Article

In the rugged journey of bettering lives abroad: does the driver matter?

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This article highlights difficulties that humanitarian organizations encounter juggling the expectations of their own organization and the donor community. Drawing on World Vision Canada's (an NGO) case, we found that aligning their work to local priorities of beneficiaries, collaborating locally and gender mainstreaming are still wishes. Soliciting and reporting on funds within single project-based logical models is challenging. Also, a growing move towards General Budget Support (GBS) to increase national governments' control over aid threatens their religious agenda. For effective aid uses, this article encourages developing Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) to guide development efforts and slowly adopting GBS while utilizing program-based funding approaches, actors' comparative advantage and gender sensitive staff.

Key words: International aid effectiveness, humanitarian organizations, World Vision Canada, NGOs, poverty reduction.

INTRODUCTION

International development continues to be supported by insights and guidelines from the international community. This has especially been the case in hopes of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - the world's 2015 target to dramatically reduce extreme poverty in the areas of income poverty, hunger, disease, exclusion, lack of infrastructure and shelter and other dimensions while promoting gender equality, education, health and environmental sustainability (United Nations Millennium Project, 2006). Achieving the MDGs will depend on the support of state actors, private partners, international community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Charitable and community organizations that serve as instruments to meet community needs, defend interests and promote new policies have been present since the eighteenth century. Particularly, anti-slavery movement and international committee for the Red Cross emerged during this time in America and Europe. By the nineteenth century they broadened their focus to include issues on women's rights, poverty, alcohol abuse, municipal reforms and the Trade Union. Today, these organizations which can be found in every part of the world address any imaginable issue. The United Nations System refers to them as NGOs to distinguish their representatives from those of governments. Most NGOs often operate in their local country settings (e.g., Chamber of Commerce and neighbourhood associations) and thousands exist internationally. Their main sources of funding have been from membership dues, grants and donations from corporations, individuals and governments, and international contracts. This sector which economists refer to as the 'third sector' produces 'public goods' that would not otherwise be offered in the marketplace. They can command greater legitimacy and be more effective than national authorities (noting that some can have criminal interests). Their role in the twenty first century could be larger because of the cross-border issues that come with globalization. According to former Secretary General Boutros Ghali, NGOs "are an indispensable part of the legitimacy" of the United Nations, while his successor Kofi Annan indicated that NGOs are "the conscience of humanity" (Paul, 2010).

Often NGOs are said to be characterized by several challenges. Most common of them noted include: duplication of efforts; lack of awareness of inter-organizational linkages to other NGOs and divisive

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approach to response; political ineffectiveness; lack of identity; and inadequate facilities and obstacles to fund transfers (Judge, 1976). In response to the many issues that affect NGOs, they are urged to replace organizational rigidity with organizational flexibility so that they can respond to new situations and opportunities. Also to focus on social realities as they are more important than administrative and legal functions aimed to keep their status. Others suggest that they mobilize support for program execution and engage beneficiaries in formulating their programs.

While several issues in NGOs are internally driven, some of the problems they face today can be attributed to institutional challenges from external parties. For example, the international community (e.g., The World Bank and International Monetary Fund - IMF) is focused on aid effectiveness since this is important to meeting the MDGs. They push actors including the state, private actors and NGOs to align their work to existing country strategies for better results on poverty reduction. Each country is expected to develop a broad-based Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The PRS is to provide a country's macro-economic, structural and social policies and programs for three or more years that advance poverty reduction, along with the major financial sources and external financing needs. Developing a PRS entails a participatory comprehensive process involving domestic stakeholders and external development agencies including the World Bank and International Monetary fund. Updates on the PRS are mandatory every three years (International Monetary Fund, 2010). Development actors that seek to ensure that their work is in sync with the country PRSs may face difficulties. However not much is understood of how their external enablers, funders and supporters can be a blessing at the same time a challenge to their work.

Using the World Vision Canada as a case study, the goal of this study was to understand the kinds of challenges they face and how these relate to either the internal workings of the organizations or external workings beyond their control. Thus, the study set out to answer the following key questions:

1. What challenges does the World Vision Canada encounter in its international development work?
2. How are the challenges internally driven and/or externally driven?
3. What lessons can the World Vision Canada and external parties learn to be more effective in using aid to reduce poverty?

