Evaluation of the
Development Cooperation Ireland
Multi-Annual Programme Scheme

Christian Aid

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1. **Executive Summary**

1. Christian Aid Ireland is part of Christian Aid, the official relief and development agency of the Protestant churches in Ireland and the UK. Christian Aid Ireland has a long-established relationship with Development Cooperation Ireland’s Aid programme based on a synergy between their respective values, vision and goals. Prior to MAPS, this found expression in the Ireland Aid support through block grants and other funding mechanisms such as the NGO Co-financing Scheme; Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance Fund; Human Rights and Democratisation Scheme etc.

2. Christian Aid Ireland’s operationalisation of MAPS was based on two main themes, *sustainable livelihoods and sustainable security*, the idea being that in countries emerging from conflict it is essential to work on two fronts:
   (i) Creating an interest in maintaining peace by working with the poor and marginalized, helping them to realise their rights and removing key underlying causes of conflict;
   (ii) Supporting the processes and structural changes on which peace can be maintained.

3. MAPS funding primarily aims to support development processes as distinct from emergency operations. Christian Aid Ireland felt that existing programmes in four conflict states could benefit from the MAPS funding and increase Christian Aid Ireland’s engagement with the local partners, namely Afghanistan, Colombia, Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (IOPT), and Sierra Leone. What emerged was an overall objective to advance a development agenda in the midst of conflict. The Christian Aid portfolio was firmly based on the idea that even within the context of chronic and on-going conflict it is important to actively support communities and processes which take a longer term developmental view.

4. The fact that Christian Aid’s methodology is to work only through partners means that their approach fits with Development Cooperation Ireland’s criteria of strengthening partners and partnership. Christian Aid Ireland is an attractive partner to Development Cooperation Ireland, not least because it offers an opportunity to learn from a second agency (the other being Trócaire) on a partnership-based approach. The engagement also provides a focus for Christian Aid supporters in Ireland, and the projects have been included in publicity around the work of Christian Aid in Ireland.

5. The promotion of learning as part of the MAPS’ objectives was welcomed by Christian Aid Ireland. It presented an opportunity to share learning in the Irish aid and development sector in addition to providing the potential to contribute to understanding within Christian Aid’s thematic learning groups on issues such as conflict and livelihoods.

6. Based on the Evaluation Team’s field visits to Christian Aid (Colombia and Sierra Leone), the overall approach of the agency would seem to be strongly in accordance with MAPS principles, specifically:
   - Quality relationships have been forged with their partners in-country;
• Active support for capacity building and organizational development needs of partners in a multi-annual context is being provided;
• A stronger emphasis on strategic, macro level changes using a range of approaches including advocacy is evident.

7. There have been clear efforts to advance towards mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and to articulate MAPS with the HIV/AIDS Partnership Scheme funded activities where possible. Issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS are seen as priorities by Christian Aid’s partner organizations and even when not immediately linked to their area of work, efforts to incorporate them were visible.

8. Although it would not be valid to attribute the current shifts from a project to programme approach to MAPS per se, Christian Aid has attempted to look at its work with partners and their individual projects through a more programmatic lens. This is seen as work in progress by Christian Aid Ireland, and is not yet thoroughly embedded in the partners’ ways of working or relating.

9. The Scheme provided a timely platform for a strategic, developmental approach (to which Christian Aid was in any case committed) to be implemented on a scale and at a pace which would have been otherwise improbable. The continuing challenge is to develop a programme with sufficient space for reflection and cross-learning between partners, country programmes and with strategic allies, in order to develop and share learning about development amidst conflict.

10. MAPS has added a new dimension to the relationship between Christian Aid Ireland and Development Cooperation Ireland. The impact of this new relationship is not just bi-lateral. The status of Christian Aid in Ireland is changing and it has also significant implications for the relationships between Christian Aid Ireland and Christian Aid in UK. MAPS presented an opportunity for Christian Aid Ireland to develop its own identity as a development partner and this has a significant impact on its partners and its relationship with Development Cooperation Ireland.

11. Overall MAPS has provided Christian Aid Ireland with an opportunity to change its role and capacity in shifting from a funding to a more pro-active development agency. The existence of structures and systems in Christian Aid has meant that Christian Aid Ireland is able to take advantage of years of experience of partnership-based working. Within Christian Aid, although it would not be valid to attribute the evolution from a project to a programmatic approach to MAPS, it is certain that MAPS provided a timely platform for a strategic developmental approach to be implemented on a scale and at a pace which would have been otherwise improbable. The continuing challenge is to develop a programme with sufficient space for reflection and cross-learning with partners and strategic allies in order to develop and share learning about development amidst conflict.

12. Christian Aid seems to be the type of NGO where the MAPS Scheme is most productive. The coherence of its own objectives and procedures with MAPS principles facilitates the implementation of the Scheme. An important element in this seems to be the clarity of selection criteria for choosing partners with whom to work, with a focus on strong leadership, clear knowledge of the country situations and commitment. There is also the fact that the small size of Christian Aid Ireland enables
it to be more nimble in introducing change, a characteristic that resulted in its being better positioned than its larger peers to respond to the key opportunities that MAPS offered.

13. Some recommendations are made to Christian Aid Ireland regarding a future phase of participation in MAPS, which can build on the foundations already laid.

a) Christian Aid Ireland has a strong and valid focus to its conflict transformation and development work; care should be taken not to stretch this too far. Growth of the MAPS funded programme would be best approached on an incremental basis, using clear criteria which could include an assessment of learning from the previous engagement, added value, and Christian Aid capacity.

b) There is still room to improve the programmatic nature of the engagement both vertically (within the Christian Aid organisation) and horizontally (with partners in the field).

c) Christian Aid Ireland needs to support its partners to mainstream all three cross-cutting areas under MAPS more effectively, and in a more nuanced way (avoiding the temptation for a uniform template), especially in contexts where conflict (or post-conflict reconciliation) is an ever present element in the landscape.

d) Learning from HAPS could provide a more strategic dimension to the engagement with partners on cross-cutting issues. A starting point for this could be an assessment of the learning processes which were included in HAPS, and whether these could be helpful to learning on other mainstreaming or thematic issues.

e) Christian Aid and its partners need to develop appropriate programmatic monitoring and evaluation systems, which develop the latter’s capacity to monitor and evaluate at the level of outcomes and impact.

f) Networking should be seen as a central element of a partner’s work, which grounds their efforts and provides a base for sustainability, strategic alliances and potential lesson learning and sharing.

g) Learning needs to become more strategically placed in the work of Christian Aid if it is to add value to the wider development field.

h) A stronger liaison between the MAPS NGOs in-country (e.g. Sierra Leone), and with the local Development Cooperation Ireland office where applicable, is called for; this will enable them to share experience laterally, and coordinate some actions, especially where a plurality of MAPS NGOs have one local partner in common.

Although strictly speaking outside the remit of the MAPS evaluation, it appears that a critical foundation for the future growth of Christian Aid Ireland as part of Irish civil society is the recruitment of a Board of Directors able to guide Christian Aid Ireland to be increasingly effective as an organisation.
Acronyms

AMR  Appraisal Monitoring and Review
ARD  Association for Rural Development (Sierra Leone NGO)
CA   Christian Aid
CAC  Christian Aid’s programme in Colombia
CAI  Christian Aid Ireland
CASL Christian Aid’s programme in Sierra Leone
DCI  Development Cooperation Ireland
HAPS HIV / AIDS Partnership Scheme
HDI  Human Development Index
HIPC Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative
IHL  International Humanitarian Law
IMF  International Monetary Fund
I/OPT Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territories
LDC  Least Developed Countries
MAPS Multi-Annual Partnership Scheme (DCI)
MCSL Methodist Church in Sierra Leone
MDGs Millennium Development Goals
MNGOs NGOs which are beneficiaries of MAPS
NGO  Non Governmental Organisation
NMJD Network Movement for Justice and Development (Sierra Leone)
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMC Partnership Monitoring Committee
PRSPs Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
1. Introduction

1.1 This report is one of a series of seven that together constitute the end product of a wide-ranging external evaluation commissioned by Development Cooperation Ireland of its Multi-Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS). This Scheme was first introduced toward the end of 2002. It involved five participating agencies (Concern, GOAL, Trócaire, Self Help Development International and Christian Aid Ireland). At the time of writing MAPS is approaching expiry of its initial three-year phase of operation. The evaluation assignment was conducted between late January and late June 2005 by a consultant team comprising INTRAC (UK) and Annesley Resource Partnership (Ireland).

1.2 The purpose of the MAPS Evaluation was to assess the progress of the Scheme, focusing primarily on relevant strategic and operational issues and examining performance from the perspectives of (a) international standards of best practice, (b) effectiveness, (c) efficiency, and (d) impact, with particular emphasis on Partnership. The exercise was designed to look mainly at organisational structures and systems, their changes/developments since the inception of the programme both horizontally and vertically, and establish any evidence of operational changes. Whilst most of the evaluators’ time was devoted to information gathering and in-depth bilateral consultations with key personnel in Development Cooperation Ireland and in the five participating agencies in Ireland, field visits were also undertaken in five selected countries to see at first hand some illustrative examples of the outworking of MAPS at ground level. In Christian Aid’s case, the countries of operation which received visits by the Evaluation Team were Colombia and Sierra Leone.

