



Research Programme Main Phase

INTRODUCTION

The SAFOD Research Programme (SRP) has just come out of the Inception Phase and is now in its first year of the Main Phase. Thanks to DFID, the main funding partner of the programme, who recently approved the Inception Phase reports and the programme plans for the Main Phase.

BACKGROUND

Launched in October 2006, the SRP was developed following a Planning and Conceptualisation Phase process funded by the British Government Department for International Development (DFID). The Conceptualisation Phase resulted in the development of a five-year Programme on Poverty, Disability and Policy Research. The purpose of the SRP is to build the capacity of SAFOD and its member organisations to design, drive, own and use research to influence policy and practice that responds to the particular needs and interest of people with disabilities in SAFOD member countries (i.e. Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe). It is anticipated that the SRP will also assist SAFOD to improve its organisational and operational approaches, procedures and performance.

Ideas that led to the establishment of the SRP arose initially from an evaluation of the DFID funded Disability Knowledge and Research (DKaR) project. The evaluation recommended, amongst other things, the provision of support by DFID to a DPO-led research programme in the South. SAFOD was found to be the most suitable organisation based in the South to host the programme that was later named the SAFOD Research Programme or SRP in short. The Planning and Conceptualisation Phase of the programme was membership driven through a series of consultative meetings and roundtables held between June 2006 and April 2007. This was followed by the Inception Phase process that started in October 2007 and ended in May 2008.

EXCITING DEVELOPMENT

The recent move of the SRP into the Main Phase, that will run until 2012, is exciting development that is being celebrated by both the leadership and membership of SAFOD. The programme partners, researchers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders, must be excited by this development as well!

The SRP is growing. It is a step-by-step process led by a small team of dedicated

staff at the SAFOD Research Centre in Francistown, Botswana. Tecla Butau, the SRP Manager, is currently the focal person of the SRP. Working long hours in consultation with the SAFOD Director General, Alexander Phiri, and other members of staff at SAFOD headquarters, she facilitated the implementation of a DPO Needs Assessment, Literature Review of Disability Research and the following three research projects during the Inception Phase:

- Disability Policy Audit (focusing on Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland);
- Promoting Education and Training of People with Disabilities (focusing on Lesotho and South Africa); and
- HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Among People with Disabilities (focusing on Malawi and Namibia).

It should be pointed out here that all these are pilot studies from which the findings or lessons learned will be used for more in-depth research during the SRP Main Phase. At the time of writing this Bulletin, the research institutions engaged to undertake the pilots had either completed or were in the process of completing their studies

and were preparing to submit their final reports. This is indeed an exciting moment for SAFOD in general and the SRP in particular as everybody is anxiously waiting to know the findings of these pilot research projects, including the Literature Review and the DPO Needs Assessment! The next issue of the SRP Bulletin will focus on the results of these pilot research projects.

BUILDING THE SRP INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The step-by-step growth of the SRP is an interesting process that seems to be creating a big window of opportunity for the programme to engage with a broad range of stakeholders at various levels, i.e. national, regional and international levels. Such engagement is necessary and important for promoting the spirit of partnership between people with disabilities, academic institutions and other social, economic and political interest groups. After all, this is what the SRP is all about, i.e. strengthening the capacity of people with disabilities and their organisations on how to relate with and work with researchers. Or put differently, it is about fostering understanding, cooperation and mutual trust between researchers and people with disabilities.

It is in view of the anticipated growth of the SRP during the Main Phase and beyond that SAFOD is seeking to engage the services of dynamic, qualified and experienced professionals for the positions of Research

Programme Director and Information and Communication Manager. Both positions will be based in the SAFOD Research Centre in Francistown, Botswana. The following are the new positions that need to be filled in the SRP as soon as possible:

1. RESEARCH PROGRAMME DIRECTOR:

Reporting to the SAFOD Director General, the Research Programme Director will have overall responsibility for the management of the SAFOD Research Programme. This would include all aspects of the professional, financial and administrative management of the programme. The Research director will also be accountable to DFID Central Research Department.

Management Responsibilities:

- Co-ordination of the Research Programme with the SAFOD member DPOs and with other disability programmes in the region to avoid duplication and to promote synergies;
- Ensuring gender dimensions are mainstreamed into research themes;
- Terminating unsuccessful activities;
- Act as an ex-officio member of the SRP Technical Advisory Board (TAB);
- Ensuring timely delivery of the activities of the SRP;
- Reviewing the progress of the SRP in terms of potential impact on disability policy and practice;

- Disseminating and promoting the use of SRP-generated knowledge for the benefit of disabled people in SAFOD member countries;
- Line management of SRP staff, which includes a Research Programme Manager and a Communications Officer;
- Financial management of the budget and expenditure of the SRP;
- Safe-guarding any database of knowledge generated by the SRP so that it remains accessible after the research programme ends;
- Safeguarding any work that may be commissioned to contribute to the achievement of the purposes established for the SRP.

SRP Implementation:

Overall responsibility for implementing the SRP programme.

