

## ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

### 5 PRACTICE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they demonstrate a sustained organizational commitment to transparency, multiple accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.



**OXFAM**  
Québec



Photo: Eric St. Pierre/Oxfam Quebec

## Beneficiary Accountability Framework:

### Oxfam-Québec

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations (Oxfam-Québec is one affiliate) working together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty.

We work directly with communities and we seek to influence the powerful to ensure that poor people can improve their lives and livelihoods and have a say in decisions that affect them.

## CHALLENGE

While NGOs often emphasize the need to be accountable to their stakeholders and donors, Oxfam-Québec saw a need for increased accountability to its beneficiaries as well.



## RESPONSE



Working in collaboration with two other Oxfam affiliates, Oxfam-Québec developed an accountability framework for its emergency relief efforts in Haiti that seeks to provide all employees with a clear understanding of accountability and transparency, and how to achieve them. Five standards (participation of beneficiaries, transparency, complaint management, staff skills, and continuous improvement) will be integrated into emergency relief and recovery projects.

## LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

Oxfam-Québec mainstreamed its accountability strategy for beneficiaries into its Haiti projects during the 2010 Earthquake response. This forced employees to pay attention and to implement the strategy rigorously. Without such a formal adoption, the same accountability principles might have been subject to interpretation, both by field and policy staff.



The organization used multiple tools to reach its beneficiaries, including complaint boxes, focus groups, and surveys. Oxfam also offered a phone line to beneficiaries, enabling them to interact with the Oxfam team. Other outreach tools focused on the needs of illiterate or marginalized beneficiaries. Oxfam International dedicated one employee to help implement the accountability framework in Haiti, mainstreaming the framework in every project.

## MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



Oxfam-Québec has trained a team of Haitians to mainstream the framework in their country. The organization shared knowledge with other NGOs in Haiti within their “Accountability and Learning Working Group” — a network of NGOs, set up in Port-au-Prince, which met every couple of weeks to improve accountability towards beneficiaries during the first year and a half after the earthquake. What’s more, the Group has integrated lessons learned and best practices from Haiti into its other projects, including those in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the response to the food crisis in the Horn of Africa in 2011 and in Sahel in 2012.

## NEXT STEPS

With the accountability framework mainstreamed into most reconstruction projects, the next steps will be to focus on its use in longer-term development projects.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

“2010 Progress Report on work in Haiti”

<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/haiti-progress-report-2010-en.pdf>

“2011 Progress Report on work in Haiti”

<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/20120110-haiti-progress-report-en.pdf>