

2010 Submission to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness



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The Australian Centre for Leadership for Women (CLW) is very supportive of the stated current and future increases in total official development assistance to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. CLW is also supportive of the overall purpose of the independent review to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Australian Aid Program. In this submission I shall outline some areas for further consideration in the context of the Review.

Effectiveness and Efficiency Criteria:

Whilst the Review seeks to make recommendations to improve the Australian Aid Program's structure as stated in its objective, thereby evaluating the strategic focus of the Program, it would be useful to clarify on what basis effectiveness is to be measured. What are the criteria that will be used to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall Aid program and will this assessment also apply to individual projects?

Will the criteria include the following considerations?

- short-term outcomes of initiatives against planned goals
- long-term measurements of sustainability to ensure lasting development gains and self empowerment for the target group, community and sector
- policy coherence within recipient countries to support and sustain the aid program and its short and long term impact

Gender Focus:

The Terms of Review does not include an assessment of a gender focus in Australia's Aid Program. Whilst the Australian Aid Program has linked some of its initiatives to the United Nations Millennium Health Goals for women and children, it would be useful to consider how Australia is positioning itself to further lead the regional effort in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 in areas including the elimination of all forms of violence against women and trafficking of women and girls; and the advancement of gender equality and parity.

Will Australia's Aid Policy prioritize gender mainstreaming for the delivery of development in coordination with its partners? Development

research indicates clearly an association between the level of development and the role of women in the society. For example, the Canadian International Development Agency states, "Women's critical roles in food production, income generation, management of natural resources, community organization and domestic responsibilities are essential for sustainable development." The theme of gender equality has been almost exclusively linked with foreign assistance for social and economic development as strategized by the Millennium Development Goals.

Although there is a sense of gender equality commitments in Australia's sectoral programs, a gender focus appears to be implicit rather than explicit in the vision of Australia's Aid Program. Developing clarity in relation to a gender focus will link Australia's Aid Program to global strategies to improve outcomes for women and children and will clarify the vision of Australia's Aid Program in line with drivers of global aid initiatives and the language that frames these goals.

Organisational Review:

It is good that an evaluation of AusAID's organisational structure for aid delivery is to be included in the Scope of the Review. Bearing in mind the interlinking influences of an organisation's structure, climate, policy and performance, it might be worthwhile to consider these areas in relation to enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

As much of the literature indicates that organisational structure and culture exist in close alignment with overlapping functions, within this context, considerations such as the following could be evaluated:

- The extent to which the culture of AusAid influences team and organisational capability
- Does the structure and culture facilitate increased empowerment, cross-organisational collaboration and learning to enable it to respond flexibly to new ways of working with key stakeholders in a changing global and regional environment?

Conclusion:

The Australian Government's decision to increase the official development assistance budget to 0.5 per cent of gross national income by 2015–16 is to be highly commended. It would be good to see in the outcomes of this Review, a clear vision that outlines the set of priorities for the Australian Aid Program that is linked to the aims and schedule of the Millennium Goals. It would be good to see a gender focus brought to the fore in the vision of the Australian Aid Program as gender mainstreaming is critical for the delivery of sustainable development. It would be also valuable to see how AusAid can develop its organisational capabilities to work with development partners to improve aid coordination and effectiveness under the *Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific*.

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Dr Diann Rodgers-Healey's career has spanned diverse sectors including education, the corporate and not-for-profit sector. She has held positions of leadership and management in Sydney and London. Her skills as a mentor and coach for leaders and women aspiring to be leaders underlie her work as a strategic analyst and as an educator. She is currently the Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Leadership for Women, a virtual Centre at www.leadershipforwomen.com.au which she founded in 2000. Through the Centre she has established national leadership awards for women and organisations, contributed to federal policy development through research and writing on women and leadership issues, and developed resources for potential leaders. She also lectures in management and educational leadership subjects at the University of Wollongong. Rodgers-Healey's PhD thesis led to the development of a co-existential leadership model for workplaces for men and women. In 2009 she was awarded The World of Difference 100 Award from The International Alliance of Women (TIAW) in Toronto, Canada.