

Reaching the **Next Generation:**

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN THE AUSTRALIAN AID PROGRAM



Australian Council
for International
Development (ACFID)
Policy Analysis
October 2011



The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is the independent peak council for Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the field of international aid and development. ACFID has more than 70 members operating in over 100 developing countries worldwide. ACFID administers a rigorous Code of Conduct, representing the active commitment of over 120 overseas aid and development agencies to conduct their activities with integrity and accountability.

Authors

Helen Cheney
(Save the Children Australia)

Amalia Fawcett
(Plan International Australia)

Chris McBrearty
(Plan International Australia)

Jannah Montersino
(Save the Children Australia)

Rebecca Spratt
(Plan International Australia)

Lanie Stockman
(Save the Children Australia)

The above authors are listed in alphabetical order.

Permission to reproduce or distribute any part of this publication is not required.

This document does not necessarily reflect positions of the ACFID member agencies.

Acknowledgement

This Policy Paper has been developed by the ACFID Child Rights Working Group. The Child Rights Working Group is a multi-agency group working for the increased profile of child rights and building the capacity of the sector to implement child rights based approaches in development. It is made up of ACFID member agencies. This document has received input from the following members of the ACFID Child Rights Working Group:

Australian Volunteers International
Baptist World Aid Australia
ChildFund Australia
Nossal Institute for Global Health
Plan International Australia
Save the Children Australia

ACFID member organisations (as at 30 June 2011):

40K Home Foundation Australia
Act for Peace – NCCA
ActionAid Australia (formerly Austcare)
Adventist Development and Relief Agency
Afghan Australian Development Organisation
Anglican Board of Mission – Australia
AngliCORD
Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Relief and Aid Fund
Assisi Aid Projects
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine
Australia for UNHCR
Australian Business Volunteers
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Doctors International
Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific
Australian Lutheran World Service
Australian Marist Solidarity
Australian Medical Aid Foundation
* Australian Red Cross
Australian Reproductive Health Alliance
Australian Respiratory Council

Australian Volunteers International
Baptist World Aid Australia
Burnet Institute
CARE Australia
Caritas Australia
CBM Australia
ChildFund Australia
Credit Union Foundation Australia
Foresight Australia (Overseas Aid and Prevention of Blindness)
Fred Hollows Foundation, The
Friends of the Earth Australia
Global Development Group
Habitat for Humanity Australia
HealthServe Australia
Hunger Project Australia, The
International Centre for Eyecare Education
International Nepal Fellowship Australia
International Women's Development Agency
Interplast Australia, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Lasallian Foundation
Leprosy Mission Australia, The
Live & Learn Environmental Education
Mercy Works Inc
Mission World Aid

Motivation Australia
Muslim Aid Australia
Nusa Tenggara Association
Opportunity International Australia
Oxfam Australia
OzGREEN – Global Rivers
Environmental Education Network Australia
Partners in Aid (formerly Action Aid Australia)
Plan International Australia
Project Vietnam
Quaker Service Australia
RedR Australia
* Refugee Council of Australia
RESULTS Australia
Salesian Society
Save the Children Australia
Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia
TEAR Australia
Transparency International Australia
Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA
Unitingworld
WaterAid Australia
World Education Australia
World Vision Australia
WWF – Australia

Contents

Acronyms	i
Executive Summary	ii
Thematic Recommendations	iii
Introduction	vi
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (child-friendly version)	viii
What is a Child Rights Approach?	ix
Disability	1
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	2
Economic Growth	3
Education	4
Environment	6
Family Planning	7
Food Security	9
Gender	11
Political Governance	12
Health	14
Infrastructure	15
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	16
Mine Action	17
Regional stability	18
Rural Development	19
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	20
Conclusion	22
Appendix A	23

Acronyms

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	ODA	Official Development Assistance
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
EFA	Education For All	UN	United Nations
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
MRE	Mine Risk Education	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
NGO	Non-Government Organisation		



Executive Summary



This analysis of key AusAID sector policies and documents contributes to the realisation of children's rights in the Australian Government's international aid efforts. It provides a tool for advocating for a stronger child focus in AusAID work. By providing a timeline of current policies (see Appendix A), this analysis will allow child-focused and child-rights organisations to provide consistent input into AusAID policies before, during, and after review.

This analysis may also be used as a tool by AusAID and other government departments that deliver Official Development Assistance (ODA) to assist in reflecting on the strengths of existing policies and identifying areas for improvement or developing new policy, strategy and approaches. In the context of the Australian Government's response to the recent Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness and the development of new policy and strategy by AusAID, this analysis is particularly timely. This document makes overarching recommendations and thematic recommendations, specific to the sectors in which AusAID delivers ODA.

Overarching Recommendations

AusAID, other government departments that deliver ODA and NGOs should:

- i Provide policy directives that encourage skilled consultation with children and young people wherever possible and at all stages of work, in line with Article 12(1) of the CRC. Consultation should include the views of the child, including the most marginalised, and give due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.¹
- ii Respect and take into account the evolving capacities (i.e. maturity and capabilities) of children. All ODA must consider the heterogeneity of children and be explicit in defining the age groups of children considered and consulted.
- iii Recognise children as rights-holders to which state parties are accountable for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of all children. In practical terms, this means incorporating the relevant elements of the CRC and utilising language that positions children as rights-holders within all documents.
- iv Disaggregate all data by age, sex and disability and encourage and support partner governments and organisations to do the same to strengthen accountability to children. Children have the right to exist and be counted in data.
- v Apply child protection standards to all themes to ensure the development practices of the Australian aid program are implemented in the best interests of children and young people. These standards should identify risks to children's safety and wellbeing, as well as provide protective frameworks to prevent the abuse, exploitation, or harm of children and young people.
- vi Build in-house capacity and expertise regarding child rights programming.

¹ For more guidance, please refer to Practice Standards in Children's Participation - http://www.savethechildren.org.au/images/content/resources/UN_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child/Practice_Standards_in_Childrens_Participation_Save_the_Children_2005.pdf



Thematic Recommendations

Disability

1. Strengthen guiding principle 4 on gender by emphasising the importance of the collection of sex disaggregated data to enable a deeper analysis of the impact of disability on girls.

Disaster Risk Reduction

2. Disaggregate data by sex and age to assist in DRR planning and in evaluating the impact of emergency response.
3. An emphasis is needed on the important role of child protection specialists in an emergency response or DRR planning.
4. A clearer focus on the role of education and ECCD in the wake of an emergency

Economic Growth

5. Include a child-focus in regard to economic poverty reduction strategies. Such strategies should address child-rights and ensure the participation of a wider section of society. Such strategies equally help build the capacity of duty-bearers, and strengthen government and governance structures.
6. Provide recommendations on how child and youth-headed households can access microloan and other economic development strategies.

Education

7. Inclusion of specific references to relevant articles of the CRC would also strengthen the Policy and could be a useful basis for a more holistic performance monitoring framework.
8. A much stronger emphasis on ECCD within all education-related documents.
9. Focus on adult literacy as a contributing factor to children's well-being.
10. Stronger focus on indicators of quality, including relevance and appropriateness of education, and outcomes stated in terms of optimum development and best interests of children.
11. Recognition is needed of children as advocates for their own education. Children have the right to participate in relevant decision-making.

Environment

12. Emphasise children as key contributors not merely passive in the environmental process.
13. Include environmental education programs as part of the environment strategy.
14. Include children in consultations on the environment, climate change, and environmental programming

Family Planning

15. Explicitly position Family Planning as one component of SRHR, and that it will not be dealt with in isolation but addressed and invested in as part of broader package of SRHR information, services and advocacy.
16. Link strategies on SRHR to policies on prevention of and response to gender-based violence, in recognition of the power dimensions of SRHR.
17. Explicitly recognise adolescents and young people as having a right to family planning and SRHR information and services, and as demanding particular attention due to the specific nature and scale of their concerns.
18. Include comprehensive sexuality education within curricula/activities of schools and non-formal youth-accessible spaces.
19. Recognise and provide guidance on the tensions of children's rights and SRHR of women and men.
20. Develop clear policy on SRHR within which the Family Policy Guiding Principles would sit, and which include specific policy guidance on AusAID's response to Reproductive and Sexual Health concerns of young people.





