

Chapter 7 Report Writing: Documenting the Worth of Your Project

(Adapted from "A Manual on Planning, Implementation and Management of Development Projects, CEDPA)

Another monitoring tool you can use to gauge your progress is the report. Whoever is funding your project will require you to submit reports on a regular basis. Some funders will require monthly reports, others will require reports less often, say every six months. Your agreement or contract with the funding agency will outline the reporting requirements and provide you with guidelines as to the report's content and format.

You must remember that it is your responsibility to stick to your grant agreement, and in the report you must compare work you planned to do (your activities and objectives) to the work that you actually did. Again, think of the report as a monitoring tool that will allow you to determine whether or not you are progressing on schedule. With report writing we see the importance of a solid program plan, workplan, evaluation plan and effective monitoring through a good record-keeping system. Without good records you will not have complete information about your activities and accomplishments.

When writing your report, be sure to answer the following questions:

- What is the period covered by the report?
- What were planned targets (objectives) and activities for this period? Your workplan will be a valuable reference for answering this question.
- What were the actual achievements and activities for this period and what indicators of change have you used to determine these? Here you will discuss numbers of people involved, what they did or learned and results.
- What resources were used? Were they adequate? Financial reports should be submitted to account for expenditures made. Follow the guidelines of your funding agency. Do not forget to discuss other resources that have been used, including community participation and any in-kind contribution.

- What lessons have you learned during this period of project activity and how will this learning be applied to continued project work?
- What problems did you encounter during this period? How did you or will you solve these problems?
- What are your plans for the next period of project activity? Do these plans involve any changes in the project's objectives, schedule of activities or necessary resources? If so, be sure to get authorization from the funder before proceeding.

