# Partnerships, Alliances and Networks Policy

november 2018, version 3

1. Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA development policies and procedures and in particular:

* Human rights and Development
* Gender and Development
* Evangelisation, Politics and Welfare Activities
* Trade Unions and Development Position Statement

This policy has been developed with reference to Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s values, DFAT’s ANCP Manual (2018) and ACFID’s Code of Conduct.

Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA is a secular, not-for-profit registered charity of the Australian trade union movement that seeks effective partnerships with other organisations and institutions with the aim to campaign for equality, justice and an end to poverty by supporting labour and social movements internationally. In some cases, partnerships and alliances are also sought to provide medium-long term relief from hardship caused by conflict, natural disasters or other emergency situations.

1. Definition

As per ACFID’s report ‘Partnerships for Effective Development’ (2014), Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA recognises that “partnership has become a word that covers a great range of different sorts of relationships…[and so] rather than trying to formulate an inclusive definition of partnership, it was more important to look at the range of working relationships ANGOs are utilising to support and extend their development work.”[[1]](#endnote-1) The range of working relationships Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA uses are similar to those described in this report:

1. Partnerships for more effective development at the local level: working with local community-based organisations and trade unions to achieve project outcomes but also build organisational capacity.
2. Partnerships to support civil society development: focusing “on how local organisations could be fostered to grow and develop in order to work together with others as required in that context”.
3. Partnerships which leverage a more effective response to complex change situations: “working together with private companies, research institutions, United Nations (UN) agencies and other NGOs, both international and local, to draw together the respective strength and values of these different organisations”.
4. Partnerships which add quality to the work of all partners: “in these types of partnerships, there may be an exchange of funds or skills but increasingly the focus seems to be on learning and interaction for the purpose of better quality development work”.
5. Partnerships and alliances for social change: working as members of broader alliances and networks for social change to create new paradigms of development. “In some cases, such membership is about solidarity with broader movements for change, such as support for the women’s movement in various countries and regions around the world. In other situations, the Australian NGO might identify a role for themselves around support for specific operations within an alliance, or support for specific organisational members within an alliance”.
6. Purpose of the policy

This policy defines the key principles that underpin all of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s partnerships with its implementing NGO partners and its engagement with project participants and communities it serves, with union activists and members, with the Australian union movement, donor organisations and other others with shared values. It also outlines the processes in place to put the principles into practice.

1. Scope

The policy applies to all employees, volunteers, consultants and members of the Committee of Management involved in Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s international program and activities in Australia and overseas.

1. Principles

**Solidarity**

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s approach to partnership is rooted in solidarity – solidarity that builds connections between people across borders as key to building organised movements and activities for equality, development and justice. Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA particularly recognises that its solidarity with the working class and marginalised people in developing economies can strengthen them and that we, as well as Australian organisations in turn can be strengthened from campaigning and working with them. Our on-the-ground assistance aims to address the causes of injustice and inequality, not the symptoms.

**Movement-building**

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA seeks to help build democratic civil society, social justice movements, and representative organisations of workers, women, farmers, young people with disabilities, refugees and others – so they can define and fight for their rights and against power structures that seek to oppress them. Organised movements of people make change possible, by exerting political pressure for just solutions.

**Partnership**

Working in partnership is the cornerstone of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s approach. The organisation aims for joint action with local partner organisations directed at meeting practical needs with movements on the ground, by supporting the building blocks that enable movements to emerge or become stronger, such as organising, campaign capacity, education, research and skills development. Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA believes that strong partnerships are grounded in openness, mutual respect and learning from each other.

**Equality and justice**

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA seeks to challenge the dominant myths of development aid – that charity and depoliticized humanitarian assistance can be adequate in addressing the root causes of poverty and injustice. Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA seeks to help build strong movements of organised people, so that demands for a more equal distribution of wealth and power can be strengthened through democratic processes.

**Accountability**

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s systems of work aim to be accountable on multiple fronts: to the local organisations we work with internationally and the people they serve, to our own union activists and members, to the Australian union movement and to government and other donors. Where we receive public or private funds, in Australia or from elsewhere, we are fully accountable for these funds and support programs in line with the commitment we make and our goals and values. In all our work, we seek the most effective and strategic way to deploy funding – by addressing causes not symptoms. We recognise the challenge of doing this in a meaningful way and seek to involve partner organisations in reviewing programs and work for continual improvement.

**Mutual Learning**

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA believes that problems can be solved/addressed when the partners and Union Aid Abroad- APHEDA go through a mutual learning process to create new insights and knowledge to solve problems differently and/or in a better way. The joint learning also fosters new ownership and commitment for problem solving as well as partnership development.

1. Guidelines

* 1. **Developing partnerships, alliances and networks in Australia and overseas**

Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA will actively develop partnerships, alliances and networks to maximise support for and effectiveness of its strategy both in Australia and overseas. Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA seeks partnerships and alliances with a range of organisations, including community based organisations, indigenous organisations, trade unions, government departments, provincial and district administrations that will assist in supporting the organisation’s goal for equality, justice and an end to poverty, particularly for:

* Trade union development, workers’ rights and safety at work
* Climate justice, energy democracy and just transition
* Rights of migrant workers and refugees
* Women’s rights and feminist movement development;

And, on occasions for medium-longer term development caused by conflict, natural disaster or other emergency situations.