Food Security

21. Ensure strategies are developed for protecting children from inappropriate forms of child labour, especially in regard to interference with a child's education.
22. A more detailed analysis of the long-term impact of children's under and malnourishment.
23. Food assistance, especially targeting children in food-insecure areas, should be an integral part of the long-term food security solution.
24. Consideration in building the capacity of mothers and fathers in food utilisation is paramount because it has a direct bearing on children's healthy growth.
25. Encourage sectoral collaboration to address the malnourishment of young children.
26. Provide a detailed examination of school feeding programs and home-based alternatives.

Gender

27. Ensure that all statements on Australia's objectives for the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries of development include references to boys and girls.
28. Revise Gender and Peace Building Guidelines on disarmament to include a section on the gendered aspects of the demobilisation, demilitarisation, and rehabilitation of child ex-combatants.
29. Revise *Gender Guidelines for Water Supply and Sanitation* to incorporate a child-rights approach.

Political Governance

30. Child-rights monitoring systems: partners should be supported in the collection of disaggregated data and in incorporating views of children in developing national policies and programs.
31. Strengthening of legislation: partner governments should be supported in developing national legislation that incorporates the principles of the CRC.
32. Child-friendly budgeting: as budgetary program and socio-economic spending directly impacts the well-being of children, partners should be supported in reviewing budgetary allocation and outcomes, to ensure spending meets the welfare needs and helps all children realise their rights.
33. Child-friendly services: partners should be supported in developing public administration and services that have children's interests as a key consideration.
34. Coordination of bodies responsible for children: partners should be supported in developing systems to effectively coordinate ministries responsible for the lives of children and in elevating the status of ministries dealing with children's issues.
35. Capacity-building of professionals in contact with children: partners should be supported in strengthening the competence of police, teachers, social workers and judiciary in working with children and the realisation of their rights.
36. Promotion of civic education inclusive of human rights education to enhance understandings of child-rights and the responsibilities of duty bearers. Specific support for children's participation in human rights and civic education should be included.

Health

37. Recognise in relevant policies children as rights-holders rather than victims.
38. Incorporate a holistic approach focusing on health, water, sanitation and education.

Infrastructure

39. A greater focus on children should feature in AusAID's infrastructure policy and projects.

40. The *Child Friendly Cities Framework for Action* (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2004) adapts the processes needed to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child with emphasis on child participation across areas such as budgeting and urban planning. The framework is a useful guide in incorporating children's rights in policy review and formulation concerning infrastructure.

Millennium Development Goals

41. Children should be noted in all relevant documents as rights-holders as opposed to beneficiaries. Incorporate the CRC more explicitly into all future documents regarding the MDGs.²
42. Improve the sex disaggregation of data sources. The evidence used supports progress toward the MDGs, however, gender disparities need to be taken into account.

Mine Action

43. Include children in the outcomes for the Mine Action Strategy Goal.
44. A multi-sectoral approach to mine action needs to incorporate Mine Risk Education (MRE) as a mitigating strategy.

Regional Stability

45. Undertake an analysis of the wide-ranging issues contributing to regional instability and map the impacts these issues have on the wellbeing and livelihoods of children and adolescents to provide a basis for future policies.
46. Provide clear policy direction for a regional approach to climate change with an express consideration of the short and long-term impact on children.
47. Take a regional lead in promoting the CRC and Optional Protocol through partnerships such as the Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project and law enforcement agencies (such as the Australian Federal Police).

Rural Development

48. Consider the rights of the child in future documents concerning rural development. For example, a greater focus on education and early childhood facilities as important aspects of rural development.
49. Recognise that child labour, particularly in rural areas, is often common practice at the expense of education, play, and other instrumental child development activities. Strategies which address child labour are important in any rural development policy.
50. Emphasise existing gender imbalances – girls are less likely to be sent to school and are instead required to assist with household responsibilities in many rural communities in developing countries. It is important to work toward holistic strategies that reduce this gender disparity.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

51. Support and promote children as change agents for water, sanitation and hygiene in their communities.
52. Ensure that all WASH infrastructures incorporate child-friendly designs (e.g. the height of tap-stands, accessible toilets, and hand-washing facilities).
53. Acknowledge and promote the importance of access to a close, convenient safe water supply from the perspective of supporting the increased enrolment of girls in school.
54. For school WASH Programs, ensure separate toilet facilities for girls and boys.
55. Place greater emphasis on the importance of sanitation and hygiene, rather than water supply, in order to provide maximum benefit for children.
56. Promote gender equality outcomes for girls and women through the implementation of WASH programs.

² Please refer to Millennium Development Rights, ACFID, 2009 for further guidance.



Introduction



It is universally acknowledged that children have particular rights; rights that must be protected if they are to grow up and achieve their full potential. Less well known is that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, outline the requirement for international co-operation in order to ensure all children regardless of country of origin have their rights protected, respected, and fulfilled.

General Comment #5 from the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that:

*"...the Convention [on the rights of the Child] should form the framework for international development assistance related directly or indirectly to children and that programmes of donor States should be rights-based."³
It is thus beholden on donor governments to ensure there is consideration of child-rights within their Official Development Assistance (ODA).*

There are indications Australia's ODA is progressively more inclusive of children. While determining the level of aid allocated directly to children is a challenging task, Australia's 2010-2011 ODA budget paper prioritises education, with a spending increase from approximately \$530 million in the previous financial year⁴ to over \$744 million in the 2010-2011 financial year.⁵

Moreover, of the ten development objectives of Australia's ODA articulated in the recent Australian Government response to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness⁶, two were child-focused:

- saving the lives of poor women and children through greater access to quality maternal and child health services...and supporting large scale disease prevention, vaccination and treatment;
- enabling more children, particularly girls, to attend school for a longer and better education so they have the skills to build their own futures and, in time, escape poverty.

While these are promising advances to improve the situation of children, Australia's ODA efforts would be enhanced by an explicit and systematic human rights-based approach - recognised by the United Nations as leading to "better and more sustainable outcomes by analysing and addressing the inequalities, discriminatory practices and unjust power relations which are often at the heart of development problems".⁷ Further, the systematic incorporation of a specific child rights approach may contribute more effectively and sustainably to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – an approach that underpins the ODA programs of a number other OECD countries (see for example, *Three Billion Reasons: Norway's Development Strategy for Children and Young People in the South*).

In his address to the United Nations at the MDGs Summit in September 2010, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd, told the stories of three children. These stories illustrated progress toward achieving the MDGs and the considerable work still to be done. It reminded too that children the world over share the same rights.

While Minister Rudd's stories were simple case studies, they were also poignant reminders of the fact that "...the governments of the world cannot disappoint the children of the world"⁸ and that aid efforts must be maintained and strengthened. With bipartisan support for an increase in spending on foreign aid (to 0.5% of Gross National Income by 2015), this is an opportune time to ensure that policies and strategies are leading to more effective development outcomes for all, and particularly for children.

³ www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/comments.htm

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia 2009, Australia's International Development Assistance Budget 2009-2010, 12 May 2009

⁵ Commonwealth of Australia 2010, Australia's International Development Assistance Budget 2010-2011, 11 May 2010

⁶ United Nations Development Group, Human rights-based approach to development programming (HRBA), <http://www.undg.org/?P=221>, accessed 5 August 2011

⁷ United Nations Development Group, Human rights-based approach to development programming (HRBA), <http://www.undg.org/?P=221>, accessed 5 August 2011

⁸ The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2010/kr_sp_100922.html Accessed 09/01/2011

How to use this document

This document comprises an analysis of each of AusAID's 16 aid themes from a child-rights perspective. Each analysis provides a thematic overview, strengths of AusAID policy/ies related to each theme, gaps/areas for review, and recommendations. It has been designed so that each thematic analysis can be used discretely if required. It is noted that for several thematic areas there are no specific policy and/or strategy documents and in these instances any available strategic documents have formed the basis of analysis.

The document may also be used in its entirety in more general discussions and advocacy work. To that end, page ii of this document puts forward overarching recommendations to enhance AusAID's child-rights approach more broadly. This document also provides an orientation to AusAID themes and policies and is a tangible example of the application of a rights-based approach to policy analysis.

Methodology

At the time of this analysis, the Australian Aid program was organised around 16 aid and development themes, although it is noted in view of the Australian Government's response to the recent Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness, there will be a shift to a country and priority/objective focus. To highlight the focus on children, and in consideration of child-rights, this paper has considered policy and strategy documents and thematic reviews, where available, of themes most closely linked to children's wellbeing. Relevant documents were identified for each thematic area and were analysed for the frequency and context of references to the words 'girl', 'boy', 'child' and 'children'. Commentary was then developed according to the result of this analysis and forms the basis of each section of this report. The report was distributed to the Child Rights Working Group and members' comments and recommendations have been included.

