

ACFID Human Rights Project and Task Group

Outcomes and Objectives April 2009

OUTCOMES:

The Human Rights Project and Task Group have a vision for:

1. greater protection and promotion of human rights and achievement of MDGs
2. increased development impact by adoption of a human rights-based approach

OBJECTIVES:

One – The Sector

We aim to influence Australian development NGOs to deepen their understanding and use of a human rights-based approach and strengthen their capacity to deliver a human rights-based approach; and in doing so:

1. develop a coherent ACFID approach towards human rights encompassing advocacy, program design and networking
2. provide compelling proof that a human rights-based approach is effective
3. increase advocacy and campaigning on human rights by the members of ACFID aimed at government and the public
4. deepen members linkages with human rights actors domestically and internationally and establish new relationships

Two – The Australian Government

We aim to influence the Australian government (particularly AusAID and DFAT) to adopt a human rights-based approach, and in doing so:

1. provide compelling proof that a human rights-based approach is effective
2. increase advocacy on human rights by the Australian government
3. deepen linkages with civil society human rights actors domestically and internationally and establish new relationships
4. establish greater space for effective NGO engagement with Australian government on a range of human rights issues.

BACKGROUND

The objectives of the project are shared by the members of the ACFID Human Rights Task Group and are based on the ACFID strategic plan:

“To achieve better development outcomes for peoples, and greater respect by governments of the human rights of people in the Pacific and Asia, by positioning ACFID as a leading body in the development context in promoting and protecting the human rights of people.”

The objectives and outcomes of the Human Rights Project adopt the same strategies identified in ACFID’s current strategic plan.

ACFID HUMAN RIGHTS TASK GROUP

The ACFID Human Rights Project is guided by a Human Rights Task Group, which comprises of a number of representatives from ACFID members agencies, currently: Act for Peace, Plan Australia, World Vision, Oxfam Australia, Fred Hollows Foundation, Caritas Australia, and an interested non member, Amnesty Australia.

In December 2007, the ACFID Executive Committee approved a proposal to do the following:

1. support a dedicated human rights project for a period of two years
2. enable an APPC human rights steering group (now Task Group) to guide the work plan for the Human Rights Advisor (with management of the work plan by the ACFID Secretariat)
3. ensure that monitoring and evaluation is built into the project from the outset and leads up to a formal review at the 18 month point as whether to continue and in what fashion
4. interested ACFID members provide individual financial contributions to ACFID to collectively support the project (in the same way they have funded Make Poverty History) to employ a manager and resource the project's work on behalf of the sector.

Subsequently, the Task Group members raised \$240K over two years, to contribute to a staff position for the project. At the August 2008 Advocacy and Public Policy Committee (APPC) meeting, the APPC affirmed ACFID's intention to recruit a Human Rights Advisor to develop a human rights culture within ACFID membership. The position commenced in November 2008 for an initial period of two years. A work plan is being developed to ensure clear, measurable objectives.

In April 2009, members clarified their status as a Task Group, accountable to APPC, and expressed a desire to keep working together, and to develop the objectives above as a common endeavour. The Task Group welcomes the participation of other ACFID members.

WAYS OF WORKING WITH THE PROJECT

Task Group members proposed terms of reference to APPC, in November 2008, which set out their proposed ways of working in support of the project, namely, that as a Task Group they would:

1. Provide advice to APPC on:
 - a. overall strategies and operational plans for the Human Rights Advisor
 - b. monitoring and evaluation of the Human Rights Project
 - c. potential resources required for new initiatives arising from the Human Rights Project
 - d. link the Human Rights Advisor to program and other relevant people in agencies
2. Provide advice to APPC, relevant ACFID working groups and the Secretariat on:
 - a. policy propositions regarding sectoral human rights issues and how they might be addressed. Any work undertaken in this area will be done with agreement of the ACFID Executive Director.

Additionally, in a meeting on 30 April 2009, members agreed to provide timely feedback to the ACFID Human Rights Advisor.