

30 November 2022

Coordinator
International Development Policy
Development Policy Section
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
via email: development.policy@dfat.gov.au

Dear Coordinator,

New International Development Policy 2022

As the International Aid Agency of the Catholic Church in Australia, Caritas Australia works to uphold human dignity and promote justice in partnership with marginalised communities, regardless of their ethnicity, political beliefs or religion. We support long-term development programs and emergency humanitarian programs in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Australia. In 2021-22, Caritas Australia reached over 1.3 million people worldwide, and over 60,000 people in Australia actively support our work through fundraising and advocacy.

Caritas Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation for the development of a new International Development Policy (IDP). Our submission is based on over 55 years of experience working with our development and humanitarian partners and the communities we serve.

Overarching Recommendation 1

That the International Development Policy reaffirms the Australian Government's commitment to inclusive, intersectional, and equitable development, with a clear commitment to women's leadership and the prevention of gender-based violence.

Equity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality

Australia's IDP must be informed by a broader and more inclusive framework that reflects diverse and intersectional experiences of gender and gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and disability. The IDP must commit to upholding the rights of women and girls in all contexts that perpetuate discrimination against them. It must ensure equal access

to basic services; as well as to safe spaces for their active and meaningful participation in community life, and in decision making, including during times of conflict and disaster.

Specific Recommendations:

1. Ensure the IDP adopts an intersectional approach to equity and inclusion, in particular addressing the compounding effects of poverty, climate change, conflict, and other drivers that increase women and girls' vulnerability.
2. Expand financial and technical support to ANGOs and local partner organisations to strengthen capacities to support the integration of gender equity outcomes. This includes committing to:
 - 5% of ODA delivered through women's equality organisations in 2023-24
 - 15% of ODA to initiatives with gender equality as the primary objective, in addition to 80% of initiatives with gender equality as a significant objective.
3. Maintain a commitment to the highest sector standards in the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment recognising how intersecting drivers of vulnerability can exacerbate risks in the delivery of development and humanitarian programs and support partners to build their capabilities including through financing mechanism.

Promoting women's leadership in development

Globally, women are disproportionately affected by poverty, food insecurity, climate change, exclusion, gender-based violence and abuse. In many regions, women and girls face additional barriers to accessing education, employment and opportunities to participate in decision-making. Programs that support women's leadership enable gender-transformative policies, programs and decision making.

Specific Recommendations:

4. That DFAT scale up its support to women's leadership programs, including by enhancing the Pacific Women Leader Program from 2023 to allow more women to participate and expanding the Program to other regions by 2024.

Addressing gender-based violence

We cannot expect women to bear the responsibilities of leadership if they cannot feel safe in their own homes. In 2021 alone, one in ten women reported experiencing sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner. During the pandemic, one in four women reported more frequent household conflict than prior. Child, early and forced marriages remain a rapidly growing issue. The new IDP should prioritise preventing all forms of gender-based violence. It should support interventions, both at the systems and community level that address the root causes of violence and strengthen strategies that respond to the compounding impacts of poverty, climate change, conflict, and other fragile humanitarian contexts, as well as on the intersections of gender and disability on women and girls that make them particularly

vulnerable to various forms gender-based violence. This should include utilising church networks to confront community norms that contribute to gender-based violence.

Specific recommendations:

5. That the IDP recognises the role of local CSOs, including churches and faith-based organisations, as key actors in tackling gender-based violence and inequality; and increase support for locally led programs that address these issues including during disaster.
6. That the IDP prioritises addressing and preventing all forms of gender-based violence, with a focus on eliminating discriminatory social norms and practices, strengthening local mechanisms, and supporting the provision of necessary services to victim-survivors, particularly in emergency and humanitarian situations. Collaboration between DFAT, ANGOs, and relevant Australian Government departments and agencies is needed to leverage expertise and achieve the OECD's recommendations in this area¹.
7. That DFAT in partnership with ANGOs co-designs a capacity strengthening program that promotes collaboration between DFAT, ANGOs and Australian Government departments and agencies (including the Department of Education; Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission; Workplace Gender Equality Agency) to strengthen policies, design, and implementation standards to prevent and address all forms of gender-based violence. The program should contain goals and indicators showing how the collaborations have effectively addressed gender-based violence.