For the purposes of this report the definition of 'child', as expressed in Article 1 of the CRC, is adopted: "...every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier."⁹

⁹ Convention on the Rights of the Child <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>, accessed 25/01/2011

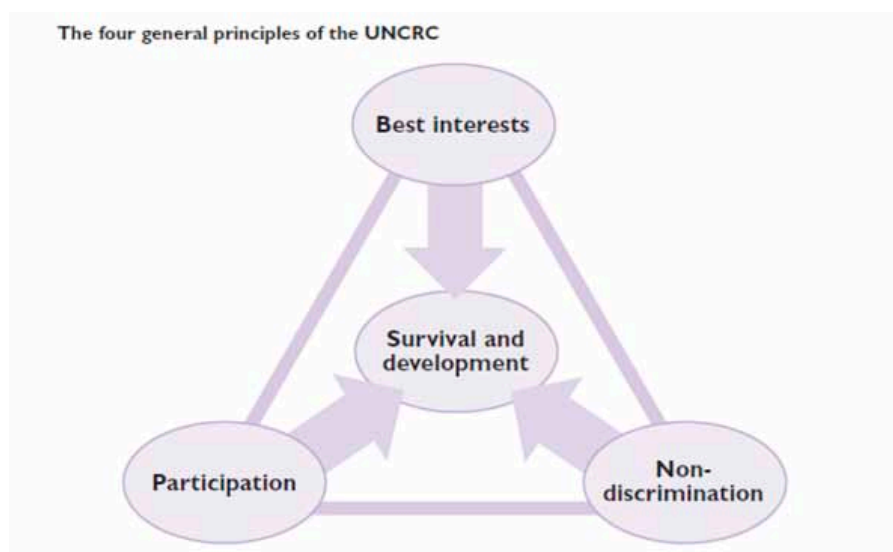
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (child-friendly version)

1. Everyone under the age of 18 has ALL of these rights. You have the right to:
2. Be treated fairly no matter who you are, where you are from, what language you speak, what you believe or where you live.
3. Have adults always do what is best for you.
4. Have all of these rights protected by your government.
5. Be given support and advice from your parents and family.
6. Life.
7. Have a name and a nationality.
8. An official identity.
9. Not be separated from your parent/s, unless it is for your own good.
10. Be reunited with your parent/s if they have to move to another country.
11. Not be taken out of your country illegally.
12. Have your own opinion, which is listened to and taken seriously.
13. Find out information and express what you think through speaking, writing and art, unless this denies other people their rights.
14. Think and believe whatever you want to, and practice any religion with guidance from your parent/s.
15. Be with friends and join or set up clubs, unless this denies other people their rights.
16. Have your privacy and family respected.
17. Get reliable information from newspapers, books, radio, television and the Internet, as long as it is not harmful to you.
18. Be brought up by your parents, if possible.
19. Be protected from being hurt or badly treated in any way.
20. Special protection and help if you can't live with your parents.
21. The best care possible if you are adopted or in foster care.
22. Special protection and help if you are a refugee.
23. Access to education and any support you may need if you have a disability.
24. The best health and medical care possible, and information to help you stay healthy.
25. Have your living situation checked regularly if you are looked after away from your family.
26. Help from the government if you are poor or in need.
27. A basic standard of living: food, clothing and a safe place to live.
28. An education.
29. An education that develops your personality and abilities, and encourages you to respect other people, cultures and the environment.
30. Enjoy your own culture, religion and language, even if these are not the same as most people in your country.
31. Rest, play and relax.
32. Be protected from work that harms your health or education.
33. Be protected from dangerous drugs and their trade.
34. Be protected from sexual abuse.
35. Not be kidnapped or sold.
36. Be protected from being taken advantage of or exploited in any way.
37. Not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way.
38. Protection and care in times of war. If you are under 15 you should never be forced to join an army.
39. Special help if you have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.
40. Be helped and treated fairly if you are accused of breaking the law.
41. Be protected by national or international laws which provide better rights than the ones in this list.
42. ALL children and adults should know and learn about these rights.

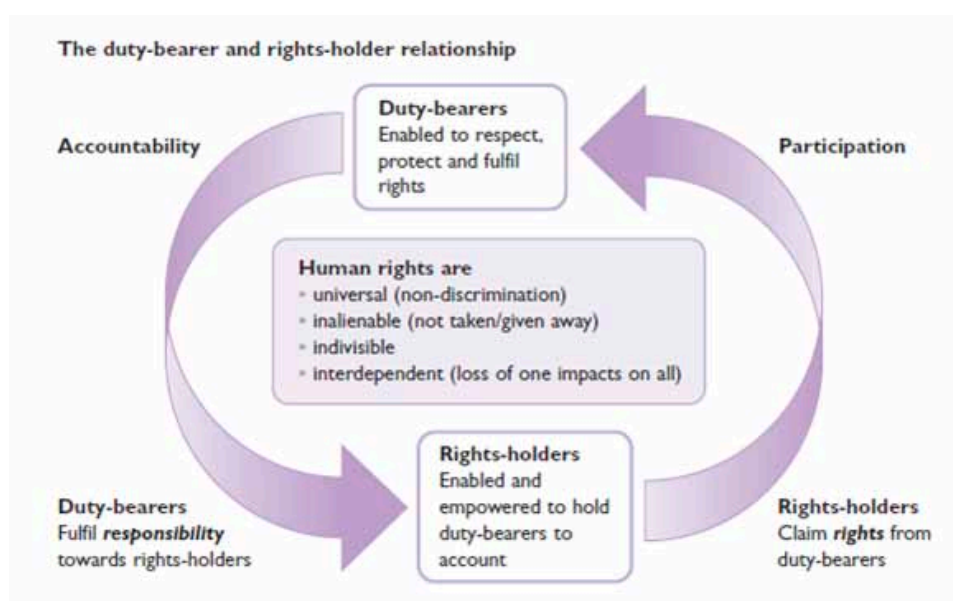
This is a simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention has been signed by 191 countries and contains 54 articles. Articles 43-54 are about how governments and international organisations should ensure children have access to rights.

What is a Child Rights Approach?

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has identified four general principles that underpin the implementation of the CRC and form the foundation for implementing child-rights. These principles can be represented in the form of a triangle¹⁰, which demonstrates the links between the principles and their interdependent nature. Each principle strengthens and supports the other.



Fundamental to a rights-based approach is the process through which those who are responsible meet, and are held accountable, to their obligations. Through this process rights-holders are empowered to claim their entitlements. The diagram below describes this relationship¹¹.



¹⁰ Save the Children (2007) Getting it Right for Children, p.11
¹¹ Ibid, p.9

Disability



CRC Articles

Article 12 – Participation, Article 23 – Children with a disability have access to a full and decent life.

Overview

Disability is emphasised as a key consideration in the Australian ODA program. An amount of \$30.2 million has been allocated across a four year period under the *Disability: Fair Development Accessible to All* measure, with additional investments including \$45 million to help eliminate avoidable blindness in the Asia-Pacific region. *The Development for All: Toward a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014* strategy discusses children as a substantial group requiring particular attention in development programming. Of the six guiding principles, the fifth calls specifically for a focus on children, “Children with disability face major barriers to enjoying the same rights and freedoms as their peers and may often face greater risks of abuse.” There is an evident understanding of children as a group with particular rights as well as vulnerabilities.

Strengths

The disability development strategy is a highlight of AusAID’s strategy and policy documentation. It seeks explicitly to implement the strategy with a human rights foundation - the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of which Article 7 requires that States Parties take, “...all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.”

In the *Development for All* strategy children are identified as rights bearers; a group that should have their rights promoted, protected, and fulfilled. A range of strategies for achieving this are highlighted: from the broad initiatives of inclusive education and accessible infrastructure, to the more specific example of training more sign-language interpreters in Fiji. Preventable disability, such as that resulting from disease, is discussed as a necessary focus for targeted health programs. The strategy acknowledges that this is particularly important for children and targets programs as such.

The interaction between gender and disability is identified as a guiding principle and attention is given to the fact that girls and girl carers are a group particularly vulnerable to the effects of disability.

