



ACFID Resolution 1-2020

RESOLUTION on Race, Diversity and Australian INGOs

Pre-Amble

We start from this position: this resolution does not purport to speak on behalf of any group other than the Board to the Council. We wish to initiate a vital dialogue amongst members about representation, participation, access to decision making. We are open to where members may go in the future with dialogue and options to address these critical issues, but we believe it is not an option to not to discuss these matters.

Noting ACFID's value of "Respect: we recognise the value and diversity of every person and are committed to treating others with due regard for their rights, dignity and integrity."

ACFID Council recognises Racism is harmful and has real life impacts - including exclusion from power and decision making - and that meaningfully addressing diversity and inclusion often requires engaging in questions of racism.

Noting that racism in Australia and overseas may intersect gender, disability, age, class, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, and other identities; and that it has historically compounded real-life impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Indigenous peoples.

Noting Australia's international aid and development organisations are yet to achieve representation, participation, and access to decision making that reflects the ethnic composition of Australian society and the overseas communities we seek to serve and work with.

Recognising the value of diversity in its own sake, and noting that governance of INGOs would benefit by being informed by participation of people from countries, cultures, and peoples where members work.

Resolutions

ACFID Council resolves to work to build greater representation, participation and access to decision making with peoples of varied cultural and racial origins and intersections in the sector.

To do this Council **calls on BOARDS/ SENIOR LEADERSHIP:**

- A. to initiate genuine dialogue about greater representation, participation and access to decision making with peoples of varied cultural and racial origins to consider within their own governance and leadership, including explicit strategies on addressing cultural, racial and ethnic diversity within the organisation, with respect to different perspectives of worldviews, communication, and priorities;
- B. to consider how, and to move to formally incorporate participation that better reflects the ethnic composition of Australian society and the overseas communities we seek to serve and work with, into our Australian governance and leadership;
- C. to counter direct and indirect racism, both structural and individual, using tools and resources from the Australian Human Rights Commission and anti-racism organisations led by people of varied cultural, racial and ethnic diversity;
- D. to form a new Diversity in Leadership Community of Practice where it is encouraged that senior Board, CEOs, and Executives, staff - from all cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds - step up to advance thinking, create safe spaces, drive initiatives, and share good practice on sharing power amongst ACFID membership; and
- E. to ask ACFID to integrate high level data on ethnic diversity in leadership and staffing levels into its annual surveys, and share good practice of members' Boards and leadership with the Council, including the number of members with explicit targets to address race, diversity and inclusion, eg Reconciliation Plans and/or other collaborative efforts, and report back to the Council in 2021.

Background

Cultural Diversity of Australia.

Noting in 2016 Census data, there were over 7.5 million migrants living in Australia. This was 29.7% of the population that were born overseas, and that over 6 million came from non-English speaking backgrounds; Nearly half (49%) of all Australians were either born overseas (first generation) or have at least one parent born overseas (second generation). The remaining 51% were at least third generation – born in Australia to Australian-born parents.

Noting that the Reserve Bank of Australia's 2018 Equity & Diversity Annual Report estimates the percentage of leadership in Australia is representative of the following: 0.4% Indigenous, 4.7% Non-European, 19% European, and 75.9% Anglo-Celtic peoples.

Noting that retention rates and pay equity strongly links to how safe and valued people of varied cultural and ethnic diversity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, feel in the workplace.

Indirect racism in Australia and the sector

Noting the Australians Human Rights Commission's warning that Indirect discrimination can be less obvious but can happen when employers or service providers put in place conditions, requirements or practices which appear to treat everyone the same but which actually disadvantage some people because of their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status; and tools to prevent indirect racism: <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/> and to help build cultural diversity: <https://culturaldiversity.humanrights.gov.au/>

Localisation and devolution of power

Noting leaders of civil society organisations in developing countries have been calling on Australian NGOs and elsewhere, to 'localise' their operations and partnerships and devolve power, funding, and donor relationships to local civil society through the Charter for Change <https://charter4change.org/>

Noting the general absence of peoples from developing countries sitting on the governance bodies of Australian INGOs despite their mandate to work in other societies and culture; and notwithstanding that under the Charity Act, and with modern communication, there is no legal or technical impediment per se to developing country representation on Australian charity boards occurring so as to diversify and inform governance.

Black Lives Matter and the sector

Noting the global responses to Black Lives Matter in the US and UK and calls from groups such as Charity So White, <https://charitysowhite.org/our-calls-to-action> to: "Prioritise candid and honest conversations about racism; publicly acknowledge racism within the sector and within their organisations; and commit to tackling institutional racism within their organisations and in the sector."

Noting that in the context of Black Lives Matter INGOs have started making commitments to progressing the necessary changes to governance, executive leadership and to strengthening the participation of CALD communities.

Moved: Matthew Maury, TEAR Australia

Seconded: Lyn Morgan, Oxfam