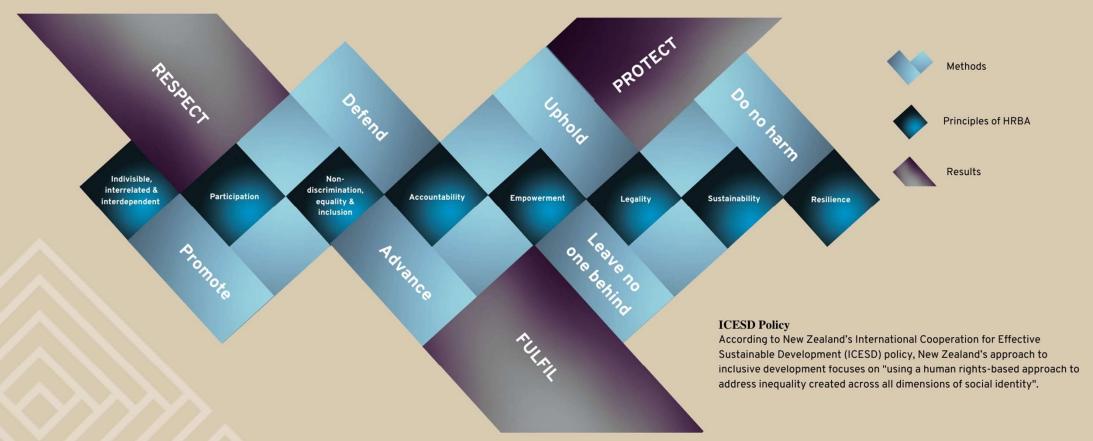# Human rights based approach to international development cooperation

GOAL: Aotearoa New Zealand's international development cooperation advances the realisation of human rights, prioritising people and groups at risk of being left behind

NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere

RESPECT

PROTECT

Defend

Uphold

Do no harm

| Indivisible, interrelated & interdependent | Participation | Non-discrimination, equality & inclusion | Accountability | Empowerment | Legality | Sustainability | Resilience |

Promote

Advance

Leave no one behind

FULFIL

Methods

Principles of HRBA

Results

ICESD Policy
According to New Zealand's International Cooperation for Effective Sustainable Development (ICESD) policy, New Zealand's approach to inclusive development focuses on "using a human rights-based approach to address inequality created across all dimensions of social identity".

What is a human rights based approach (HRBA)?
A human rights based approach to development is a method of ensuring development programming **respects, protects, and fulfils the realisation of human rights for all**. New Zealand's HRBA to development begins with the assumption that **all human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent**, and requires the application of the following principles: **non-discrimination, equality and inclusion; participation; accountability; empowerment; legality; sustainability; resilience.** Taking a HRBA means starting with the goal of realising human rights for all. It means we not only **defend and uphold** human rights, but we strive to **promote and advance** human rights, including through our development programming. It means taking an **inclusive approach** to ensure non-discrimination and prioritisation of those people and groups most at risk, so that we **leave no one behind**. And it means ensuring our activities are based around the principles that shape good human rights, and good development, processes and outcomes, including **do no harm**.

Why use a HRBA?
Applying a HRBA enables us to ensure our development programming is contributing to the realisation of human rights. It ensures that our development programming contributes to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights for all.

How to apply the HRB
The HRBA is applied in accordance with New Zealand's Human Rights Strategic Action Plan for International Development Cooperation 2021-2025 along with further guidance on the principles and key questions to ask.

PRINCIPLES OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE Aid Programme

An explanation of each of the principles of the HRBA

Questions to ask when applying the HRBA in development processes

Indivisible, Interrelated, and Interdependent

All people everywhere in the world are entitled to all human rights. All rights – political, civil, social, cultural and economic – are equal in importance and none can be fully enjoyed without the others. The fulfilment of one right often depends, wholly or in part, upon the fulfilment of others. For instance, fulfilment of the right to health may depend, in certain circumstances, on fulfilment of the right to development, to education or to information.

