

**BCO Impact Study Yahoo and Telephonic meetings
Feb 17 - 23 2006**

1) Report on progress so far

Proposal circulated by KW and LF after Nepal meeting, for “three-track” approach:

- a) Advocacy using good “results”, to be carried out by BCO members
- b) Collaboration among members for impact evaluations on any topics/projects
- c) Country studies involving projects of all BCO members, investigating the agreed “Impact Question” (voice and participation)

Responses gathered to date by phone/yahoo/email one-to-one conversations (APC, AMARC, IICD and Panos London):

Summary of discussions:

- o Interest in Activity A; with an additional interest in working towards a collaborative and BCO-branded output.
- o Interest in Activity B; APC/IICD are well on the way to developing a sizeable partnership to explore the impact of their policy-influence work in four countries. AMARC is also interested in collaboration with other BCO partners, possibly Panos, but this has not been developed yet.
- o Activity C is described as “low priority”.

Meetings with Panos SA, SDC and Bellanet have been scheduled for next week, meeting with One World is to be arranged and HIVOS is awaiting a response.

2) Issues arising and/or still to be discussed

1. There is a general feeling (not overtly articulated) that asking partners to carry out three separate impact activities will be stretching their capacity.
2. There is a strong preference for using most of the BCO funds received to carry out and strengthen their regular evaluation activities-and publish them, rather than pay a significant sum for a joint BCO project of whose value they are not convinced. These enhanced-regular evaluation activities would fall under Activity A in the proposal above: evaluation with more than usual focus on advocacy /dissemination of the results. This would be a valid approach for BCO to take, given that all the BCO partners have much to learn and much progress to make in impact evaluation and disseminating findings.
3. What would be the “BCO additionality” of this? Partners express a willingness for “BCO branding”, without being clear at this stage what this might be and what it would look like. It could be just an acknowledgement. It could be a local country meeting or a high profile meeting to lobby decision makers?? If the thinking is a joint publication,

we are unsure of the value of if it consisted of a number of unconnected case studies.

4. If DFID is asking for a stronger focus on advocacy using the evaluation results, this could become an element of BCO support/monitoring of the partners (as in the proposal made by KW and LF after Nepal). The partners have not picked up on this aspect yet and it needs to be clarified and reinforced. At the end of the process, a publication/short report on the experiences of advocacy could be interesting and useful. (But this would have to be quite a long way down the road, time-wise – evaluation of the success of the advocacy.....)
5. On Activity B, there is some interest but also some confusion. Some of what is being discussed is joint advocacy (properly under element A) rather than joint evaluation. (APC and IICD are exchanging on a collaborative proposal of an impact evaluation on national policy in 2 countries on 2 continents). But it is likely that some real collaboration can be developed here. If not, the “learning” goal of BCO could be achieved by systematic exchange among the partners of their evaluation methodologies, experiences and findings.
6. On Activity C, there is little enthusiasm because of a lack of capacity (time, resources) and it not being a priority. The question of cost is of course significant: country studies as proposed at the Nepal meeting would require a contribution of £15,000 + from each of the main funded BCO members, but we haven’t mentioned figures to the partners yet.

3) Questions for DFID

Proposal: a “BCO evaluation plan” which consists of :

- peer-monitored impact evaluation of separate project/programmes of the BCO partners;
- a number of inter-partner collaborations for carrying out evaluations and/or advocacy
- systematic exchange among the partners of their evaluation methodologies, experiences and findings.
- with a strong focus on developing a communication strategy that identifies and lobbies key audiences with the findings;
- a deliberate effort to share learning from a) impact evaluation activities; and b) advocacy activities, among the BCO members and beyond

Will this be acceptable to DFID?

end