

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

General Policy

2008-2013

1.0 Introduction

This policy states the general guidelines the CRWRF executive will apply for the distribution of Christian charity abroad for the calendar years 2008 - 2013. It was adopted by the CRWRF executive at its meeting held on September 10, 2008 and ratified by a majority of the delegates from the supporting churches at its meeting held on October 4, 2008.

2.0 Background

In 1965 The Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund was established "for the purpose of helping to relieve hunger and want in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." CRWRF is a voluntary charitable organization based in the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.

According to our constitution:

The purpose of CRWRF is to provide Christian charity to any area of the world that is in need of such. This purpose is based on the conviction that "all the gifts which we possess are bestowed by God and entrusted to us on condition that they be distributed for our neighbour's benefit," (Calvin's Institutes III, 7, v); as instructed to us in numerous passages of the Bible, some of which are: Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Hebrews 13:16; I Thessalonians 3:12; Romans 12:17; 2 Peter 1:7 and James 2:14-17. From these passages and from all Scriptures we learn that we should show generosity, charity, mercy and kindness to the poor to thereby show our thankfulness for the great salvation that we have in Jesus Christ.

Our Mission:

CRWRF serves, as a bridge for our church members and churches to provide resources that address material needs of people suffering the effects of poverty through Christian motivated partners.

Program Focus

Our Scriptural basis for both immediate and long term response is that Christians are called, as they have opportunity, to do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6: 9, 10; see also 1 Thess. 3:12, 1 Thess. 5: 15, and 2 Peter 1:7).

CRWRF's program has the following focus areas:

- Child Development
- Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation
- Community Development
- HIV/Aids Response
- Global Awareness Education

CRWRF facilitates immediate aid to emergency and disaster situations providing food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care after civil wars or natural disasters.

CRWRF is also involved in longer-term development projects that benefit children, and families in communities who lack the means for a sustainable livelihood. Development programs provide training and enable local leaders to facilitate changes that address long term problems in their own communities.

Programs that respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis have become a special program focus for CRWRF's development work due to this overwhelming problem: there are more than 40 million people living with AIDS worldwide, and 90% of them live in poor countries without means to receive help.

In 2007 CRWRF started a new program focus to promote educational awareness about global issues and encourage a Biblical framework for understanding relief and development responses to world poverty within our constituency. Publications for family devotional use and resource materials for Christian educators are part of this program. Faithworks, a subcommittee of CRWRF now provides trip participants with both active service and guided learning opportunities to foster reflection on being a Christian steward in a world of need.

3.0 General Criteria for the Distribution of Our Funds

Our available financial and personnel resources are limited and the distribution of our assistance in foreign countries requires co-operation with other organizations. Our status as a registered Canadian charity also involves specific administrative obligations for the distribution of our funds. Our operating by-law provides that:

All funds are to be distributed through avenues that are trusted as reliable, honest and Christian in character.

At all times, CRWRF is to endeavour to give the necessary aid along with the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, both in word and deed.

4.0 Partnership Principles

CRWRF, as a Christian charity desires that all projects or programs meet the following criteria:

- address needs which result from the temporal circumstances of the recipients,
- are appropriate and responsibly through a transparent and efficient use of financial, material or personnel resources,
- in a manner not contrary to biblical principles; and
- accompanied by a faithful Christian witness.

In all cases, the projects of CRWRF must meet the first three criteria given in this section. With respect to relief projects responding to civil or natural disasters, CRWRF will continue to work through Christian organizations although the circumstances here may not lend

themselves to a direct Christian witness to the recipients. We cannot expect this to be the case where a large-scale distribution of food or other basic necessities takes place. In these circumstances, the best one may expect is that the Christian personnel involved may be able to give an explanation afterwards of why they engage in such an endeavor so that people may be drawn to know more about God's love as reflected in such acts of charity.

Our assistance is given with the goal that it may serve the glory of God (Col. 3: 17; 1 Cor. 10: 31) and that it may enable the recipients to live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Timothy 2:1, 2).

CRWRF will explore opportunities to engage in projects which meet all four criteria and which involve sister churches or churches belonging to the ICRC.

5.0 Criteria for our Intermediary and Local Partners

Relief Projects:

CRWRF responds to disasters through Christian motivated partners who:

- have a presence in the disaster area and are equipped with adequate personnel, infrastructure and logistical capability to respond
- determine response after gathering the best available information about the situation
- ensure that assistance methods are compatible with local living conditions
- assist the victims to become self-reliant as soon as possible after a disaster, moving them from a dependent situation to empowerment over their own futures
- where possible work through local churches so that the proclamation of the Gospel is strengthened
- in disaster-vulnerable areas work with local leaders to develop plans for rehabilitation, bring longer-term solutions to recurrent problems

Child and Community Development Projects:

