



ACFID NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2018

30-31 October 2018 | Scientia Building, UNSW in Sydney

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY - PEOPLE. PLANET. PEACE

Human rights in the 21st Century

People | Planet | Peace

Concept Note

Background

In 2009/2010, ACFID engaged its membership through a variety of means to further discussions around human rights and development. In 2009, the report *Rights in Sight*¹ was published as the result of a study commissioned by a group of ACFID members into Australian aid and development views and practice by NGOs with regard to human rights. Following that, ACFID National Conference touched on many aspects on women's and children's rights through the theme "Women and Children as the Foundation of Development". From these insights; and through the work of the Development Practice Committee, ACFID produced a Practice Note on "Rights-based approaches to development"².

*A human rights-based approach is different to other traditional approaches to delivering aid and development (such as a needs-based or charity approach) as it views poverty as a direct result of disempowerment and exclusion. A human rights-based approach specifically highlights the human rights entitlements of people and the corresponding obligations of governments, and encourages empowerment, participation and capacity building with local communities so that vibrant civil societies can hold their governments to account. Therefore, human rights-based approach to development refers to a framework for human development that is based on international human rights laws and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights*³.

ACFID's recent National Conferences have explored the significant development challenges facing the world (climate change, migration, inequality), the role of innovation and collaboration in delivering impact, and transformational change and what these issues mean for the future of ANGOS.

¹ ACFID, Rights in Sight, available at:

http://www.acfid.asn.au/resources/docs_resources/docs_papers/Rights%20in%20Sight.pdf

² Human rights based approaches to development, available at:

https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/human-rights-based-approaches-to-development.pdf

³ Millennium Development Rights, available at:

<https://acfid.sharepoint.com/Publications/Publications/Archive/Briefs%20and%20Reports/Millennium%20Development%20Rights.pdf>

Conference purpose and theme

Human Rights in the 21st Century

People. Planet. Peace.

The purpose of this Conference is to explore the contemporary challenges and opportunities for how the Australian development and humanitarian sector can better give effect to human rights through our development and humanitarian work.

This concept note provides an outline against the overall Conference theme of Human Rights in the 21st Century, including how the three streams, “People. Planet. Peace.” contribute to the numerous issues brought forth within the topic of human rights.

Why human rights?

70 years on from the adoption of the UDHR, significant changes have occurred across the world. Overall poverty has been reduced, but inequality is growing. We have identified the limits to growth and the need for environmental sustainability, but climate change poses a threat to our very existence. Democracy appeared triumphant at the close of the Cold War, but conflict within states and with non-state actors presents a growing challenge along with rising populism and nationalism. Are we closer or further away from the vision of universal human rights embodied in the Declaration? How does power affect the way rights are conceived, upheld or denied? What does the changing global landscape mean for ANGOs and our contribution to human rights?

Why now?

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration – a landmark document for the promotion and protection of human rights. But these anniversaries – and the beginning of Australia’s seat as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council – are taking place in an era defined by a global backlash against human rights which is putting the vision of these declarations and their implementation in peril.

People

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”⁴

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life. This theme represents the heart of human rights – people. The protected, the protectors, and those that are still fighting for theirs.

This stream brings forth content on Human Rights as they relate directly to people and the long-standing and contemporary challenges to realisation of rights including;

⁴ UDHR, Article 1, available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

- How can a human rights framework help us address poverty and intersectional disadvantage?
- Does the language of human rights have salience in the developing world?
- How do we tackle rights as indivisible and what are the contemporary ramifications when some rights are prioritised at the expense of others?
- What challenges to rights do we see in the digital age?

Planet

This stream focuses on human rights as they relate to healthy ecosystems, environment and climate and the necessary interaction between these and healthy communities and societies. They are essential for human health and therefore life, and when functioning well, provide us with nutrition and food security, clean air and fresh water, medicines, cultural and spiritual values, and contribute to local livelihoods and economic development. While all nations face future risks from global environmental change, such risks are already being felt first and foremost by poorest populations.