METHODOLOGY

This article is formulated within the lens of critical methodological theory. It is focused on providing insights into existing structures to understand 'what is' as opposed to 'what appears to be'. Critical theorists understand that their own world view, shaped by their background and experiences affects their interpretation of a phenomenon (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005). The authors are passionate about problem-solving as they view development as an unending process entailing constant efforts at improvement. Also, they believe that relationships that support proactive approaches to solving problems can facilitate better development outcomes. However, in a skewed relationship where the issues that affect some parties find little expression in the public arena because of the fear of losing potential funding, trust and reputation, can become detrimental to humanitarian work. Similar to the realm of 'business', healthy relationships that serve to allow for open honest dialogue about issues and opportunities and actions that respond effectively are key to the success of any enterprise. Thus, a critical understanding of World Vision Canada's endeavours and what affects them, along with ideas on minimizing their challenges are discussed.

Data was collected from World Vision Canada. Staff of their International Programs branch were interviewed as key informants in June of 2006. Key questions were around the organization's history, modalities, challenges and ways forward. This article also benefitted from secondary data available on the organization. Conclusions could be more compelling if the insights of World Vision Canada's partners abroad were included.

Study context

The World Vision International is a Christian relief and advocacy organization that offers assistance to people in need (regardless of race, religion, gender and ethnicity). They work with children, families and communities towards making poverty and injustice history. It was founded by an American Protestant, Dr. Robert Pierce, when he was overwhelmed by the abject poverty he saw on a trip to China in 1947. He acted by giving his last $5 to a school principal when he met a ragged little girl in their school. He promised to send more money on a monthly basis and that was the beginning. Today, World Vision around the world provides assistance to approximately 100 million people in nearly 100 countries with some 31,000 staff members who implement programs of emergency relief, education, health care, child rights, poverty reduction and economic development, and the promotion of justice and child rights. As a partner of World Vision International, World Vision Canada (WVC) is the largest humanitarian relief and development organization in Canada (World Vision Canada, 2008).

The WVC aims at transformational development in hopes that children become the ultimate beneficiaries. A major philosophy in their work is participatory development in which emphasis is on stakeholders' participation and building capacities of local leaders and self-help groups. Their funding comes from public and private donors and partners such as Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and International Development Organizations (IDOs).

The WVC uses an Area Development Programme (ADP) model in their service delivery. This is a comprehensive 10-15 year development plan for an area, usually comprising a group of villages with approximately 30,000 people. To develop an ADP, a local office of World Vision within the target country, in other words, World Vision Abroad (WVA) collects information on existing national and local plans or a PRS, if any. This information would help with adapting their work to local or national needs. Neediest geographical areas are selected based on whether they are accessible. Community members are engaged to assess their own development needs and priorities, which may often include aspects such as: health and nutrition; water and sanitation; food and agriculture; HIV/AIDS; education; human rights; economic development; and Christian impact. The findings from this needs assessment are used to formulate an integrated ADP, providing a road map of priority projects for the communities within the area.

From the ADP, the WVA goes on to develop and submit project-

based proposals to international partners of World Vision around the world for funding to carry out the projects. Upon receipt of project proposals, the WVC would review it and a decision is reached on whether to fund or raise funds for the project. A project that is approved for funding by WVC is prepared for implementation and monitoring by the WVA partner. In fulfilling donor requirements, the WVA would evaluate and report back on a funded project, often after two to five years (depending on the duration of the project) to the WVC who in turn would share this information with donors. Lessons from an evaluation can help to better shape the project or future projects of the WVC and WVA (Interview with WVC, 2006 World Vision Canada, 2008).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Among the guiding principles for international development work set out by the World Bank to facilitate aid effectiveness and in meeting the MDGs is alignment. According to the World Bank (2004), "Alignment means providing assistance that is consistent with the priorities in the national development strategy". Also, the Paris Declaration (2005) which provides guidance to bolster international aid effectiveness maintains that "donors commit to: base their overall support - country strategies, policy dialogues and development co-operation programmes - on partners' national development strategies and periodic reviews of progress in implementing these strategies". Thus, aid is said to be more effective when humanitarian agencies being major contributors to poverty reduction in developing countries align their work to PRS targets which are tailored to the MDGs and to measuring progress on them.

