




UN Millennium Campaign

EXTERNAL EVALUATION 2009

Internal fitness subreport



**UN Millennium Campaign
External evaluation 2009
Internal fitness**

**Prepared for the
UN Millennium Campaign**

By

**Leitmotiv
Social Consultants
12 Imaginero Castillo Lastrucci, 4º
41002 Seville
SPAIN
www.leitmotivsocial.com
Tel: +34 954 909690**

This is the report of independent evaluators commissioned by the UN Millennium Campaign. The views expressed in this report should not be taken as being those of the UN Millennium Campaign. They reflect evidence collected and expressed by the evaluation team. Any comments regarding this report can be sent to the evaluation team by email at info@leitmotivsocial.com




Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Methodology and purpose of this sub-report	2
3.	Findings and related recommendations	3
3.1.	Structure	3
	Figure 1: Summary of “structure” related questions from the on-line survey	4
3.2.	Leadership	4
	Figure 2: Summary of “leadership” related questions from the on-line survey.....	5
3.3.	Financial management	5
	Figure 3: Summary of “financial management” related questions from the on-line survey.....	5
	Financial support mechanism for partners: The small grants modality.....	6
3.4.	Staffing	6
	Figure 4: Summary of “staffing” related questions from the on-line survey.....	7
3.5.	Documentation and M&E.....	7
	Figure 5: Summary of “documentation and M&E” related questions from the on-line survey	8
3.6.	Culture.....	8
	Figure 6: Summary of “culture” related questions from the on-line survey	9
3.7.	Internal communication	9
	Figure 7: Summary of “internal communication” related questions from the on-line survey	9
4.	Summary of recommendations.....	10

1. Introduction

The UN Millennium Campaign was formally launched in the second half of 2002 to operationalise the “campaigning” element of the UN strategy on achieving the MDGs. The UN designed the MC as a ‘small unit’ that would facilitate a global campaign.

Since 2004 (from when we have financial data) the campaign has worked on an average budget of US\$9 million a year, which has currently grown to approximately US\$14 million in 2009. It has a small global office with 5 professional staff (housed in UNDP) in New York, regional offices in Rome (hosted by FAO), Bangkok (housed in ESCAP) and Nairobi (housed in the All Africa Conference of Churches) and a number of national teams (most of them just with one person) in some of the priority countries. In total, 48 people report to the campaign (consultants and regular staff).

2. Methodology and purpose of this sub-report

As part of the evaluation of the UN Millennium Campaign we conducted a brief analysis on “internal fitness”. An in depth organizational analysis is well beyond the scope of this evaluation. All we have intended to do is to paint an “impressionist” piece of the Campaign out of a range of sometimes contradictory data coming from the perception of the MC staff and some internal documents.

Of the 11 questions posed in the original ToRs of the evaluation, 3 referred specifically to “internal fitness”. The first referred to structure and staffing: “Has the campaign had the appropriate structure and staffing needed to achieve its mandate?” The second referred to finances: “Has the campaign had the right level and quality of financial resources?” And the third referred to leadership and culture: “Has the campaign had the suitable leadership and culture for the achievement of its goals?”

During the preliminary needs assessment done among all MC staff we also identified the desire to tackle internal communications and documentation and M&E.

In keeping with the rest of the evaluation; the assessment of internal fitness was divided into two stages. The first was a process evaluation more descriptive and the second an impact evaluation that was more qualitative; drawing on evidence from a small number of sources.

During the process evaluation we used the “*timelines*” to paint a global overview of the main events in the internal evolution of the Campaign. In this phase we also reviewed a number of internal MC documents and reconstructed a current organogram of the Campaign that was used as a quasi sample frame; to identify representative informants.

In depth interviews

We grouped the MC staff into the following: Management, Campaigning/Advocacy staff, Communications, and Financial/Admin staff. For each group, questions were drawn up that addressed the seven areas identified under “internal fitness” and which also intersected the background of the informants. The evaluation team conducted 29 interviews with staff members: 11 from Europe, 7 in Africa, 6 in Asia and 4 in North America. Summaries were written and based on the “internal fitness” reports coming from the above continents and/or countries.

On-line survey

An on-line survey was conducted that addressed all 48 people working for the Campaign. This was done to complete the information and give every member of staff the chance to have their say concerning the seven identified internal fitness areas. We received 35 complete surveys which represents 73% of all the staff. The on-line internal fitness questionnaire was composed of three to four statements related to each of the six areas; in addition there were a small number of general open questions. The statements were designed by the evaluation team and were tested with three staff members to ensure they were understood before they were sent to all the MC staff.

