

A new development policy for Australia

CARE Australia seeks a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live with dignity and security. Formed in 1987 by former Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser, as a humanitarian aid organisation, and part of a global movement formed in 1945, CARE Australia has a strong focus on gender equality as an essential component in bringing lasting development to communities. The primary geographic focus of CARE Australia is the Pacific and South-East Asia where we manage all programs and activities of the CARE International confederation in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. In addition, CARE Australia undertakes development assistance and disaster response activities in another 17 countries in the Pacific, Middle East and Africa.



It starts with equal

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Framing a new development policy with the SDGs

Integrate the SDGs as the foundation for Australia's International Development Policy.

Enhance and develop the SDG indicators, providing sex and gender and other vulnerabilities disaggregated data, and clarity, measurability and rigour and public accountability, for a new aid performance framework that will show achievements against the SDGs and in eradicating poverty.

CARE Australia contends the primary purpose of Australia's international development program must be to advance Australia's interests through the promotion of sustainable growth in order to eradicate poverty and bring about the advancement of universal human rights. Development cannot be seen as a siloed issue, but rather an essential ingredient of Australia's international engagement. The scope of Australia's development policy, while recognising the immediate needs and opportunities in the local region, must be global to ensure vital partnerships are maintained and communities are supported at times of greatest need. In framing a new international development policy for Australia the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ provide vision, ambition and establish necessary progress points towards this purpose. As already identified in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper "our development program magnifies the influence that Australia brings to bear on pressing regional and global problems, including efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals."² The SDGs are not just a framework for aid delivery, they underpin every aspect of international engagement.

The SDGs present us with a roadmap towards a universally agreed vision of the world we want to live in. They exemplify a collective ambition, and like fundamental human rights, are universal, indivisible and interdependent. We cannot progress towards ending poverty (SDG 1) without considering quality education (SDG 4), safe cities (SDG 11) or use of the oceans (SDG 14) (for example).

We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path.³

¹ The Sustainable Development Goals were developed and supported by 193 member states of the United Nations in 2015

² Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017 *Foreign Policy White Paper* 2017 p18

³ United Nations *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* 2015

To truly work as a foundation for Australia's international development policy the SDG framework can be expanded to better integrate measurement methodologies, noting

For many of the SDGs targets and indicators, information is not yet disaggregated by sex, there is no intention to disaggregate by sex, or there are data gaps that prevent us from measuring key issues, which hamper our ability to understand today's gender differences and the direction of travel for the well-being of girls and women. Indeed, gender bias is often ingrained in the way we measure - or fail to measure - aspects of a person's life.⁴

It is vital the Australian Government is able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the investment in Official Development Assistance across the key parameters of the SDGs. OECD directives should continue to be a core identifier in recognising ODA spending. A new performance framework, to sit with a new development policy, must recognise poverty reduction linked to sustainable economic growth, as the primary goal of the aid program. Current baseline data for all indicators is necessary, and the performance framework should deliver clarity, measurability and rigour. Targets should be clear in their articulation, with baselines and level of ambition explicit in the description.

Gender Equality

The need to advance gender equality at individual, community and structural levels must be integral to Australia's international development policy across aid, trade and diplomacy.

Using the OECD gender equality policy marker, at least 10 percent of aid programming be coded as principal investment, increasing to 15 percent by 2025, recognising the cross-cutting benefits of gender equality programming to the goals of the development policy.

The new international development policy for Australia must tackle the challenge of gender inequality. "Gender inequalities manifest themselves in every dimension of sustainable development,"⁵ and yet "no country is on track to achieving gender equality targets as set out in the SDGs."⁶ The steps already taken by Australia in support of gender equality through the aid program have been welcomed, and with deeper integration of gender considerations in all aspects of development policy these small wins can be embedded and enhanced. As noted by the Asian Development Bank Institute "government intervention, through the legislation and execution of concrete plans of action, is a crucial component"⁷ in progressing towards gender equality. And for all nations, there are strong economic benefits for working towards gender equality, as "the presence of conditions that hinder the ability of women to realize their full capabilities has economic consequences."⁸ McKinsey Global Institute found that "advancing women's equality could result in an estimated \$4.5 trillion of additional GDP in 2025"⁹ for the Asia-Pacific region. Progress towards gender equality can support a reduction in gender-based violence, increased political engagement, improved literacy rates, and benefits for health and well-being for the whole population. Yet multiple forms of inequality, within countries, are higher today than 25 years ago.¹⁰ As outlined in the most recent ILO World Employment and Social Outlook report

Inequalities and widespread decent work deficits not only lead to economic inefficiency, they can also undermine social cohesion within countries. Significantly, seven out of the 11 subregions of the world experienced an increase in the incidence of protests in 2019, which suggest that discontent with the social economic or political situation is on the rise.¹¹

⁴ Equal Measures 2030 'Data driving change: Introducing the EM2030 SDG Gender Index' quoted in Kharas et al (eds) *Leave No One Behind 2020* p33

⁵ UN Women *Turning Promises Into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2018*

⁶ CARE International Gender Network *Supporting women's social movements and collective action 2019*