Although this aligning obligation is favourable to the cause, it is easier said than done. The WVC reported that the WVA who are responsible for the alignment appear to do so in only a few countries. Adding that it has been possible in countries such as Mali, Tanzania and Ghana where PRSs are available. Thus, in areas where there is little calm because of political distress or disaster, developing a PRS is obviously difficult since it demands a substantial consultative process which can be hampered by instability. For example, although Angola launched its PRS process in 2000, it was yet to be finalized as of 2005. The delay was because the PRS completed by the Angolan government in 2003 not only lacked clear prioritized objectives, actions, timelines and financing sources, but also lacked sufficient civil society consultation partially due to the Angolan war [African Development Bank and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005)]. Using other national or local plans is an option when PRSs do not exist, but these alternatives may not be tailored to poverty reduction or the MDGs.

Further, the development discourse on international aid effectiveness calls for the use of a General Budget Support (GBS). The GBS is a management approach to support direct financial assistance as a contribution to an overall national budget.

GBS is defined as: …"financial support from a donor that is channelled into the general treasury account of a recipient country where, as an integral part of the resources herein, it co-funds the national budget. The support is thus not earmarked, and it is used according to the national public expenditure management rules and procedures" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2007: 6).

Donor programs that support GBS typically link fund disbursement to meeting policy conditions and reforms, capacity development and progress monitoring (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2007). The fundamental reasoning behind GBS is to allow recipient countries to play a larger role in determining fund allocations based on country priorities and to encourage 'program-based' rather than 'project-based' funding for their development priorities. It is in support of the GBS that the Paris Declaration (2005) and IMF and the World Bank (2005) maintain that 66% of aid should be channelled to program-based approaches by 2010, and that 85% of aid flows should be reflected on partner national budgets by 2010. According to WVC personnel, national leaders of Guyana and Zimbabwe, for example, have requested to be their own 'managers of aid' or 'aid treasuries'-to receive aid and use it to address their own priorities. The GBS approach can potentially advance the cause of poverty reduction; however, there are issues when it comes to implementing the GBS. The GBS has largely focused on aid management at the national level, with limited discussion on how this can be implemented between national and local governments, especially with the increased adoption of decentralized systems of governments in aid receiving countries. Decentralized systems of governing among developing countries demanding that local governments be accountable to their constituents for expenditures on basic services or infrastructure (e.g., as primary health, clean water and sanitation, secondary and tertiary roads and irrigations systems) suggest that local governments and civil society have a crucial role in realizing the MDGs. (Ferrazzi and Steffense, 2008). However, passing aid through national governments without well-developed local government roles and expectations within the framework of GBS could create greater aid ineffectiveness, and subsequently hold back the MDGs' targets.

Aside the lack of role clarity for local governments in implementing the GBS, some NGOs are yet to establish what adoption of GBS will mean for them as far as their program modalities, internal and external organizational structures and management are concerned. For NGOs with religious agenda, a move towards GBS could relegate their religious agenda. Evidence of this situation was highlighted in discussion with WVC staff, who reported that part of their mission as a Christian organization is to share the message of God's love with beneficiaries. Thus, directly giving funds to national governments instead to develop and manage community projects for

the needy would mean that less material religious agenda they are able to carry out when their local partners engage with communities, can get lost if they go by GBS. Besides, whether the WVC trust national and local governments to effectively utilize the aid transfers in meeting the needs of the poor and expectations of donors is uncertain. In consequence, the GBS is predisposed to acceptance problems among some humanitarian organizations until such a time when lessons from GBS pilots have helped to significantly address concerns among NGOs, donors and recipient governments of aid.

Further, the WVC reported the challenge around co-ordinating roles among humanitarian actors and host governments especially in unstable country situations where tactical collaboration and high skill levels are indispensable for making a positive difference. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Association of United States Army (AUSA) have identified three conceptual phases - initial response, transformation and fostering sustainability - as a framework for post-conflict reconstruction. Thus, the ".....initial response is often characterized by military intervention for basic security, stability and emergency". The second phase, transformation, focuses on developing legitimate and sustainable indigenous capacity, often with special attention to restarting the economy, establishing mechanisms for governance and participation and securing a foundation of justice and reconciliation. The final phase, fostering sustainability, consolidates long-term recovery efforts, often leading to the withdrawal of all or most of the international military involvement. It is this phase that also lays the foundation for the prevention of conflict and the reemergence of violence (CSIS and AUSA, 2002)