1.3 This report assesses the experience to date of Christian Aid Ireland vis-à-vis MAPS; it attempts to present the wider institutional context and culture within which the agency’s handling of MAPS is to be understood, addresses the key challenges which appear to have arisen, and identifies certain practical steps towards even greater effectiveness and impact in any potential future phase of MAPS.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to warmly acknowledge the excellent cooperation shown at all times by all the staff of Christian Aid Ireland both at Headquarters and in the field, who greatly facilitated the work of the Evaluation Team, and who were always generous with their time. Similarly, our thanks are due to the representatives of Christian Aid’s partners at country level, who kindly made themselves available to the Team for site visits, interviews and focus group meetings.
2. Origins and Context

2.1 Christian Aid and Partnership

2.1.1 The advent of MAPS was seen at the outset as a major milestone in the partnership between Development Cooperation Ireland and the participating agencies. It represented a significant move away from the traditional annual funding schemes with their short-term project orientation, onerous procedures and high transaction costs, towards a larger-volume funding facility, which allowed for:

- multi-annual predictability;
- significant operational flexibility;
- programmatic focus;
- emphasis on impact;
- emphasis on strengthening partnerships.

2.1.2 Across the institutional landscape of international development, partnership is considered important in helping to improve aid effectiveness and create a more collaborative framework for the implementation of development programmes, in enhancing donor coordination and behaviour, and in building more local ownership of the development process.

2.1.3 Christian Aid Ireland is part of a wider Christian Aid family, and as such any assessment of Christian Aid Ireland must also embrace the overarching strategies and approaches in the whole organisation. Christian Aid’s work is based on three fundamental principles: poverty eradication, partnership and the Christian roots to this work. Christian Aid is essentially a non-operational organisation that works with and through partners, from churches, faith-based and secular organisations. Christian Aid currently works in 48 countries with more than 500 partners although it maintains a field presence in approximately 19 countries. Christian Aid’s view of partnership embraces ideas of participation, listening and working together, as well as accountability to the poor. Their working methodology includes capacity building, advocacy, impact assessment and institutional learning.

2.1.4 Through its field office presence in 19 countries, Christian Aid facilitates the cultivation of deeper and more effective partnerships in-country, which was evident during the field visits both in Colombia and Sierra Leone. Christian Aid sees itself as having a model of partnership which both informs and reinforces its engagement in effective advocacy through policy dialogue, public campaigns, and analysis of key issues in international politics and economics. The importance of the relationships between Christian Aid partners in the field, involving reciprocal learning and exchange meetings for situational analysis, should not be overlooked. This provides an opportunity for Christian Aid staff at country level, as well as partners, to enrich their country analysis based both in the international experience of the Christian Aid staff as well as the local knowledge of the partners. In looking at Christian Aid Ireland’s approach to partnership on the continuum proposed for this evaluation, the agency would appear to be a ‘programme/institutional supporter’ - a relationship in

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which transactions benefit both what the organisations do and what they are, and which is primarily concerned with overall development effectiveness and organisational viability.

2.2 Christian Aid’s Profile

2.2.1 Christian Aid Ireland is part of Christian Aid, the official relief and development agency of the Protestant churches in Ireland and the UK. Christian Aid has a long established relationship with Development Cooperation Ireland based on a synergy between their respective values, vision and goals. Prior to MAPS this found expression in support through block grants and other funding mechanisms such as the NGO Co-financing Scheme; Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance Fund; Human Rights and Democratisation Scheme etc.

2.2.2 Christian Aid has offices and staff in the Northern Ireland and in the Republic. Christian Aid Ireland has been in existence since the 1950s, when it purchased premises in North Dublin to provide accommodation for post war refugees. An office in Dublin was opened in 1976, when its first paid member of staff was appointed. The period from 1978-’81 was when the Department of Foreign Affairs first funded Christian Aid Ireland. Recommendations for allocations were made by Christian Aid Ireland staff in Dublin, while London colleagues managed the partner relationships. Christian Aid Ireland was also applying for other Irish Aid grants from the Emergency and Human Rights budget lines. Christian Aid Ireland began to receive Block Grant funds directly from (what was then) Irish Aid in 1996. However, at this time the decisions on how block grants were allocated remained with the London office. In 1997, Irish Aid began to question whether an anomaly might exist, namely that Christian Aid Ireland had little management responsibility over the money that was donated by the Irish Government. This led to a significant development, with the recruitment of a programme funding manager for Dublin, following which the management of the Block Grant relationship became the responsibility of Christian Aid Ireland. The grant was used to complement existing Christian Aid programmes, which however were not conceptualised as a discrete Christian Aid Ireland programme.

2.2.3. The two MAPS country programmes of Christian Aid selected for field visits as part of this Evaluation were Colombia and Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, Christian Aid has been active for some 20 years, initially with a focus on rural livelihood projects, and from 1991 onwards on emergency relief and rehabilitation. The level of involvement was further intensified during the war years 1997-2000, when the exigencies of the situation called for a twin-pronged approach consisting of some direct implementation coupled with work with and through five partners (including the Council of Churches of Sierra Leone). Since 2001, the programme has swiftly evolved into one which is strongly partner-based, and which strongly emphasises advocacy work, civil society strengthening, human rights and conflict transformation.

Christian Aid has had a significant programme in Colombia since the late 1980s but this was managed from London until the opening of the Field Office in 1997. The Christian Aid approach here has been strongly focused on advocacy work, civil society strengthening, international humanitarian law and human rights, through the
support to committed partners. Selected partners work in zones of on-going conflict in the country. Christian Aid sees its main role in Colombia as contributing to organizational strengthening and enhancing the partners’ protection and security.

2.3 Christian Aid’s entry into MAPS

2.3.1 The Christian Aid Ireland submission to the Ireland Aid Review in 2001 identified areas of potential complementarity: civil society engagement; conflict; the promotion of democratic processes; good governance and also the type of partnership which Christian Aid Ireland would like to develop with Development Cooperation Ireland (Ireland Aid):

“…a partnership where there is space for genuine information exchange and learning and where the NGOs' ideas, style, capacities and innovation are on an equal footing with the priorities, standards and pace of Ireland Aid.

…such a partnership would bring enormous benefits in terms of the development and maturation of both our organisations, in terms of increasing our legitimacy and support at home and perhaps most importantly, in terms of enhancing the quality of the work we do together in the name of development”. ²

2.3.2 Recognising the potential for a more extensive and direct relationship with Development Cooperation Ireland as offered by preliminary discussions around the concept of MAPS, Christian Aid’s preparation began in earnest in 2002. The Christian Aid MAPS submission was based on two main themes; sustainable livelihoods and sustainable security, the idea being that in countries emerging from conflict it is essential to work on these two fronts:

(i) creating an interest in maintaining peace by working with the poor and marginalized, helping them to realise their rights and removing key underlying causes of conflict;
(ii) supporting the processes and structural changes on which peace can be maintained.

2.3.3 Christian Aid Ireland’s MAPS programme focuses on four of Christian Aid's established country programmes, namely Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Colombia and Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (I/OPT). Each of the four countries presents a unique set of problems and opportunities. However, in each one, problems such as social and economic exclusion, weak civil society, non-accountable political cultures and serious human rights abuses have contributed to situations in which conflict has flourished. In turn, conflict has prevented - or limited - meaningful opportunities to address the very issues that caused (and in some cases perpetuate) such conflict. Recognising these linkages, the programme sought to advance a development agenda in the midst of, or aftermath of, conflict, whereby development would address poverty and inequality combined with social, economic, cultural and political injustice and the

² From Christian Aid’s Submission to the Ireland Aid Review, April 2001.
denial of basic human rights. The decision to work in this way is based on Christian Aid's long engagement in the four environments which it proposed for MAPS and, importantly, reflects the priorities of the partners and their ability to make a natural link between emergency and longer-term development programmes. In the case of the two country programmes visited in this Evaluation, the Consultant Team saw much evidence of effective translation of this thinking into practice; both country programmes are focused on Advocacy work, Civil Society Strengthening, and Human Rights, through support to credible local partners, whose own capacity building needs are also being progressively enhanced.

2.3.4 The development of the MAPS proposal also represented a new phase in the emergence of Christian Aid Ireland as an agency with an international dimension to its work. Its status in the larger organisation had traditionally been focused on servicing the constituency of supporters for Christian Aid’s work.

2.3.5 In the initial stages of the negotiation, Development Cooperation Ireland questioned the Christian Aid Ireland proposal on the grounds that it did not make clear enough linkages with progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The ensuing dialogue discussed the challenges of attribution both generally and when working through partners, while also questioning the contribution of an NGO working in conflict prone countries to the ambitious Millennium Development Goals. This dialogue appears to have enabled both sides to arrive at a shared but more nuanced interpretation of the relevant part of the MAPS Guidelines.

2.3.6 Although it is in the interests of Development Cooperation Ireland and development agencies alike to show an impact or contribute to change, and a link to the Millennium Development Goals can be seen as relevant in the current climate, it is not necessarily appropriate in all types of development work. The debate which started in the negotiations between Christian Aid Ireland and Development Cooperation Ireland has extended to the wider group of MAPS NGOs. Discussion on the feasibility of these links continues, with specific issues arising for those organisations which only work through local partners. Similarly, the relationship between working on rights and advocacy does not always sit comfortably with the more elemental targets associated with the Millennium Development Goals. This debate is still not fully resolved, but shows the degree to which Christian Aid Ireland and Development Cooperation Ireland were able to negotiate an approach which enabled the proposal to go ahead, thereby implicitly accepting that the Christian Aid Ireland proposal was both coherent and relevant to the MAPS goals and within the guidelines.