Overarching Recommendation 2

That the International Development Policy restores and builds upon the Australian aid budget, while recognising the valuable role of civil society organisations as development partners and prioritising localised responses to global development challenges.

Greater investment in international aid

The Australian Government needs to invest more in international aid. Central to the ongoing viability of this investment will be ensuring the Australian public understand the value of our international aid investment. DFAT needs to work with ACFID (Australian Council for International Development), through its Public Engagement and Campaign Committee (PECC) for a public education campaign on Australian aid and development. This work needs to include funding for global justice education, with the aim of teaching people in Australia about the poorest of the poor and the role that Australia plays in tackling global injustice. Recent research undertaken for Caritas Australia found that 95% of people think that it is important to be a good neighbour and partner to countries in the Pacific region. This

¹ OECD 2019, *DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response*, OECD/LEGAL/5021

support needs to be solidified and should be done through a joint campaign between DFAT and ACFID.

Key Recommendations:

8. At a minimum, the Australian Government should maintain Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) at 0.2% of gross national income, in line with SDG recommendations, and report its ODA against this goal, including projections for when it will be achieved.
9. DFAT, in partnership with ACFID, undertake a public education campaign on global justice including the value and importance of the Australian aid program in 2023.

Strengthening the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)

The ANCP has delivered an efficient and effective framework for the delivery of Australian aid. Its collaborative approach has built trust and cooperation between DFAT, NGOs, local partners, and the Australian public. Further changes such as better alignment between funding and accreditation arrangements, identified through the independent evaluation of the ANCP, will help to strengthen the program. The annual nature of funding limits flexibility and inhibits a shift to more localised development approaches and can create downstream blockages of funding flows. A longer funding cycle and the ability for ANGOs to provide local partners with core funding would maximise the benefit of flexibility. ANCP funds should continue to be able to be used in any country and support civil society in organisational development and capacity building.

Key recommendations:

10. In line with the outcomes of the ANCP Evaluation and Development Finance Review, DFAT should change ANCP funding and partnership arrangements from 1-year to multiyear contracts while maintaining the flexibility of what and where ANCP funds can be used.

Localisation as a central pillar of the IDP

Aid and Development work needs to empower local communities and through initiatives like the Grand Bargain international donors are moving to greater localisation of funding. Local communities must be able to easily access opportunities presented by Australia's ODA. Locally led development is an important means of decolonisation, building the capacity of local partners to identify local development needs and transfer skills to local communities. It helps to target and overcome barriers for local communities in accessing development support. The IDP needs to support existing localisation programs and their expansion and replication.

11. Implement the OECD DAC Recommendations on Enabling Civil Society, the commitments under the Grand Bargain through co-design of a practical

roadmap for the genuine localisation of Australia's aid program that includes targets for local leadership in all aspects of programming.

12. Develop individual Country Strategies that recognise the unique strengths, opportunities, needs, and challenges of countries and ensure that genuine partnership to achieve development goals is prioritised and measured.

The importance of local networks

People-to-people connections are the strongest bonds we can develop. They are what enable us to become closer culturally, relationally, and spiritually, providing the opportunity to learn and build deeper understanding of each other. The church is a 'unique' partner, particularly in the Pacific – different from government, the private sector and the rest of civil society in its strengths, capabilities, networks and influence. In the Pacific, the church is often the most significant civil society actor, whose reach and influence make it the largest piece of social infrastructure throughout the region. The Pacific Church Partnerships Program (PCPP) was developed in acknowledgement of the reach the church has in countries which are predominantly Christian – for example countries in the Pacific.

