

PROGRESSIO

People Powered Development

Progressio's Strategic Framework 2010-2015

Who we are

Progressio is a UK-based charity working internationally to enable people in developing countries to challenge and change the situations that keep them poor. We currently work in 11 countries and have a long history of working in fragile, post-conflict and authoritarian states. We have an independent sister organisation, Progressio Ireland, based in Dublin.

We believe poor and marginalised people can improve their own lives and transform their world. Despite the many barriers that keep them in poverty, 'poor people' are often rich culturally and socially, and have the resilience and resourcefulness to be the authors of their own development. Our role is to support them.

That's why we develop long-term partnerships with local organisations and community groups in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia, providing practical support through around 100 development workers, mostly from the South, who share skills, know-how and training. It's like having a long term, dedicated expert embedded in the organisation, someone who can respond flexibly to changing needs. Working together in this way we can cost-effectively help to improve the lives of thousands of people.

Because poverty is about unequal power relations and a lack of human rights, we work with a wide range of people who are poor and marginalised to change the structures that keep them in poverty. We support them in their calls for policy change. With our supporters we stand alongside them in demanding that decision-makers around the world sit up and listen to them.

Inspired by our Catholic roots, we believe that experiencing 'life in all its fullness'¹ means more than just having enough food. It includes freedom and control over one's life and future. It means challenging inequalities, especially those resulting from the social, political and economic impact of differences in gender roles. We see every person as sacred, having inherent dignity, so we stand in solidarity with poor people in achieving their rights.

We were founded 70 years ago by Catholics speaking out against injustice and the forces of fascism. Today we unite people across faiths in a common desire to tackle poverty and see lives transformed. This is at the heart of the change we want to bring by 2015.

"... people are only truly human in as far as, masters of their own acts and judges of their worth, they are authors of their own advancement, in keeping with the nature given to them by their Creator."

Populorum Progressio, Pope Paul VI, 1968

¹ John 10:10 (New International Version of the Bible); "have life and have it to the full" New Jerusalem Bible

Our values

Respect

We respect every person's inherent dignity and right to justice. This requires us to ensure fairness and equity in everything we do. At the heart of our work is fair and sustainable use of the earth and its resources.

Solidarity

Poverty is not someone else's problem. We are a global community. So, we stand in partnership with poor and marginalised people to support them in achieving their rights and challenging unfair systems. We bring people together from the Global South and North, from all faiths and none.

“When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.”

**Dom Hélder Câmara,
Archbishop of Recife, Brazil**

Passion

Poverty is an outrage. But we believe people can change their own lives for the better. We act with commitment and conviction to see poverty eradicated. We mobilise people from different countries to campaign and act – because every step, however small, helps to achieve lasting change.

Boldness

We are bold and innovative, bringing together Christian values of dignity and social justice with a strong, practical understanding of development. We recognise that relentless determination combined with high calibre work makes the most impact.

Our vision

Poor people empowered to transform their lives

Our mission

To help people gain power over their lives and overcome barriers that keep them poor

Where we are heading in the next five years

Poverty is not just about a lack of resources. It is more complex than that. At its core are unequal power relations that erode human dignity. Only when every person with whom we work can make important choices about his or her personal, economic, social or political future can they transform their lives.

This is the conviction behind our five-year strategic plan and it is never truer than in our rapidly changing world of economic interdependence and environmental fragility.

We will continue to playing our part in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We will increasingly support social movements in which citizens play a proactive role in driving social change – such as women’s groups in El Salvador, small-holder farmers in Malawi, indigenous people’s movements in Peru, networks of HIV-positive people in Zimbabwe and faith-based organisations in all the countries where we currently work.

We will help poor people challenge the local, national and international policies and structures that keep them poor. The experiences of poor people combined with our faith perspective will drive both our analysis of poverty and our lobbying and campaigning.

We will test different development approaches and share the evidence of strengths and weaknesses from these models with the wider development sector. This will magnify the impact of innovative work.

