



ACFID Resolution 2-2020

RESOLUTION on Children and Australian Aid

Pre-Amble

- Children are disproportionately affected by poverty. Children represent half of the world's 1.3 billion people living in poverty, yet they make up only one third of the population. Approximately 387 million, or 19.5% of the world's children live in extreme poverty, compared to 9.2% of adults.
- In Australia's immediate neighbourhood – the Pacific region – half of the region's population is aged under 23. It is one of the youngest regions in the world.
- Children experience poverty differently than adults because their needs, opportunities and social situation are different. The power dynamics are very different for children, as they are vulnerable and dependent on adult support and protection. Girls, children with disabilities and children from other marginalised groups experience intersecting vulnerabilities. This means that development and humanitarian approaches should be intentionally designed with children in mind.
- The World Bank advises that one of the smartest investments a country can make is to invest in children to minimise the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Investing in children brings a triple dividend of development benefits: it immediately improves the lives of vulnerable children, builds their health, capacity and productivity for future life stages, and lays the foundations for strong development outcomes for the next generation.
- COVID-19 has further highlighted how children are often the invisible victims in times of crisis. The lockdowns and economic stress caused by COVID-19 are increasing children's vulnerability to violence, abuse and exploitation. Millions of children are going hungry, being forced into child labour and child marriage. Unless we act now to address the pandemic's impacts on children, the echoes of COVID-19 will permanently damage our shared future.
- Children must be intentionally considered in the design, implementation and review of international development and humanitarian programs in order to serve the best interests of children, do no harm, maximise their impact and, ultimately, to eliminate intergenerational poverty.

Resolutions

We encourage the Australian Government to:

- Develop an intersectional children's strategy for the aid program with child-specific metrics, targets and benchmarks to track the extent to which development and humanitarian programs consider their impact on children.
- Prioritise ending violence against children alongside its focus on ending violence against women given the severity and prevalence of the issue, especially in the Pacific region, and given the interconnectedness of violence against children and gender-based violence.

We reaffirm that:

- Australia has made commitments under Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to work within the framework of international cooperation to protect child rights.
 - In particular, as outlined in General Comment No.5 (2003), the Convention should form the framework for international development assistance related directly or indirectly to children and that Australia should take upon itself obligations to not only realise child rights in its jurisdiction, but also to contribute to global implementation.
- All children, regardless of race, gender, disability or other status are development actors and holders of inalienable rights who deserve to be consulted, listened to, protected and empowered.

- Children are at increased risk from a range of threats, including malnutrition, violence, forced labour, education disruptions and exploitation, in the wake of COVID-19.
- The 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved without a dedicated focus on children, the world's future sustainability leaders. Children are affected by all of the Sustainable Development Goals and most specifically the 16 SDG indicators directly focused on children.

The ACFID Council resolves to:

- Champion children's rights and uphold the international cooperation framework articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Enable platforms for children to engage in development programs as active agents for change.
- Engage our supporters and partners to promote child-centred development in aid programs and humanitarian responses.

Moved: Graham Strong, World Vision Australia

Seconded: Margaret Sheehan, Childfund