

Australian Council for International Development

Policy Platform



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

A Modernised Australian Development Cooperation Policy and Performance Framework

A future Australian Government creates a new, modernised development cooperation program responsive to the diverse development demands of the region; attuned to geostrategic challenges; and focused on creating peace, stability and security and the establishment of long-term relationships.

It's time to re-examine the purpose, policy and profile of 'aid' and establish development as a driving force for Australian foreign policy. Australia last refreshed its aid policy in 2014. Dramatic shifts in our partners' priorities and geostrategic dynamics have not been matched by changes to the Australian aid program. The program is underfunded and lacks strategic coherence and sufficient capability.

A new development cooperation policy and performance framework should be driven by the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure Australia is supporting the poorest people and most fragile states, while creating regional peace, stability and prosperity and the mutually beneficial relationships to achieve it.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- An independent panel leads a whole-of-government strategic review of the Australian aid program, aimed at creating a new Australian development cooperation program. The review includes expertise drawn from the Australian Government, the non-government development and foreign policy community and regional stakeholders;
- A strategic review establishes a new Australian development cooperation policy and is followed by a commensurate governance, performance and capability framework;
- The review prioritises:
 - Establishing the principles and priority of sustainable and inclusive development as a driving force behind Australian Foreign Policy;
 - Resetting Australia's engagement in Asia including middle income countries, to develop more and deeper partnerships;
 - Identifying pathways for investment in the Australian Government's international development analytical and implementation capability;
 - Establishing a framework for locally led partnerships in mutual pursuit of the SDGs;
 - Aligning the new development cooperation program with a new national strategy for the SDGs, agreed with states and territories; and
 - Increasing the transparency and communication of the Australian development cooperation at home and internationally to build domestic public support and demonstrate that Australia is a good international citizen and reliable partner.

Rebuild the Australian Development Cooperation Budget

A future Australian Government should work to establish a bipartisan commitment to rebuilding the Australian development cooperation budget which includes a floor for Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels enshrined in legislation and with a budget trajectory that ensures levels reach 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2030.

Australia's development assistance is at its lowest level in history as a proportion of Australian GNI. In 2018-19, 22 cents were spent on development cooperation for every \$100 of Australia's income.

Based on median wealth per adult, Australia is the richest country in the world, yet ranked 19th (2017) among our international partners in the OECD Development Assistance Committee. We can do better. Australia can show global leadership through investing in Australian development cooperation.

ACFID supports the bipartisan report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to establish a timeframe of no more than five years for increasing Australia's funding for development cooperation to at least 0.5 per cent of GNI, and to a

second timeframe of no more than 10 years for increasing funding to at least 0.7 per cent of GNI. This should be achieved and enshrined in legislation so funding floors are established for Australian development cooperation.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- All parties have committed to a timetable to reaching ODA spending of 0.5 per cent of GNI in no more than five years and 0.7 per cent of GNI in no more than 10 years.
- Legislative floors are passed enshrining ODA spending of 0.5 per cent of GNI and 0.7 per cent of GNI as part of the trajectory to 0.7 per cent by 2030, meeting Australia's commitment to the SDGs.



Children who have been both physically and mentally traumatised by the Syrian war attend a Child Friendly Space in an informal settlement in Zahle, Lebanon, close to the border of Syria. Child Friendly Spaces provide structured play and development activities for children in a safe environment. Photo: Jamie Baker, Save the Children.

Infrastructure for Sustainable and Inclusive Development

A future Australian Government must ensure that loan-financed infrastructure maximises sustainable and inclusive development.

In the shift to a greater focus on infrastructure (particularly in the Pacific), Australia must ensure that it does so with development outcomes and beneficiary nations' interests foremost in its design.

Infrastructure – and the associated lending – must be guided by criteria which has sustainable and inclusive development principles embedded. Loans must also be accompanied with high levels of social and environmental safeguards and transparency. Debt-servicing to Australia should also not remove public resources for supporting essential services in recipient nations.

It is essential that loan-financed infrastructure consider sustainability, including resilience to climate change and ongoing benefits to local communities. This can be achieved through complementary grants to support the systems and institutions for education, health and governance.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Public, international, multisector expert consultation and co-design takes place to establish a credible and transparent infrastructure financing facility – and a sustainable and effective footing for broader development financing – which maximises sustainable and inclusive development, creating mutually beneficial partnerships.

