



ICAI Follow up: Girl Hub: a DFID and Nike Foundation Initiative

1. We examined how effectively and efficiently Girl Hub, a joint initiative between DFID and Nike Foundation, was delivering impact and whether it should be used as a model for future partnerships. We found that Girl Hub was widely seen as playing a useful role in getting adolescent girls more firmly onto the development agenda. There were, however, significant shortcomings in Girl Hub's set-up and governance and in its plans to achieve its vision. DFID has told us that it found our report to be essential to get the basics of Girl Hub right and that the report was also helpful in highlighting cultural differences between DFID and Nike Foundation.
2. We recommended that Girl Hub should be reconfigured to focus more sharply on how it would make a difference to girls. DFID only partially accepted this recommendation. Girl Hub has now changed its approach, however, placing more emphasis on its expertise in social communications and research and using those as a catalyst for change. Its detailed country and programme plans are also clearer.
3. DFID, Girl Hub and Nike Foundation took swift and positive action to address deficiencies that we identified in risk, governance, financial and performance management policies. There has been a significant improvement in all of these areas. We welcome measures, such as improved budgeting and reporting and the development of a 'Girl Safety Toolkit', to make the programmes safer for girls, which is vital for Girl Hub to operate properly. DFID did not respond regarding ensuring that Girl Hub messaging is clear and consistent and that roles are transparent and accountable. While some action has been taken, feedback from stakeholders suggests that there is still confusion about roles and how they fit together.
4. Girl Hub, DFID and other NGO staff have raised concerns about the levels of development expertise within Girl Hub, in-country succession planning, professional development and insufficient efforts to build local capability. We encourage DFID and Girl Hub to consider and address these concerns.
5. We recommended that DFID learn lessons from the Girl Hub experience. Our Girl Hub report and other ICAI reports have informed on-going initiatives on innovation; for example, DFID's Gender Team has applied learning from engaging with a private organisation in its development of other programmes, such as the Girls Direct Assets Incubator. DFID also took Girl Hub lessons to a programme management conference last October. Beyond these actions, we encourage DFID to do more to learn lessons from Girl Hub to strengthen future engagements with the private sector and private foundations.

6. An independent review of Girl Hub, comprising the 2013 annual report and a paper setting out options for the future of the strategic collaboration between DFID and the Nike Foundation, is being carried out, as we recommended. We consider this review to be critical for ensuring that all options for the future are considered and properly assessed.

7. Overall, DFID has followed through on most of our recommendations. DFID recognised that some of the basics had been neglected and moved quickly to address these issues. We will continue to follow Girl Hub's activities with interest to see if they are achieving impact for the poor and we await the results of the independent review with interest.