3. Findings and related recommendations

3.1. Structure

The vast majority of the staff are clear about the vision, mission, and values of the Campaign and find them challenging and exciting. This is ultimately what holds an organisation together and it is very important to point out the common sense of purpose that the Campaign staff has across the board. The annual retreats and the visits from senior staff members are key components that re-energise and make these values firmer, especially among new staff members.

During the research we found out that a significant number of the staff believe that the National Campaigns in the priority countries, especially in Africa, need to be strengthened. The Campaign is already taking the right steps in Asia, where it has recently recruited National Coordinators for all priority countries. The MC is also exploring ways to reinforce the campaigns in Africa. It is important to highlight that to cover these positions it is essential to have in place people with the right qualifications, possibly professionals with an already established reputation in the countries, who can put their experience at the service of the Campaign. In this sense, the partnership with VSO in Africa might not be sufficient to fill the gap. However, new recruitments are not a “magic recipe”; therefore to improve the Campaign as a whole this recommendation needs not to be read in isolation of the set of recommendations in the global report referring to policy, public campaigning, media and partnership strategy.

Given the new promising political context due to the election of President Obama; there could also be the strategic opportunity to strengthen the team in the USA. At the global level a permanent focal point interacting with the UN is needed.

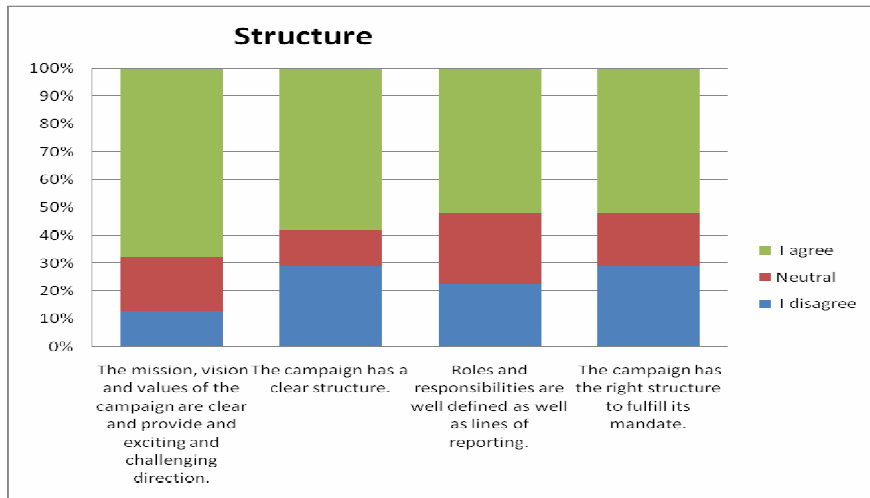
Almost half of the staff responding to the on-line survey did not perceive that there is clarity about roles, responsibilities and lines of reporting which matches the views we got during the interviews.

A possible explanation for the above could be the overloaded ToRs that the staff have to live up to. Also, there seems to be some confusion about “thematic reporting vs. line reporting”; i.e. if I am a communications person do I report to the deputy for communication or to my regional deputy director? Overall, the structure of the Campaign seems to be based on the excellent professional calibre and the commitment of the staff; which is an achievement of the Campaign and one of its main assets. However, it still needs a more thorough analysis of its objectives, roles, profiles, and the time needed to perform the required tasks; and how this all reflects on the ToRs.

The goals of the Campaign seem to be changing rapidly to adapt to new environments and new opportunities and staff are asked to adapt their tasks and priorities equally fast. Sometimes this sense of urgency, which in many cases is the strength of the Campaign, can be overwhelming and ultimately unsustainable even for the most committed.

Another issue that came up that relates to this lack of clarity is the structure and decision making dynamics among the senior team. The Campaign has a senior team composed of one Director and six Deputy Directors. All Deputy Directors have clear roles and duties. However, although all Deputies are treated as senior management theoretically, in practical terms the group is too big and geographically dispersed to be able to benefit from everybody's input: when setting strategic lines in the organisations. Therefore many key decisions are taken by the Director himself.