⁷ Kunmin Kim & Dani Rose C.Salazar, 'Toward gender-focused governance reform in Asia' (2018) 4 *Asian Development Bank Institute Policy Brief* p6

⁸ *ibid* p1

⁹ Quoted by Kunmin Kim & Dani Rose C.Salazar, *op cit*, p5

¹⁰ World Bank *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality* quoted by UN Women *Turning Promises Into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2018*

¹¹ International Labour Organisation *World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2020, 2020*

While perhaps beneficial for the country's economy, a job or economic engagement may not immediately improve a woman's life, especially if the quality of work is low or vulnerable.¹² As has been noted by Professor Naila Kabeer there is debate on whether "women's entry into paid work represents empowerment or exploitation."¹³

CARE works with communities producing cocoa in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in PNG, to help reinvigorate the cocoa industry and improve the lives of farming families. Through targeted programming women and men are able to understand the importance of giving women an equal role in decision making on the farm and about incomes. Participants come to recognise this is not only fair, but can also improve cocoa quality and yields - with cocoa production increasing by on average three bags, the equivalent to an income increase of \$430. And household chores are being shared more equally, and cocoa cooperatives are functioning more efficiently and getting better cocoa price for their members.¹⁴ Gender equality programming and integration across the development program cannot be focused on just individual-level solutions - such as supporting a woman into education, training or economic productivity. "The achievement of gender equality is dependent on structural change."¹⁵

Women, Peace and Security

Include a strategic approach to consolidating peace across all development efforts by connecting grassroots women-led peacebuilding up to national and international peace-making activities.

The *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*, adopted by Pacific Islander leaders, including Australia and New Zealand in September 2018, reiterates and recognises an expanded concept of security, with an increasing emphasis on four key areas, including 'human security, including humanitarian assistance, to protect the rights, health and prosperity of Pacific people.'¹⁶ With Australia's recent renewed focus on the Pacific region, this expanded understanding of security needs to be respected with the incorporation of the women, peace and security agenda. Australia's new development policy must recognise women are integral to sustainable peace and security, as well as the urgent need to tackle the scourge of violence against diverse women and girls in conflict, fragile contexts and protracted crises. Gender based violence in humanitarian crisis is endemic, with at least one in five women reporting experiencing sexual violence but less than one percent of global humanitarian funds are spent on the prevention of sexual and gender based violence.¹⁷

"We want peace to help sustain the growth that has brought the region to the centre of the global economy."¹⁸ Australia, through a new development policy and a second National Action Plan on WPS, has the opportunity to lead in adopting a holistic approach to conflict prevention and resolution, founded on women's meaningful and substantive participation in all aspects of peace and security policy and practice. This will mean implementing comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing structures and relations that condition their choices, women's capacity and potential, and fostering linkages between access to and control over civil, political, economic and social rights.¹⁹

Civil Society

To ensure beneficial development outcomes, recognise the primacy of civil society stability and partnerships, along with local engagement in Australia's international development policy.

¹² Sakiko Tanaka & Maricor Muzones 'Female labour force participation in Asia: key trends, constraints, and opportunities' (2016) 71 *ADB Briefs* p2

¹³ Naila Kabeer 'Marriage, motherhood and masculinity in the global economy' (2008) 1 *NIASnytt Asia Insights* p6

¹⁴ J Cousins *BECOMES Mid Term Review Report* 2018

¹⁵ Kharas et al (eds) *Leave No One Behind* 2020 p27

¹⁶ As referenced in CARE and IWDA *From Rhetoric to Reality: Towards a Feminist Foreign Policy* 2019

¹⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [Gender-based violence: A closer look at the numbers](#) 2019

¹⁸ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* 2017 p3

¹⁹ CARE International *From Resolution to Reality - Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance* 2010

“Development can be inclusive - and reduce poverty - only if all groups of people contribute to creating opportunities, share the benefits of development and participate in decision-making.”²⁰ Strong civil society organisations provide the foundations for good governance, the recognition of human rights, and the provision of essential services. A study of 70 countries over 40 years, looking at violence against women, found the “most important and consistent factor for driving policy change is feminist activism.”²¹ The presence of strong women’s movements, for example, is more important for progressing women’s rights than the number of women legislators or national wealth. Women’s movements, or collective organising, and a strong civil society more broadly, are often seen as an example of a healthy democracy and legal system. “Robust democratic and equitable social development is more likely to be obtained when civil society functions well in terms of both advocacy and service delivery.”²²

On a multilateral and on a local level, Australian civil society organisations or NGOs, of which CARE Australia is one, play a crucial role in supporting people-to-people links and communicating with the Australian population the importance of aid to the national interest. Australia has long advocated for ensuring civil society has a voice in multilateral processes even when there is considerable resistance to this by some nations. As noted in the White Paper “Australia is committed to protecting and strengthening civil society internationally.”²³ Support for local civil society can be made a more explicit strategic priority for Australia, and be ingrained in the new development policy as an explicit pillar of our aid program and across all aspects of international engagement. “Until we better enable [localisation and feminism], women and girls in crisis - and especially the most vulnerable subgroups - will continue to be left behind.”²⁴