Applying the CSIS and AUSA framework or similar frameworks to development work in unstable situations is still not simple. The WVC reported that their WVA partners have over the years made significant progress in collaborating with other actors within fairly stable countries such as Malawi and Ghana. On the contrary, little success has been seen in countries such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Nepal where conflicts exist. Further, the Paris Declaration (2005) establishes that partner countries should commit to: building institutions and establishing government structures that deliver effective governance; public safety, security and equitable access to basic social services for citizens and encourage a broad range of national actors in setting development priorities in fragile states. The declaration (Paris Declaration, 2005) also indicates that donors in fragile states should commit to:

(1) Harmonizing their activities in the absence of strong government leadership;
(2) Focusing on upstream analysis, joint assessments and strategies, co-ordinate political engagement and

support practical initiatives; and
(3) Aligning to the maximum extent possible behind central government-led strategies or, if that is not possible, donors should make maximum use of country, regional, sector or non-government systems

Increasing support for government led strategies and use of non-government systems in the absence of government systems for administering aid within weak states demands a very high level of co-operation among actors at all levels; national, local and external in order to deliver complementary interventions. Awareness of skill levels allowing for actors to undertake roles in which they are most competent is also a pre-requisite for better results. This will contribute to prevent the problem of raising expectations and being unable to deliver, a situation that can rather cause tensions and ultimately lead to more conflicts. It is because of this reason that The Care International in Sri Lanka, for example, uses a partner assessment tool called Institutional Development and Organizational Strengthening Analysis (ID/OS) to determine strengths and weaknesses of partner organi-zations. This has led to a joint agreement on role clarity between CARE Sri Lanka and their partners in conflict intervention (FEWER, International Alert and Safe World, 2003).

Yet, attempts to establish partnership, particularly with national and local governments of aid recipient countries continue to show limited success. The WVC reported that some governments (such as the Sri Lankan government) have been hostile to the WVA partners wanting to work closely with them. The basis for the hostility is unclear. Nonetheless, this situation could arise from non-govern-mental outfits: undermining national institutions; setting high salaries for local staff; promoting incompatible values and winning the trust of citizens and working with less neutral parties. Bebbington et al. (2004), for example, noted from a study of rural villages in Indonesia that local struggles or silences may signify the protection and projection of certain cultural practices. They added that people defend and mobilize around practices and institutions that are meaningful to them and resist those that convey meanings that do not conform to their cultural values.

Besides their value-based issues, technical requirements of donors can be disconcerting. There are conditions to be met before a project would qualify for funding from donors. While some of the expectations are pertinent to project success, others may somewhat be impractical. One such expectation is funding based on a logical framework. The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) was first developed by Practical Concepts Incorporation in 1969 for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The international donor community has since widely accepted the LFA as an analytic tool for project approval, monitoring and evaluation, because it provides a convenient overview of

a project and warrants accountability. The LFA usually comprises a matrix which corresponds to the various levels in a project, and contains logical connections of project elements, including inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes and their corresponding performance indicators, assumptions and risks [Canadian International Development Agency, (CIDA) (2006)]. According to Gasper (1999) the LFA can guide logical thinking from one level of a project to the next higher level and helps to determine roles and connections of external factors. But he recognizes that the logical framework should be flexible to changes in projects over time. The WVC reported that donors frequently consider logical frameworks that they receive as part of the package for soliciting funding as a 'locked' document once they commit to fund them. This has been the case to prevent the loss of accountability. However, working with a logical framework that is inflexible creates difficulty when the WVA partners attempt to report on performance indicators for projects that have undergone many changes during their life time. Donors anticipate evaluation reporting to reflect the outcomes predicted within the original logical framework. Being unable to provide a close match between expectations within the original logical framework and actual project proceedings has partly prevented CIDA and other corporate organizations from meeting some of the funding requests by the WVC.

Gasper (1999) critiqued the limited exposure of the 'ups' and 'downs' of methods in many development agencies and noted the abuse of the LFA. For Gasper the logical frameworks are simple 'thinking aids' and should not be treated as authoritative statements, hence failing to update logical frameworks because they are static can rather cause illogic. Adding that, the LFA has often been used only because external donors demand it. He attributes the logical framework 'static addiction' by donors to a lack of proximity to projects and low trust. Although CIDA for example, supports the LFA and has allowed a degree of reporting flexibilities, evidence from the WVC suggests that staying true to the original ideas in a logical framework remains steady for the majority of donors, which continually hampers acquiring of funding.