2.3.7 The fact that Christian Aid’s methodology is to work only through partners meant that its approach fitted with Development Cooperation Ireland criteria of strengthening partners and partnership. Christian Aid Ireland is an attractive partner to Development Cooperation Ireland, not least because it offers an opportunity to learn from a second agency (the other being Trócaire) on a partnership-based way of working. The engagement also provides a focus for Christian Aid supporters in Ireland, and the programme has been included in publicity around Christian Aid in Ireland.
Although Christian Aid is known as an organisation which engages in advocacy locally, via partners, internationally and in the UK and Ireland, the MAPS funding did not envisage domestic advocacy work. The promotion of learning as part of the MAPS’ objectives was welcomed by Christian Aid Ireland, as it presented an opportunity to share learning in the Irish aid and development sector, while also potentially contributing to understanding within the wider Christian Aid.

2.3.8. The relevance of MAPS funding to the fuller emergence of Christian Aid Ireland with an international dimension cannot be overlooked. However, a lack of clarity of two key elements of the MAPS concept has meant that not all the expectations have been met in this period. As mentioned above Christian Aid Ireland was interested in engaging with the other Irish NGOs on learning. However, it is clear from Christian Aid Ireland’s experience and those of the other MAPS NGOs that the processes for cross-organisational learning have yet to materialise in Ireland. Although the MAPS Guidelines include learning as an objective, there appears to have been limited engagement with other MAPS NGOs, or the broader Irish NGO sector, in this area; it appears as if both donor and recipient waited for someone to take the lead. In contrast, the country programmes have made progress in this area, both within countries and between partners, and (to a lesser extent) across countries. This topic is considered in more detail in the context of impact, in Sections 4 and 5 below.

2.3.9. Related to this, a second area where the change has been challenging for Christian Aid Ireland is that of taking a programmatic approach. Whilst Development Cooperation Ireland provided some broad outline of this in the Guidelines, the MAPS NGOs were to a great extent left to define what this meant in their individual organisations. It was recognized by all concerned that (a) MAPS was so innovative that it would necessarily involve some degree of ‘learning by doing’, and (b) that one of its core characteristics of flexibility would have been negated, the more prescriptive its Guidelines were. To a large extent therefore, a leap of faith was required by both parties (especially Development Cooperation Ireland) in order to get the Scheme up and running on the basis of a fairly open set of Guidelines, at least for a pilot phase, subject to this joint Evaluation taking place after two full years of operation. While this allowed for appropriate and flexible responses in the field, the downside was that the Guidelines did not provide clear and transparent criteria for assessing performance on the transition from project to programmatic mode.

2.3.10. Christian Aid Ireland shaped its MAPS proposal around existing initiatives in contexts and environments at risk of conflict, or emerging from conflict. In each of the four chosen countries, the projects and partners already formed part of a more or less coherent country programme, but were not conceptualised as a MAPS sub-programme within those country programmes. Christian Aid Ireland has been attentive to this in allowing for diversity while also seeking to promote linkages and synergy where possible. In its first MAPS Annual Report, the agency acknowledges that there is sometimes a tension when reporting on a “programme with the partners”, who at that point were thinking of projects and not necessarily conceiving of themselves in collective terms. The honesty of the reporting by Christian Aid Ireland

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3 This point is addressed in detail in the Development Cooperation Ireland Partner Report and in the Synthesis Report of this Evaluation.
on this issue reveals an integrity and intention to ensure that a programme is more than a collection of projects / partners. At country level, the agency has established processes and created opportunities for more interaction between partners, but recognises that there is scope to further develop this agenda.

2.3.11. As has been stated above, the focusing of the programme on conflict-prone countries meant that only the selected countries could benefit from the multi-annual funding. The critical work of reinforcing peace-building in countries like Afghanistan, Colombia, Israel-Occupied Palestinian Territory and Sierra Leone, could have been considered as interventions which fell more appropriately into other funding streams catering for humanitarian /emergency relief. However, Christian Aid’s preference to pursue a longer-term development approach via MAPS has been vindicated, and perhaps illustrates the logic of confining schemes of humanitarian and emergency relief to ‘sudden onset’ emergencies only.

2.3.12. In summary, the MAPS funding is being used by Christian Aid Ireland primarily to support development processes as distinct from emergency operations. This Christian Aid Ireland portfolio was firmly based on the idea that even within the context of chronic and on-going conflict, it is important to actively support communities and processes which take a longer term developmental view. In Colombia, for example, the strategy adopted by the country office team fits very well with MAPS objectives. As the country representative was appointed after MAPS started, the comparison with pre-MAPS support has been difficult. Nevertheless, the fact is that multi-annual funding has been adopted in the country on a general basis - not only for MAPS partners. Likewise, the Colombian emphasis on organizational strengthening of partners, capacity building and a human rights promotion approach with all partners is consistent with a MAPS approach. Similarly in Sierra Leone, MAPS offered a timely opportunity which enabled Christian Aid to greatly accelerate the pace of the evolution, which was already in train, from project to programmatic working and from a relief to a development focus. This work has very much been centred on the strengthening and empowerment of civil society, working around conflict transformation and reconciliation issues within Sierra Leone.
3. Partnership Relationships

As explained above, prior to MAPS funding Christian Aid Ireland and Development Cooperation Ireland (Ireland Aid as it was) had experience of a financial rather than a programmatic relationship. MAPS has added a new dimension to the relationship between Christian Aid Ireland and Development Cooperation Ireland. The impact of this new relationship is not just bi-lateral. The status of Christian Aid Ireland in Ireland is changing and it has also significant implications for the relationships between Christian Aid Ireland and Christian Aid in the UK. MAPS presented an opportunity for Christian Aid Ireland to develop its own identity as a development partner and this has a major impact on Christian Aid Ireland, its partners and its relationship with Development Cooperation Ireland. A key area of change in Christian Aid Ireland is the creation of two incorporated Companies in Ireland with a common Board of Directors which allows for decision making to take place in Ireland. Currently Christian Aid Ireland is served by a national committee. The demands on a Christian Aid Ireland Board will be different, as it needs to guide the new identity which Christian Aid Ireland is developing as an agency with a strengthened international agenda.

3.1 Partnership arrangements and experience

3.1.1 The experience for Christian Aid Ireland in working with an independent consultant while developing its proposal for Development Cooperation Ireland helped to consolidate within the former a new sense of identity which at the same time was facilitated but not imposed by the latter. It is clear from the initial negotiations that Christian Aid Ireland had deliberated on the focus and approach for its international work and was ready to engage with Development Cooperation Ireland on the issues. This appears to have been a very healthy starting point to the engagement, and the beginning of trust building between the two entities. The risk assessment work Christian Aid in general carries out on its own portfolio of work is an example where they have been able to respond to Development Cooperation Ireland’s queries in a professional and confident manner.

3.1.2. As with all the MAPS NGOs, there are formal, regular meetings between Development Cooperation Ireland and Christian Aid Ireland. These Partnership Monitoring Committee Meetings (PMCs) seem to have been useful for stocktaking of the progress in the programme areas, as well as in the more strategic issues related to policy implementation. It is evident from the minutes of the PMC meetings that Development Cooperation Ireland has taken a specific interest in the involvement of Christian Aid Ireland, and Christian Aid globally, in the area of governance, and that ideas and inputs have been openly exchanged and respected. Furthermore, a Christian Aid Ireland member of staff was selected to be part of the steering committee for this evaluation and as such has had more exposure to the thinking in Development Cooperation Ireland regarding the future of MAPS.

3.1.3. The difference between Development Cooperation Ireland’s engagement with Christian Aid Ireland and the other MAPS NGOs is related to the current status of the latter organisation, and this is one of the focal points of their communication. This was not part of the MAPS proposal which focused more on developing Christian Aid
Ireland programmes. However, currently Christian Aid Ireland is to some extent under increased pressure to pursue a more independent and legally constituted identity in Ireland; this process is under way and it is expected to be achieved by the end of 2005. Christian Aid Ireland also recognises the need to increase its legitimacy by developing a stronger constituency in the Republic as well as in the North where the support base is more solid. Although it is stated elsewhere that Christian Aid is the agency of the Protestant Churches, it embraces an ecumenical ethos and its work with a diverse range of partners illustrates this. There is also the question of the profile of Board members who are able to guide Christian Aid Ireland in the process of changing from being a grant giving agency to actively promoting partnership and including a much broader international agenda in its profile.

3.1.4. Development Cooperation Ireland is supportive of this process and it is also keen that the organisational governance review will lead to an increased Irish constituency for Christian Aid Ireland. Although Development Cooperation Ireland is clearly interested in the outcomes and monitors progress towards this change it is not felt to be interfering with the decision making process. In this instance Christian Aid Ireland finds the dialogue helpful. However, in a future scenario where there may be other organisations applying for MAPS with similar identity and governance questions, the role of Development Cooperation Ireland /MAPS in these discussions would benefit from greater clarity.

3.1.5. As much as the regular bi-lateral meetings are useful to the development of understanding and trust, there are also limitations to the level of engagement in MAPS and a risk that the meetings take on a checklist function rather than being a debate about strategy and quality. One of the limitations experienced by the MAPS NGOs is the capacity of Development Cooperation Ireland to engage with NGOs outside of these formal meetings. The lack of progress on creating more Irish cross-sector learning opportunities has been mentioned above, but is understood by the MAPS NGOs to be linked, inter alia, to the limitation of the human resources in Development Cooperation Ireland. There are very real concerns that the level of engagement with Development Cooperation Ireland will deteriorate when the move to Limerick takes place. The only multilateral Development Cooperation Ireland/MAPS NGOs meetings that have taken place have been in relation to this evaluation. It is worth considering whether there is room for more multilateral fora in the future. Efforts need to be made in the near future to establish processes that will create a better foundation for communication and learning and critical dialogue in forthcoming funding rounds.

