



Department
for International
Development



Faith Partnership Principles

Working effectively with faith groups to fight global poverty



Foreword

Faith makes such an important contribution to development. Most people in developing countries engage in some form of spiritual practice and believe that their faith plays an important role in their lives. Faith groups can inspire confidence and trust. They are often seen as a true part of the local community and more committed to it than perhaps other groups. Indeed, they are often the first group to which the poor turn in times of need and crisis and to which they give in times of plenty. I have seen for myself in some of the most deprived and difficult parts of the world, the extraordinary work by faith groups who bring light and hope to the desperate.



Andrew Mitchell with flood survivors in Pakistan, 2010 (photo: Vicki Francis/DFID)

Faith groups are doing excellent work in providing not only humanitarian relief, but delivering health, education and other services in some of the most troubled parts of the world. They are making a real difference to countless lives. The work of governments alone will never be enough. For lasting change, states must fully engage with a range of civil society organisations. I recognise the unique contribution of faith groups in both delivering development and connecting with communities in the UK and abroad, particularly those that are marginalised or can't be reached by other means.

This paper sets out the principles – of transparency, mutual respect and understanding – that will in future guide DFID's relationship with faith groups going forward. I look forward to the closer partnership with people of faith who play a unique role in fighting poverty. We know that while faith often brings people together, it can also sometimes lead to divisions. We know that conflicts can arise or be exacerbated when people from different faiths find it hard to live and work together. And it is the poorest that suffer most. So we also need to know more about what can help people from different faiths to come together and work for a common purpose.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Andrew Mitchell
Secretary of State for International Development

1. Background

1.1 DFID recognises the important contribution made by faith groups to international development. The Secretary of State announced in February 2011 that DFID would establish a Working Group to produce a practical Partnership Principles Paper to strengthen DFID's collaboration with faith groups on international development. This would enable us to work together effectively to transform poor people's lives and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

1.2 The Faith Partnership Principles Working Group was formed in June 2011 to strengthen DFID's collaboration with faith groups to transform poor people's lives and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (see Annex 2 for the members of the Working Group). The Working Group has produced a Faith Partnership Principles Paper following consultations with faith groups and others.

2. Purpose

2.1 The Purpose of this Principles Paper is to strengthen and guide DFID's future relationship and collaboration with faith groups on international development.

2.2 The key Principles of the Partnership between faith groups and DFID are transparency, mutual respect and understanding. The areas in which these Principles will be applied include: building a common understanding of faith and development; documenting the impact of faith groups through research and evaluation; and, working on difficult themes and areas to find effective ways to progress development and bring about transformational change in the lives of the poor.

3. Faith in development

3.1. In many countries, and for many people, faith and religion are central to development. Most people in 'developing countries' engage in some form of religious and faith based practice on a regular basis that enables them to understand and relate to the world. There has been a renaissance of faith in many countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, since 1900, the proportion of Christians has increased from 9% to 57% and Muslims from 14% to 29%. In virtually all 'developing countries' faith and religion have grown in importance over the past two decades. Conversely in a number of industrialised countries, the role of faith and religion in societies appears to have been declining.

3.2. All religions have views on how society should be managed, what they regard as 'values and characteristics of a good society' and what constitutes 'development and human wellbeing'.

Defining a 'faith group' is difficult. Faith groups range from a few believers meeting together through to global institutions. This paper uses a broad and inclusive definition of 'faith group' encompassing:

- **Congregational faith groups** of believers predominantly focused on worship;
- **Representative faith organisations** both nationally such as Network of Sikh Organisations UK and internationally such as the World Council of Churches;
- **Faith-based development organisations** that focus on international development such as World Vision and Islamic Relief;
- **Faith-based political organisations** such as the Christian Democratic Union in Germany;
- **Faith-based missionary organisations** promoting their faith;
- **Inter faith groups** working with other faiths and to build understanding such as Religions for Peace;
- **Other organisations** in which faith plays an important role such as the 'Guides' and 'Boys Brigade'.