- How will the impacts of climate change undermine the protection of human rights, particularly those of vulnerable communities?
- What is the required balance between the right to development with the right to a safe environment?
- How can we use a rights framework to drive sustainable food systems and nutrition outcomes?
- How can a human rights framework empower local communities to demand action on climate change?
- What kind of collective action do we need to protect the human rights and dignity of those affected by climate induced displacement?

Peace

“Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected, and development is fully realized.”⁵

This stream will focus on human rights in the broader context of peace, civil society space and human security and explore critical questions around the nexus between rights and peace including:

- How will the continued closing of civil society space effect human rights?
- What’s the link between women’s human rights and international peace and security?
- How will we give expression to and support the realisation of rights through shifting geopolitics and democratic systems?
- How could a human rights approach change the way we think about refugees?
- How can a modern movement tackle disarmament and contribute to global peace?
- What role does a rights-based approach to development have in disrupting systems of conflict?

⁵ [Resolution 32/28. Declaration on the Right to Peace](#). United Nations general Assembly 18 July 2016

How will ACFID National Conference 2018 explore the themes?

Through the overarching themes of “People Planet Peace”; the conference will bring forth content on human rights as they relate directly to the wellbeing of people, healthy ecosystems and the environment and in the broader context of peace, civil society and human security.

Opening Keynote: Rosalind Croucher, President Australian Human Rights Commission.

As President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Rosalind will open the conference and provide contextual information on the background of human rights through history, focusing on:

- In the 70th year of the UNHRD, what are human rights and why do they matter?
- Reflections on the current situation in the world and Australia. Is there a retreat from multilateralism and conventions like the United Nations Human Rights Declaration?
- How should Australia project itself, especially now with its seat on the Human Rights Council?
- The role of human rights bodies like the AHRC
- What does this mean for the international aid and development community?

International Keynote (People, Peace): Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Executive Director, International Civil Society Action Network will be outlining:

- How is the shrinking of civil society space impacting on the enjoyment of human rights and the work of (particularly women) human rights defenders?
- What is the significance of peacebuilding for international development and should development and humanitarian NGOs be working more actively in this area to promote human rights?
- What are the key messages around the nexus between peace-development-humanitarian response that NGOs and donors working in fragile contexts need to understand in order to be effective?
- What can our member NGOs do to promote human rights and support human rights defenders at the grassroots level?

Plenary Panel (People): Are human rights under attack and do we have an obligation to uphold them?

Rights-based approaches are now part of development orthodoxy, with empowerment at the front and centre of programs that address the intersections of marginalization and disadvantage. But does this go far enough in a rapidly changing global context of shrinking civil society space, climate change, rising inequality and the challenges of mass migration?

This panel will unpack what we really mean when we talk of the indivisibility of human rights and the contemporary ramifications when some rights are prioritised at the expense of others? Where should our priorities lie? What are the key challenges we must address to remain relevant?

Chair – Scott Stephens, Editor of the ABC’s Religion and Ethics website and panellists:

- Tasneem Chopra, Chair of Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR)
- Matthew Maury, CEO TEAR Australia
- Savina Nongebatu, Deputy CEO from the Pacific Disability Forum
- Elaine Pearson – Australia Director Human Rights Watch

Panel Format: Each panellist will provide a perspective on the challenges facing human rights today drawing out questions such as:

- What is the current situation for human rights in the Asia Pacific region?
- How do we support human rights defenders in a closing civil society space?
- What are the implications of the human rights discourse across different cultural and faith settings?
- How should we approach intersectional discrimination? (race, gender, faith, sexual orientation)
- What lessons can be shared around approaching human rights in an Australian community development context with organisations who implement development programs internationally?
- The international human rights framework has been criticised as a western construct – do you agree with this? Are there other ways to engage people from different cultures in discussions about their development needs?
- How is a rights-based approach to disability inclusion different? Tell us about how people with disabilities in the Pacific are fighting for their rights. Are people with disabilities facing the same human rights challenges as others or are they unique (or both)?

Dinner Keynote (People): Larissa Behrendt, Director of “After the Apology”, a landmark documentary exploring the continued practice of child removal in indigenous communities in the years after the 2008 Apology by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, will be discussing the importance of storytelling in the genuine promotion of self determination and human rights protection.