3.1.6. Wherever possible, Christian Aid Ireland aims to create links between their partners and Development Cooperation Ireland, and this includes arranging meetings with Development Cooperation Ireland when partners are in Europe. According to the Colombia Country Representative, there has been more contact between Christian Aid Colombia partners and Development Cooperation Ireland than there has been between them and, for instance, DFID. This contact has been greatly facilitated by MAPS and been more intensive since MAPS started. Even more contact was planned, in the form of a 2004 field visit to Colombia by the Development Cooperation Ireland official responsible for MAPS, but this had to be cancelled because of heightened diplomatic sensitivities between the two countries. A separate field monitoring visit by Development Cooperation Ireland officials to the Afghanistan country programme
was planned in 2004, but did not proceed for different reasons\(^4\). There is expected to be increased engagement with Sierra Leone partners as Development Cooperation Ireland has opened an office in Freetown. In the case of partners in Colombia, there is a sense that their link to MAPS and Development Cooperation Ireland creates a type of protection in a very hostile environment. This shows that not all relationships need to be face to face to add value in the international context.

### 3.2. Innovation

3.2.1. In this Evaluation, the term ‘innovation’ is used to denote an organisation doing something which it did not do before. Innovation is therefore understood as an organisation doing things in a different way, rather than as the development of new models or approaches in the absolute sense. A number of examples of innovation have been noted which are given below.

3.2.2. For Christian Aid Ireland, MAPS has presented many opportunities for a fundamental change in its way of working with partners from a funding to a more strategic and direct engagement. In the overall context of Christian Aid, this is not innovation, but for Christian Aid Ireland this is a new way of working. Given that this is a relatively new way for Christian Aid Ireland to engage with partners in–country, it may be too early to assess its impact or extent. In the future however, there is potential for learning from Christian Aid Ireland’s thematic focus to bring innovation to the wider organisation.

3.2.3. For Christian Aid Ireland, the main difference is in the way it engages with partners in the field. The advantage for Christian Aid Ireland is that the systems and structures for working with partners within MAPS already existed within Christian Aid in general. In addition, Christian Aid Ireland has increased its involvement in strategic planning and engagement with the partners. Christian Aid Ireland has participated in the reference group for the Country Programme Strategy Paper in Sierra Leone and in a partner workshop for the revision of the Colombia Country Programme Strategy Paper. It considers these changes would have happened however without MAPS. The engagement with the London office is also changing, as Christian Aid Ireland and some of the Irish Board members have been involved in the processes around the development and rolling out of the new Christian Aid strategic framework for 2005-10.

3.2.4. This changing level of engagement is further exemplified in the fact that Christian Aid Ireland will host the forthcoming conference on “Development and Conflict” planned to take place in Dublin in October 2005, with participation from all four country programme staff. This will be an opportunity for Christian Aid Ireland to contribute to important debates from the perspective of an actor rather than a funder.

3.2.5. The way in which Christian Aid Ireland reports is also changing. The first annual MAPS report provided accounts on a thematic rather than country basis and moreover, used case studies to illustrate both the processes and products of change.

\(^4\) CA agreed to facilitate a MAPS field visit to Afghanistan in April 2004. Subsequently DCI chose not to visit Afghanistan as a simultaneous Public Expenditure Review of support to Afghanistan took precedence.
Formerly, at the early stages of its involvement in the Block Grant Scheme, Christian Aid Ireland would not have had this role and the reports would have been compiled in London. However, Christian Aid Ireland has been making steady progress in increasingly taking ownership of this work, a fact which favourably influenced its candidacy of MAPS. For the partners, their reporting continues as before on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, programme staff in the 4 countries now have to play a role in collating and contributing to the reports that Christian Aid Ireland presents to Development Cooperation Ireland. Christian Aid Ireland also reports to MAPS/Development Cooperation Ireland on the change processes which are taking place in the wider Christian Aid as a way of highlighting areas which could influence the effectiveness of Christian Aid Ireland in the future.

3.2.6. In looking at the examples of innovation given above, it is clear that overall MAPS has provided Christian Aid Ireland with an opportunity to change its role and capacity in shifting from a funding to a more pro-active development agency. The prior existence in Christian Aid of structures and systems that were needed for a scheme like MAPS has meant that Christian Aid Ireland is able to take advantage of years of experience of partnership working. Although the size of Christian Aid Ireland has to some extent enabled it to be more nimble in responding to the changes necessitated by MAPS, credit must be given to the readiness and willingness of the two full time staff who work on programme issues in Ireland to address the challenges presented by this fundamental shift.
4. Organisational Strengthening

4.1 Preamble

4.1.1. The concept of development underpinning MAPS is very broad. It includes changes in the wider context, asking MAPS NGOs to link their initiatives so as to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals; changes in individual organisations and changes in the Irish NGO sector. These changes are over and above providing a secure funding agreement for MAPS objectives over a three year period. From the perspective of Development Cooperation Ireland, MAPS funding should be applied in developing the capacity of MAPS NGOs to work more strategically and effectively, thereby increasing their contribution to change.

4.1.2. From the perspective of Development Cooperation Ireland, MAPS aims to promote meaningful and effective changes in the way organisations go about their business. As a way of maintaining respect for organisational autonomy and flexibility, the organizations receiving MAPS funding should be allowed to decide on the best way to achieve such changes. In this context, there are several ways in which MAPS funding could potentially deliver changes and these are considered below.

4.2 Policy Implementation

4.2.1. Christian Aid Ireland documentation and materials reveal quite a lot of congruence between its values and aims and the overall objectives of MAPS. The Evaluation Team’s field visits confirmed that the overall approach of the agency is strongly in accordance with MAPS principles, specifically:

• Quality relationships have been forged with their partners in-country;
• Active support for capacity building and organizational development needs of partners in a multi-annual context is being provided;
• A stronger emphasis on strategic, macro level changes using a range of approaches including advocacy is evident.

The debate which Christian Aid Ireland had with Development Cooperation Ireland prior to the introduction of MAPS regarding its accountability for contributing to Millennium Development Goals also shows how Christian Aid Ireland tries to respect its partners’ contributions rather than claiming them as their own.

4.2.2. A major contour shaping how Christian Aid Ireland goes about its work is the corporate approach of the larger Christian Aid body of which Christian Aid Ireland is a part. In this case it could be argued that Christian Aid Ireland already had these foundations for policy implementation prior to MAPS. For this reason, in Christian Aid as a whole, the difference in approach attributable to the advent of MAPS is difficult to discern in precise terms, as many of the distinctive features of MAPS (including triennial funding cycle of partners) were already incorporated in Christian Aid’s overall project cycle and procedures. However it is fair to say that the distinctive profile of Christian Aid Ireland in programme implementation was undoubtedly given much greater weight as a result of MAPS.

4.2.3. In the case of Christian Aid in Colombia, the long-standing policies of Christian Aid globally to protect organizations in high-risk environments and support
their advocacy role, has been helpful in enabling civil society organizations to act effectively in the very tough human rights environment which has prevailed there for many years past. Despite the ongoing conflict situation, Christian Aid work in Colombia has never been based on an emergency or relief approach. Instead, the focus has been on advocacy, policy influencing and publicising of human rights violations, combined with strengthening civil society organizations committed to this purpose. Nominally, in the annual Colombia programme budget, some partners (currently seven) appear as funded by MAPS; these are the partners that most strongly reflect the MAPS aim of promoting a development agenda in the midst of a conflict. With these partners Christian Aid in Colombia tries to capitalise – in advocacy and protection work - on the closer relationship with the Irish government that the MAPS connection provides; however to all intents and purposes, Christian Aid in Colombia does not distinguish in its treatment of the MAPS-funded partners and the other partners, lest this might make some of them feel as ‘second class partners’.

4.2.4. MAPS funding provided opportunities for MAPS NGOs to develop their own organisational strengthening. Christian Aid in Colombia has exploited this to some extent by recruiting a second Programme Officer post (almost entirely MAPS funded), and through the establishment of a staff training budget (entirely MAPS funded). However, due to increased administrative and procedural requirements in Christian Aid over the past year or so, the Colombia programme has not managed to make the most of the opportunities MAPS could provide in this respect. In addition, time demands on Christian Aid programme staff is also a major reason why supposedly mainstreamed topics such as gender and HIV have not been mainstreamed as effectively as they might have been. While both Colombia programme staff and partners recognise that gender is important, efforts to mainstream it have been overtaken by the ongoing chronic conflict and semi-emergency state in which the programme operates. As for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS, in Colombia the infection and prevalence rates are not high, relative to other countries and the virus is concentrated among particular ‘at risk’ groups; as a result, it has proved difficult in practice to accord it a position of very high priority in comparison with the defence of very basic civil and political rights such as the right to life and physical safety. The issue of mainstreaming is dealt with in more detail under the Mainstreaming Section of this Report (4.3).

