**CARE International**

**Humanitarian Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL) Working Group**

**Terms of Reference**

**November 2018**

1. **Background**

CARE has a well-established MEL Working Group but within this group (and across the organisation) the number of colleagues specialising in humanitarian MEAL is relatively low (just 3 out of 37 members). This reflects the reality that few CARE members have a standing capacity to support country offices at the operational level on designing and rolling-out MEAL systems and tools or to build frontline humanitarian MEAL capacity. At global level the CARE Emergency Group (CEG) has one position dedicated to Monitoring, Evaluation & Accountability across all levels of CARE’s humanitarian programming and management, and 1.5 full time positions for global Information and Knowledge Management for humanitarian responses.

Consequently there is a notable gap in standardised tools, processes and approaches for humanitarian MEAL. This results in colleagues across the confederation developing resources from scratch, usually doing so without guidelines or technical support. In particular, there is a significant gap on accountability to crisis affected people (information sharing feedback and complaints mechanisms).

While there are some examples of good MEAL systems and tools in certain humanitarian projects/programs, overall reviews of CARE’s humanitarian responses (such as After Action Reviews, Rapid Accountability Reviews and Response Performance Summaries) recurrently identify significant technical and conceptual gaps in humanitarian MEAL at the operational level as well as at the organisational level in CARE members supporting humanitarian responses. CARE’s CHS self-assessment (2017) scored extremely low (1.4) on CHS 5 (complaints are welcomed and addressed) which puts CARE far behind peer agencies. There is also a recognition internally that the organisation has not done enough to utilise technology. Weaknesses like this have serious consequences for the quality of humanitarian action: low quality and inconsistency of data and therefore of reports; delays in information flow and data visibility and therefore in analysis and informed decision-making; insufficient engagement with crisis-affected communities and therefore low accountability and high risk of unintended negative effects including abuse and fraud.

With the recent recruitment of a MEAL Rapid Response Team Member (who will have 30% downtime to work on MEAL at the organisational level) and increased resources for MEAL in CARE Canada’s humanitarian team, an opportunity has been identified to address some of these gaps.

1. **Objectives**

The Humanitarian MEAL Working Group has been established in order to strengthen CARE’s approach to humanitarian MEAL with the following objectives:

* Identify, prioritise and address areas of weakness in MEAL in CARE’s humanitarian programmes/responses;
* Create a Humanitarian MEAL Reference group and through this undertake a mapping of what exists within the organisation, capture and learn from good practice, and build on existing tools, processes, methods and approaches;
* Produce standard guidelines, templates and tools (including integration with relevant initiatives in the MEL Working Group) and use this to update Chapter 9 of the CARE Emergency Toolkit;
* Emphasise use of technology and other innovative approaches for effective and efficient MEAL;
* Disseminate and roll-out resources developed throughout the organisation, including a focus on capacity building for CO staff and ensuring that roster MEAL experts receive orientation.
1. **Humanitarian MEAL Working Group Members**

The Humanitarian MEAL Working Group (WG) will be comprised of a small core of CARE colleagues who work in humanitarian programming across multiple contexts and have interest, time and capacity to work on developing MEAL guidelines, templates and tools and are available for monthly coordination calls. This is essentially a task-focused WG whose remit will be to produce outputs while recognising that each member has existing commitments. Currently the WG consists of four members:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Title** | **Time Available** |
| Margaux Saillard | Emergency Response Specialist - Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (RRT) | 30% |
| Meagan Patterson | Program Officer (CARE Canada) | TBC |
| Victoria Palmer | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning Specialist (CARE Canada) | 20% |
| Uwe Korus | Monitoring, Evaluation & Accountability Coordinator (CI) | 30% |

Other Humanitarian MEAL specialists from the CARE membership are expected to join the WG permanently or for a specific task. In any case WG members should be able to utilise tools/systems/approaches developed in their response/project-specific MEAL work to support the objectives of the WG and will be able to pilot new tools and approaches in the responses and projects they support. Contributions to organisational-level MEAL therefore complements and supports their existing work.

Flexibility will be required in terms of timings of deliverables. Given the nature of humanitarian work, the members of the WG will need to make allowances for sudden deployments and periods of inactivity due to responses.

1. **Ways of Working**

The Humanitarian MEAL Working Group intends to complement and contribute to the work of the **CARE International** **MEL Working Group** by providing a united voice on CARE’s approach to humanitarian MEAL and coordinated contributions to their initiatives.

The Working Group will also utilise the existing CARE International **MEL Community of Practice** as a platform to showcase new MEAL guidelines, templates and tools and to convene discussions / learning sessions specific to humanitarian MEAL.

Liaising with the **Humanitarian Working Group** will also be essential in order to keep them informed of work priorities and progress and for consultation if any changes are required in protocols and SOPs.

**A Humanitarian MEAL Reference Group** will be created – essentially a list of all staff in CARE working on humanitarian MEAL at the operational level (extracted from the CARE global MEL CoP). The WG will seek input from this group in order to:

* Identify gaps
* Prioritise focus
* Collect examples of good practice and existing work
* Seek guidance and feedback on formats developed

This will ensure that the WG builds on what CARE is already doing in different contexts, that we are demand-driven and have buy-in and support from colleagues who will be expected to utilise the new formats.

The WG will also collaborate with the following when necessary:

* Technical Specialists in core sectors – to seek input on tools and support for rolling-out
* Regional Humanitarian Coordinators
* CEG – for approval of new tools and guidelines to be included in the CARE Emergency Toolkit and for any additions to protocols

The group may also act as an advisory panel to provide direction/feedback for work that is contributing to the objectives of the WG but is being done in other forums and other CARE entities.

The first step will be to identify work priorities and deliverables. The WG will then inform the Humanitarian Working Group and CI MEL Working Group and on a regular basis keep them informed of progress.

1. **Preliminary Focus Areas (as of November 2018)**

A preliminary list of focus areas is provided below, which will be refined and finalised based on feedback from the MEAL Reference Group and colleagues in the CI MEL WG and Humanitarian WG:

* + HUM elements (e.g. FCM practice guidance) for the CARE Global MEL Minimum Package
	+ Basic capacity building and training materials for HUM MEAL standards and practice
	+ An indicator menu to be used in HUM proposal development
	+ Standard post-distribution monitoring formats for CARE’s core HUM sectors
	+ Contribute to ongoing efforts to strengthen CARE’s approach to HUM needs assessments
	+ Improving systems for indicator tracking and data visualization for HUM decision-makers