Figure 1: Summary of “structure” related questions from the on-line survey



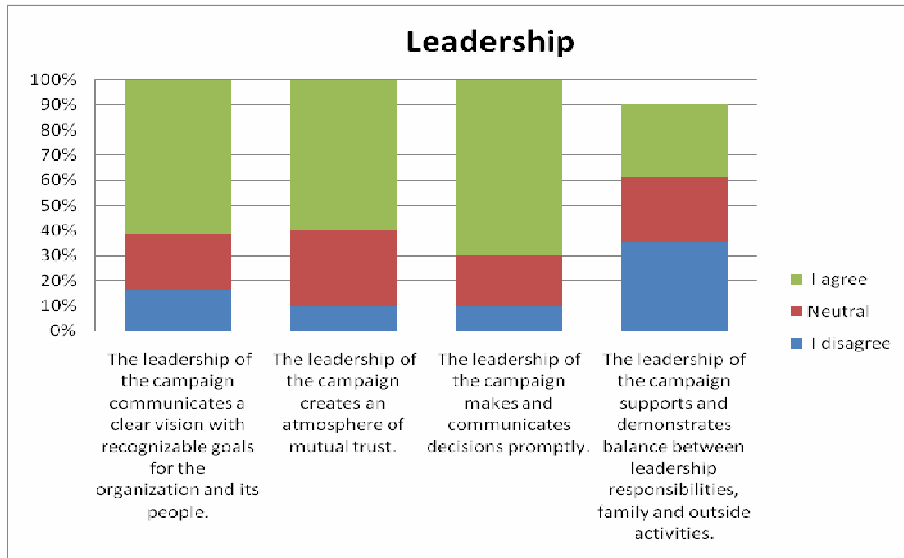
3.2. Leadership

The leadership of the Campaign has a very central figure in the form of the Director. In Europe, the former Executive Coordinator has also provided solid leadership over the years; although recently she has taken a more secondary role.

The leadership is very well respected by all the staff; and during the course of the evaluation the staff used adjectives such as “empowering” “energizing” “bright” and “accessible” to describe the Director.

On the negative side, in many instances, we also heard that ad-hoc and top down decisions are made which confuse staff members and the concept of “micromanaging” came up repeatedly.

Figure 2: Summary of “leadership” related questions from the on-line survey

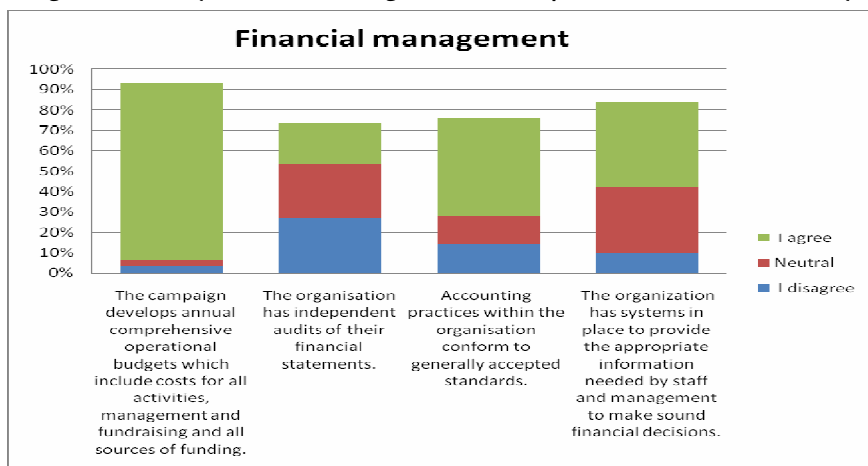


3.3. Financial management

During the evaluation we did not have enough information or sufficient time to conduct an in-depth analysis of the MC’s financial systems. However, we collected evidence from the interviews to conclude that there are no major issues in regards to the financial systems of the organization. The Campaign has decentralized their finances and they are now more controlled by the regional offices; and this is perceived to be a good thing. The reporting is thought to be generally useful for both managers and staff; although there is a certain level of disagreement in this regard: as the chart from the on-line survey shows. In a few instances, staff and partners aired their concern that the system is too complicated. However, this could be due to the internal regulations of UNDP; and could be out of the control of the MC.

Accounts are handled with a considerable degree of transparency. The financial staff we interviewed agreed that auditing follows the required UNDP regulations. However, the results from the survey show that only a small proportion of the organization is aware of this.

Figure 3: Summary of “financial management” related questions from the on-line survey



Financial support mechanism for partners: The small grants modality

The UN Millennium Campaign has operated a small grants modality to support citizen's efforts to hold their governments to account for the achievements of the MDGs. The mechanism has benefited mainly actors from CS in the South and in very few cases it has also served to finance activities to other constituencies like parliamentarians and local governments. Since 2005, the Campaign has deployed a little more than \$6,000,000 through this mechanism.

