



GOAL

LEARNING BRIEF

PARTNERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

LEARNINGS FROM A PARTNER SATISFACTION
SURVEY IN SOUTH SUDAN

DATE

December, 2022

THEMEMEAL; Partnership;
Programmes**LOCATION**

South Sudan

INTERVENTION**DATE(S)**

August, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this brief GOAL outlines lessons learnt in South Sudan from its partnership processes and procedures, how they are perceived by partners in order to develop effective and efficient collaborations. Feedback from partners was gathered through a survey questionnaire.

BACKGROUND

GOAL believes that its work is optimised when the agency works in partnership (GOAL Strategy 2025). GOAL in South Sudan works closely with international and national NGO partners and this diverse range of partners are key to the success and sustainability of our programming. GOAL also partners with County Health Departments (CHDs) to build their capacity, relevant government ministries particularly the Ministry of Health, and actively participates in the UN-led Cluster System. In August 2022, GOAL South Sudan undertook a survey of its partners to gain insight into how its partnership processes and procedures were perceived by partners in order to develop effective and efficient collaborations.

METHODOLOGY

GOAL South Sudan used a purposive sampling approach to specifically survey staff of current and past partner organisations using MS Forms. The tool collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Four categories of participants were sampled representing multi-level staff such as heads of organisations as well as positions in programmes, finance, and area coordinators/field team leaders. 10 out of a targeted 16 respondents participated, from four agencies, representing 62.5% response rate. 80% of respondents' organisations have a current partnership agreement with GOAL, while 20% worked with the agency in the past. 80% of participating partner organizations were national NGOs and 20% international NGOs. 20% of respondents represented heads of the organisations, 40% heads of programmes, 30% heads of finance, and 10% area coordinators/field managers.

Partners were given eight days in which to answer the survey, after which GOAL South Sudan analysed the results. The results analysed were presented to the GOAL South Sudan Senior Management Team (SMT) in which an action plan was agreed to respond to the survey's findings.



FREE SPACE

Statistics:

Partner Agencies
Surveyed: 4

Partner Staff Surveyed: 10

Current: 8;
Former: 2

National: 8;
International: 2

GOAL'S PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

GOAL believes in the power of partnerships. We understand that tackling the challenges of poverty, crisis and social injustice is complex and can only be achieved by working with others towards shared objectives. Aligning approaches, resources and expertise, our collective impact is greater and more effective than anything we could achieve on our own.

GOAL SOUTH SUDAN

GOAL has responded to wide-ranging humanitarian needs in South Sudan for over 30 years, implementing multi-sectoral programmes in emergency response, early recovery, health and nutrition, and resilience-building programmes that focus on food security and livelihoods.

LEARNINGS

Survey Results Summary

- The results from the survey were largely positive. Most respondents felt that GOAL was professional in how it manages its partnership and that working relationships with GOAL were positive. They reported that support received around capacity building and the sharing of best practices enhanced partners' good financial management, reporting, and knowledge. Also, largely, project implementation, monitoring and evaluations were successfully undertaken. Most respondents expressed looking forward to working more with GOAL in future.
- Partners did, however, express a desire for more effective communication. Additionally, they requested more capacity building in IT and security as well as simpler and clearer pre-awards assessments and fund transfers. Partners asked that GOAL develop a localisation strategy and work towards more equal partnerships.

Successes

- The introduction of the survey to partners by the County Director provided strong validation for the survey. This also made partners more accountable and more prompt with their responses.
- The involvement of different partners' departments led to the identification of critical areas of partnerships. It helped draw lessons from practical challenges faced by each department of partners.
- Keeping the survey simple made it easier for respondents to complete and for the analysis team to draw conclusions.
- Allowing for anonymous responses gave respondents the freedom to share their honest feedback working from different levels in their organisations.

Challenges

- To keep the survey simple, follow-up questions to answers were not included, and not possible to administer ad hoc on MS Teams. This led to the loss of potential further information and less data to analyse. While the qualitative questions did add more value and information, an opportunity was missed in the quantitative survey questions due to their simplicity.
- The team initially intended to use Survey Monkey to administer the survey. However, MS Forms was chosen as it was a cost-free and easy-to-use platform included in GOAL's Outlook package. However, the data analytics charts and infographics developed by MS Forms are limited in scope and do not give a full picture of the survey results, especially regarding qualitative results. This meant the team had to do additional work on Excel to analyse results.
- The analysis grouped all respondents together, however each respondent represented a unique organisation and position from which they interacted with GOAL on specific and not all areas of the partnership. Therefore some responses may have been given with limited knowledge of the respondent.
- A larger sample size than the four partner agencies and ten staff members would have made the results more valid.

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- In some cases, the same partner/respondent gave conflicting answers within the quantitative survey. This made their results difficult to analyse and will require further discussions with them to understand better.

Conclusions

- Best practice advises that partnerships should be reviewed regularly, involving consultations with partners to understand what is working and what is not. Those undertaking such reviews should bear in mind that each partner agency is unique and may experience relationships and perceive processes differently from others. Recognising the uniqueness of partners needs however to be balanced with the need to be consistent in our approach, especially when it comes to compliance. Agencies undertaking partner reviews and committing to improve partner relationships should be flexible to meet the divergent needs of partners in terms of support and capacity building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Partner surveys are an important way to improve understanding of our partnerships and increase engagement, communication and collaboration with partners. Some recommendations for future surveys include:

- Involving key departments and staff engaged in managing partnerships to come up with practical areas that can or should be assessed for gaps, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- Communicating to partners clearly that the survey and review being undertaken is a collaborative opportunity to identify areas openly and honestly in the partnership that are going well and those that require improvement, rather than seeing it as a 'shaming' or 'finger pointing' exercise.
- Each partnership is different, and partners have different capabilities. Surveys assessing partnership effectiveness must take this into account and tailor survey tools accordingly.
- Conduct follow up discussions for negative answers to questions to try and improve relationships and for conflicting answers to questions, to clarify results.





REFERENCES/ CITATIONS:

GOAL On-Granting Partnership
Manual – May 2022

GOAL South Sudan Country Profile
- 2022

GOAL Strategy 2025

SUPPORT

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