

# **Quality and Accountability in Humanitarian Assistance**

**We Intend Good  
therefore  
We are Good**

Niels Dabelstein,

ICFO Annual General Meeting, 16 May 2008

# Transparency is key!

- Most ICFO members not transparent:
  - Websites promotional
  - Limited financial info
  - No accessible evaluation results

# Evaluation Assessment 1996

- “The performance of NGOs in providing humanitarian assistance was mixed. A number behaved professionally and compassionately and delivered high-quality care and services. But other NGOs performed in an unprofessional and irresponsible manner that resulted not only in duplication and wasted resources but, in a few cases, in unnecessary loss of life.”

# Evaluation Assessment 2006

- “Some international organisations managed well; many did not.”
- “...these include supply-driven, unsolicited and inappropriate aid, and inappropriate housing designs and livelihood solutions. Such aid has led to inequities, gender- and conflict-insensitive programmes, indignities, cultural offence and waste.”

Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Tsunami

# Why so little change?

- Reluctance to admit shortcomings
- Fear of declining funding
- Reluctance to learn
- High staff turn-over

# Why Evaluate?

- Contribute to informed debate
- Debate influence policy
- Educate the public
  
- Secrecy fosters suspicion

# Evaluation Culture

- Self-criticism
- Openness to debate
- Demonstrate usefulness
- Lesson learning

Require:

- Management champion

# Benefits of Joint Evaluation

- **Broader Scope:** answer questions which cannot be addressed by one actor such as coordination and coherence
- **Objectivity and Legitimacy:** Increased weight of the evaluation if undertaken with partners
- **Rationalisation, harmonisation and reduced transaction costs** for all partners (except lead)
- **Builds credible evidence** for advocacy and fund raising purposes



# Quality & Accountability Initiatives

- IFRC: Code of Conduct (1994)
- People in Aid: Code of Best Practice (1996)
- The Sphere Project (1997)
- ALNAP (1997)
- The Ombudsman Project (1997- 1999)
- The Humanitarian Accountability Project/Partnership (2000)
- The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (2003)
- SGS Benchmarking (2006)
- ISO Standards (2006)

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therefore**

**We Want to be Better**