

# Checklist to Guide Healthy Partnerships and Projects for Integral Mission

This checklist has been developed from TEAR Australia's 40 years of experience with international Christian development work. Its purpose is to help Australian Christian groups (mission committees, churches, schools, NGOs) make good decisions and avoid causing harm to local communities in their efforts to help alleviate poverty and suffering. It is suggested that groups prayerfully and thoughtfully work through each question in the checklist to determine if and how they should proceed with a project partnership.

**1. History:** Do we understand the history of the local community through hearing multiple stakeholder perspectives? Do we know the history of local mission and the local church? Are the plans being informed and shaped by this history?

**2. Location:** Why are we choosing this location rather than another community? How are the local needs being measured and assessed to ensure we are reaching those in greatest need?

**3. Root Causes:** Does the project address the root causes of suffering or need? Has there been enough analysis of the underlying issues? Are we just providing a service that doesn't solve the root problems?

**4. Empowerment:** Are we providing a service that local people could do just as well themselves (or possibly better)? Are we taking away an opportunity for local Christians to build relationships with their own community?

**5. Expertise:** Do we and/or our partners have the experience to do this type of project in this context? What is the track record of success? Are there other partners locally who are already doing this work or are better suited to do this project? How are we going to develop local capacity and expertise through this project? Are there other Australian agencies that it would be more efficient and effective for us to partner with rather than doing this ourselves?

**6. Cultural context:** Do we have a deep and diverse range of perspectives and understanding of local culture and context to make wise decisions? Do we understand who the key people in the community are and how they will affect the project, either positively or negatively? Do we understand the implications of this project for the local church community? Do we understand the local and national political context and implications for the project?

**7. Reconciliation:** Will this project contribute toward peace building, reconciliation and unity in regard to the local political, ethnic, tribal, church and religious context or will it create further divisions and conflict?

**8. Commitment:** How long are we prepared to be involved? Are we willing to commit to the time frame required for lasting development outcomes?

**9. Dependency:** Will the project create dependency? How will the project continue when our support ends? Are we creating dependency on external resources?

**10. Prayer:** Have we committed to ongoing prayer for this partner, and the work, for the life of the project?

**11. Strengths-based:** Is the project building on the assets and strengths that God has placed in the local community or is it dependent on external resources?

**12. Participation:** How is the community involved in the project – are they just recipients or active participants in the design, implementation and monitoring? Is the project building dignity or providing charity? Have we considered the position of women, children, people with disability, and others who might not normally have a say in community affairs? How will they be included?

**13. Partnership:** Is our relationship guided and shaped by the Micah Network partnership guidelines'?

**14. Theology:** Does the project align with our theological understanding of biblical justice and mission?

**15. Humility:** Are we willing to follow the lead of our partners? Are we willing to put our strategies, interests and priorities aside and be guided by the local partners? Are there good reasons for us to be doing this ourselves rather than supporting another agency who has the experience to do this better?

**16. Accountability:** Does the partner have experience and systems to handle the funding and project management? How does this project compare to the size of past projects and the current budget of the local church/partner? Does the partner have appropriate governance and accountability systems? Is the partner registered with the local government? How well do they link with other local agencies? Do we have experience ensuring appropriate accountability systems exist for partner projects?