During the field work the evaluators for Africa and Asia conducted a more detailed analysis of the grants deployed to the regions: to get to relevant conclusions in relation with the questions posed in the evaluation ToRs. Here we will just focus on the procedural side of the mechanism. The following issues have come up recurrently and may be of use for the Campaign to reflect upon:

- ✓ The Small Grants modality is a scheme highly valued by the partners. However, there is a lack of specific references to this mechanism in the reports of the MC; even if the grants have been reported to be a considerable 24% of the expenditure of the Campaign from 2005 to 2008.
- ✓ Delays and other incidences in the deployments of resources have been reported by partners. This might be one of the explanations behind the fact that from the surveys partners 46.2% of the respondents from Asia and Africa stated that “the bureaucracy involved in the partnership with the Campaign is too complicated”. 45.5% of the respondents from Asia, where the Campaign invests the most, also marked this option.
- ✓ We have noticed that the reporting system of the grants has improved significantly over recent years. However, during our analysis we still encountered a number of inconsistencies. Many of the reports from the partners were missing; and in a few cases we could not find the entire file of a particular grant altogether. Moreover, it is not clear how the Campaign uses the reports from the partners that are a very valuable source of information.

3.4. Staffing

We have included as “staffing” issues those related to the conditions of service of the staff as well as recruitment, promotions, and dismissals.

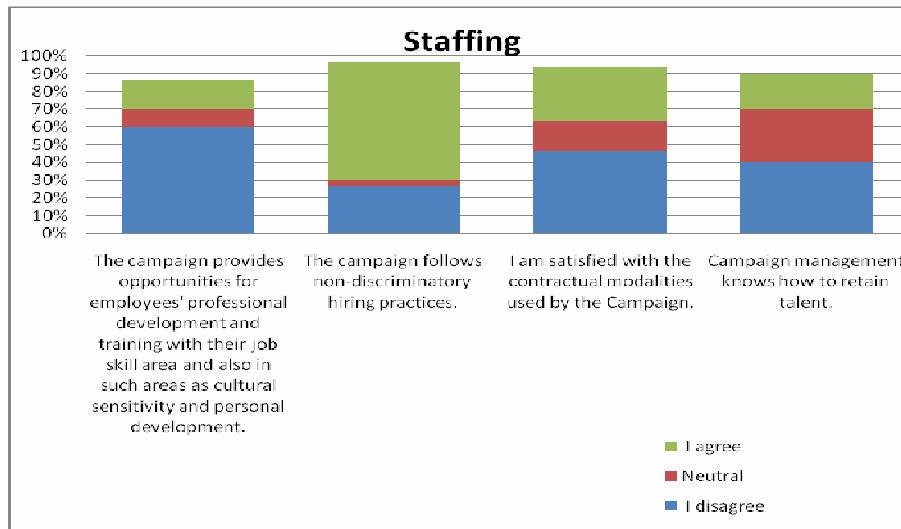
When looking at the chart, we can see that the vast majority of employees trust the honesty of the organization in terms of fairness when recruiting people, which is important. It is interesting nonetheless the almost lack of “neutral” answers. Here people are either for or against. What underlies these negative responses could possibly be very concrete and isolated cases that the Campaign should address. We have not found any evidence of such cases during the in-depth interviews.

On the negative side, there seems to be a very obvious issue with the contractual modality coming from all regions of the organization. During the field work, we concluded that staff across the organisation strongly felt that people doing similar jobs should get similar conditions of service, when possible under the UNDP standard contractual modalities. This is of course not a straight forward task. Contracts may depend on the country where the staff member is working in. In order to be eligible for certain contracts, there is a need for an established UN Salary Scale. In many European cities and countries, this is not the case, which makes it difficult to harmonize all contracts. However, despite this difficulties and a remarkable organizational effort done by the MC to homogenize the contractual modalities; there are still quite a few things to iron out.

On the issue of development and training, it is understandable that a time-bound Campaign does not invest the usual 5% (in terms of contractual time) in people's professional development. The pace is too fast and the duration of the project relatively short. However, in

order to improve performance and staff retention: the Campaign might want to change its position as this seems to be a major source of concern for the majority of the staff.

Figure 4: Summary of “staffing” related questions from the on-line survey



3.5. Documentation and M&E

The issues of documentation and M&E have been sufficiently addressed in the main report. We would like to highlight here a couple of issues.