* 1. **Induction**

All employees and international volunteers will undertake an induction training at the commencement of their employment or engagement and will be made aware of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s Policy on Partnerships, Alliance and Networks. The process for induction is detailed in the Governance and Human Resources Manual.

* 1. **Working with partners**

Relations between Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA and its partners should be equitable and demonstrate mutual respect and integrity. Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA aims to work in a manner that:

* values long term partnerships
* values the retention by the partner organisations of control, ownership of assets, skills development, project processes, reporting and evaluation
* supports and involves local people in leadership roles and as advocates
* promotes common understanding and solidarity
* involves local people in leadership roles

Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA recognises that its partners vary in their own capacity, motivations and objectives and that they may come from a range of religious, political and ideological backgrounds and opinions.

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA values civil society partners with transparent and democratic structures.

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA will provide full information to partners about relevant decision-making including related to policy development, reporting, financing, and operations or advocacy through its annual reports, website, newsletters, joint meetings, and other communications. Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s agreements with partners include clauses about mutual learning, mutual respect and how the partners will publicly communicate matters of relevance to each other.

All Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s partners will be informed of the organisation’s Complaints Handling Policy.

Prior to working with a partner, Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA conducts a Partner Capacity Assessment and, on the basis of this assessment, Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA will decide whether or not to work with the relevant partner. The process for the partner capacity assessment and selection of partners is outlined in the organisation’s International Program Manual under ‘Project Partner Selection and Appraisal’. During this process, discussions take place with the partner to present Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA’s values, strategies and policies and similar information from the partner will be gathered to ensure both organisations can work together for a mutually beneficial partnership. This process also helps to identify areas for capacity building or where risk mitigating measures need to be put in place.

* 1. **Partner capacity building**

To ensure that the organisation it works with has the capacity to promote project outcomes and to build its capacity so that it can function effectively in its local context, Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA will, in liaison with the partner, agree on specifics areas for the partner’s capacity building. These will be included in a Capacity Building Plan. It will be reviewed jointly on a yearly basis, when monitoring visits are taking place or at other times following the partner and Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s agreement.

The procedures for review of the partner capacity building plan are detailed in the International Program Manual.

* 1. **Partnering for projects**

To ensure that the projects supported are in line with Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s strategy, themes of work and principles, these considerations are included at different stages of project development:

1. At project identification: Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA will give priority to projects focusing on the thematic areas. Partners and the communities they assist will be able to authentically contribute to the project’s identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
2. At design stage –the project design prompts designers to ensure that projects supported by Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA are in line with its strategy and themes of work. Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA will seek genuine, informed and consensual participation of local partners and communities in the design of its aid and development activities. Procedures for the development of a project design are included in the International Program Manual and a project design/proposal template is available.
3. At appraisal stage - prior to a project starting, Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA will conduct a project appraisal. The outcome of the appraisal will allow the organisation to decide whether or not to support the project. This process requires Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA to check that the activity is in Iine with the organisation’s strategy and themes of work and that partners have actively participated in the design process.
4. When monitoring and reporting on the project - during monitoring visits, Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s employees will assess whether other organisations need to be consulted and partnered with to enhance project outcomes. Risks and progress towards areas identified in the capacity building plan will also be regularly monitored and reviewed. Assessment of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s support to partners and how this could be improved will also be monitored. All decisions such as changes in funding levels or direction of programs which affect partners will be discussed openly and fully with them before such decisions are implemented, and their views will be accorded the highest priority.
5. When evaluating a project and in addition to assessing how the project has contributed to progress towards Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s themes of work, an assessment of the support provided to partners and identification of lessons to be learned for future projects will also be conducted. This is outlined in the International Program Manual. The evaluation template is available.
   1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

*6.6.1 Committee of Management and Executive Officer*

It is the responsibility of the Committee of Management and Executive Officer, with the support of senior managers and employees to ensure that Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA develops partnerships, alliances and networks that support its strategy and themes of work, and that in all its operations the partnership principles outlined in this policy are implemented.

*6.6.2 Senior Managers (including Country Managers)*

It is the responsibility of senior managers to ensure they have a sound understanding of the range of stakeholders working in their areas of operation and that they develop effective partnerships in support of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s strategy and themes of work.

The senior managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees promote Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s partnership principles and apply related procedures and tools.

*6.6.3 Employees*

All employees working on the International Program in Australia and overseas are responsible for ensuring that the partners understand Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s partnerships principles and, with the support of their respective managers, build partners’ capacity so that they become effective organisations in their local context.

1. Document Control

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| **Date** | **Version** | **Revision Description** | **Approved by Board (date)** | **Reviewed/Updated by** |
|  | 1 | Original | 2004 | Ken Davis, Peter Jennings |
| 2011 | 2 | Revised | September 2011 | Ken Davis, Peter Jennings |
| August 2018 | 3 | Revised to put in new template for stronger emphasis on guidelines, include definition on partnership, align with new strategy and themes of work | November 2018 | Corinne Stroppolo, Kate Lee, Sharan KC |
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1. Partnerships for Effective Development, ACFID, 2014 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)