Plenary Panel (People, Peace): Interests, Values & Influence: Development Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

An exploration of how the sector should respond to geopolitical change in the region and what effect this will have on human rights

Chair – TBC and panellists:

- Dr Amrita Malhi, ACFID
- John Blaxland, ANU
- Dr. Denghua Zhang, Australian National University

Panel Format: Each panellist will contribute to a sector-specific exploration of how we believe we should respond to geopolitical change, drawing out information and questions such as:

- Overview of the themes and outcomes from the ACFID workshop on soft power and DFAT submission

- How might factors like declining absolute poverty, rising inequality, urbanisation, and geopolitical change set new parameters around the exercise of Australian soft power?
- Current research on the soft power game in the Indo-Pacific;
- Stories based on field research analysing how Australia and China are seen in the Pacific
- Communicating the sectors value in the language of foreign policy and the national interest

International Keynote (People, Planet): Joan Carling, former Secretary-General of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) will be outlining:

- her experience working on indigenous issues at the grassroots to international level and the critical issues around the intersection of human rights and sustainable development,
- struggle for land rights and the impacts of land rights violations on women,
- sustainable development and the environment; and
- Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

Keynote (People, Planet): Dr Robert Glasser, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and head of the UNISDR will be outlining:

- Impacts for international development and humanitarian agencies on the waning respect for human rights and humanitarian principles.
- The rise of new development and humanitarian actors such as china, who may not espouse these principles and does this matter?
- Does climate change and human rights intersect and why?
- Where do you see great leadership and good practice in the application of human rights in development and humanitarian programming?

Plenary Panel (People. Planet. Peace): Human rights challenges in humanitarian response

Human rights protection lies at the heart of humanitarian response as both conflicts and natural disasters generally result in, or are triggered by, human rights concerns.

Panel presenters will discuss the biggest human rights challenge in humanitarian response today. Their presentations will reflect on the implications of these challenges for development and humanitarian community and will consider the successes and struggles of how to apply rights-based approaches to humanitarian practice.

Chair –Beth Eggleston, Humanitarian Advisory Group and panellists:

- Dr Robert Glasser
- Morten Pedersen. UNSW
- Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, ED ICAN
- Professor Jane McAdam, Director, Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW
- Habiburrahman, Australian Burmese Rohingya Organization

- How do organisations promote human rights on the ground in repressive states such as Myanmar? Discussing the ethical dilemma of speaking out on human rights violations whilst working within those countries (Morten Pedersen)

- Climate change and displacement – what does the future hold for climate induced refugees. (Professor Jane McAdam)
- The unique role women play in efforts to counter violent extremism and how we can better address the unique challenges women face — and replicate the incredible work they are already doing — in unstable environments and closing spaces. (Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini)
- What should development organisations do to support the human rights of refugees?

Concurrent sessions:

The following concurrent sessions related to the theme “People” will be held.