This facility should ensure:

- Partners' needs are prioritised and met;
- The criteria for infrastructure and associated loans has sustainable and inclusive development principles embedded;
- Concessional loans are prioritised;
- Australian debt servicing is not at the expense of essential services in recipient nations;
- All loans are transparent and made publicly available for scrutiny;
- Social and environmental safeguards for infrastructure are robust;
- All possible options for effectively financing achievement of the SDGs are explored, including an Australian Development Finance Institution;
- Infrastructure for adaptation to climate change and long-term climate resilience is prioritised.

Civil society as a cornerstone of Australia's development cooperation program

A future Australian Government should invest in the civil society of developing nations as a means of helping create peaceful, stable and democratic societies.

Civil society supports and enables citizens to collaborate and advocate around social and economic problems; extend and deepen social capacity to build more inclusive institutions; and analyse and monitor the actions of state and market actors. When citizens are resourced and empowered in this way, they hold their governments to account, compelling and incentivising improved systems and standards of governance across a range of institutions.

Vibrant local civil society organisations (CSOs) are better able to support free, open and democratic societies; are better-placed to respond to authoritarianism and populism in developing countries; and can better mobilise resources to respond locally to disasters and drive sustainable development.

All nations in our region need strong, skilled, civil societies. This requires Australia's long-term support and investment.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Overall Australian development assistance channelled to and through civil society rises to 20 per cent commensurate with comparative donors and the importance of democratic accountability in our region.
- Civil society strengthening is a standalone feature of the new development cooperation program;
- A new civil society partnerships strategy is established by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for peace and stability building through local and Australian CSOs. This should include initiatives such as fostering engagement between CSOs and the private sector through trilateral partnerships, blended finance instruments or matched funding;
- A civil institution target is established as part of the development cooperation program performance framework to drive development cooperation program performance on matters of building civil society;
- Tenderers – as part of Australian development cooperation procurement processes – demonstrate how they propose to engage, strengthen and work with civil society; and
- Local and Australian civil society representatives are formally and consistently engaged in the design of new development programs.

An Australian fair share in meeting global humanitarian needs

A future Australian Government should commit its fair share of global humanitarian financing and ensure humanitarian assistance reaches those in greatest need.

Australia has a proud history of providing rapid and effective humanitarian assistance, both in the aftermath of sudden-onset disasters, such as the 2018 Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami, and in response to protracted crises, including in Syria and Iraq.

In 2019, over 132 million people will require humanitarian assistance, the majority of them due to conflict. Over one third of these people come from just three countries: Yemen (22.2 million people), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (13.1 million) and Syria (13 million). The United Nations estimates that US\$24 billion in humanitarian funding will be required to meet the most urgent needs.

Despite humanitarian financing reaching unprecedented levels in 2018 (US\$13.9 billion received in 2018, compared to US\$10.6 billion in 2014), the humanitarian financing gap remained at 44 per cent with unmet requirements equalling US\$11.01 billion.

As a prosperous nation Australia should commit its fair share of global humanitarian financing by increasing humanitarian funding to at least \$570 million per annum, in line with global humanitarian needs. Australia should continue to respond quickly and generously to sudden-onset disasters in the Indo-Pacific, develop whole-of-government strategies to address humanitarian and protection crises in our region (for example for the Rohingya crisis), and develop long-term, multi-year packages of assistance for the worst protracted crises across the globe.

A future Australian Government must also recognise the important role that civil society organisations, including Australian and local NGOs play in responding effectively and efficiently to crises. National and local actors are first responders to crises and have the greatest knowledge of local contexts, while Australian NGOs can transform Australian Government funding into rapid action on the ground in a fraction of the time taken by multilateral partners.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Australia is contributing its fair share of global humanitarian financing by increasing humanitarian program funding to at least \$570 million every year;
- Australia's humanitarian assistance is allocated on the basis of need, and fully complies with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;
- At least 20 per cent of Australia's humanitarian funding is delivered directly through Australian and local NGOs, in line with the OECD average, and in support of the localisation of humanitarian responses;
- Australia is delivering at least 5 multi-year funding packages to address protracted crises, for example in Yemen, Myanmar/Bangladesh, South Sudan/Somalia and DRC;
- Australia is ensuring that it closes the divide between humanitarian and development programming, to ensure that life-saving assistance is provided, while the root causes of crises also are addressed; and
- Australia increases the transparency of its humanitarian program and provides information on how humanitarian response funding is determined by crisis and by funding modality.