Gaps/Areas for Review

Although a focus on girls and women is guiding principle 4 of the *Development for All* strategy, the document does not explicitly refer to the importance of the collection of sex disaggregated data. Disaggregation of data would assist in the articulation of appropriate policies and the provision of programs, services, and funds.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen guiding principle 4 on gender by emphasising the importance of the collection of sex disaggregated data to enable a deeper analysis of the impact of disability on girls.



Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

CRC Articles

Article 11 – Illicit transfer of children abroad, Article 12 – Participation, Article 19 – Protection, Article 28 – Education.

Overview

With an increase in the number of natural disasters globally, and a significant concentration of these in the Asia-Pacific region, there is an evidential requirement for strong disaster risk reduction planning. Three documents were considered in this thematic analysis the most recent being the *Investing in a Safer Future: a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian Aid Program* (2009). Further policy documents include the *Humanitarian Action Policy* (2005) and the *Peace, Conflict and Development Policy* (2002).

Strengths

These three documents include some analysis of the impact of disasters, both natural and conflict driven, on children. The *Disaster Risk Reduction* policy includes an examination of the many ways in which emergencies hinder progress towards achievement of the MDGs. Through this framework, the impacts upon children are detailed, particularly given that MDGs 2, 3, 4 and 5 are child-focused. In this, children (especially girls) are acknowledged as most likely to be killed by a sudden event and most acutely affected. A case study of earthquake simulation drills for children in Indonesia emphasised the fact that children who learn about disasters are capable of promoting a culture of safety in the wider community, thus positioning them as potential actors in disaster risk reduction rather than passive victims. This also supports their resilience and participation.

The *Humanitarian Action Policy* identifies women and children as the most vulnerable in the wake of a humanitarian crisis. There is some sex disaggregation and consideration of the important role that education can play in assisting with post-disaster recovery and crisis rehabilitation. Child soldiers are equally identified as a group particularly affected by the atrocities of war. The policy identifies their rehabilitation as an important, although challenging, process. This process of identifying specific groups of children, rather than always referring to them as a homogenous group, is a strength in this suite of documents.

Gaps/Areas for Review

There is a greater need for disaggregation by sex and age of the impact of disasters.

Very young children are often the most acutely affected. Psychosocial support in the wake of a disaster is very important. It lessens the long-term impact for all, and particularly for children.

While strengthening partnerships, leadership, advocacy and building capacity are all built into the *Disaster Risk Reduction* Policy, there is the need for an articulated consideration of the role of education, particularly Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). Education in the aftermath of a disaster is an integral, but often overlooked process, as other seemingly more immediate needs are addressed.

Recommendations

2. Disaggregate data by sex and age to assist in DRR planning and in evaluating the impact of emergency response.
3. An emphasis is needed on the important role of child protection specialists in an emergency response or DRR planning.
4. A clearer focus on the role of education and ECCD in the wake of an emergency

Economic Growth



CRC Articles

Article 6 - Life, Article 12 – Participation, Article 27 – Standard of Living, Article 28 – Education, Article 31 – Play, Article 32 – Labour.

Overview

Supporting economic growth via appropriate partnerships can be a very effective method for improving livelihoods. The (2010) *Financial Services for the Poor – A strategy for the Australian Aid Program 2010-15* outlines how financial services (such as microfinance, savings and insurance) can make a contribution to the achievement of the MDGs. Creating the conditions that support growth is seen as a means by which Australian aid can assist in promoting the MDGs in recipient countries.

Strengths

The Financial Services for the Poor strategy identifies children, along with women and people with disabilities, as groups disproportionately affected by poverty. Case studies of microloan programs in the Philippines and the *Capital Aid Fund for Employment of the Poor* (CEP) in Vietnam, detail the benefits for children. A more financially secure family is able to send their children to school on a regular basis and is equally less likely to rely on children for labour. Thus, children and their ability to access education are closely linked to improved access to financial services for families.

Gaps/Areas for Review

While children are considered beneficiaries in a more financially secure family, the concept of accessing their rights needs to be further developed. Education is a fundamental right for all children and consequently it is important that programs in economic growth include strategies targeting the most marginalised children. Microloan systems are one method by which families can improve their living conditions yet these are not accessible to everyone. Child and youth-headed households are one such group that face particular difficulties.

More broadly, this document refers to rights in the sense of financial institutions' responsibility to inform clients of their rights (in relation to financial services products). However this neglects an acknowledgement that poverty alleviation is not just about basic service access but also about the importance of the fulfilment of rights for growth. In regard to children, the CRC and its comprehensive and indivisible approach to attaining child wellbeing should be incorporated into economic growth strategies.

Recommendations

5. Include a child-focus in regard to economic poverty reduction strategies. Such strategies should address child-rights and ensure the participation of a wider section of society. Such strategies equally help build the capacity of duty-bearers, and strengthen government and governance structures.
6. Provide recommendations on how child and youth-headed households can access microloan and other economic development strategies.

Education

CRC Articles

Article 2 – Non-discrimination , Article 3 – Best interests of the child, Article 6 – Life, Article 12 – Participation, Article 28 – Education, Article 29 – Holistic education, Article 23 – Children with disabilities and access to education, Article 28.2 – appropriate school discipline.

Overview

With an investment of \$744 million over 2010-11 (19% of ODA), education is considered a ‘flagship’ of the Australian aid program. The MDGs enshrine both access to universal primary education and gender equality and these goals underpin the (2007) *Better Education: A Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Education*. Education has a self-evident focus on children and the policy concentrates Australian efforts in “...improv[ing] the functioning of national education systems to enable more boys and girls to complete primary school...” and “improv[ing] the quality of education...”¹²

The *Better Education* policy document was reviewed in combination with the (2010) *Annual Thematic Performance Report: Education 2008-09*.

Strengths

The 2007 Education Policy considers in detail the different needs of both girls and boys in education, emphasising the requirement that schooling be extended to all children. It is acknowledged that in many countries, particularly fragile States, there is gender disparity that must be overcome. The policy highlights initiatives such as incentive programs for girls in Bangladesh, and gender-sensitive toilet facilities in Indonesia and the Philippines, that have helped encourage girls to enter and remain in school.

While enrolment numbers may be improving in many countries, continued poor quality education is highlighted as a growing concern. Australia has considerable experience and expertise in education and this can be directed to helping improve the effectiveness and quality of education. The first outcome in the monitoring framework articulates this requirement for quality, calling for: “more boys and girls in the Asia-Pacific region accessing better education services.”¹³

Gaps/Areas for Review

While the MDGs and *Education For All* (EFA) goals provide some human rights framework to the policy there is no reference to the CRC and no recognition of education as a fundamental right of all people. The policy emphasises the economic benefits of education and depicts education primarily as a means to the economic growth and reduction of poverty. In contrast a rights-based approach emphasises the role of education in enabling every child to reach their full potential, and recognises the process as an important outcome. Recognising education as a right and taking a rights-based approach—as has been adopted by UNESCO—would significantly strengthen the policy. This would also help to recognise children as change agents and advocates for their own education.

The current policy and thematic performance report considers all levels of education, however, it requires a much stronger analysis of the very early years (0 to 8) which are those covered by ECCD. Accordingly, the link between adult literacy children’s well-being (as acknowledged within EFA goal 4) should be incorporated into future policy review and development.

This provides the foundation for stronger outcomes, not merely in education, but in all latter aspects in a child’s life. A growing body of research demonstrates the critical importance of investing in holistic programming in these very early years.

¹² AusAID, *Better Education: A Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Education* (2007), p. 1

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 32



Recommendations

7. Inclusion of specific references to relevant articles of the CRC would also strengthen the Policy and could be a useful basis for a more holistic performance monitoring framework.
8. A much stronger emphasis on ECCD within all education-related documents.
9. Focus on adult literacy as a contributing factor to children's well-being.
10. Stronger focus on indicators of quality, including relevance and appropriateness of education, and outcomes stated in terms of optimum development and best interests of children.
11. Recognition is needed of children as advocates for their own education. Children have the right to participate in relevant decision-making.

Environment

CRC Articles

Article 12 – Participation, Article 24. 2(c, e) – Protection from pollution and environmental sanitation, Article 29. 1(e) – education on respect for environment.

Overview

Environment is increasingly a cross-cutting issue relevant to many aid themes. The 2007 strategy *Aid and the Environment – Building Resilience, Sustaining Growth: An Environment Strategy for Australian Aid* is the central guiding document; however this contains little reference to children. Similarly, the (2009) *Environment Annual Thematic Performance Report 2007-08* contains no reference to children.

Strengths

Children are mentioned but only cited in reference to their particular susceptibility to disease and illness as a result of poor water quality.