NGOs are also critical implementing partners for multilateral agencies that have a broad mandate but are often stretched in their capacity to implement. Many of these arrangements take the form of sub-contracting, and are not always considered until too late in the design process, after DFAT funding has been allocated. A new development approach can incorporate joint design processes and incentivise partnership brokering earlier on in the design process before funding is allocated. This would go a long way to maximising the impact and reach of programs through multilateral mechanisms, the largest channel of funding for Australian aid. There are also opportunities for DFAT to more effectively influence innovation in multilateral organisation spending. The Office for Development Effectiveness found in 2015 that despite accounting for just 2.7 per cent of the aid budget, the Australian NGO Cooperation Program delivered almost one-fifth of the results for the Australian Government.²⁵ The work of NGOs aligns well with the commitments the Australian Government has made to strengthening local civil society, promoting human rights and maximising efficiency and quality, as well as delivering value for money.

Humanitarian response

To serve communities and lead them towards self-reliance and resilience in times of crisis integrate nexus principles across all aspects of the international development policy, creating systems and structures, such as maintaining multi-year funding timeframes, and developing local organisations.

In 2020, nearly 168 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This represents 1 in about 45 people, and is the highest figure in decades.²⁶ The average humanitarian crisis now lasts more than nine years (an increase from 5.2 years in 2014).²⁷ The SDGs provide an interconnected framework for humanitarian and development responses - “not

²⁰ UNDP [A Glimpse Around the World - United Nations Development Programme](#) 2014

²¹ S. Laurel Weldon & M Htun, ‘Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women’ (2013) *Gender & Development*, vol 21 - issue 2

²² V. Heinrich & L. Fioramonti (eds) *CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society: Comparative perspective*, 2008 p363

²³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* 2017 p89

²⁴ Kharas et al (eds) *Leave No One Behind* 2020 p36

²⁵ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Office for Development Effectiveness, *Evaluation of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program* 2015 p13

²⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs *Global Humanitarian Overview 2020* 2020

²⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs *Global Humanitarian Overview 2019* 2019

just to meet needs, but to reduce risk, vulnerability and overall levels of need.”²⁸ Development gains can be rapidly eroded when communities are faced with disaster. Quality humanitarian action has a role in protecting development gains and integrating development goals into recovery programming. Integration of resilience and community preparedness work into long-term development programming reduces the negative impact of humanitarian crises, and can support the quality and reach of life-saving interventions. To see positive and significant impact in addressing humanitarian crisis, the Australian development policy must be global in its framing. It is imperative the Australian Government commits to greater investment in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience, including a strong focus on gender, to support and protect gains from across all aspects of Australia’s international development work.

Disaster impacts are not gender neutral. “Our activities during a humanitarian response can increase and reinforce, or reduce, existing inequalities.”²⁹ In the Pacific, women are more likely to be killed by disasters compared to men, and are more susceptible to sexual and gender based violence, recording one of the highest rates globally in the aftermath of a disaster.³⁰ Ensuring DRR programs recognise and respond to the fundamental differences in how women and men prepare for and are affected by and recover from disasters is essential to ensuring the basic rights of women and girls are met, and helps to make DRR more effective on a broad scale. CARE Australia’s work on women’s leadership in community based disaster committees found that where gender equality training had been delivered and women had taken up leadership roles, the community as a whole work together more effectively.³¹

Though there is recognition of the need to mainstream gender throughout international engagement activities such as the development program within DFAT, there remains a lack of basic gender inclusion measures across humanitarian activities. Gender and disability disaggregated data is only used sparingly, for example to inform the provision of relief packages. There is a lack of gender analysis and the different needs and contributions of women and men is not mainstreamed throughout practical implementation, data collection, policy and decision-making. In many activities, gender is not specifically identified as a key objective, with the result that gender disparities remain unaddressed and activities fail to meet the needs of the most vulnerable to disasters.

Australian humanitarian and development priorities should be mutually reinforcing. A focus on gender equality in development programming should continue to inform gender transformative humanitarian programming. Incorporating immediate gender-conflict analysis, identifying and then supporting local partners are key components of humanitarian response³², and through the nexus framework³³ as articulated at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, can support longer term development outcomes. A nexus approach must be grounded in local realities by using immediate and root causes analysis, mapping and understanding local partners, and which uses local responses to local challenges. By incorporating nexus principles into Australia’s development policy we can achieve a new way of working that will serve our participants with impact and efficiency. A better integrated approach to humanitarian assistance and development work, which also works better for women and girls, is possible and can be implemented at local and global levels successfully.

²⁸ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [Humanitarian Development Nexus](#) 2017

²⁹ Kharas et al (eds) *Leave No One Behind* 2020 p35

³⁰ UN Women *Time to Act on Gender, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction: An overview of progress in the Pacific Region with evidence from The Republic of the Marshall Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa* 2016 p11

³¹ J Webb et al *Does Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction Make a Difference? - A comparative study of Category Five tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu* 2017 p39

³² Gender Action for Peace and Security *The Ten Steps: Turning Women, Peace and Security Commitments to Implementation* 2019

³³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [Humanitarian Development Nexus](#) 2017