Faith groups addressing poverty

3.3. Faith is often part of an individual's or group's identity. This gives faith groups considerable legitimacy in the activities that they carry out. The World Bank's "Voices of the Poor" study¹ found that "religious leaders and institutions are often the most trusted institutions in developing countries. Faith groups can inspire confidence and trust and are often seen as more embedded in, and committed to, local communities. They are often the first groups, which people turn to in times of need and contribute to in times of plenty". Faith groups make an important contribution to poverty reduction through:

- **Provision of services and humanitarian assistance:** faith groups are important providers of services particularly in fragile states.^{2 3}
- **Empowerment and accountability:** faith groups can empower poor people so their voices are heard when decisions that affect their lives are taken.^{4 5 6 7}
- **Building resilience and peaceful states and societies:** faith groups can bring a distinct contribution to reducing certain types of conflict^{8 9},
- **Changing beliefs and behaviours:** religion has a critical influence over the beliefs and behaviours of followers¹⁰
- **Building support for development and global advocacy:** Faiths are global institutions which can create national and international coalitions of action.

4. DFID's existing partnership with faith groups

4.1. DFID works with a wide variety of faith groups in the UK and around the world on all aspects of international development from service delivery to policy formulation. DFID offers a range of support to faith groups, through different funding instruments managed by DFID Country Offices as well as centrally through DFID Head Offices. The key central funding instrument for faith groups is the **Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF)** which operates largely on a match-funding basis.

World Vision stops violence, abuse and exploitation ruining childhoods. In 2011, they launched 15 new projects to protect 200,000 vulnerable children from harm in 520 communities worldwide. Funded by DFID, these projects strengthen local and national child protection mechanisms and reduce harmful practices such as female genital mutilation in Somalia, child marriage in Malawi and sexual abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In South Sudan, DFID supports the **Episcopal Church of Sudan** through the Basic Services Fund to train teachers and construct schools. Since 2007, the Episcopal Church has trained over 1,000 Head teachers and constructed 90 classrooms in 22 schools. Working together, the Sudanese churches (Anglican, Catholic and others) have built 42% of all of the schools constructed through the Basic Services Fund. As the largest civil society grouping in South Sudan, the churches' national networks have increased community trust and delivered cost effective services making them key partners for achieving national education goals.

4.2 Through the GPAF, the UK Government supports groups to deliver transformative change through provision of basic services like health and education; empowering people and communities to hold their governments to account, and, strengthening resilience to disaster and conflict. In the past it may have been challenging for some faith groups to access DFID funding. The GPAF was specifically designed to ensure DFID is not just working with the 'usual suspects'. Already over two thirds of the 54 provisional grants awarded from GPAF are to organisations that have not received DFID central funding before. Ten of these organisations are faith groups including: the Buddhist Karuna Trust; Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference AIDS Office; Tearfund UK; and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

A strategic alliance between **Islamic Relief** and **CAFOD** has benefited thousands of people in conflict and disaster affected areas - where each organisation is able to reach populations by working with or through the other. Joint humanitarian projects have included helping especially vulnerable populations in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Niger and in El Salvador.

DFID supports **Progressio** which works with religious leaders in Yemen to build awareness of HIV and to challenge stigma and discrimination. Somia explains the importance of the work: "We had no idea how HIV was transmitted. It was more like a shame – because the first thing you think of is sex. I learned how HIV is transmitted and how to work with people living with HIV". Somia explains how training led to action: "We started doing group work in houses and mosques on HIV prevention...we started to work with women on accurate information and doing home based care with people living with HIV."

4.3 DFID has long term relationships with many major faith based development organisations such as Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, CAFOD, Progressio, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and World Vision. This has been through both country office support and central DFID funding (such as Programme Partnership Arrangements and the Civil Society Challenge Fund). DFID's work with faith groups over the last ten years has benefitted many millions of women, men, girls and boys.

With DFID support, **CAFOD** works with Catholic Justice and Peace Commissions in nine African countries to help poor men and women to understand and demand their rights. Successful examples include a campaign to review a mining contract leading to reinstated health care services in Bunia in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo; research and lobbying which led to provision of safe drinking water in Zambia's Copperbelt and work with local pastoralists to secure the construction of a new road to facilitate access to markets in northern Kenya.