4.2.5. Overall, the management of the MAPS funds in Colombia has been allocated nominally to those partners which pre-dated MAPS, thereby permitting the country programme to devote its freed-up Christian Aid resources to other partners. It has been suggested that an alternative way for the MAPS funding to be managed could be to apply it across the entire country programme, specifically to support the kinds of activities that MAPS promotes and that Christian Aid does not usually find sufficient time or resources to do optimally (e.g. impact assessment, institutional learning). All this would be done within the general parameters of promoting development in the midst of a conflict situation via the programme themes rather than specific partners. The added value here would be that Christian Aid in Colombia could manage strategic priorities more effectively.

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5 This staff training budget is unique among the CA country programmes in the Latin America and Caribbean Division at present.
4.2.6. With regard to Sierra Leone, MAPS has enabled Christian Aid to plan in a more ambitious and strategic way, as well as to expand its activities. MAPS fitted very well with the existing Christian Aid approach as reflected in a 2002 Strategy Paper. Christian Aid had been moving towards a programmatic direction that recognises the need for a long-term development perspective even in times of crisis. Thus even when still involved in the critical relief and emergency work during the conflict, there was a need to include an analysis of development opportunities incorporating a rights based approach. This work has very much been centred on strengthening civil society, public policy advocacy, working on conflict transformation and reconciliation issues within Sierra Leone.

4.2.7. The advocacy work with civil society is a key programme strategy of Christian Aid in Sierra Leone, where partners are addressing the need for macro level change. This is facilitated and monitored by the in-country Advocacy & Civil Society Officer, who supports the partners individually and as active members of various national forums to which they are affiliated (e.g. Youth Coalition). The Christian Aid programme in Sierra Leone is also responding directly to the PRSP process; the work of one local partner (NMJD) is fundamentally oriented towards creating a more informed public awareness of the PRSP and subjecting its contents to rigorous scrutiny and open debate. This discourse is effectively addressing key issues of a structural nature in the areas of longer-term poverty reduction and promotion of active citizenship. In Colombia advocacy is both a key strategy for the programme staff and partners.

4.2.8 From the perspective of the staff in Dublin, the view is that the current content of their work funded by MAPS does have some unique characteristics; however, they are not confident that the grouping of countries and partners and approaches is being managed in a fully programmatic way. This in part stems from the fact that all of the partners pre-dated MAPS and collecting them under a title of development in conflict situations is not a fundamental shift in the way that the partners relate to each other, or are learning from the processes supported by MAPS. The admission on Christian Aid Ireland’s part that the shift from projects to programmes is ongoing rather than completed suggests that as an organisation they want to make a difference through a programmatic approach for all stakeholders, which they do not think they have yet achieved.

4.2.9. In summary, although it would not be valid to attribute the evolution from a project to a programmatic approach to MAPS, it is certain that MAPS provided a timely platform for a strategic developmental approach to be implemented on a scale and at a pace which would have been otherwise improbable. The continuing challenge is to develop a programme with sufficient space for reflection and cross-learning with partners and strategic allies in order to develop and share learning about development amidst conflict.
4.3 Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues

4.3.1. Christian Aid has a long list of cross cutting issues; HIV/AIDS, Gender, Capacity Development, Impact Assessment, Institutional Learning. These overlap with two of the three areas prioritised in MAPS, i.e. Gender and HIV/AIDS. Christian Aid Ireland has benefited from both HAPS and MAPS funds in recent years and as such has been able to use the funds in a synergistic way to raise awareness and capacity in the area of HIV/AIDS.

4.3.2. There have been clear efforts towards mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, and to integrate MAPS with HAPS funded activities where possible. Issues such as Gender and HIV/AIDS are seen as priorities by Christian Aid, and efforts to incorporate them at field level were visible.

4.3.3. As mentioned above (4.2.4.), the exigencies of the work of Christian Aid and its partners in high-risk zones of Colombia has meant that HIV/AIDS and Gender have been allowed to slip down the agenda, as was acknowledged by the country programme team in 2004. However, for both HIV/AIDS and gender, the availability of small funding from MAPS to support initiatives in each of these fields helped provide impetus to revive a focus on gender and to initiate an exploratory piece of work on HIV/AIDS in Colombia. MAPS funds have been used for an extra staff member not to specifically work on these issues but to accompany the partners in implementing their projects and addressing those issues within that context. MAPS has also enabled some diagnostic work with six partners on their experiences and the challenges they face in trying to mainstream gender, with a view to devising a set of pointers about what specific help or accompaniment partners need to ensure greater gender equity in the impact of their Christian Aid supported work. With regard to the work on HIV/AIDS, the country office is currently developing a pilot awareness raising and education project with one indigenous partner organisation and expect to be able to share the findings and lessons from this with other indigenous partners whose target communities include large numbers of displaced persons at highest risk of infection.

4.3.4. In Sierra Leone, mainstreaming of gender in the programmes of all three local partners was evident. An HIV/AIDS prevention component has been strongly incorporated in the implementation of the programmes (e.g. of MCSL and ARD), and there has been considerable capacity development support to all Christian Aid partners on HIV/AIDS, some of which was HAPS funded. Gender training opportunities had been provided to partners in a planned programme of inputs and support. The country programme had also supported the ARD microfinance agency to undertake a high-quality gender impact study, and the development of gender mainstreaming action plans. Importantly, a shared partner approach to HIV work has been systematically developed through the partner HIV forum, with a focus on sharing and learning, collaborative work, joint trainings and major inputs by Christian Aid partners into the national HIV advocacy forum.

[6] For example, training inputs, or strengthened accountability structures on gender issues within project monitoring.
4.3.5. In contrast, environmental issues have generally not been accorded major prominence at programme level, although Christian Aid as an agency has produced significant policy position papers on the macro issues\(^7\), and the most recent Strategic Framework includes as one of its goals:

“To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of environmental threats, and respond to its effects in the way development is managed.”\(^8\)

The Appraisal Monitoring and Review system (AMR) process, which partners have to comply with to get funding, includes questions on environmental sustainability, but partners are not provided with real guidance on inclusion of environmental analysis or good practice in this area. Not surprisingly this shortcoming is evident in both Christian Aid Ireland reporting and also in the awareness in the field.

4.3.6. Sierra Leone suffers from serious environmental problems, ranging from over-reliance on diesel generators as a power source, to the predatory practices in the extractive industries sector in Sierra Leone. Environment was not prominent in the Christian Aid country programme there, although some support had been provided to advocacy work by partners and national forums in relation to the extractives sector (rutile and diamonds). In Colombia, the partners have carried out research and are lobbying for changes due to the detrimental effect of expanding the African palm oil industry. A second research and advocacy process on gold extraction is on-going, both of them because of their environmental impact on fragile environments. Although these activities are taking place it does not amount to mainstreaming and this aspect of Christian Aid and their partner organisation merits greater attention. The slower progress on the environment is not unique to Christian Aid Ireland and is also noted that Development Cooperation Ireland was still in the process of developing their own policy in late 2004.

4.3.7. In general the Christian Aid efforts towards mainstreaming show some progress. Christian Aid Ireland admits in its reports that there are times when long term issues are de-railed, as the context demands a response to the urgent and unpredictable needs which emerge in the complex situations. In this case it can be seen that the strategic sometimes loses out to the necessary. Where there has been limited progress, this perhaps reflects caution on the part of Christian Aid Ireland. It could be argued that Christian Aid Ireland are less confident about imposing policy directives in their new found status as development actors rather than funders. It is assumed that as the partnerships and mutual confidence increases there may be more scope for Christian Aid Ireland to do more. Their focus and efforts to mainstream raise some interesting questions. Firstly, in relation to cross-cutting issues in the context of working with and through partners and secondly, whether there needs to be a more nuanced and strategic approach to implementing an ever increasing list of critical issues.

4.3.8. Where MAPS NGOs work with and through partners on increasing awareness and capacity in these areas, to what extent are they accountable for what the partners are adopting or not? The question of impact and attribution becomes relevant here and although beyond the scope of this evaluation, it may be useful for both MAPS NGOs

\(^7\) e.g. Global warming, unnatural disasters and the world’s poor – November 2000, www.christianaid.org.uk/indepth

\(^8\) Christian Aid Strategic Framework 2004 document – goal # 1.3
and Development Cooperation Ireland to reflect on the degree to which they can be held accountable in this area.

4.3.9. The question of accountability is also relevant to the debate which Christian Aid Ireland had with Development Cooperation Ireland on the contribution its developmental activities to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As we have seen above, there are partners in the current cadre who are directly involved in poverty reduction as well as the PRSP processes, but the extent to which these processes can be meaningfully linked and make an attributable contribution to the MDGs is questionable.

4.3.10. Could future MAPS guidelines consider cross-cutting issues being managed through a diverse range of processes with differing degrees of intensity as per the context and partner focus? Clearly the Christian Aid Ireland /Christian Aid experience of cross-cutting issues is reflected in the experience of other MAPS NGOs and NGOs more generally. There is therefore scope for current practice and learning to inform a future policy guideline.

4.4 Impact

4.4.1. For Christian Aid Ireland and the four country programmes involved, the two inter-linked programme themes of sustainable livelihood and sustainable security are planned and implemented through four different intervention types:

- Resettlement, reintegration and regeneration
- Community social and economic development
- Civil society strengthening
- Human rights promotion, protection and International Humanitarian Law compliance.