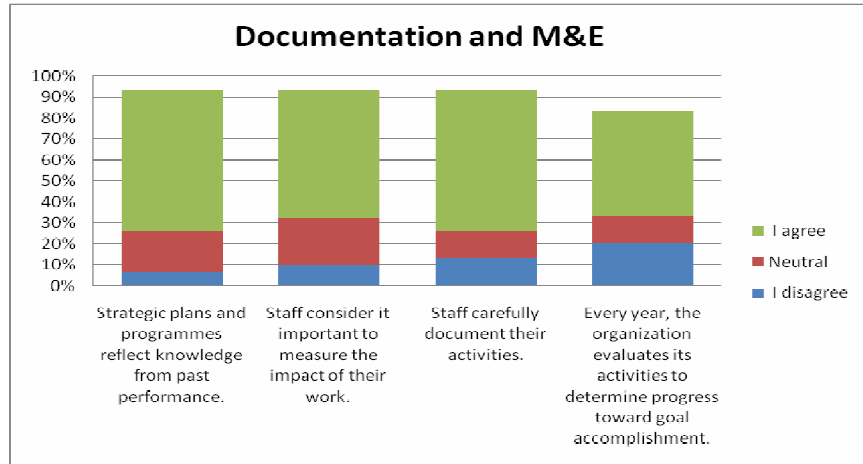
During the course of this evaluation we found it hard to find the necessary documentation within the organization to conduct this assessment. We are referring to key pieces of information such as:

- A comprehensive database of key and relevant partners
- A history of the Campaign from its foundation
- Complete monitoring tracking for media coverage
- Specific reviews of the operational plans stating which activities were actually conducted of those planned
- A representative sample of impact stories derived from activities conducted by the Campaign
- A comprehensive set of MoUs signed with key partners
- A comprehensive set of ToRs of all the staff
- An update organigram with lines of reporting
- A HR history from the beginning of the Campaign

Also, most of the staff we interviewed acknowledged the need to find ways to document better the activities of the Campaign and to evaluate the impact in order to inform strategic decisions. However, according to the staff survey this is not an aspect that categorically needs improvement.

Even so, we would recommend strengthening the documentation of the structure of the organization as well as relevant activities at least at key moments like during the *Stand Up*. The key to useful documentation is to determine beforehand when it is necessary to document and why.

Figure 5: Summary of “documentation and M&E” related questions from the on-line survey



3.6. Culture

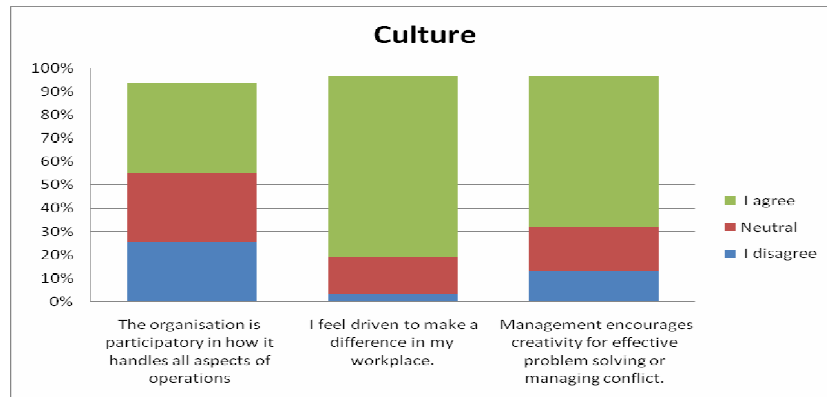
The culture of the Campaign can be described as: “can-do”, open, informal, organic, and above all passionately committed. The ambiguity of the Campaign’s identity taints their image; staff would frequently describe it as “non-UN”. This could become an issue especially for people whose roles are intimately linked with complying with the rules and regulations of UNDP: those in finance and administration, HQ, and National Campaigns (connected with the UN system).

Although the survey results show that most staff consider the organization as “participatory”, during the in-depth interviews we encountered strong voices that would disagree: stating that key decisions seem to be consistently coming from the top. We can conclude that there is a relevant number of staff who would welcome a more transparent and democratic decision making process.

The culture can also be described as “Ad-hoc”. It does not follow strict plans. This provides the organization with the necessary flexibility for adapting to new campaigning opportunities, but it also puts considerable pressure on staff members and can ultimately diminish the effectiveness of the Campaign.

