**CLIMBING THE ACCOUNTABILITY MOUNTAIN:**

**Four INGOs’ experiences implementing participatory reflection processes**

**Session Abstract:**

The 21st century international NGO must be nimble and flexible to realize their intended impact in environments that are constantly in flux politically, socially and economically. One way that international NGOs approach this challenge is by developing reflection and learning processes that engage program stakeholders, in addition to external experts, in joint sense-making of monitoring data and evaluative findings. This panel takes a comparative case study approach, presenting four distinct reflection and learning processes used by international NGOs (Oxfam America, ActionAid, ChildFund, and Mercy Corps). Through sharing of practical experiences and organizational assessments, the presenters explore the theoretical and practical dimensions of participatory reflection and learning processes in terms of methods, successes, and challenges. This panel will be of particular value to colleagues who are designing or currently using participatory reflection and learning processes, and will share a variety of approaches and tools that have been recently applied in international NGOs.

**SESSION AGENDA:**

* Introduction and framing by session chair - Kent Glenzer, Monterey Institute of   
  International Studies

* Each panelist will have 7-10 minutes for presentation, where you’ll hear about each organization’s particular experience and learning. Order of panelists:  
  + Julia Fisher-Mackey, ChildFund International
  + Kimberly Miller, Oxfam America
  + Bevis Kapaso, ActionAid International
  + Barbara Willett, Mercy Corps
* The session chair will facilitate 10-minute discussion session with the audience.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:**

**ChildFund**

ChildFund International is an international non-governmental organization working in 30 countries to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children have the capacity to improve their lives and become young adults, parents and leaders who bring lasting and positive change in their communities. ChildFund is committed to child-centered change that results in healthy and secure infants, educated and confident children, and skilled and involved youth. Since 1938, ChildFund has worked for the well-being of children by supporting locally led initiatives in health and nutrition, education, micro-enterprise development, early childhood development and psychosocial assistance that strengthen impoverished families and communities to help break the cycle of poverty and protect children’s rights. With an annual budget of approximately $252 million (FY2013), ChildFund currently reaches over 18.1 million children and family members through comprehensive programs in communities around the globe. Through its membership in the ChildFund Alliance, a family of 12 like-minded organizations, assistance is extended to children in 56 countries.

**Oxfam America**

Oxfam America is a global organization working to right the wrongs of poverty, hunger, and injustice. As one of 17 members of the international Oxfam confederation, they work with people in more than 90 countries to create lasting, sustainable solutions. Oxfam America takes a rights-based approach to creating change and understands poverty as a problem of power, one in which people are deprived of opportunities, resources, public services, knowledge, and protection. Oxfam America’s program approach seeks to address policies, conditions of exclusion and discrimination, and above all to empower people themselves to hold powerful actors accountable. Oxfam America believes people can sustain positive gains through self-organization, advocacy, and continuous engagement with duty bearers on policies and practices that promote both growth and equity. For this reason, Oxfam commits to long-term engagements with specific disadvantaged groups, and build lasting coalitions and strategic partnerships around specific rights issues.

**ActionAid**

ActionAid is an international organization, working with over 15 million people in 45 countries for a world free from poverty and injustice. ActionAid advocates a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) approach to help people use their own power to fight poverty and injustice as it believes the people whose lives their work affects should decide how the organization runs. In 2003, ActionAid International adopted a federal model of governance and organization. This is a union comprised of self-governing affiliates and associates which are members united by a central or international (“federal”) structure and by shared values, vision and mission.

**Mercy Corps**

Mercy Corps is a US-based relief and development organization working since 1979 to help communities and individuals turn crisis into opportunity. Currently operating in 42 countries, and implementing more than 300 programs, Mercy Corps works in a wide range of sectors, harnessing private sector, civil society, and government partners to find innovative solutions to the world's toughest problems. Mercy Corps programs are largely grant-funded, by a range of public and private donors, including US and European governments, and major foundations like Gates, Rockefeller, MasterCard Foundation, and many more. We are field-driven and de-centralized in our operations, with small, tightly focused technical support teams like our 3-person Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning unit. Since 2007, the MEL team has had a strong focus on agency-level measurement and learning processes, alongside field support for building and implementing strong M&E.