4.4 As with other parts of civil society, there will be an organised exchange of ideas between DFID and faith groups on development issues. DFID is committed to consulting as widely as possible. DFID will ensure that there is an opportunity for faith groups and other parts of civil society to be involved in relevant policy consultations.

In 2010 **Tearfund** analysed the costs and benefits of the DFID funded disaster risk reduction programme implemented by Presbyterian Church in 53 remote villages of Mzimba District, Malawi. The study found that for each dollar invested, there was a positive return of 24 dollars to the community. The return of investment reflected increase in crop production, increases in small livestock production, reduced education drop-out rates and reduced mortality.

With DFID support, **Christian Aid's** Zimbabwean partners have achieved extraordinary success. More than 5,000 households (mostly headed by women) have increased their food security, income and access to water, and they have begun to buy cattle, goats, chickens, donkeys and ploughs. The partners have supported farmers to introduce new agricultural techniques to improve productivity and livelihoods.

5. Developing the Principles to guide DFID's relationship with faith groups

5.1 The Faith Partnership Principles Working Group has produced the following **Partnership Principles** to strengthen and guide DFID's future relationship and collaboration with faith groups on international development.

5.2 The **Vision of the Principles Paper** is for a clear statement of intent which will strengthen that relationship between DFID and faith groups. The Principles of the Partnership are transparency, mutual respect and understanding:

- **Transparency:** faith groups, DFID and organisations working on international development need to be open about their mission, beliefs, values, policies and practices.
- **Mutual respect** of distinctive roles, contributions and added value of faith groups and DFID in development.
- **Understanding** the role of faith groups and their contributions to development.

5.3 The key areas in which these principles will be applied are building a common understanding of faith and development; documenting the impact of faith groups through research and evaluation and working on difficult themes and areas to find effective ways of contributing to improvements in the lives of the poor.

Building a common understanding of faith and development

5.4 **Issue:** Faith groups are motivated by values which are grounded in their religious beliefs. They can have a distinct understanding of development and relationship with many people who can make a real impact on poverty. There can sometimes be a lack of understanding and empathy between faith groups and governments, donors, secular development organisations and other parts of civil society.

5.5 **Challenge:** Many development organisations have avoided the issue of faith and religion and its contribution to development. Many development agencies were heavily influenced by a Western tradition that draws a sharp distinction between religion and the state. Religion and faith has sometimes been regarded as a barrier to development and inherently contentious. Faith groups are sometimes excluded by development agencies and believe that when they are allowed in, they have to "leave their faith at the door". This estrangement however is not just one-sided. Some faith leaders typically see themselves as the defenders of traditional moral values amid the onslaught of a secular and materialistic world - and some want to have 'nothing to do with official donors' or with other faiths.

5.6 Way forward: People working in development need to have sufficient understanding of the role played by faiths in the local, national and global cultural contexts. This includes an understanding of how faith relates to development issues; the role of religious institutions and leaders in public life; the basic tenets of religions and an appreciation of the different interpretations within any given religion, and the ways in which different faiths engage in and contribute to sustainable development. A common understanding will change perceptions, build trust and identify opportunities for collaboration including policy development and programming. Building a common understanding requires specific and targeted information on the role of faith in different contexts.

Documenting the impact of faith groups through systematic research

5.7 Issue: In many parts of the world faith groups play a crucial role in providing services and relief to poor people, particularly to marginalised communities and in fragile environments. Many figures have been cited on the level of services provided by faith groups. For example a figure that is often cited is that approximately 40% of health services in Sub-Saharan Africa (rising to 70% in certain African countries) are provided by faith groups^{11 12}. DFID's interest is the impact of faith groups on poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals and global development framework that follows the MDGs from 2015. However many faith groups feel that there is a need for a more holistic understanding of wellbeing in development which brings together social, economic, environmental and spiritual dimensions. It is also important to recognise that many faith groups often work to longer timescales than official development agencies.

5.8 Challenge: As with many statistics on the impact of civil society on poverty, most of the figures on the impact of faith groups are difficult to verify. There is a need for more systematic evidence on the scale and impact of services provided by faith groups, and the distinctive contribution they make.