Gaps/Areas for Review

Children need to be considered as stakeholders in environmental projects and programming. The strategy should require analysis of the impact on children of environmental issues beyond the effects of poor water quality.

Environmental education of children is key to building resilience. Education programs improve knowledge and simultaneously enable children to become advocates within their communities and contribute to preparedness and climate change adaptation. Lessons can be taken from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) children and youth environmental engagement initiative, Tunza. This is a potential partnership opportunity for the Australian Government.

Children are recipients of environmental decisions made today. It is therefore imperative that they are included in consultations on the environment, climate change, and environmental programming in age-appropriate ways.

Recommendations

12. Emphasise children as key contributors not merely passive in the environmental process.
13. Include environmental education programs as part of the environment strategy.
14. Include children in consultations on the environment, climate change, and environmental programming

Family Planning



CRC Articles

Article 6 – right to survival, Article 12 – Participation, Article 13 – freedom of expression, right to information, Article 14 – right to make up your own mind, Article 16 – right to privacy and confidentiality, Article 24 – right to health and freedom from harmful practices, Article 34 – freedom from exploitation.

Overview

Family planning, as a core element of broader Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) is central to development. There are currently 215 million women worldwide with an unmet need for family planning. The United Nations estimates that meeting unmet needs for contraception alone would reduce up to a third of maternal deaths globally. Having fewer pregnancies and spacing births increases the survival rate of both women and their children¹⁴. Some 1.5 billion young people are now becoming sexually active¹⁵ but do not get the information and services they need to practice safer sex. As a result, 16 million adolescent girls become mothers every year¹⁶, reducing their educational and economic opportunities and carrying serious health risks. The importance of providing quality and comprehensive family planning for all women, men, boys, and girls is clear.

The *AusAID Family Planning Guiding Principles 2009* set out the framework for directing AusAID investment in, and approach to, Family Planning. It also identifies the key issues to be addressed by AusAID staff and fund-recipients when considering provision family planning services.

Strengths

The 2009 *AusAID Family Planning Guidelines* marked a significant shift in AusAID policy from the previous guidelines dating back to 1996 and reflect a more holistic, empowering and evidence-based approach. The alignment of the Principles with the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development is positive and positions AusAID's policy firmly within the broader international commitments and positions on family planning and SRHR.

Gaps/Areas for Review

The Guiding Principles make no reference to rights and focus exclusively on family planning rather than the much more holistic and internationally accepted framework of SRHR. The rationale for supporting family planning given in the Guiding Principles is as “one of the most cost effective approaches to reducing maternal and child mortality”. Isolating family planning from the broader framework of SRHR, negates the critical and wide-ranging role SRHR play in development and rights, particular for young people and women.

The Principles also do not provide any recognition of the particular and urgent issues of SRHR of adolescents and children. This is a significant and worrying gap, given the scale of the adolescent population in developing countries and the significance of reproductive and sexual health (including family planning) for them. There is also little recognition of particular issues for people, let alone adolescents or children with disability, or other similarly discriminated populations such as certain ethnic groups or castes that have differing needs and challenges related to family planning and SRHR.

The Principles position family planning primarily as an issue of service delivery and access to information. There is little recognition of the power issues involved; that provision and quality of family planning and reproductive and sexual health services is a political matter. It is also a matter of intersecting barriers. The ability to realise SRHR is influenced by factors such as poverty, literacy, family violence, and cultural attitudes. This is particularly true for children and young people.

The Principles state that AusAID should focus on “involving communities in planning programs appropriate to their needs”. It gives no recognition to the issues of power within a community, or the fact that the voices of girls and women are likely to be crowded out in a community consultative process of determining family planning services.

14 Save the Children (2001) Behind Every Healthy Child is a Healthy Mother

15 UNFPA, Accessed on 21 January 2011 at: <http://tiny.cc/1j9j7>

16 UNFPA, Accessed on 21 January 2011 at: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/adolescents/>

Recommendations

15. Explicitly position Family Planning as one component of SRHR, and that it will not be dealt with in isolation but addressed and invested in as part of broader package of SRHR information, services and advocacy.
16. Link strategies on SRHR to policies on prevention of and response to gender-based violence, in recognition of the power dimensions of SRHR.
17. Explicitly recognise adolescents and young people as having a right to family planning and SRHR information and services, and as demanding particular attention due to the specific nature and scale of their concerns.
18. Include comprehensive sexuality education within curricula/activities of schools and non-formal youth-accessible spaces.
19. Recognise and provide guidance on the tensions of children's rights and SRHR of women and men.
20. Develop clear policy on SRHR within which the Family Policy Guiding Principles would sit, and which include specific policy guidance on AusAID's response to Reproductive and Sexual Health concerns of young people.

Food Security



CRC Articles

Article 6 – Life, Article 12 – Participation, Article 26 – Health and Services, Article 27 – Adequate standard of living, Article 32 – Child labour.

Overview

The (2010) *Recovering from Economic and Financial Crisis: Food Security and Safety Nets* paper emphasises the detrimental impact of food insecurity on children: “Children who fail to get the correct nutrients and vitamins become prone to illness, learn less and have poorer cognitive development and lower productivity in the long term.”¹⁷ Food insecurity is one of the most significant challenges facing the developing world and has been compounded in the wake of the recent global economic crisis. The food insecurity problem facing children is further compounded during manmade or natural disasters.

In 2009 the Australian Government announced a four-year \$464 million global food security initiative with a focus on three areas: increasing agricultural productivity, improving rural livelihoods, and building community resilience. *The Food Security Strategy* (2004), and the briefer *Australian Aid: Approach to Food Security* (2006), emphasise children as among those most vulnerable to the effects of food insecurity.

Strengths

Recognising children as a particularly vulnerable group, the *Food Security Strategy* provides statistical evidence (200 million children under five suffer globally from protein, micronutrient, and energy deficiencies) of the importance of childhood nutrition. The *Food Security Strategy* also recognises the targeting of children for food assistance as an immediate need during hardships and as an integral part of the longer food security solution. This may inform supplementary feeding to save lives, school feeding to ensure increased attendance and registration, and incentives for gender balance in schools (incentives for girls to attend school). According to World Food Program’s 45 years of school feeding experience, an estimated 66 million school children go to school hungry and school feeding is a powerful hunger response for children and their families.

The main strength of the food strategy in relation to child-rights lies in the fact that it acknowledges the importance of childhood and early childhood nutrition. The strategy promotes a holistic approach to food security both in terms of its analysis and programmatic focuses. The analytical framework incorporates availability (production), access (ability to purchase) and utilisation (in balanced rations, hygienic etc.). As a consequence, programming guidance incorporates a comprehensive range of interventions including training in literacy and better education of girls as a means by which to improve gender incorporation.

Gaps/Areas for Review

While increasing agricultural productivity is a key element of the food security strategy there needs to be some consideration of the use of children and child labour that can accompany such a push (e.g. children may be withdrawn provisionally or permanently from schooling to support family subsistence in places of food security stress).

There should be a more detailed analysis of the long-term impact of children’s under and mal-nourishment and the role of the mother, especially given the malnutrition burden in priority AusAID countries.

Better cross-sectoral collaboration to address the malnourishment of young children, for example collaboration between the ECCD and Health and Nutrition sectors on the promotion of optimal infant feeding knowledge and practices, especially for children under 24 months (the critical period for intervention).

Given the sometimes controversial nature of school feeding programs and home-based alternatives, there is a requirement for some strategic direction around this issue.

17 Recovering from Economic and Financial Crisis: Food Security and Safety Nets paper, prepared by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF & WPA at an Executive Boards’ joint meeting, 15 and 18 January 20 (p.2).

Recommendations

21. Ensure strategies are developed for protecting children from inappropriate forms of child labour, especially in regard to interference with a child's education.
22. A more detailed analysis of the long-term impact of children's under and malnourishment.
23. Food assistance, especially targeting children in food-insecure areas, should be an integral part of the long-term food security solution.
24. Consideration in building the capacity of mothers and fathers in food utilisation is paramount because it has a direct bearing on children's healthy growth.
25. Encourage sectoral collaboration to address the malnourishment of young children.
26. Provide a detailed examination of school feeding programs and home-based alternatives.

Gender



CRC Articles

Article 2 – Non-discrimination, Article 12 – Participation.