CRWRF selects Christian motivated partners who

- seek to address the causes of poverty, not just decrease its effects
- empower and increase people's sense of control and power over decisions and events that affect them
- increase their capacity through the development of new skills, and abilities to help the poor make future changes
- promote community-wide benefits with special concern for the most needy and vulnerable groups in society, not just privileged members
- work towards local sustainability by employing technologies that are appropriate to available economic, human, and environmental resources
- identify with the local church, embracing biblical principles in their development approach, along with a strong Christian witness through their personnel
- when possible, support word and deed activities of Christian leaders that are specifically aimed at promoting the reform of cultural practices that are in conflict with biblical truths

6.0 Standards for CRWRF Programs or Projects

Program Staff:

CRWRF does not have its own personnel managing relief and development projects. However when evaluating partnership with other organizations we will look for:

- foreign personnel working on projects are oriented in required language skills, cultural understanding and job expertise
- field positions are filled by qualified national staff whenever possible
- national staff are fairly compensated with sensitivity to local scales
- training and preparation is given to national staff in order to fill expatriate staff positions in future

Cooperation:

CRWRF works with partners that:

- cooperate and seek to complement rather than duplicate assistance by other agencies
- where possible, engage the local Church members in sharing human, material, and spiritual resources in achieving program goals

Host Government:

CRWRF works with partners who:

- recognize their responsibilities as "guests" of the host government and will respect and comply with national and local laws that apply to them
- where they believe the systems are unjust, they will challenge them while continuing to work within due process
- develop programs that are compatible with national, region, and local development plans

Program Review and Evaluation:

CRWRF will dedicate resources to participate in review and evaluation activities both on the field and with project personnel visiting within Canada to ensure that:

- projects are achieving targets and working towards agreed ends
- all partners continue in agreement about principles and approaches to development problems
- understanding of lessons learned, future directions, and proposed solutions to issues of concern are openly discussed and agreed to by all partners.

7.0 Terms of Partnership

In all cases our co-operation with other organizations will continue to be on a project-by-project basis. Our support for such projects and the partners involved should be subject to mutual periodic review, and a mutual agreement to extend our co-operation, at least every 5 years.

In co-operating with other organizations, CRWRF is vulnerable to changes concerning any partner organization over which we can have no control. Therefore, CRWRF will limit long-term commitments through any one organization to not more than 50% of our annual expenditures.

With respect to working through a foreign intermediary or directly through a local partner abroad, we must require compliance with the guidelines established by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency for a Canadian charity to follow in co-operating with a foreign organization.

From our partners we will require their statement of faith or confessional basis, and the stated mission, vision, principles and policies adopted in the course of their work. We will inform an intermediary and local Christian agency of the confessional basis of our organization, namely the Three Forms of Unity, as a faithful summary of the teachings of the Bible. They should be prepared to accept that we would proceed from that basis.

Our co-operation with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (discussed in a separate report to our delegates at the 2002 annual meeting) will continue on the same basis as applied for co-operation with interdenominational organizations.

Where relief and development programs need support alongside the existing mission aid or ecclesiastical assistance channels of our churches, CRWRF will evaluate opportunities that are available to offer meaningful assistance. Among the member churches of the ICRC are a number of developing world churches as well. Closer relations with ICRC churches and the ease of communications between our churches and Christians in developing countries means may lead to new opportunities in the future.

8.0 CRWRF Allocation of Funds

CRWRF will continue to endeavour to provide Christian charity to any area of the world that is in need of such through projects for:

- Child Development 30 – 35 %
- Community Development 20 – 25 %
- Disaster Relief 15 – 20 %
- HIV/Aids Response 15 – 20 %
- Global Awareness Education 10 – 15 %

The percentages allocated among the program categories serve as a guideline only. These funding categories were approved as agreed guidelines at the Strategic Planning Session held in May, 2007.

9.0 Conclusion

In our support for Christian relief and development work, we seek to be an avenue for our constituency to address the temporal needs of our neighbour. It is our hope that this general policy may assist us in doing so in line with what the Reformer, John Calvin, once wrote about our neighbour:

Now since Christ has shown in the parable of the Samaritan that the term neighbour includes even the most remote person (Luke 10:36), we are not expected to limit the precept of love to those in close relationships. I do not deny that the more closely a man is linked to us, the more intimate obligation we have to assist him. It is the common habit of mankind that the more closely men are bound to together by the ties of kinship, of acquaintanceship, or of neighbourhood, the more responsibilities for one another they share. This does not offend God; for his providence as it were leads us to it. But I say we ought to embrace the whole human race as it were in a single feeling of love; here there is no distinction between barbarian and Greek, worthy and unworthy, friend and enemy since all should be contemplated in God, not in themselves. When we turn aside from such contemplation, it is no wonder we become entangled in many errors. Therefore if we rightly direct our love, we must first turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom would more often engender hate than love, but to God, who bids us extend to all men the love that we bear to him, that this may be an unchanging principle: whatever the character of the man, we must yet love him because we love God.

(Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, VII, 55)

***If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.
Isaiah 58:10***