5.9 Way forward: Information on provision of services needs to be disaggregated to illustrate the scale of services provided by faith groups. Assessing the impact of faith groups on development is complex. It requires both qualitative and quantitative approaches and a focus on wellbeing that goes beyond standard development indicators to include wider measures of the ability to flourish. Research carried out and interpreted by beneficiary communities could produce more appropriate evidence. Building this systematic evidence base can be achieved by mapping the work of faith groups, developing evaluation methodologies and supporting faith groups (especially smaller groups) to measure their own impact¹³. This fits in well with the UK Government's prioritisation of results and value for money.

Working with difficult areas: finding an effective way forward

5.10 **Issue:** Faith groups are motivated by values that are grounded in religious beliefs and religious teaching often focuses on questions of behaviour relevant to development. This has often been a powerful driver for development such as the role played by Christian, Islamic and Buddhist groups in contributing to the toppling of authoritarian regimes and promoting human rights in South Africa, Latin America, North Africa and Asia^{14 15 16}. However there are important areas where values and ethical positions are contested by, within and between different faith groups. Contested issues include: contraception; gay rights; abortion; capital punishment; gender equality; freedom of religion; blasphemy; HIV/AIDS; and other cultural and religious practices.

5.11 The **Challenge** is to develop ways of working that help faith groups and DFID to identify and discuss areas of difference in constructive ways without threatening wider collaborative work.

5.12 **Way forward:** Faith groups and DFID can start from the common areas of agreement. However we need also to be aware of contested areas. Faith groups and DFID cannot and should not try to agree on everything. There will be times when faith groups will need to recognise DFID's position on certain issues, even if they do not agree with that position, and vice versa. DFID needs to be clear and transparent about the situations when collaborative work with organisations may not be possible. There is a need to explore these issues sensitively, by understanding the underlying fundamental values, gathering all the facts and being comfortable to challenge each others' values and beliefs whilst still respecting differences. To navigate through these contested areas both faith groups and DFID need to be clear about and respect boundaries; ensure that we do not make prior assumptions; identify interlocutors to act as bridge builders; develop guidelines where useful on how to address specific contentious issues and create space for open and frank discussion.

6. Conclusions

6.1 These Faith Partnership Principles will guide DFID's relationship with faith groups in the future. Annex 1 highlights some key activities to start the process of putting the principles into practice. The Principles Paper will provide an opportunity for both faith groups and DFID to suggest new ways of building on our relationship. Above all, and working together we will pursue our common objective of tackling poverty and deprivation in the poorest and most disadvantaged parts of the world. Our fundamental proposition is that by working together we will achieve more through our common endeavours.

June 2012

Annex A

Putting the Faith Partnership Principles into Practice

The following are the agreed priority actions to put the Principles into practice.

1. To **build a common understanding of faith and development.**

DFID and faith groups will identify priority countries for faith groups to focus on in order to produce 3 country papers (including case studies, examples of good practice and learning) by December 2012.

2. To **document the impact of faith groups** and identify the effective approaches to improve the lives of poor people.

Faith Working group will establish a “community of learning” (involving faith, inter-faith and secular civil society organisations) to map the work of faith and inter-faith groups; document the added value and effectiveness of approaches used by faith groups and produce guidance on evaluation of the impact of faith groups (that incorporates broader indicators of human and environmental wellbeing)¹⁷ by October 2012.

3. To **discuss areas of difference in constructive ways** without threatening wider collaborative work.

Faith groups and DFID will identify up to 3 priority areas to be discussed and constructive ways of dealing with these issues documented by December 2012.

4. The relationship needs to be based on **open and frank debate** in the UK and in developing countries. This will be managed by faith groups with DFID participating where a specific need is identified.

The Faith Working Group will facilitate a **representative and balanced forum** for faith and inter-faith work to facilitate the establishment of representative and balance fora in the 3 priority countries by October 2012.

5. DFID is keen to ensure that a **wide and diverse range of organisations** that can make an effective contribution to development are eligible for funding through its funding in the UK and overseas through DFID country offices.