<p>Rights, revenues and repression - When the promise of revenue from business investment combines with governments eager to grow economies, the human rights of affected people and communities can easily be set aside. With private sector investment increasingly a preferred aid medium, this panel examines spaces where business interests and human rights collide. Using examples from mining, agriculture and retail industries, the panel explores the role of the state and the closing civil society space activists are subject to when speaking out about private sector projects. This session will be held under strict Chatham House rule.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 1</p> <p>Oxfam, HRLC, ActionAid</p>
<p>Safe environments for all - what is the development role of ACFID NGOs in helping to build safe communities? This workshop will go beyond thinking about organisational safeguards to sharing case studies of existing development programs, policy and advocacy work that is helping to build safer communities in the countries where we work.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 1</p> <p>CBM</p>
<p>Rights-based approaches in development - Old hat: fashion trend or essential workwear?</p> <p>This session explores different case studies of how rights-based approaches are incorporated within other methodologies, looks at some of the challenges that rights-based models are facing, and discusses where rights-based approaches fit within systems thinking and the movement to “do development differently”.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 2</p> <p>Development Practice Committee, Caritas</p>
<p>Gender justice: going beyond the household level towards societal change?</p> <p>This session will draw on the perspectives, insights and experiences of both presenters and participants to generate a conversation about creating and supporting gender just societies. The session will explore the connection between individual and societal level changes and what this means for enabling positive shifts in gender relations.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 2</p> <p>Oxfam, IWDA, CARE</p>
<p>Women's rights to health care access in PNG Health as a human right creates a legal obligation to ensure access to timely, acceptable and affordable health care of appropriate quality, where programs prioritise the needs of those furthest behind. In this session speakers from academia and the field share first-hand experience from the remote front-line of health identifying PNG rural women as those furthest behind.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 1</p> <p>Australian Doctors International</p>
<p>Preventing sexual misconduct and safeguarding human rights In 2018, sexual misconduct scandals in the UK raised serious concerns about the international aid sector’s approach to safeguarding. Emerging findings of the ACFID commissioned reviews highlight that while the aid sector faces unique challenges in preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, existing good practice and strengths provide a platform to build upon. In this session we explore the challenges and showcase examples of good practice and leadership from our sector and beyond.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 1</p> <p>ACFID, VIFM, Save the Children, Blue Bike Solutions</p>
<p>Exploring the intersection of emerging technologies and humanity –</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 2</p>

<p>The pace of technological innovation and adoption is rapidly evolving the way people, work, and interact with each other and institutions. The potential for new technologies to improve society and address some of the most significant issues facing humanity is immense, but it also presents challenges by creating risks of misuse, malfunction, and unintended consequences. This session will explore the implications of increasingly intelligent technologies on humanity and our ability to protect and enrich people's welfare and freedoms.</p>	<p>Australian Red Cross</p>
<p>Shrinking Civil Society Space - This interactive discussion will explore how shrinking civil society space is impacting human rights activists in Asia and beyond with speakers bringing global and regional perspectives, as well as from Australia's own environmental movement. The panel will share how activists are responding and examine the implications for NGOs engaged in advocacy and campaigning. The session will also explore the role of social movements and community organising in responding to this growing trend.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 2 ActionAid</p>

The following concurrent sessions related to the theme “**Planet**” will be held.

<p>Sea Change: human rights vs economic progress How do we advocate for human rights in areas of significant natural resource extraction? How do we support this in places where tribal conflict exists, and local knowledge and culture underpinning livelihoods are at risk of disappearing? In this session we discuss community participation and empowerment, digital technology, and mainstreaming sustainable resource systems.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 2 Agriculture CoP, Kyeema, International Water Centre</p>
<p>Gender Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change - This interactive panel discussion will explore how climate change is impacting women's rights, bringing first-hand perspectives from women in Vanuatu. It will highlight how a human rights-based approach is being used to empower women to drive gender-responsive alternatives in the face of the challenges. Monash University will also share emerging themes from multi-country research being undertaken to improve gender responsive programming in response to climate change in ways that bridge the development, humanitarian and security divide.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 1 ActionAid</p>

The following concurrent sessions related to the theme “**Peace**” will be held.

<p>No development without peace: This panel makes the case for more peacebuilding in Australia’s international development. Speakers from Australia, Timor Leste and Fiji explore the state of play in peacebuilding internationally, what it might look like in Australia, and the impact that it could have in conflict-affected countries in Asia and the Pacific.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 1 PEACEIFICA</p>
<p>Young women as disruptors & designers: how human centred design can set the human rights, peace and security agenda. Collaborative and co-design processes place people at the centre to drive change and disrupt traditional hierarchies of power. This interactive session will explore a range of unique and collaborative approaches undertaken by INGOs and academia to design thinking where young women and girls are disruptors, leaders and agents of change.</p>	<p>Day 2, Session 2 PLAN International Australia, Marie Stopes,</p>

Concluding remarks

Through this diversity of voices, it is our intention that speakers not only inspire, but challenge current ways of working. By offering critiques and stimulating debate on Australian development NGOs current integration of human rights with development and humanitarian efforts, ACFID Conference 2018 will highlight the issues faced today and discuss what human rights may look like in the future.