



ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE (IR)

BACKGROUND

Islamic Relief (IR) is an independent relief and development INGO founded in the UK in 1984. It responds to disasters and emergencies, and promotes sustainable economic and social development by working in partnership with local communities.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The governing body of Islamic Relief Worldwide is the Board of Trustees, also known as the General Meeting that also elects the Board of Directors. The Chief Executive Officer, along with the Board of Directors, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation. The CEO also chairs the Executive Committee which is made up of the Division Directors and supervises the activities of IR.

Headquarters: Birmingham, UK

Countries of operation: 25

Operating budget: £31.7 million (2007)

Employees: 1600 (10/2008)

Website: www.islamic-relief.com

Accountability Initiatives signed up to:

- Disasters Emergency Committee Accountability Framework
- People in Aid Code of Good Practice

ACCOUNTABILITY SUMMARY

TRANSPARENCY

IR has two key transparency documents: the *IR Accountability Framework* which outlines the organisation's core beliefs, values and codes, and the *IR Code of Conduct*, which underpins IR's commitment to transparency. The *Framework* is accompanied by a toolkit to assist field offices with its implementation.

Although at the HQ level there is no individual responsible for transparency, at the field office level, the Performance Improvement Manager is responsible for overseeing compliance with the *Framework*. Islamic Relief provides training for staff and managers and the *Framework* includes a training toolkit called *Staff Capacity Building and Training for an Accountable Organisation* that includes transparency and disclosure of information elements. The *Framework* is available on the IR website and in hard copy upon request. Both the *Code of Conduct* and the *Framework* are available only in English. Contact information for IR's headquarters or field office locations is made available to external stakeholders via the IR website.

2008 GLOBAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT RATINGS			
Dimension	Score	INGO Rank	2008 Rank
Transparency	54%	2=	6=
Participation: External Stakeholder Engagement	61%	7	12=
Participation: Member Control	100%	1=	1=
Evaluation	72%	7	16
Complaints & Response: Internal	86%	1=	3=
Complaints & Response: External	46%	3=	6=
Overall	68%	3=	6=

= denotes tied ranking

PARTICIPATION – EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The *IR Accountability Framework* makes a general commitment to engaging with external stakeholders and is supported by a toolkit, which provides an action plan to ensure stakeholder participation at the different stages of the project cycle. In relation to accountability to external stakeholders, the *IR Quality Management System* translates the codes and values in the *IR Accountability Framework* into standards that each IR office needs to meet. Furthermore, the *IR PRA Handbook* serves as a step-by-step guide for individuals in the field involved in engaging beneficiaries in policy design, implementation and evaluation. Islamic Relief also makes commitments to specific stakeholders in policies and reports for each of their programme areas.

Relevant Programme Managers oversee external stakeholder engagement at the operational level. Compliance with the *IR Accountability Framework* in terms of stakeholder engagement is the responsibility of the Head of the Performance Improvement Unit. At the headquarters level oversight of stakeholder engagement takes place during the Project Approval Process and coordinators within regional management teams oversee compliance at the regional level. IR provides training at the field level for its staff and disseminates the key policy documents widely, although these documents are available only in English.

PARTICIPATION – MEMBER CONTROL

Although IR's *Memorandum and Articles* do not state that all members of Islamic Relief are given representation at the General Meeting, all members of Islamic Relief are in fact Trustees of the company and are therefore given representation at the governing body level. The General Meeting then elects the members of the executive Board of Directors and may remove Directors by means of an Extraordinary Resolution. However, only one quarter of the seats on the Board are retired at each annual meeting. In line with good practice principles, each member holds an equal number of votes and no single member can block changes to the governing articles.

EVALUATION

Islamic Relief has several policies which guide evaluation. The *IR Quality Management System* details evaluations that take place at the project, programme, country, regional, global, and sectoral levels. The *IR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* outlines the monitoring, reviewing and learning processes that all IR offices need to follow. Both policies commit to external stakeholder engagement, using the results of evaluation to inform future decision making, and evaluation of its managerial performance, but not to being open and transparent about the results.

Each field office has a Senior Manager who is responsible for overseeing evaluations. All evaluations are sent to the Internal Audit Committee, at the field office level, for internal verification. At the HQ level, the Performance Improvement Unit oversees all the field-based Internal Audits. IR provides training on evaluations through regional training courses and also provides field office training on evaluations. Furthermore, a handbook entitled *How to Monitor and Evaluate Emergency Operations* provides guidance on staff training and procedures in emergency situations. However, these documents are only available in English and there is no evidence of any mechanisms for disseminating lessons learnt within the organisation.

COMPLAINTS AND RESPONSE– INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

The handling and investigation of complaints from both internal and external stakeholders is guided by the *IR Anti Fraud Policy and Response Plan* and the *Complaints Handling Policy of Islamic Relief* which together provide a clear description of how a complaint can be made and how it will be investigated. The policies also commit IR to ensuring confidentiality, non-retaliation for internal (staff) complainants, and the independence of the investigative process. However, these policies do not guarantee the reversal of negative consequences nor mandatory discipline for anyone found to have retaliated against a the complainant. There is also no independent appeals mechanism, which, combined with the lack of guaranteed protection from retaliation, leaves external complainants vulnerable in comparison to internal (staff) complainants. Furthermore, IR offers no formal mechanism that enables all external stakeholders to file a complaint against organisational policies

The Internal Auditor at the HQ and field office level is responsible for overseeing internal complaints and policy compliance whereas responsibility for overseeing external complaints handling is split between the Head of Projects Division at the field office level, and the Internal Auditor at the HQ level. Those responsible for handling internal complaints are trained as part of the accountability training of Islamic Relief and training guidelines are made available to all field offices by the Performance Improvement Unit. Training on external stakeholder complaint handling is provided within the general complaints handling training. The policies are further disseminated to staff by leaflet and intranet but are only available in English.

ONGOING ACCOUNTABILITY REFORMS

Islamic Relief has made a commitment to making its accountability policies available on the IR website.

PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

Islamic Relief performs comparatively well across all dimensions of accountability capabilities and is particularly strong in in transparency and complaints handling relative to all sector averages. Nonetheless, IR's score in transparency is still well below the 70 percent minimum accountability capabilities threshold. IR's complaints handling capabilities, which are supported by clear guidance and oversight, are weakened by the lack of protections or a means to file complaints against organisational policies for external complainants. However, IR scores well in comparison to all sectors, tied for third ranking in the INGO sector and tied for sixth ranking overall.