Case Study: Localisation – the Kioa Finance Mechanism

Pacific communities facing the impacts of climate change do not have the resources they need for adaptation and have faced significant challenges in accessing climate finance. Despite large financial commitments from the global community to mitigate the impacts of climate change on communities, bureaucratic red tape, delays and a lack of access to information has prevented funds from flowing to where they are needed most – in communities, where they can be used to plant mangroves or build seawalls to protect their homes.

The Kioa Finance Mechanism (KFM) provides a recent example of locally led innovation by Pacific civil society that empowers communities and gives them greater control over access to funding for climate adaptation. The KFM was established through the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration and provides a community-led central access point to support and guide local communities in navigating the system and making applications for climate finance.

Specific Recommendations:

13. DFAT should deepen engagement with local actors including church and faith-based organisations and those supporting greater and more inclusive civil society participation in public policy, informed by the success of the Pacific Church Partnerships Program and the Church Partnerships Program in Papua New Guinea.

First Nations led development

Recognising the Government's historic development of a First Nations foreign policy, DFAT should prioritise engagement, linking and learning between First Nations people in Australia

and First Nations groups internationally. Standalone programs should be complemented by integrated action across all areas of the new IDP, such as fighting the impacts of climate change and increasing women's leadership.

Specific recommendations:

14. The Office of First Nations Engagement co-designs and shares a framework for bringing First Nations people's voices, perspectives, and experiences into Australian diplomacy and international development programs.
15. DFAT should support First Nations led diplomacy and links between First Nations Australians and indigenous people involved in Australian aid and development.
16. DFAT continues to support the Pacific Australian Emerging Leaders' Summit (PAELS) and network that links together people from the Pacific and Australia, including emerging First Australian leaders.

Overarching Recommendation 3

That the International Development Policy supports the Australian Government to uphold its global climate commitments and supports effective action on climate change in the Pacific and globally including through promoting inclusive climate justice and adequate climate financing.

Inclusive Climate Justice

Climate change is the greatest global challenge of our time and it has implications for all aspects of aid and development efforts globally. The IDP needs to shift to address climate change and its effects on social, financial, political and cultural life. Women, girls, people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and expression, as well as people with disabilities suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change and yet remain grossly underrepresented in all conversations and debates about climate change, disaster risk response and adaptation at all levels of decision making. An inclusive approach to climate justice is required to limit the exacerbation of existing marginalisation in any community served by Australian ODA.

17. The IDP should be centred on an inclusive approach to climate change that reflects the diversity of experiences of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, Aboriginal identity, and disability, and supports the voices, leadership and meaningful contributions of local communities in conversations, debates and all levels of decision-making on climate change, disaster risk response and adaptation.
18. That DFAT includes details of the intersectional goals of all funded climate projects when it publishes annual details of climate funding (see Rec. 20).

Climate adaptation and finance

Pacific villages, islands and coastal communities need immediate resources and support to make their homes habitable, prepare for extreme weather events and mitigate the effects of rising sea levels and face barriers in accessing climate finance. At a global level, positive development outcomes for the Pacific are threatened by the 'twin clouds' of debt risk and the economic impacts of climate change.² Research by Caritas Oceania and Jubilee Australia captured the concerns of Pacific communities in relation to the urgency of climate adaptation needs and the inseparability of building community capability and resilience to climate change with broader development goals.

The Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration³ was developed by Pacific Civil Society and provides a roadmap to address these ecological justice issues through actions on adaptation, Loss and Damage, climate migration, debt and financing and ocean conservation. The Kioa Finance Mechanism addresses local community access to climate finance by establishing a hub led by Pacific civil society organisations. This hub model should be replicated in other ODA funding areas to increase the amount of locally led initiatives.