4.4.2. In Colombia, MAPS is seen as an excellent opportunity to develop the kind of activities they are interested in supporting and promoting, in a manner consonant with the key characteristics of the scheme. With the goal of improving social justice and participation, Christian Aid works on:

- Civil and Political Rights
- International Humanitarian Law
- Human Rights
- Advocacy
- Security
- Civil Society Organization
- Development in Conflict Situations

4.4.3. Christian Aid Colombia uses MAPS funding, with six of its partners, plus with the Small Projects Fund (SPF) and the Emergency and Advocacy Fund. The SPF is an initiative that aims to support small and incipient grassroots groups. In Colombia, Christian Aid support has provided institutional strengthening of local partner organizations in exposing human rights violations. Their support has enabled the organizations to accomplish an important but risky role in a difficult situation. To
some extent, Christian Aid relations with international organizations are understood by partners as providing a protective umbrella.

4.4.4. The preparation period for this evaluation was used by Christian Aid Colombia as an opportunity for furthering the understanding of MAPS by the partners. Two meetings were organised and facilitated by Christian Aid (funded by MAPS) prior to the Evaluation country visit which provided opportunities for partners to recognise and articulate common issues and to encourage them to network more closely together. They, along with MAPS-funded partners from the three other Christian Aid MAPS country programmes, will be visiting Dublin later this year. The visit will provide an important opportunity for cross-country exchange with counterparts from three other Christian Aid country programmes receiving MAPS support, as well as an international advocacy visit.

4.4.5 In Sierra Leone, the MAPS funding is used to support partners working on Governance, Economic Justice (extractives, PRSP and budget monitoring etc.), Human Rights and Conflict Transformation. The in-county Advocacy and Civil Society Officer plays a central role in providing constant capacity building and other support on these issues to partners and to national civil society fora. In Sierra Leone, the creation of the PICOT network (bringing together the three Christian Aid partners working on Conflict Transformation, two of whom are MAPS funded partners) is providing these partners with the opportunity for learning, sharing and developing collaborative approaches to peace building work as well as creating linkage at national and regional levels. PICOT has been instrumental in convening national CSO forums for discussion and the sharing of experience as well as development of an advocacy agenda. This is an excellent example of how MAPS has been used to confer additionality over and above the core work programmes of the individual agencies, whilst in the process deepening the capacity and broadening the impact of those same agencies.

4.4.6. HAPS funding was also being utilised in Sierra Leone, if not for the abject poor, certainly for groups at significant risk of HIV transmission (e.g. MCSL’s Youth Centre in Bo, where some vulnerability assessment of the target group and baseline study had been undertaken by the partner in question). In addition, the Team noted that the literacy training being delivered there was certainly addressing the basic needs of a group which, by any definition, was suffering significant poverty. As this programme becomes more established, efforts to move the focus increasingly towards the most marginalised might be attainable through more targeted outreach work.

4.4.7. The Christian Aid approach appears to fit well within the MAPS policy guideline, developing and maintaining a range of partners who work on both micro and macro issues in a way that is able to link the needs within these areas post conflict.

4.5. Modus Operandi & Innovation

4.5.1. As has been mentioned above, MAPS funds have enabled Christian Aid Ireland to shift from a funding agency to a more pro-active development partner. The development of a framework, which enables partners to be supported from Ireland, is seen as work in progress. The impact of this in the types of engagement with partners...
and also the ability to engage with other development actors inside Christian Aid and beyond is part of a process in which a new identity is emerging in Christian Aid Ireland. Planning the use of first MAPS funds concentrated on developing direct links with partners in the four focal countries. Changes which have taken place in Dublin are more related to the content of day-to-day work, and two additional staff have been recruited\(^9\). In this first stage of development partnering, Christian Aid Ireland was cautious about the implications for all parties and did not seek to embark on an over-ambitious plan of expansion and as such sought to invest the funds in partners and their activities.

4.5.2. The Evaluation Team considers that the utilisation of MAPS resources by Christian Aid has broadly reflected ‘downstream’ to its local partners the benefits (such as stability, flexibility, etc) which it itself derived as a beneficiary of MAPS. The hallmarks of Christian Aid’s handling of MAPS have included such key factors as:

- Supporting medium-term organizational development and strengthening of partners;
- Supporting the development of a programmatic approach;
- Promoting a rights-based approach (but based on an astute judgement of the pragmatic realities and constraints imposed by difficult operating environments such as Colombia);
- Promoting advocacy and policy influencing for denunciation and prevention of International Humanitarian Law violations;
- Developing the capacity of partners to mainstream Gender and HIV/AIDS.

4.6. Information flow and reporting

4.6.1 Since 1998, Christian Aid has an Appraisal Monitoring and Review (AMR) system for monitoring of partner projects which also serves as a management tool. Christian Aid Ireland staff find that although the information provided by this system is useful in the monitoring of individual partners, it does not provide an easy platform to take a programmatic or thematic view. The reporting for MAPS is thus taken from country programme reports and re-structured in a way that deals with themes and programmes. This work is mainly done in Ireland for Development Cooperation Ireland, but with major inputs and support from the relevant Programme Staff. The structure of the MAPS report appears to work well and the question remains as to whether or when this more thematic narrative can be integrated in the field and partners.

4.6.2. The minimum reporting requirement which partners are obliged to provide to Christian Aid London (via the country office where one exists) is a financial and narrative report every six months. There is no standard reporting format for these reports, but in 2004, Christian Aid produced a document *Guidance on Partners’ Project Proposals, Reports and Accounts* as a guide to what Christian Aid would like

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\(^9\) The two additional staff comprise a Finance Officer and a Media & Communications Officer. This development is an important indicator of the general capacity development of CA in Ireland but is not specifically linked to MAPS.
to see included in proposals and monitoring reports. At the discretion of the Country Programme Manager, a financial report may be required every quarter for more detailed monitoring purposes. The Colombia country team declared themselves dissatisfied with the AMR as an instrument, which they considered repetitive, too time consuming, incapable of capturing meaningful information, and too encumbered by continuous additions and adjustments over time, which had made it ever less useful. What was needed in its place was something that was more useful to Christian Aid partners as well as Christian Aid staff and much more user-friendly; they felt that Christian Aid headquarters should revise their software and requirements accordingly.

4.6.3. As a result of the capacity building support which Christian Aid has been providing to partners (in project cycle management, financial management, supervision, baseline study methodology, etc) there is evidence of partners beginning to recognise the primary value of monitoring for internal purposes (as an aid towards organisational effectiveness), rather than merely to comply with externally-imposed donor requirements. A workshop in Sierra Leone brought partners together to develop some shared indicators of change and progress for their collective, albeit diverse interventions. The expectation is that this will create a benchmark against which progress can be jointly discussed and also enables a discussion of linkages and impacts. The expectation is that this work will also generate data from monitoring more in line with the MAPS programme than the individual projects.

4.6.4. Christian Aid Colombia is very flexible and supports the partners to comply with the reporting requirements. Thus, the country staff assume a heavy work load adapting this information to be incorporated on the Christian Aid reporting system for Christian Aid London and Dublin.

4.6.5. The evaluation team is satisfied that the financial analysis system being used in Christian Aid enables a 'red thread' of traceability of MAPS funding to be followed, from the receipt of funds in Dublin to their eventual disbursement to final beneficiaries in the field.

4.7. Learning

4.7.1. MAPS NGOs recognise that they have still some way to go to achieve a higher level of reporting, whereby greater emphasis would be placed on outcomes and impact, rather than merely on activity. The challenge is to view the implementation of the respective programmes through a wider-angle lens, and thereby to identify changes (attitudinal, behavioural, structural or other). This on-going work can be seen as part of the overall process of shifting away from projects to programmes. In the case of Sierra Leone, there will shortly be an intensification of support to local partners in this regard, with the recruitment by Christian Aid in Sierra Leone of an in-country Monitoring & Evaluation Officer to work closely with the MAPS NGOs in order to help partners to engage in more qualitative and shared impact assessment.

4.7.2. Christian Aid has rightly perceived the value of enabling partners to participate in relevant regional networks between countries and between agencies in order to facilitate cross-learning around emerging best practice, for example the Sierra Leone PICOT network has been facilitated to link up with counterpart initiatives in Ghana and South Africa. In future, Christian Aid Ireland would like to see more
exchanges across the Southern Partners from different regions to share approaches and learning.

4.7.3. The Christian Aid Colombia programme staff consider that monitoring and evaluation (especially impact assessment) is not taken seriously enough by partners, and is working to rectify this situation, which it suspects is not unique to the Colombia programme but a wider issue across Christian Aid. There are some exceptions, a notable one being a recent evaluation of the Small Projects Fund, as one MAPS-funded part of the Colombia programme, which provides intensive support and follow up to a large number of small, incipient, grassroots organisations. This far-reaching external evaluation, conducted through a very participatory and learning process, has led to the adoption of a revised model for the Fund which incorporates lessons and experiences of the SPF staff and target organisations from the past three years.

4.7.4. It is the view of the evaluation team that there is evidence of building blocks being put in place on which an effective learning strategy can be developed. The conscious effort to create horizontal learning between partners will only be effective if the partners themselves have systems through which learning can be generated. It appears that this period has concentrated more on establishing the basic skills and systems within the partners; it could be expected that this will provide evidence that will support learning in the future. Developing the partners’ capacity to monitor and evaluate their contributions to complex advocacy and policy processes is recognised as challenging and will require a different sort of thinking - programmatic rather than project-oriented. The current reporting system tends to focus on projects and therefore needs to be adapted for both learning and impact assessment.

4.8. **Capacity building**

4.8.1. Capacity building is an integral part of Christian Aid’s work with its partner organizations. Christian Aid is thorough in its approaches, benefiting from the institutional approaches and learning which have been developed over many years. There is a clear system for assessing organisational capacity development. Partners themselves recognise the need for additional development, especially on the ‘higher level’ monitoring of programmes, and effective use of qualitative information to assess ‘quality of life’ changes.