- What are the obstacles to realisation of rights? What are the root causes?
- What information, situation analysis and data are needed to substantiate the issue?
- How are the issues connected? How do violations or failures to realise rights in one area (or for one group) impact upon the realisation of other rights?
- How are we incorporating interrelated human rights throughout our work?

Non-discrimination, Equality & Inclusion

Human rights apply to all equally. All types of discrimination should be prohibited, prevented and eliminated, including discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, age, language, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or geographical origin, disability, property, birth or other status as established by human rights standards. Development should Leave No One Behind, thus targeted at those most at risk.

- Which groups of people are being denied rights? How? Which rights?
- How can our development activities prioritise women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), indigenous people and others, and/or address the disadvantages they face?

Participation

All people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being. Full, active and meaningful participation by all stakeholders, including women, children, vulnerable groups, and civil society, must be ensured in all phases of development, including identifying development priorities, as well as design, implementation, and assessment of programmes and policies.

- What are the obstacles to expressing and hearing people's voices? What is needed for people to express their views and be heard and influence decisions affecting their welfare?
- What information is needed to participate fully, actively, and meaningfully? Who are the representatives of the affected groups?
- What structures are in place to ensure safe, systematic and ongoing participation?

Accountability

Where there are violations or failures to realise human rights, rights-holders are entitled seek redress. Those impacted by our development activities must have access to avenues to seek accountability and redress for grievances and/or violations of human rights. Robust and transparent accountability mechanisms help clarify who is responsible for delivering on what, by when, and by what means.

- Who are the responsible duty bearers at community, institutional and national level?
- What do they need to do to ensure rights are realised?
- What institutions are needed to ensure accountability of duty bearers?
- What support do governments and others need to deliver and report on human rights commitments and hold duty bearers accountable on human rights realisation?

Empowerment

Everyone is entitled to claim and exercise their rights. Individuals and communities need to understand their rights and participate in the development of policies which affect their lives. A HRBA is designed to empower people and communities, ensuring all people have opportunity to prosper through economic, political, and social empowerment that builds resilient communities.

What forms of empowerment are needed for survival and development?
- *Political*? e.g. Voice, engagement opportunities, structural space, inclusive governance
- *Social*? e.g. access to services for health, education, protection etc
- *Economic*? e.g. opportunities for skills building and training, services to support employment and entrepreneurship, income generation opportunities

Legality

States and other duty-bearers have to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in international human rights instruments. These human rights standards should guide all development cooperation and programming. This maintains certainty and clarity for all involved. A HRBA ensures all development activities are aimed at contributing directly to the realisation of one or several human rights.

- Which human rights are affected? How are the rights respected, protected, fulfilled?
- Does the project draw on international human rights law guidance regarding the core components of the relevant human rights?
- What in the legislative and regulatory framework assists/prohibits realisation of rights? What legal and regulatory reforms are needed to fully realise rights?

Sustainability

The principle of sustainability ensures that human rights realisation contributes to creating a more peaceful and prosperous world, where all people live in dignity and safety, and our environment is protected. A HRBA ensures that programming is effective for long term improvement of human rights enjoyment for all, thus focuses on developing local capacity to implement human rights.

- Are development initiatives addressing root causes, norms and systemic change?
- What measures are included to ensure duty bearers can sustain change?
- What measures are included to ensure local ownership & leadership by rights-holders?
- What partnerships are needed and what will make those partnerships sustainable? (institutions, legal/regulatory frameworks, resources)

Resilience

A HRBA builds resilient communities who are empowered to address the underlying determinants of well-being and mitigate and adapt to future challenges. Strengthening the ability of individuals and communities to recognise, challenge and transform the power structures that dictate their vulnerability, means their ability to withstand shocks and stresses over the long term can be greatly improved.

- How can realising rights improve economic, environmental and social resilience?
- How can communities be assisted to improve the underlying determinants of well-being and mitigate and adapt to future challenges?
- Are our resilience efforts inclusive of priority populations – women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, people of diverse SOGIESC?