Development of the SRP will include the following tasks:

- Identification of future research activities;
- Identifying the stakeholders for research outputs within and beyond the SRP,
- With the advice of the Communications Manager, establish the means by which these outputs may be used and how they should be packaged and promoted;
- Establishing strategic relationships with SRP partners and with other collaborating research institutions in target countries to promote the transfer of knowledge to stakeholders;
- Development of new consortium milestones for agreement with DFID.

The Research Director may identify and

commission work to achieve the outputs within the annual budgets and the financial limit set by the contract.

General

Taking into consideration the views of the Technical Advisory Board, establish all necessary arrangements to achieve the SRP outputs in a cost-effective way and to achieve best value for money in the commissioning of activities;

Establish and maintain liaison with relevant DFID advisers and with local institutions in SAFOD-member countries in which research activities are to be implemented; Set up criteria for commissioning research and ensure research proposals are fully appraised to ensure that quality, developmental relevance and demand criteria are met;

Monitor progress against the outputs and milestones, and producing regular financial, operational and technical reports within prescribed deadlines;

Monitor SRP expenditure against the approved annual budget allocation and the financial limit with accurate forecasting of expenditure and submit quarterly and annual financial reports in the format prescribed by DFID. Provide additional financial information as required.

Prepare, for submission to DFID and with TAB endorsement, annual work plans and annual reports in the format prescribed and participate as required in SAFOD monitoring and review activities;

Facilitate access to the SRP for the Mid-Term Review of the programme mid-way through the programme cycle.

2. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The Communications Manager will be an expert in communicating research. The post will be full-time and the post-holder will report to the Research Programme Director.

The Communications Manager will have overall responsibility for planning and implementing a communications strategy. The post will involve close engagement with the research work, people, debates and partners across a range of countries, especially those where SAFOD is operating. This post will be crucial in helping the programme to develop policy-influencing strategies linked to research results. The postholder will need to combine strong interpersonal and communications skills with the vision, networking skills and entrepreneurial ability to develop and implement a communications strategy which promotes research to a wide audience.

Responsibilities include the following:

Take the lead to identify and establish the means by which research products will be packaged, promoted and adopted, *inter alia*:

- Planning and implementing a communications strategy for the SRP in consultation with research and management staff;

- Undertaking a communications assessment for the entire programme, including the capacity and needs of the SRP partners to collaborate and deliver communications components;
- Undertaking stakeholder analyses, in collaboration with research staff, to identify key audiences for research findings at different stages of research;
- Ensuring the identification and establishment of effective dissemination of research findings to key stakeholders;
- Packaging of research in a form appropriate for use by stakeholders, including disabled people;
- Working with research staff to produce outputs, mostly in print and electronic formats, such as policy briefings, resource guides, comments and opinion pieces, drawing on research findings as they emerge;
- Maintaining the SRP website, including monitoring of use and establishing subscription mechanisms for interested parties;
- Producing SRP newsletters, periodically;
- Promotion of research products to target institutions and beneficiaries;
- Syntheses of knowledge and lesson-learning on specific themes;
- Maintain effective relationships with SRP partners and with other collaborating research institutions in target countries to promote the transfer of knowledge to stakeholders;
- Ensure effective design and implementation of all research projects being conducted under the programme;

- Advise the Research Director on all matters relating to the implementation of the research programme and standard operating procedures and project management;
- Ensure that good relations are maintained in all the communities in which research is being conducted through regular and scheduled community meetings;
- Represent the programme at community functions and fora as required to provide information to community leaders /DPOs and partners about the programme and research conduct;
- Liaise with Director General to ensure local capacity building throughout SAFOD via sharing of experience in research management and, where appropriate, dissemination of key findings.

Person Specifications:

- a)Experienced communications expert with a solid understanding of the processes for achieving evidence based research and targeted outputs for policy change;
- b)Strong interpersonal communication skills to work and communicate with a variety of stakeholders including people of varied disabilities, academic research community; international development donors, disabled peoples' organisations and so on;
- c)Strong background and commitment to community based research and knowledge and skills of participatory learning and action research;
- d)A social science degree or equivalent in communications and experience in the research field;

- e)Excellent oral and/or written communications skills to work and communicate with people of varied disabilities, and capacity to edit and draft research reports and written out puts;
- f)Computer literacy and Internet experience;
- g)Knowledge in website and data base design;
- h)Knowledge of a non-discriminatory society and that disability does not mean inability.

Key Result Areas:

- Development of a Communications Strategy to ensure the efficient and effective systems of dissemination and communication of SRP research products and findings to key stakeholders;
- Development of a capacity building programme to strengthen SRP member capacity to undertake disability research and disseminate findings;
- Establishment of outreach and mobilization programmes on disability research and related advocacy activities to effect change on the basis of key findings;
- Establishment and maintenance of a resource center holding documentation and information regarding disability policy and practice, as well as housing SRP programme research products;
- Maintenance of a database of SRP stakeholders as part of the communications strategy.

Interested in these highly rewarding positions ?

Please send your applications, together with CVs by not later than 16th January, 2009, to the Personnel Assistant at:

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Everyday thousands of children in Africa are orphaned because of AIDS.

SAFOD welcomes any comments, questions, and / or ideas you might have on this DFID-funded initiative. Please feel free to send these to the Director General or Information Department



Designed by:
Information Department

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