4.8.2. In Sierra Leone, partner capacity building occupied a prominent place in the country programme, in which the Advocacy and Civil Society Officer was providing very broad support and input to both partners and broader civil society on advocacy issues relating to governance and economic justice (extractives, PRSP and national budgets, HIV / AIDS). Also in Sierra Leone, the remit of the Finance Manager in the Country Office has been wisely extended beyond the maintenance of a proper financial management system for Christian Aid itself, to embrace close and regular mentoring of relevant staff of the MAPS beneficiary partners to help them improve their MIS systems. MAPS funding has been used to enable two partner organisations to introduce computer-based accounting package (Quick Books), and ongoing capacity building support has been provided by the Finance Office to enable the staff...
concerned at partner agency level to acquire the requisite proficiency in the use thereof.

4.8.3. Similarly in Colombia, capacity building of the partner organizations has been a need especially in administration and accounting skills, which has been assisted with training and mentoring. However, the main effort has been given to support advocacy and political analysis capacity of the partners, intrinsic to their role as organizations for change.
5. Southern Partnerships/ Impact

5.1. Across the institutional landscape of international development, partnership is considered important in helping to improve aid effectiveness and create a more collaborative framework for implementation of development programmes, in enhancing donor coordination and behaviour, and in building more local ownership of the development process. Partnership is a key principle that has been used to define the relationship between the more progressive donor NGOs and their implementing partners for over thirty years, and is also now being used by Governments to define their funding relationships with civil society agencies. However, as a result of the wide use of the term, there is no clear universal definition or understanding of all that it denotes. Rather there is a spectrum of understandings and typologies from ‘service provision’ at one end to ‘mutual’ reciprocal ‘trust based’ relationships at the other. A consequence of this lack of clarity is that NGO’s are increasingly confronted with questions about their role and the added value they bring to the development process. For instance, are they merely conduits for aid delivery, or should they be adopting a more proactive advocacy strategy alongside their southern partners, in order to achieve systemic / structural change?

5.2. In both Colombia and Sierra Leone, a strong emphasis is placed on the strengthening and empowerment of the partners through training opportunities, as well as through networking and advice from Christian Aid itself. At the same time, Christian Aid uses the partners for the country strategic analysis, establishing a two-way relation. For example in Colombia, the main goals being pursued in the two-way interaction around the country strategy are human rights protection and the application of the international humanitarian law. Thus, in the view of the Evaluation Team, the type of relationship that Christian Aid establishes with its partners incorporates important characteristics of real partnership. The whole aim of the relationship is to support the partner organization in a holistic rather than a project oriented way. Partners are facilitated to achieving their goals, on the basis of shared positions and objectives.

5.3. In Sierra Leone, the selection of partners working with Christian Aid Sierra Leone reflects clearly the approach described in the previous section. MAPS funds three of the five Christian Aid Sierra Leone’s partners:

- Network Movement for Justice and Development – NMJD;
- The Association for Rural Development – ARD;
- Methodist Church Sierra Leone – MCSL.

5.4. All the partners have a clear mission and have advanced towards strategic approaches to their work with a focus on advocacy, social and political equity, secure livelihoods and the strengthening of civil society through rights based approaches as well as conflict transformation methodologies. These priorities were clearly defined by the partners themselves in each of the organizations but they articulate very well with Christian Aid Sierra Leone priorities. This makes for a mutually enriching relationship. The professional teams involved with these local NGOs impressed the

10 A point which will be developed more fully in the MAPS Evaluation Synthesis Report
evaluation team for their clear vision and articulate thinking, a view which was reinforced when the Evaluation Team visited project sites in Bo and Kenema.

5.5. Another dimension of the partnership relation to be pointed out is the respectful way in which the Christian Aid Sierra Leone team relates to their partners, providing autonomy and respect for their work, but acting in a very supportive way. In addition, it provides organizational strengthening and capacity building opportunities, as well as encouraging networking and coordination, and supporting advocacy initiatives both at the national and regional level.

5.6. As previously mentioned, the Conflict Transformation component of the Christian Aid SL country programme has led to the creation of a thematic network between three partners of Christian Aid Sierra Leone (of whom two are MAPS funded), which is focused on conflict transformation and reconciliation (PICOT). This initiative has been instrumental in organising Civic Society Organisations’ forums for learning and sharing on conflict transformation methodology, and it recently hosted a learning visit from Ghanaian peace building organisations. PICOT has thus produced significant synergy between the work of its constituent partners, and has already had a multiplier effect in terms of capacity building and contributing to sustainable peace. PICOT plans to open its membership to other civil society organisations once the work has been consolidated.

5.7. A stronger liaison between the MAPS NGOs in Sierra Leone is called for. This will enable them to share experience laterally, and coordinate some actions, especially considering that Christian Aid Sierra Leone and Trócaire have one partner in common.

5.8. Christian Aid’s 7 partners in Colombia are strong and experienced organizations in the Human Rights promotion work. These are:

- Fondo de Pequeños Proyectos (Small Projects Fund);
- Red Ecumenica (Ecumenical Network);
- Diocesis de Quibdo (Quibdo Diocese);
- CREDHOS;
- Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio (Programme for Development and Peace in the Middle Magdalena);
- Fondo de Emergencia e Incidencia (Emergency and Advocacy Fund);
- Brigadas Internacionales de Paz (Peace Brigades International).

5.9. By the nature of their work, these NGOs are in danger of being targets of different political violent forces. For this reason, Christian Aid Colombia also uses its network capacity to help make visible human rights violations, at the national and international level, in a way that also provides some protection for the local NGOs. Christian Aid conceives of its partners in a horizontal way, as political partners, and supports them in a variety of forms while explicitly recognising their role in providing input to Christian Aid country situation analysis. There is some sense that the partners in Colombia are conscious that being a recipient of funds from a government donor also affords them some protection.
6 Summary against MAPS Objectives

6.1. MAPS as an opportunity has enabled Christian Aid Ireland to be able to plan in a more ambitious and strategic way and to expand its activities. MAPS fitted very well with the approach that Christian Aid had already assumed as an organization. Although it cannot be affirmed that both the evolution from project to programmatic and the moving from relief to development approaches were initiated at the MAPS stage, it is certain that it provided the ideal situation and conditions for a strategic developmental approach to be implemented.

6.2. In both the Colombia and Sierra Leone country programmes of Christian Aid which received visits from the Evaluation Team, MAPS is seen as an excellent opportunity to develop and expand the kind of activities they are interested in supporting and promoting. The characteristics and objectives of the Scheme - the support of organizational development and strengthening, capacity building and the support to programmes rather than discrete projects - are coherent with Christian Aid country strategies (though some of the characteristics were of course already part of the country strategies prior to MAPS).

6.3. The coherence between the MAPS Scheme’s objectives and the approaches of the country programme teams in Sierra Leone and Colombia was also evident. Although all of the characteristics of the programmes were apparent in the country strategies prior to MAPS, the Scheme has been an opportunity to expand and consolidate Christian Aid’s work and that of its partners. Flexibility in funding mechanisms is also an attribute which has been passed on to the local NGOs with whom Christian Aid is working. The space for reflection created by this Evaluation and the joint preparation with the participation of Christian Aid Ireland, provided an opportunity to revisit Christian Aid’s initial MAPS strategy and to think about fresh opportunities within the Scheme. It is hoped that this will enable the consolidation of the country work, include internal capacity building for the office staff and greater networking and training for their partners.

6.4. MAPS has three stated objectives and five key elements.

6.4.1. The first stated objective is:

‘To facilitate receipt by NGOs of Development Cooperation Ireland funding in such a way as to promote flexibility within their own programme framework of visions and strategies, in so far as these visions and strategies are in line with the Irish Government’s policy of development cooperation’.

6.4.2. The only conclusion that can be drawn from the review of Christian Aid Ireland is that this objective is being achieved. Without MAPS funding, Christian Aid Ireland’s vision to become a development partner rather than just a funder, would not have happened at this pace. The framework which delineates the boundaries for Christian Aid Ireland is based on the shared values and vision of Christian Aid, and there is a strong synergy with the policies of MAPS and Development Cooperation Ireland more generally.
6.4.3. Interestingly, the shift to developing an international dimension to their work has also catalysed and focused the debate about a domestic constituency and the formal legal status of Christian Aid Ireland. The agency is engaging with the Irish NGO sector and civil society in a way that is new, and which therefore needs to be addressed as part of the process of the evolving identity of Christian Aid Ireland.

6.4.4. It appears that the size and relative new-ness of Christian Aid Ireland means that there is less need for flexibility. Whereas some of the organisations benefiting from MAPS funds are able to use these funds flexibly in switching between projects and initiatives, this does not appear to be as necessary in Christian Aid Ireland. It could be seen that given their real commitment to supporting the work of partners, there is more of a risk of underspend which, given the relatively small size of their portfolio, is less easy to absorb elsewhere. This has not been directly discussed with the stakeholders and there is no evidence of a fund lead growth. However, it is mentioned here as a way of opening a debate about whether an organisation in receipt of MAPS needs to be of a certain size to truly benefit from the flexibility that MAPS offers.

6.4.5. Overall, the evaluation team respects the Christian Aid Ireland approach of starting with a small group of partners with a degree of shared thematic foci in this first phase of being a development partner, as appropriate.