Overview

Planning and programming with regard to gender relations is vital for all development work. MDG 3 works to promote gender equality and empower women and is evidence of the centrality of this theme. It should not be assumed that boys and girls are automatically accounted for in gender analysis activities. By understanding the needs of women in a particular sector or community we do not necessarily understand the needs of girls (and vice versa). The following documents within AusAID's gender equality theme were analysed:

Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program – Why and How? (2007)

Gender and Peace Building Guidelines (2006)

Gender Guidelines for Water Supply and Sanitation (2000, updated 2005)

Guide to Gender and Development (year unknown)

Strengths

An Operating Principle of the 2007 gender policy emphasises the importance of supporting partner countries in meeting their commitment to international conventions for gender equality, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In view of this, the policy frequently refers to rights and needs of girls and boys across a range of thematic areas: economic reporting, education, environment, health and population, maternal and child health, humanitarian assistance, infrastructure and microenterprise. There is also emphasis on the right to education for boys and girls, guiding questions in areas of curricula biases, and access to resources and opportunities for girls and boys to achieve their potential.

Two examples from more recent policies, which demonstrate a stronger understanding of the needs of children, include:

The Infrastructure Annual Thematic Performance Review 2007-08 (see Infrastructure section) cites poor school sanitation as often the single most important factor in girls' underrepresentation in secondary school. However, this acknowledgement is absent from *the Gender Guidelines for Water Supply and Sanitation* first written in 2000 and updated in 2005.

The 2007 gender policy provides guidelines on the design of emergency programs and takes into account the vulnerability of boys. The 2007 policy also identifies the likelihood that men and boys could be forced to join insurgency movements. However, the 2006 *Gender and Peace Building Guidelines* refer only to adults in the section on disarmament.

Gaps/Areas for Review

The key gap in the gender equality theme is a lack of consistency from policy-to-policy when considering children. This can likely be attributed to the progression of policy development over time. For example, the 2007 gender policy incorporates elements of child-rights whereas earlier policies generally do not.

Recommendations

27. Ensure that all statements on Australia's objectives for the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries of development include references to boys and girls.
28. Revise *Gender and Peace Building Guidelines* on disarmament to include a section on the gendered aspects of the demobilisation, demilitarisation, and rehabilitation of child ex-combatants.
29. Revise *Gender Guidelines for Water Supply and Sanitation* to incorporate a child-rights approach.

Political Governance

CRC Articles

Article 4 – Protection of Rights, Article 12 – Participation, Article 13 – Freedom of Expression, Article 14 - Freedom of thought and religion, Article 42 – Knowledge of Rights.

Overview

Strengthening of political governance is fundamental to the protection, promotion, and realisation of children’s rights in three key ways.

Strengthening government capacity to fulfil their role as duty bearers has direct impacts for children in terms of the provision of services and allocation of resources, the protection and promotion of rights, and through enhancing government transparency and accountability.

Strengthening relations between citizens and government including participation of children in decision-making, and holding governments to account, enables children’s voices to be heard and supports children to realise their rights.

Strengthening political leadership to promote and advocate for children’s rights and well-being, domestically and internationally.

AusAID does not currently have an over-arching policy for governance or political governance. The (2010) independent review of AusAID’s work in strengthening formal political institutions and processes: *Power to the People: Australia’s support in strengthening political governance in developing countries* was analysed. It is important to note that this document relates to formal political governance not community level or informal systems of governance.

Strengths

In response to recommendations made in the report AusAID undertook to continue to, “advance gender equality and strengthen political governance programs that empower women and youth leadership, participation, representation and influence...and support responsiveness to the needs of women, youth and children” (p.xv).

Gaps/Areas for Review

According to the report, AusAID will develop a strategy policy framework for political governance based on a set of draft guiding principles developed by the review team. These guiding principles do not integrate a child-rights approach to governance.

The absence of an over-arching policy on governance that incorporates both formal political governance and community-based governance structures is currently a significant gap.



Recommendations

In accordance with the articulated aim to continue to advance programs that respond to the needs of children and strengthen youth leadership, participation, and representation, AusAID's forthcoming strategy policy framework should include the following:¹⁸

30. Child-rights monitoring systems: partners should be supported in the collection of disaggregated data and in incorporating views of children in developing national policies and programs.
31. Strengthening of legislation: partner governments should be supported in developing national legislation that incorporates the principles of the CRC.
32. Child-friendly budgeting: as budgetary program and socio-economic spending directly impacts the well-being of children, partners should be supported in reviewing budgetary allocation and outcomes, to ensure spending meets the welfare needs and helps all children realise their rights.
33. Child-friendly services: partners should be supported in developing public administration and services that have children's interests as a key consideration.
34. Coordination of bodies responsible for children: partners should be supported in developing systems to effectively coordinate ministries responsible for the lives of children and in elevating the status of ministries dealing with children's issues.
35. Capacity-building of professionals in contact with children: partners should be supported in strengthening the competence of police, teachers, social workers and judiciary in working with children and the realisation of their rights.
36. Promotion of civic education inclusive of human rights education to enhance understandings of child-rights and the responsibilities of duty bearers. Specific support for children's participation in human rights and civic education should be included.

The forthcoming policy should also include guidance for AusAID engagement with, and support for, community-based governance systems, recognising the more direct impact that community and informal governance mechanisms have on children's lives in most developing-country contexts. This includes consideration of support to civil society organisations as a key element of a functional governance system.

¹⁸ Save the Children (2009) Child Rights Governance – making children's rights children's realities

Health



Sebylion Ronald, 8 months and mother Ritha from Apsit village at Kunjingini health sub-centre, Woseragawi district, East Sepik, Papua New Guinea, 2010. Credit: Tom Greenwood/Save the Children Australia

CRC Articles

Article 12 – Participation, Article 17 – Access to information, Article 24. 2(e) – Education on child health and nutrition.

Overview

The 2009-10 AusAID Annual Report states that: “The health MDGs (maternal and child health; combating HIV, malaria and other diseases) continue[d] to be a key priority for our work in the region and globally.”¹⁹ This thematic analysis reviewed two documents: *Intensifying the Response: Halting the spread of HIV – Australia’s International Development Strategy for HIV* (2009) and the *Health Annual Thematic Performance Report 2007-08*. The latter of these has a very clear focus on children as it examines the performance of the sector in light of MDG 4 (reduction of infant mortality) and MDG 5 (Improving Maternal Health).

Australian health aid gives emphasis to:

- Targeting major causes of child and maternal mortality and morbidity.
- Making a strong contribution in the family planning and reproductive health sector on the basis of voluntary and non-coercive policy, and accounting for the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents (whether un/married).
- Improving HIV and AIDS prevention and care activities, particularly the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission and strategies to address the increasing incidence among adolescents and youth.

Strengths

While the annual thematic report draws on a strong statistical foundation for its analysis there is an understanding that relying solely on such measures may mask gross inequities. Access to health services may be significantly different at a regional as opposed to national level, or within different socioeconomic sections of society. “In Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, children from the poorest quintile of society are three or more times more likely to die before reaching the age of five than those from the richest quintile.”²⁰

Children benefit from AusAID partnerships, such as those with UNICEF, that assist with the implementation of child health programs and procuring vaccines. Multilateral and technical partnerships are further emphasised as important in improving the prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV. In *Australia’s International Development Strategy for HIV*, children who are orphaned by HIV are identified as a group requiring greater attention (a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach). Thus, through partnerships and coordinated efforts, the Australian aid program aims to improve the livelihoods of children.

Holding the MDGs central to aid and development efforts lends itself to a human rights focus.

Gaps/Areas for Review

While there is considerable focus on children throughout the reviewed documentation they are most often referred to as victims. While some may consider that in the area of health it is difficult for children to take an active role, it is vital that organisations with whom AusAID partners consult children and their caregivers.

A holistic approach to health needs to be incorporated into all policies, as called for in Article 24 of the CRC. This can be done by taking an integrated approach to programming for health, water, sanitation, and education.

Recommendations

37. Recognise in relevant policies that children as rights-holders rather than victims.
38. Incorporate a holistic approach focusing on health, water, sanitation and education.

¹⁹ AusAID 2009-10 Annual Report, p. 3

²⁰ Tracking Development and Governance in the Pacific (2009), p. 16

Infrastructure



CRC Articles

Article 12 – Participation, Article 23 – Health care, education & recreational facilities for children with a disability, Article 24 – Health care, including appropriate sanitation and environmental protection, Article 27 – Adequate standard of living, Article 28 – Education, Article 31 – Appropriate and safe recreational space.