As we observed in figure 2, there is also some discrepancy about the life-work balance policy of the organization. There is no doubt that the culture of the organization is driven by a healthy sense of urgency. However, there have been situations that demonstrate workaholic behaviour. Although, most people seem to be fine with this, long hours, excessive travel, no leave taken and little time for the family usually affect men and the women differently. Therefore, careful research should be conducted focusing on the gender implications that this could have.

Figure 6: Summary of “culture” related questions from the on-line survey



3.7. Internal communication

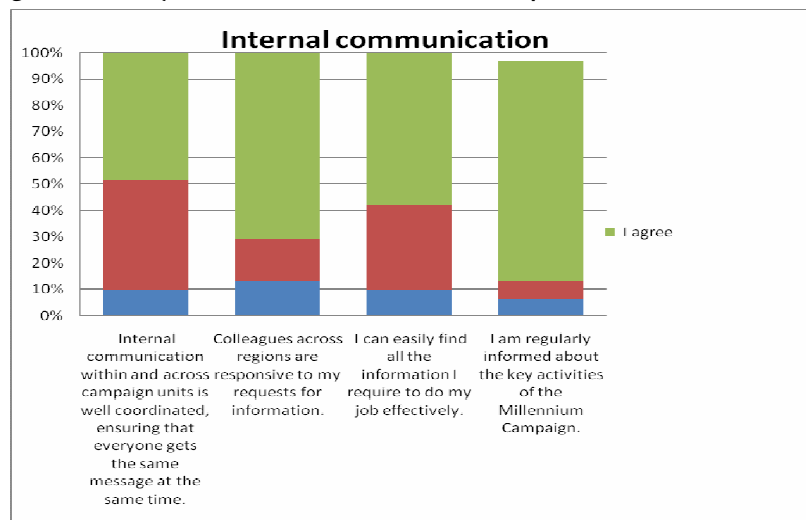
Internal communication is a big challenge for such a geographically disperse organization. Most of the communication channels rely on emails and other web related appliances like Skype.

Emails provide the possibility of an immediate response that suits the culture of the Campaign. However, during our interviews we repeatedly encountered the opinion: the amount of emails generated by the organization is sometimes unmanageable and staff may feel pressure to act immediately prioritizing “urgent” over “important”.

Another valuable form of communication is the weekly or bi-weekly meetings by thematic areas such as policy, communication, or management meetings. We would advise that this form should become the primary venue where important decisions could be taken.

Finally, we have detected a slight “them and us” situation between the HQ and the regional teams, which may be explained by their naturally different idiosyncrasies. The Campaign is deeply respectful of cultural differences, and it does not have major repercussions, but it seems that this “them and us” situation sometimes leads to communication breakdowns.

Figure 7: Summary of “internal communication” related questions from the on-line survey



4. Summary of recommendations

- The annual retreats and the visits from senior staff members are key components that re-energise and make these values firmer especially among new staff members. We recommend keeping these actions when financially viable as they also help soften the “them and us” situations.
- It would be advisable to have a senior team of two or three managers who can share the immense responsibility that the Director has taken on and have most of the current Deputy Directors in a reinforced team of middle managers.
- When recruiting National Coordinators the Campaign should consider bringing in higher profiles, possibly professionals with an already established reputation in the countries who can put their experience at the service of the Campaign in all substantive areas.
- ToRs need to reflect realistically the objectives, roles, profiles and the amount of time needed to perform the required tasks. Within a certain degree of flexibility, managers should respect the contents of the ToRs when asking staff to perform their jobs.
- People doing similar jobs should have similar CoS even if it is not under a formal UNDP contract. The MC might want to improve the clarity of their grading and the level of the staff should be standardized.
- The Campaign might want to put in place ways of developing the professional capacity of the staff to improve their performance and morale.
- It would be advisable to encourage regular and confidential spaces where the leadership and management can get honest feed-back from staff. Confidential on-line semi-structured questionnaires could be a good tool for this purpose. Facilitated meetings can also bring to the open, in a constructive manner, latent issues staff might have with the management.
- The Campaign would benefit from annual reviews of their operational plans and regular in-depth evaluation at the National level where the Campaign aims at prompting policy change.
- Of critical importance is the implementation of an Intranet, where staff can share communication/advocacy resources. This will allow staff to efficiently share resources and build on the work of others and could reduce the amount of email traffic.+
- Bi-weekly meetings by thematic areas such as policy, communication, or management meetings are a best practice. We would advise that this form should become the primary venue for information exchange.