For the WVC, some of the mismatch when comparing original logical frameworks with project proceedings is somewhat because of staff competency issues that create inadequate and inaccurate reporting on performance indicators. The process of generating performance indicators in the early part of a project is deemed equally important as the process of measuring the indicators later in the life of a project. But, insufficient involvement of various stakeholders to be affected by a project to assist with determining and measuring performance indicators has often led to evaluation findings that are irreconcilable with their original project logical frameworks.

Additionally, the WVC's ADP model is ideal for advancing a balanced development, but it is somewhat uneasy to use due to reporting difficulties. The WVC like many other humanitarian organizations is motivated to produce positive impacts among the poor. Providing a proof of impacts or outcomes accomplished in an evaluation report serves as a prop for future funding from donors. Although their ADP approach aims to promote an integrated and holistic programming, a WVC respondent indicated that, donors' needing separate evaluation reporting on individual projects can be distressing (Interview, 2006). Adding that project deliverables to donors from the WVC may include periodic evaluations either mid-term or post-project or a combination. Since funding is sought on project by project basis, projects eventually get supported by more than one donor. Each of the donors often wants updates on their funded projects. Since more than one project may be delivered within their ADP model, there are often mixed impacts. Isolating impacts of individual projects as separate entities within an interconnected program-based ADP model has been a knotty task.

Effectively reducing poverty also depends on how well gender mainstreaming is tackled. Poor handling of gender relations especially during needs assessments in development planning is a setback. The WVC reported that preference for projects are often divided along gender lines. Men generally appear 'louder' than women during gatherings to assess needs and they have often directed the choice of priority projects. They are firm in pushing for projects such as irrigation, leaving women to vote for micro-finance, education and micro-nutrient projects. However, these differences in what men and women consider important for their well-being should not be viewed as problematic since men and women know what is best for them relative to their gender roles within the cultures they share. The focus should be on whether women are less represented and feel oppressed to either express their candid views or make decisions consistent with their views at community gatherings to produce consensus on what is a desirable project. In this case some thoughts to be clarified may include: Is a gendered decision a wrong decision? Is a man's 'voice' partially the 'voice' of a woman? Are gendered needs being met when men are overpoweringly loud in a decision making process? It is vital to bear in mind that an irrigation project, for example, can provide all year round employment and higher incomes for men. Consequently, men may contribute significantly towards meeting the needs of their households.

Interestingly, Chant and Gutmann (2002) noted that increasing women's income generating power tend to make men feel redundant in women's lives. In a study of Kisii District in Kenya, it was noted that men are left with a patriarchal ideology and lacking the capabilities to fulfil new roles and expectations (Silberschmidt, 1999), which can increase male violence and psychological abuse within households. According to Mayoux (1998), better income-generating opportunities for women that enables

them to earn more incomes does not suggest that there would be increases in resources available for household usage, as some husbands may withdraw resource contributions for their households' upkeep. Thus, some women may be uninterested in shouldering nearly the full responsibility of economically maintaining their households when they already have heavy workloads.

EASING THE RUGGEDNESS

This article which discusses the complexities with humanitarian work while working with beneficiary countries and their communities and donors and the international community, clearly highlights how external influences affect international development. Regarding internal issues, not only do the humanitarian organizations have to play smart in winning the trust of beneficiaries and host governments to be welcomed. Their position and understanding on gender issues in their particular contexts, on conflict situations, values and belief systems would determine if they are going to be welcomed in a context and can be effective at addressing the needs. Being able to collaborate with other humanitarian actors to produce the desired outcomes for beneficiaries and reworking their service delivery model to facilitate better reporting is also necessary. However, there are those issues that are beyond their control, spurred by external influences and also fundamental to their operations since it involves funding. This includes reporting back to donors showing that promises on uses of the funds and outcomes have been kept, which helps to win them more money to further their international development cause. And coupled with the international community providing the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the business, overall international development planning has enough threads to be as complex as it can be dealing with multi-disciplinary subject matters. Thus, identifying the gaps and working closely with the various stakeholders, including donors and the international community is what can create societal outcomes to eventually make poverty history. To resolve the drawback to achieving and measuring the MDGs, it is pertinent that humanitarian organizations, including the WVC invest in and support the development of national PRSs in target countries - both stable and unstable ones. By making this a priority, they can seize opportune periods of peace in fragile countries to collaborate with national governments to develop one. A portion of aid money from the WVC and other humanitarian organizations could be allocated to building capacities of their staff and the local people to equip them to better monitor and evaluate progress on their work, which ultimately will inform progress on the PRSs and MDGs.