Overview

Infrastructure-related issues are clearly connected to the fulfilment of children's rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Infrastructure is also a significant theme given that MDG 7 aims to ensure environmental sustainability. For example, target 7c aims to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (also see Environment, Water and Sanitation, and Gender Equality sections of this report).

The AusAID policy framework for infrastructure is in the process of being updated. This analysis examined the *Infrastructure Annual Thematic Performance Reports 2007–08 and 2009*.

Strengths

The 2007-08 report acknowledges that support for improved infrastructure provides opportunities to address gender inequalities. One example is that poor school sanitation is often the single most important factor in girls' under-representation in secondary school. The report also contends that improving access to water helps to reduce often excessive burden on women and girls.

Gaps/Areas for Review

The report contains only two references to children as mentioned in the strengths section. The 2009 report is more limited in its reference to children, with just one example provided of how infrastructure development can contribute to achievement of the MDGs (also linking water/sanitation facilities with children's access to education). Given the intersection of infrastructure and children's rights, and that "infrastructure will be a major focus for Australian aid in the coming decade" (2007-08 report), a focus on infrastructure projects that help children to realise their rights is crucial.

Recommendations

39. A greater focus on children should feature in AusAID's infrastructure policy and projects.
40. The *Child Friendly Cities Framework for Action* (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2004) adapts the processes needed to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child with emphasis on child participation across areas such as budgeting and urban planning. The framework is a useful guide in incorporating children's rights in policy review and formulation concerning infrastructure.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

CRC Articles

Article 2 – Protection from discrimination, Article 12 – Participation, Article 24 – Access to health care including environmental protection, Article 27 – Access to adequate standard of living, Article 28 – Access to education.

Overview

The MDGs have been placed at the heart of the AusAID development assistance program. The right to survival, education, and health are all consistent with rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Increases in the budget and scope of the aid program, and a general shift towards aid effectiveness and transparency, are helping to ensure that the rights of all, including children, are protected. The (2008) *Annual Review of Development Effectiveness – Scaling up in a deteriorating global environment* and the (2009) *Tracking Development and Governance in the Pacific* were analysed.

Strengths

The *Development and Governance in the Pacific* tracking report, while not a strategy or policy document, pays particular attention to progress toward the MDGs. Evident from both reviewed documents is an understanding that development efforts must reach the most vulnerable. “Children particularly at risk of not completing primary school are those living in geographically remote communities, those with disability, those from poorer families and those who undertake paid or domestic labour. Inequalities are particularly wide for children with a disability.”²¹

Health, education, the environment, and economic growth are all discussed with reference to children. The opening of economic corridors is linked to an increased risk for trafficking of children and women. While not explicitly stated as such, working to eliminate trafficking is evidence of the Australian Government working to uphold the Optional Protocol to the CRC.

Gaps/Areas for Review

Children are considered a key stakeholder in many of the MDGs, although not sufficiently examined in the context of rights-holders. A greater level of gender specific analysis is equally required. The reviewed documents consider children at length but do not disaggregate for gender. Addressing the gender disparity in education is a central pursuit in many current aid programs and needs to be further addressed in light of the MDGs.

Recommendations

41. Children should be noted in all relevant documents as rights-holders as opposed to beneficiaries. Incorporate the CRC more explicitly into all future documents regarding the MDGs.
42. Improve the sex disaggregation of data sources. The evidence used supports progress toward the MDGs, however, gender disparities need to be taken into account.

²¹ Please refer to Millennium Development Rights, ACFID, 2009 for further guidance.

Mine Action



CRC Articles

Article 6 – Life, Article 12 – Participation, Article 19 – Protection, Article 23 – Education and Disability, Article 24 – Health and Medical Care, Article 31. 1 – Play, Article 38 – Respect of Humanitarian law, Article 39 – Support for child victims of conflict.

Overview

The preamble to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction states: “...to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines that kill, or maim hundreds of people every week, mostly innocent and defenceless civilians and especially children...”²²

Mine Action is an important element of the Australian ODA program with an estimated AUD\$23 million allocated to specific programs in the 2010-11 budget. The new *Mine Action Strategy for the Australian Aid Program* (2010-2014) is supported by a financial commitment of AUD\$100 million.

Strengths

The recent *Mine Action Strategy* considers the separate needs of girls and boys and emphasises a reduction in child mortality (MDG 4) as an overarching goal. Examining landmine action through an MDG lens introduces intrinsic human rights values.

Disaggregation of children as a group identifies boys as those who suffer the most from landmine accidents and girls as the most likely to be withdrawn from school to become carers or help families earn income. Children are also considered as a group with particular needs, separate to those of adults. An example is their changing prostheses requirements as they grow and develop. Another is the different needs of girls and boys, in their mobility, play and schooling routes, which bring them in contact with different zones to adults.

There is an articulated link between the *Development for All* disability strategy and the Mine Action Strategy. The social and physical barriers to education for children affected by landmines are identified: and education of children, families, teachers and communities on disability-inclusive development is identified as a strategy to help all victims, including children.

Gaps/Areas for Review

Although children are consistently referenced throughout the *Mine Action* and the appendix to *Mine Action Strategy*, in the detail of the outcomes for the goal of reducing the threat and socioeconomic impact of landmines, children are omitted.

Recommendations

43. Include children in the outcomes for the *Mine Action Strategy* Goal.
44. A multi-sectoral approach to mine action needs to incorporate Mine Risk Education (MRE) as a mitigating strategy.

²² Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Regional stability

CRC Articles

Article 12 – Participation, Article 19 – Protection, Article 29(b,c,d) – Education based on tolerance and respect.

Overview

Two documents form the basis of the analysis into the aid theme of regional stability: *Annual Thematic Performance Report: Law and Justice 2008-09* (2010) and *Counter-Terrorism and Australian Aid* (2003). The value of working to promote regional stability is seen most readily in the areas of the world where disparity is greatest. Conflict within borders has the potential to destabilise a region, and further threats such as health pandemics, disasters, and climate change often have an impact that stretches beyond national boundaries.

Strengths

The work of the Australian Government in partnership with other Asian Governments has seen the establishment of the Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project. This taskforce works particularly to uphold the rights of women and children and is part of Australia's work to honour its obligations under the CRC optional protocol on sexual exploitation.

Quality and affordable education is cited as a strategy to help mitigate the emergence of environments conducive to terrorism. Basic education projects are highlighted as an important step in seeking to address the potential for terrorism before it emerges, and as promoting regional stability. In Indonesia alone some two million children benefited from the funding of basic education programs during 1999-2003.

Gaps/Areas for Review

The documents analysed consider specific elements of regional development, namely law and justice and counter-terrorism. There is need for a more complete analysis of issues impacting regional stability; issues such as climate change, transnational crime, health pandemics, etc. all of which have significant impact on the livelihood of children.

With trafficking being a regional issue, particularly in southeast and south Asia, a more detailed and gender specific strategy needs to be employed.

Recommendations

45. Undertake an analysis of the wide-ranging issues contributing to regional instability and map the impacts these issues have on the wellbeing and livelihoods of children and adolescents to provide a basis for future policies.
46. Provide clear policy direction for a regional approach to climate change with an express consideration of the short and long-term impact on children.
47. Take a regional lead in promoting the CRC and Optional Protocol through partnerships such as the Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project and law enforcement agencies (such as the Australian Federal Police).

Rural Development



CRC Articles

Article 2 – Equality, Article 12 – Participation, Article 32 – Child Labour.

Overview

Rural development is often addressed within documentation related to other thematic areas. The sole document reviewed which exclusively addressed this theme was: *Income generation for the rural poor – the Australian aid program's rural development strategy* (2000). More generally, activities that fall within this policy framework and aim at improving rural development include:

- Agricultural research and development
- Community drive, small-scale rural infrastructure
- Safeguards for the rural sector
- Asia-Pacific small and medium enterprise development program

Strengths

There are no identifiable child-rights related strengths in the reviewed document.

Gaps/Areas for Review

While children are identified on one occasion as amongst the most vulnerable of the rural poor, there is considerable scope to include children in rural development programs. An approach to rural development needs to consider all rights-holders, including children, particularly around rural infrastructure: school buildings, early childhood facilities, water and sanitation facilities, etc. Limited access to these rights may perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

There is a need to analyse and discuss possible strategies aimed at reducing the engagement of children in labour. When this takes place it is often at the expense of education and play, both critical processes in children's development.