ACFID's Vision, Purpose and Values

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action.

ABOUT ACFID

Our vision is of a world where all people are free from extreme poverty, injustice and inequality and where the earth's finite resources are managed sustainably. Our purpose is to lead and unite our members in action for a just, equitable and sustainable world.

Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 125 members and 22 affiliates operating in more than 92 developing countries. In 2016–17, the total revenue raised by ACFID's members amounted to \$1.6 billion — \$889 million of which was raised by 1.6 million individual donors. ACFID's members range from large Australian multi-sectoral organisations that are linked to international federations of non-government organisations (NGOs), agencies with specialised thematic expertise, and smaller community-based groups, with a mix of secular and faith-based organisations.

ACFID's members comply with ACFID's Code of Conduct, a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development and humanitarian action outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of signatory organisations. Covering nine Quality Principles, 32 Commitments and 90 Compliance Indicators, the Code sets good standards for program effectiveness, fundraising, governance and financial reporting. Compliance includes annual reporting and checks, accompanied by an independent complaints-handling process.

ACFID'S VALUES

Respect for human rights. We champion human rights as a precondition for sustainable and equitable development and promote rights-based approaches that hold power-holders to account.

Gender justice. We stand for social, political and economic gender equality and see gender justice as both an end in itself and a means to alleviating poverty, reducing inequality and building peace.

Systemic and transformational change. We are committed to development that addresses the root causes of poverty, conflict and injustice, and transforms the lives of the poorest and most marginalised people.

A strong independent civil society. We believe that a vibrant civil society is an essential feature of free societies, bringing benefits to the public that governments and the market cannot do alone.

Environmental sustainability. We promote environmentally sustainable development solutions because poverty reduction, natural resource management and development are inextricably linked.

Accountability and transparency. We promote accountability and transparency as a standard of good practice for NGOs and other development actors, particularly downward accountability to people affected by poverty or crisis.

Quality and innovation. We exist to support and promote quality, innovation and continuous improvement in NGO governance, management and practice.

The positions in this platform are endorsed by ACFID and authorised by Marc Purcell, Deakin. The positions reflect the knowledge and experience of ACFID's membership, but are not endorsed by individual members.

FULL MEMBERS



FULL MEMBERS



DIPLOMACY
TRAINING
PROGRAM



CURE | PREVENT | EMPOWER



DEFENDING THE ENVIRONMENT
ADVANCING THE LAW



Reproductive & Sexual Health



Life-changing
partnerships



The Fred Hollows
Foundation



engineers
without borders
australia



The Leprosy
Mission
Australia



KTF



Grameen
Australia



Habitat
for Humanity®



FAIRTRADE
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND



Interplast™



IJM



LIVE&LEARN
Environmental Education



INTERNATIONAL
RiverFoundation



Islamic Relief
Australia



GraceWorks
MYANMAR



MARY WARD
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA



Edmund Rice
FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA
Liberating Lives



MARIE STOPES
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA



MARIST MISSION CENTRE
Sydney, Australia



KYEEMA FOUNDATION



inf
INTERNATIONAL
NEPAL
FELLOWSHIP



Global
Development
Group



MercyWorks
SISTERS OF MERCY IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HAGAR
The whole journey



maa



LOVE
MERCY
AUSTRALIA



ina
international
needs



IWDA
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY



HEALTHSERVE
healing, inspiring & bridging communities



hopeglobal



icare
Education, economic and health
for sustainable communities

FULL MEMBERS



AFFILIATE



MONASH
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE





AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Cover photo: Mathilda washes her hands at a newly installed tap at her school in Papua New Guinea. In partnership with the Yagoru-Saussia District, the Provincial Health Authority, and the Division of Education, Oxfam Australia is working to improve the health, well being and resilience of communities in PNG. Oxfam Australia is providing increased access to safe water and sanitation, and promoting improved hygiene practices. This initiative is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.
Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS

Authors: ACFID

Designer: Kate Bensen

Published: April 2019

Authorised by: Marc Purcell,
Deakin, Australia

 <https://acfid.asn.au>

 main@acfid.asn.au

 +61 2 6285 1816

 twitter.com/ACFID

 www.facebook.com/ACFID

 ACFID, 14 Napier Close, Deakin, ACT 2600