While GBS has the potential to improve international aid effectiveness, the international community together with humanitarian organizations and governments need to develop clearly defined local and national governments' governments' roles and their linkages and should be accompanied by proper training for its successful implementation.

As well, it is proposed that the GBS be introduced gradually; a gradual process will prevent overwhelming governments with huge funds and planning and management responsibilities. Also, it will allow them to learn by experience, until such a time when they have strengthened their capacities to take full control over effective and efficient uses of all international aid. In implementing the GBS, an agreement can be reached between target countries and the WVC on religious values that they wish to promote right from the initial stages of legitimizing their partnership. They would also have to allocate funds to continuous learning and to leveraging local capacities to implement the GBS, if a significant impact on poverty is anticipated.

It is obviously an onerous task to collaborate on and co-ordinate development efforts among various stakeholders, including local and national governments and humanitarian agencies during politically unstable situations. Dialogue driven by the desire for synergy and effectiveness is indispensable to better collaboration. By taking on befitting roles based on their capacities and utmost competencies, and enhancing the capacities of neutral actors to deliver goods and services to citizens, could serve as a prop for reconciliation and for building trust. Owing to trust being an invaluable asset for advancing their interests and partners'. Also, an assessment of how WVC's and WVA's organizational values and work approach impinge on local cultures in which they provide aid can produce insights into places where they can make the most impact, and how to adapt to various cultural contexts in which they choose to provide aid.

Further, to offset the difficulty of measuring individual project impacts within the program-based ADP model, the WVA partner could consider exploring the use of one-shot proposal for a program that will comprise a set of priority projects for a small area. In effect, donors will be invited to support the small ADPs and funds raised can be put towards this program. Donors should be made aware of the program-based reporting to them in order to prevent any misapprehension of expectations.

Regarding reporting problems arising from rigid logical frameworks, donors of international aid are encouraged to be open to flexible revisions to logical frameworks in the course of a project or program, to support realistic reporting. Also, using competent staff capable of effectively engaging beneficiaries in formulating projects and measuring their performance indicators can substantially counter inconsistencies between promises in an original logical framework and findings from evaluations.

Finally, male dominance in the needs assessment process can be ameliorated with the use of simple tools to enable men and women have an equal chance to

participate in decision-making around what meets their individual and household needs, taking into account not only their economic needs, but also their psychological needs. Given the opportunity, appropriate setting and convenient timing to participate in development decision-making, it is likely that men's and women's support for decisions may be gendered.

To support effective engagement of men and women in decision making, the WVA partners could enhance the gender sensitivity of staff by providing them the training they need. Also, at the preliminary stage of the needs assessment, a sample of daily calendars could be taken to identify convenient times for engaging men and women, and techniques such as 'women only' and 'men only' focus group discus-sions, mapping, matrix scoring and other participatory techniques can positively influence their participation. As well, culturally accepted ways of engaging women need to be explored and utilized within each context.

Conclusion

The WVC is Canada's largest humanitarian organisation. With funding from public, private and international development agencies, they strive to support an ADP approach that provides comprehensive and positive transformational development outcomes to entire com-munities. Nevertheless, many expectations of donors, the international community and beneficiaries are a reality, and so are the added emerging concepts for aid effect-tiveness.

A lack of PRSs in many target countries to allow for alignment of their work to country and local priorities and the relegating impact of GBS to the World Vision's religious agenda are concerning. The same goes for the lack of early role clarity for local governments to facilitate implementation of GBS and difficulties with collaboration among actors. Accompanied by unalterable logical frameworks and reporting difficulties on them, and inadequate gender responsiveness, there appear to be more than enough barriers. Humanitarian organizations are encouraged to allocate portions of aid money and efforts to assist in developing PRSs and local capacities to measure progress on them. This is particularly important in host countries where completed PRSs are non-existent. The international community should move quickly to develop tools for implementing the GBS and allow for a gradual GBS adoption. Flexible logical frameworks and a program-based approach to soliciting and reporting on funding may become acceptable if donors increasingly become open minded. Also, humanitarian actors, including the WVA partners need to assess their capacities and utilize those skills in which they have comparative advantage, as well as engage communities from the conception of a project and to have competent gender-aware staff in service delivery for better aid outcomes.

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