Recommendations

48. Consider the rights of the child in future documents concerning rural development. For example, a greater focus on education and early childhood facilities as important aspects of rural development.
49. Recognise that child labour, particularly in rural areas, is often common practice at the expense of education, play, and other instrumental child development activities. Strategies which address child labour are important in any rural development policy.
50. Emphasise existing gender imbalances – girls are less likely to be sent to school and are instead required to assist with household responsibilities in many rural communities in developing countries. It is important to work toward holistic strategies that reduce this gender disparity.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

CRC Articles

Article 6 – Right to life, survival and development, Article 12 – Participation, Article 24 – Health and health services, Article 27 – Adequate standard of living.

Overview

The Australian Government is currently developing a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene policy for the International Development Assistance Program²³. In lieu of this forthcoming policy framework, two older documents were reviewed: *Safe Water Guide for the Australian Aid Program: A Framework and Guidance for Managing Water Quality* (2005) and *Making Every Drop Count: Water and Australian Aid* (2003). Millennium Development Goal 7, target 10, deals specifically with 'water and sanitation', aiming to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. In this, there is still a long way to go, particularly in achieving access to basic sanitation for large numbers of people.



A boy demonstrates how to wash hands and face properly in Pakistan. This hygiene training was provided as part of Plan's response to the floods. Credit: Plan International Australia

Strengths

Children are identified as a group who are particularly vulnerable to the ill-effects of unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, and an unhygienic living environment in developing countries. There is an understanding that the health impact of contaminated and unsanitary water is felt most acutely by children who are both unaware of the risks and more susceptible to their effects.

Children are highlighted as key stakeholders in the design of sanitation facilities. Better health benefits are recognised as a possible result from hygiene education programs that are aimed at, and accessible to, children. There is some initial discussion of the fact that the burden of water collection falls most often on girls and women.

Gaps/Areas for Review

Children are the most vulnerable to ill-health as a result of unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation and hygiene, and its knock-on effects (e.g. reduced school attendance). There is a need to place children at the front and centre of any future WASH policy.

Children should be supported as change agents for water, sanitation, and hygiene in their communities. Child-to-child hygiene behaviour change enables children to take the lead in the adoption of positive hygiene behaviours, setting an example to parents, elders and the wider community. Children can also play a positive role in terms of determining the location of tap stands, communal toilets, and hand-washing facilities.

In existing AusAID documentation there is an initial understanding of accounting for the needs of children in water and sanitation projects (e.g. selecting hand-pump designs that are easier for children and women to use). Unfortunately, the depth of analysis is narrow. It identifies children solely as the beneficiaries of improved water and sanitation, while also identifying them as a homogenous group.

There is a need to acknowledge and promote the importance of access to a close, convenient safe water supply from the perspective of supporting the increased enrolment of girls in school. Girls are often unable to attend school due to the burden of time-consuming water collection. Convenient access to water can transform a girl's life and enable her to realise her right to education.

School WASH Programs must ensure separate toilet facilities for girls and boys. They must also ensure that consideration is given to menstrual hygiene needs both from an infrastructure perspective (e.g. sufficient privacy for girls, bathing facilities, clothes washing lines) and an attitudinal perspective (e.g. menstrual hygiene as a topic in school health classes to break the taboo on menstruation).

²³ AusAID (2011) Water and Sanitation www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/water.cfm



Greater emphasis must be placed on the importance of sanitation and hygiene, rather than water supply, in order to provide maximum benefit for children. Traditionally AusAID and other donors have allocated more funds to water supply above sanitation and hygiene, yet clear evidence exists to show that the adoption of good hygiene behaviours and the habitual use of a hygienic toilet are more effective in terms of reducing the risk of diarrhoea. With the sanitation MDG goal off-track (while water supply is on-track for 2015), the funding emphasis needs to shift to place greater emphasis on sanitation and hygiene.

Gender equality must be promoted in the implementation of WASH programs for better outcomes for girls and women. The burden of water collection, child hygiene, and maintaining a hygienic living environment traditionally lies almost entirely on the shoulders of girls and women. WASH can act as a vehicle for improved gender outcomes, and gender must receive consideration in the design of all WASH programs.

Recommendations

These recommendations may need to be tailored in accordance with the forthcoming Water, Sanitation and Hygiene strategy:

51. Support and promote children as change agents for water, sanitation and hygiene in their communities.
52. Ensure that all WASH infrastructures incorporate child-friendly designs (e.g. the height of tap-stands, accessible toilets, and hand-washing facilities).
53. Acknowledge and promote the importance of access to a close, convenient safe water supply from the perspective of supporting the increased enrolment of girls in school.
54. For school WASH Programs, ensure separate toilet facilities for girls and boys.
55. Place greater emphasis on the importance of sanitation and hygiene, rather than water supply, in order to provide maximum benefit for children.
56. Promote gender equality outcomes for girls and women through the implementation of WASH programs.

Conclusion

There is a discernible evolution in AusAID policy and strategy documents. The more recent, such as *Development for All* (2009), *Financial Services for the Poor* (2010), and the new *Mine Action Strategy* (2010), all include an increased level of human rights emphasis when contrasted with older documents. There is some discussion of people (and occasionally children) in the context of rights-holders, yet there is still considerable scope within all documents for a much improved inclusion of children.

When children are identified they are often considered a homogenous group. A greater degree of disaggregation by sex, disability, and age is required throughout the suite of AusAID policy and strategy documents. Girls often have very different requirements to boys, and the needs and priorities for very young children differ markedly to those who are older.

Inconsistency in the types of available documentation presented a challenge for this analysis and is equally a weakness of the AusAID thematic programming. For documents available in the public domain (through the AusAID website) some aid themes have guiding policies, others strategy documents, and some merely thematic reviews.

This research has provided an introductory analysis of the manner in which children and their rights are addressed across the AusAID aid and development themes. The broad recommendations provide a platform for engagement but more refined thematic recommendations may be developed over time by those with expertise in the area. Subsequent research could consider young people over 18, a further demographic not adequately considered in this analysis.



Children from Baptist World Aid Australia supported Child Centred Community Development Project operated by SAO Philippines, 2011. Credit: Jacob Manentz

Appendix A

AusAID documents reviewed and their expiry dates, where known

Theme	Document	Document review date
Disability	Development for All: Toward a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014 (Development strategy)	2014
Disaster Risk Reduction	Investing in a Safer Future: a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid Program (2009) Humanitarian Action Policy (2005) Peace, Conflict and Development Policy (2002)	2011 or 2012 Unknown Unknown
Economic Growth	Financial Services for the Poor – A Strategy for the Australian Aid Program 2010–15 (2010)	2015
Education	Better Education: A Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Education (2007)	2010
Environment	Aid and the Environment – Building Resilience, Sustaining Growth: An Environment Strategy for Australian Aid (2007) Environment Annual Thematic Performance Report 2007-08 (2009)	Regular review Annual report
Food Security	Australian Aid: Approach to Food Security (2006) Food Security Strategy (2004)	Unknown Unknown
Gender	Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program – Why and How? (2007) Gender and Peace Building Guidelines (2006) Gender Guidelines for Water Supply and Sanitation (2000, updated 2005) Guide to Gender and Development (year unknown)	2012 approx Unknown Unknown Unknown
Governance	Power to the People: Australia's support in strengthening political governance in developing countries (2010)	-
Health	Intensifying the Response: Halting the spread of HIV – Australia's International Development Strategy for HIV (2009)	2015?
Infrastructure	Infrastructure Annual Thematic Performance Report 2007–08 Infrastructure Annual Thematic Performance Report 2009	Annual report n/a
MDGs	Tracking Development and Governance in the Pacific (2009) Annual Review of Development Effectiveness – Scaling up in a deteriorating global environment (2008)	Annual report Annual report
Mine Action	Mine Action Strategy for the Australian Aid Program (2010 – 2014) Mine Action Strategy (2006)	2014 2010
Regional Stability	Annual Thematic Performance Report: Law and Justice 2008-09 (2010) Counter-Terrorism and Australian Aid (2003)	Annual report Unknown
Rural Development	Income generation for the rural poor - the Australian aid program's rural development strategy (2000)	
Water and Sanitation	Safe Water Guide for the Australian Aid Program: A Framework and Guidance for Managing Water Quality (2005) Making Every Drop Count: Water and Australian Aid (2003)	





www.acfid.asn.au

ACFID is the independent peak Council for Australian aid and development NGOs, working towards a world where gross inequality and extreme poverty are eradicated

