

Partnerships, Alliances and Networks Policy

MARCH 2024 VERSION 4

1. Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA development policies and procedures and Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA organisational and Country-level strategic plans.

This policy has been developed with reference to Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s values, DFAT’s ANCP Manual 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. Partnerships and alliances may also be sought to provide medium-long term relief from hardship caused by conflict, natural disasters or other emergency situations.

2. Definition

Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA recognises that “partnership” covers a range of relationships. Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s development approach is based on working in partnership with local community-based organisations and trade unions to achieve project outcomes but also build organisational capacity of civil society groups.

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA defines ‘partner organisations’ as organisations with whom we have a documented agreement committing to joint projects or campaigns.

‘Alliances’ is used to refer to organisations or groups with whom APHEDA collaborates with on an informal basis, without an exchange of funding.

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA is also part of various networks, which are groups of like-minded organisations which may or may not involve formal agreements.

3. 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, 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.

4. Scope

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

5. 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 freedom, democracy, equality, development and justice. Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA particularly recognises that its solidarity with the working class and marginalised people in low-income 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 repression, injustice and inequality, not just 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, people with disabilities, migrants, 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, accountability, 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 collective 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.

6. Guidelines

6.1 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 goals of 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;

6.2 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 management 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 and procedure.

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. The Partner Capacity Assessment is revised every 5 years.

We seek regular feedback from partners during capacity assessments, monitoring visits and through a 5-yearly partner feedback survey.

6.3 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 specific 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.

6.4 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 projects. Procedures for the development of a project design are included in the International Program Manual and a project design/proposal template is available.
3. 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 meets relevant identified needs, is feasible and realistically planned, is in line 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, monitoring visits are organized in consultation with APHEDA partners. In case of jointly funded projects,, 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 the areas identified in the capacity building plan will also be regularly monitored and reviewed. The outcomes of monitoring visits will be discussed with partners, and any decisions, such as changes in funding levels or the direction of programs that affect partners, will be openly and fully discussed with them before implemented.

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.

6.5 Roles and Responsibilities

6.6.1 Board and Executive Officer

It is the responsibility of the Board and Executive Officer, with the support of senior managers and staff 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.

The Executive Officer and one member of the Board will sign off on agreements with partners.

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 staff promote Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA’s partnership principles and apply related procedures and tools.

6.6.3 Staff

All staff 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.

7. Document Control

Version	Revision Description	Approved by Board (date)
1	Original	2004
2	Revised	September 2011

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
4	Clarified definitions and added specifics of PCA cycle	March 2024