Specific recommendations:

19. The Australian Government should meet its fair share of international climate finance, including loss and damage funding arrangements: Australia's budgeted climate finance expenditure should reach US\$4 billion by 2025, rising to \$US11.5 billion by 2030.
20. The Australian Government, through DFAT, should take a leadership role in supporting Pacific civil society organisations in their actions under the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration. These actions are an example of locally led development responding to the threats from climate change. This should include:
 - organising annual dialogue between Pacific civil society and government representatives to advocate for actions under the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration, loss and damage funding, and actions towards inclusive climate adaptation.
 - taking a leadership role in the international sphere to deliver the aims of the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration including debt restructuring, supporting Pacific economies, and addresses debt levels of Pacific countries. This is aligned to Australia's international commitment to improve access to climate finance, and to strengthen countries' capacities to access and absorb this climate finance, especially Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and landlocked developing countries.
 - investing in strengthening ANGOs and local partner organisations' capacities to advocate for actions under the Kioa Climate Emergency

² Caritas Oceania and Jubilee Australia, [Twin clouds on the horizon: climate change and debt in the Pacific \(caritas.org.au\)](https://www.caritas.org.au/twin-clouds-on-the-horizon-climate-change-and-debt-in-the-pacific), accessed 16 November 2022

³ <https://350.org/kioa-declaration/>

Declaration, loss and damage funding, and actions towards inclusive climate adaptation.

21. DFAT should publish annual details of climate funding including a full list of projects, the amount of funding provided at the local level, and the differentiation of climate funding in a project with wider goals

Overarching Recommendation 4

That the International Development Policy ensures communities affected by or vulnerable to conflict and disaster can meet their immediate needs and recover and build back stronger from crises.

Australia's humanitarian response must be global

As the effects of conflict (war, civil unrest) and climate change (drought, salination, and extreme weather events) are felt throughout the world, an IDP that responds effectively to humanitarian disasters is essential for Australia's role as a good global citizen, as well as the Australian Government's development objectives. Australia's response to humanitarian crises must not be limited to the Indo-Pacific region, instead a global lens must be applied because of the global nature of humanitarian emergencies, for example the COVID 19 global pandemic.

Specific Recommendations:

22. DFAT should strengthen civil society to prime the government to support global humanitarian crises as they emerge and based on need, including famines and protracted crises beyond the Indo-Pacific region. DFAT is in a unique position to connect civil society with government representatives, thus amplifying civil society's voices and strengthening their influence.

An inclusive humanitarian response

Women and girls, children, and people with disabilities remain the most vulnerable groups in humanitarian contexts. Without a deliberate approach to addressing child rights, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, these groups will remain subject to various forms of violence including sexual assault, and human trafficking while receiving humanitarian support. People with disabilities are often the last to flee disaster or receive aid due to mobility limitations and lack of accessible information.

Specific Recommendations:

23. Ensure the participation and leadership of women, children and people with disability in all aspects of humanitarian response through effective coordination with local government, civil society and representative organisations before, during and after emergencies.

24. Strengthen consortia approaches to humanitarian response to ensure greater coordination and consideration of the needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, children and people with disability in all aspects of humanitarian response.

Leveraging local networks in disaster preparedness and response

Over 90% of people in the Pacific identify as Christian, and churches are the backbone of civil society, often providing essential services to communities as well as acting as the glue that holds communities together. The reach and presence of churches means they often play a central role in preparedness, response and recovery in the context of humanitarian crises. Investment in further building the capability of church-based actors to prepare, respond and support recovery in affected communities will ensure more effective and wider reaching impact. A more detailed discussion of this topic is contained in the submission from the Church Agencies Network (CAN).

25. DFAT coordinates and resources an annual humanitarian dialogue between civil society and government representatives with the aim to deepen relationships and share expertise.
26. Enhance support for local Church based responses, specifically in the Pacific where reach and connection with the community is extensive. This should:
 - include local, provincial, and subnational level investments building disaster response preparedness and linking these to national disaster coordination mechanisms.
 - see DFAT coordinate with country counterpart departments or agencies to enhance support for local Church based humanitarian responses and better link them to national disaster coordination mechanisms.

Conclusion

Caritas Australia appreciates the Australian Government's continuing commitment to strengthening international development cooperation, delivering Australia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and helping our global neighbours achieve their human development goals. We look forward to the opportunity to work with DFAT on the issues identified in this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Kirsty Robertson
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