6.4.6. Christian Aid Ireland is undergoing changes which are not related to the objectives of MAPS but are being bought into focus as a result of engagement in MAPS. The stronger international dimension to its work has raised greater awareness about (as well as within) its domestic constituency, and has underlined the importance of its formal legal status for Christian Aid Ireland as a distinct entity. Christian Aid Ireland is engaging as part of the Irish NGO sector and civil society in a way that reflects this emerging identity.

6.4.7. One area which does not appear to have been adequately addressed in this first phase of MAPS is related to the local constituency of civil society in the South. Although MAPS Guidelines would seem to encourage southern partner engagement in macro–policy related advocacy at an aspirational level, this does not appear to translate into actual MAPS-funded activity in-country. A discussion in one of the PMC meetings appears to have been inconclusive as to whether MAPS funds could also be used to develop local campaigns. Whether this could be understood as policy incoherence within MAPS, or whether it is intentional, is not clear to the Evaluation Team.

6.5.1. The second stated objective is:

“To permit NGOs with a proven capacity to act in a predictable and coherent framework in so far as funding from Development Cooperation Ireland is concerned, thereby allowing longer-term relations to be established with Partners in the South”.

6.5.2. The findings of the evaluation team in both field visits are that MAPS funding is having an impact on the partners in the south as well as on Christian Aid Ireland. The advantage of Christian Aid is that it has a long tradition of working with and
through partners in the south and many of the mechanisms which MAPS would like to promote, such as multi-annual agreements, focus on capacity building of local institutions that have already been part of the Christian Aid policy and practice for many years. Thus, although it can be said that this objective is being achieved within the Christian Aid Ireland partnerships, the degree to which it results from MAPS policy direction is not clear. However, having said that, the impact on the partners in the South is positive.

6.6.1. The third stated objective is:

‘To enhance and strengthen dialogue and mutual learning between the Partners (Development Cooperation Ireland and the 5 NGOs) in matters relating to strategies, approaches and the adoption of best practices’.

6.6.2 In terms of the relationship between Development Cooperation Ireland and Christian Aid Ireland, and in the context of enhancing and strengthening dialogue, the objective is being achieved. Although there are no clear parameters set for the nature of the regular dialogue, the discussions appear to be wide ranging and generally helpful to both parties. There is a question raised about the degree to which the PMC discussions are confined to issues in the MAPS proposals. In the case of Christian Aid Ireland, there has been considerable discussion around the issue of Christian Aid Ireland governance and although this has been helpful in the context, the prospect that more organisations will be involved in future rounds may make a clearer protocol for these meetings necessary.

6.6.3 Dialogue between Development Cooperation Ireland and MAPS partners in the north and south is not yet functional. Regarding dialogue and links in the south, this can in part be attributed to the fact that a Christian Aid Ireland direct relationship with partners is still relatively new. In this context, these partners are possibly not used to prioritising relationships with Development Cooperation Ireland representations or Irish NGOs. There are plans to change this and it could be expected to happen in Sierra Leone now that there is a Development Cooperation Ireland office there.

6.6.3. As far as learning between the MAPS NGOs and Development Cooperation Ireland is concerned, it appears that this evaluation could be seen as the first formal attempt to jointly manage a “learning” process, albeit that a process for taking forward the learning from the evaluation has yet to be developed. There is certainly an openness on the part of some elements of Development Cooperation Ireland. However, as has been stated above, the limited numbers of staff, which could be exacerbated by the relocation to Limerick, would suggest that this objective needs to be re-examined in any future funding round. It is not clear from the objective who was expected to take responsibility on leadership here and this must be a lesson for future learning initiatives. It would appear that in this round of the MAPS, neither the learning processes in the MAPS NGOs nor in Development Cooperation Ireland itself were suitably developed to implement this objective effectively. The learning and exchange opportunities created in Dochas for the group of HAPS NGOs is an alternative model to examine.
6.7 Key Elements of MAPS Objectives

6.7.1 The First Key Element is: \textit{a programmatic and multi-annual perspective}

Christian Aid admit that their approach to programming is for the work to be built around a set of projects. At the same time they would stress that there is a strong tradition of taking a multi annual perspective to their work.

6.7.2. The Second Key Element is: \textit{A fuller concentration on strategies that focus on macro level issues and that move away from micro level project to project activities.}

Christian Aid focus on complex emergency situations, concentrating on advocacy and rights perspectives. Even when their partners are engaging directly in poverty reduction work, they maintain a synergy with other partners engaged in these issues – for example Sierra Leone where they engage with partners on the PRSP.

6.7.3. The Third Key Element is: \textit{A more strategic approach to the way aid is delivered through programmes co-financed with NGO’s, focusing primarily on processes, outcomes and impact.}

Christian Aid Ireland are making progress in these areas, focusing on working with partners on the essential elements of what a system involves – noting the issues that they have with the Christian Aid AMR system.

6.7.4. The Fourth Key Element is: \textit{A programme ensuring quality through systematic evaluations and the incorporation of lessons learnt into planning processes}

This is an area in which Christian Aid Ireland recognises that it has a long way to go and that it can be a struggle to structure evaluations in some of the areas in which they work. This has been evident in this evaluation where the consultancy team had to make alternative arrangements for the field visit due to diplomatic sensitivities. It is important to note the involvement and commitment of Christian Aid staff to this evaluation process.

6.7.5. The Final Key Element is: \textit{A strengthening of the Partnership with NGOs by a more open and continuous dialogue based on mutual understanding, shared goals, agreed strategies and joint evaluation}

Christian Aid Ireland has very strong partnerships and is making a real shift from just being a funding organisation to being a real partner.
7 Recommendations

Christian Aid seems to be the type of NGO where the MAPS Scheme is most productive. The coherence of its own objectives and procedures with MAPS principles facilitates the implementation of the Scheme. The recommendations that follow focus on areas where Christian Aid can build on the foundations it has laid.

Partnership
For Christian Aid, the selection of partners with which they work is critically important, with a focus on strong leadership and clear knowledge of the country situations and commitment to sustained joint action being sought in likely partners. The current theme of development in the context of conflict transformation has provided a useful focus for the collection of partner projects. In the event that expansion becomes a possibility, Christian Aid Ireland needs to devise and adhere to strict criteria for new country selection in the context of any future expansion of the Christian Aid MAPS programme which may be contemplated, in a way that is strategic and adds value to the current theme, without at the same time stretching the thematic focus too far.

Recommendations 1 and 2.

1. Christian Aid Ireland has a strong and valid focus to its conflict transformation and development work; care should be taken not to stretch this too far. Growth of the MAPS funded programme would be best approached on an incremental basis, using clear criteria which could include an assessment of learning from the previous engagement, added value, and Christian Aid capacity.

2. There is still room to improve the programmatic nature of the engagement both vertically and horizontally. This would require a clearer understanding of where the synergies lie between (a) partners and countries / context, and (b) processes and product. Before expanding into new themes it would be useful for Christian Aid to learn from the processes that support change in the complex conflict prone context.

Mainstreaming
Many agencies share the dilemma of how to strategically mainstream a range of key themes in their programmes. While Christian Aid has benefited from the experience of HAPS in relation to HIV / AIDS mainstreaming, less progress appears to have been made in mainstreaming the other areas, especially environment. Some of the Christian Aid partners working in (post-) conflict situations seem to mistakenly believe that mainstreaming is something which can wait until the exigencies of their situation have been normalised.

Recommendations 3 and 4

3. Christian Aid Ireland needs to support its partners to mainstream more effectively, and in a more nuanced way (avoiding the temptation for a uniform template), all three cross-cutting areas under MAPS, especially in contexts where conflict (or post-conflict reconciliation) is an ever present element in the landscape.
4. Apply learning from HAPS which could provide a more strategic dimension to the engagement with partners on cross-cutting issues. A starting point for this could be an assessment of the learning processes which were included in HAPS, and whether these could be helpful to learning on other mainstreaming or thematic issues.

Monitoring and Evaluation
The focus of MAPS is on Outcomes and Impact. Whilst Christian Aid is involved in working at this level, it recognises that its Monitoring and Evaluation Systems and approaches are based on a project approach and therefore not adequate to provide information at a programmatic level.

Recommendation 5
5. Christian Aid and its partners need to develop appropriate programmatic monitoring and evaluation systems, which develop the latter’s capacity to monitor and evaluate at the level of outcomes and impact.

Networking
Christian Aid Ireland benefits from being a part of the wider Christian Aid family. It also participates actively in networks in Ireland. However, there is less evidence of networking at a country level. This is a critical area to address as it links to the sustainability of local partnerships.

Recommendation 6.
6. To ensure that networking is seen as a central element of a partner’s work which grounds their work and provides a base for sustainability, strategic alliances and potential lesson learning and sharing.

Lesson Learning
As with many NGOs, the activist culture can overshadow the need for reflection and systematic lesson learning. Christian Aid Ireland needs to look at how it can best develop better horizontal and vertical learning processes.

Recommendation 7.
7. Learning needs to become more strategically placed in the work of Christian Aid if it is to add value to the wider development field.

8. A stronger liaison between the MAPS NGOs in-country (e.g. Sierra Leone), and with the local Development Cooperation Ireland office where applicable, is called for. This will enable them to share experience laterally, and coordinate some actions, especially in situations where a plurality of MNGOs have one local partner in common.

Although outside the remit of the MAPS evaluation, it appears that a critical foundation for the future growth of Christian Aid Ireland as part of Irish civil society is the recruitment of a Board of Directors able to guide Christian Aid Ireland to be increasingly effective as an organisation.