DFID will use relevant faith based networks to keep faith groups informed about funding opportunities especially for the Global Poverty Action Fund and will look for opportunities for additional development support for faith groups and other civil society organisations applying for GPAF funding by October 2012.

6. The **impact of the Faith Partnership Principles** on improving the collaboration between DFID and faith groups will be assessed

DFID and Working Group will carry out a joint review of the impact of the Principles by April 2013.

Annex B

Faith Partnership Principles Working Group

Name	Organisation
Andrew Croggon	Christian Aid
Lucy Roberts	Quaker Peace and Social Witness
Tim Aldred	Progressio
Maurice McPartlan	CAFOD, International Department CBCEW, Caritas Social Action Network, SCIAF, Trocaire and Missio UK
David Westwood	World Vision
Stacey Swimer	World Jewish Relief
Donald Mavunduse	Tearfund
Atallah Fitzgibbon	Muslim Charities Forum
Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh	Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha
Helen Stawski	Lambeth Palace
Rachel Carnegie	Lambeth Palace
Charles Reed	Church of England
Martin Francis Desforges	Volunteer Missionary Movement

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- ¹⁰ Taylor N, (2006), "Working together? Challenges and opportunities for international development agencies and the church in the response to AIDS in Africa", Tearfund, London
- ¹¹ World Health Organization. (2007) "Towards primary health care: Renewing partnerships with faith-based communities and services". WHO, Geneva.
- ¹² African Religious Health Assets Programme (ARHAP) (2008), "The contribution of religious entities to health in sub-Saharan Africa", International Religious Health Assets Programme (IRHAP), South Africa.
- ¹³ This could be supported by gathering, coordination and facilitation of existing work such as the Birmingham University Religion and Development Research Programme
- ¹⁴ Medhurst, K., (1992), "Politics and religion in Latin America". In Politics and religion in the modern world, Routledge, London.
- ¹⁵ Moreno, A. (2007), "Engaged citizenship: The Catholic bishops' conference of the Philippines in the post-authoritarian Philippines". In Development, civil society and faith-based organisations, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke.
- ¹⁶ de Gruchy, J., (1995), "Christianity and democracy: A theology for a just world", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- ¹⁷ As DFID's primary interest is the impact of faith groups on poverty reduction, this would be most appropriately carried out by faith groups.

What is international development?

International development is about helping people fight poverty. Thanks to the efforts of governments and people around the world, there are 500 million fewer people living in poverty today than there were 25 years ago. But there is still much more to do.

1.4 billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day. More needs to happen to increase incomes, settle conflicts, increase opportunities for trade, tackle climate change, improve people's health and their chances to get an education.

Why is the UK Government involved?

Each year the UK Government helps three million people to lift themselves out of poverty. Ridding the world of poverty is not just morally right, it will make the world a better place for everyone. Problems faced by poor countries affect all of us, including the UK. Britain's fastest growing export markets are in poor countries. Weak government and social exclusion can cause conflict, threatening peace and security around the world. All countries of the world face dangerous climate change together.

What is the Department for International Development?

The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK Government's fight against world poverty. DFID has helped more than 250 million people lift themselves from poverty and helped 40 million more children to go to primary school. But there is still much to do to help make a fair, safe and sustainable world for all. Through its network of offices throughout the world, DFID works with governments of developing countries, charities, nongovernment organisations, businesses and international organisations, like the United Nations, European Commission and the World Bank, to eliminate global poverty and its causes. DFID also responds to overseas emergencies. DFID's work forms part of a global promise, the eight UN Millennium Development Goals, for tackling elements of global poverty by 2015.

What is UK aid?

We are the Government's Department for International Development. We use UK aid to help the world's poorest people to change their lives and the poorest countries to grow their way out of poverty. The UK aid logo helps people identify by whom the aid is delivered.

Department for International Development

1 Palace Street
London SW1E 5HE

Abercrombie House
Eaglesham Road
East Kilbride
Glasgow G75 8EA

Tel: +44 (0)20 7023 0000
Fax: +44 (0)20 7023 0016
Website: www.dfid.gov.uk
Email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk
Public enquiry point: 0845 3004100
or +44 1355 84 3132 (if you are calling from abroad)

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