We will focus this work in three critical areas of poverty eradication:

- *Participation and effective governance* – because poor and marginalised people need to have greater influence on decisions and policies which affect their lives in order to reduce their poverty
- *Sustainable environment* – because by addressing climate change, resource scarcity and environmental degradation, poor and marginalised people can improve their quality of life
- *HIV and AIDS* – because people living with HIV have the right to receive adequate care and support, and to be less marginalised and stigmatised.

Our approach

Acutely aware of the rapidly changing world in which we live and informed by our values and our vision, we will seek to be a catalyst for social transformation over the next five years and work to:

- Strengthen social movements, church groups, networks and civil society organisations that mobilise people to pursue their rights and participate in decisions that affect their lives
- Build on and develop our placing of development workers with partners and develop fresh ways to support partners, such as enabling leaders from poor communities to share expertise across countries and regions
- Form strategic alliances with faith-based organisations, other charities, academic institutions and international agencies so that we can better support poor communities, share expertise and increase our impact
- Build solidarity by ensuring that our work always links people's experiences in local communities with decision-making structures at all levels, and by connecting supporters in the North with the experience of people in the South.

What we need

To do all this we need to develop our capability in key areas. We must build a significant UK community of support; continue to develop our staff; establish more effective information systems; build more technical expertise; and become better at documenting and disseminating good practice and monitoring the impact of our work. Greater cost-effectiveness and diversification of our income will be required for us to see the growth necessary to deliver our vision and these developments.

What we will do: Our three goals for the next five years

Theme 1: Participation and effective governance

Our goal: Poor and marginalised people we support, especially women, will have greater influence on decisions and policies which affect their lives

We believe Christian values call us to stand alongside people who have no say in the decisions and policies that shape their lives. We will work with them as they press for greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from their governments and institutions in order to achieve their social, economic and political rights.

Many of the countries in which we work are also fragile states. Due to war and instability sections of society are marginalised and under-represented. So we will monitor elections in Somaliland, we will strengthen local authorities and civil society in Haiti, and we will lobby for democratic improvements in countries like Zimbabwe.

Our solidarity with poor and marginalised communities will extend globally as together with them we represent their interests at international policy forums like the G20.

Women, who make up the majority of people in poverty, will be at the heart of our work to strengthen the ability of poor and marginalised people to demand and defend their rights. For example, we will help to get women into politics in Yemen, strengthen women's organisations in Timor-Leste and work for local government budgets to be set in favour of marginalised women in the Dominican Republic.

By 2015, working alongside civil society and local communities, we will have:

- Changed national policies – such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans – to deliver more and better essential services to poor people
- Built the capacity of civil society groups in order to equip people to successfully achieve greater rights from local governments
- Secured better levels of participation of marginalised groups in democratic processes
- Achieved demonstrable improvements in transparency, accountability and responsiveness to advocacy from the European Union, member states and multi-lateral institutions.

Our work will contribute to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1), promoting gender equality and empowering women (MDG 3) and developing a global partnership for development (MDG 8).

“The way we will get a new school is the same way we got the water supply – by getting involved in the participatory budgeting process.”

Milagros, a resident of Villa Gonzalez in the Dominican Republic

Theme 2: Sustainable environment

Our goal: Poor and marginalised people in our projects will have improved quality of life through more equitable and sustainable management of natural resources

We believe that unsustainable patterns of global production and consumption, especially in the North, are creating a perfect storm of climate change, environmental degradation and resource scarcity for many poor and marginalised communities.

That is why we will work on many fronts, including support for small-holder farmers in Malawi and agro-pastoralists in Somaliland whose livelihoods are under threat; we will work with faith leaders in Africa on concepts of environmental stewardship; we will help local groups to promote community forest management in Honduras and establish, in partnership with local and national government, better protection and use of scarce water resources in poor communities in El Salvador and Peru.

At the same time we will support these communities to influence and change local and national legislation and engage with the private sector to bring about a fairer, sustainable use of the earth's finite resources. More widely, we will work with poor people to bring their voices and experiences of environmental vulnerability to international debates and to influence international policies.

“This soil is dry and tired. We are struggling to grow enough food to survive because of illegal logging. Our new forestry law means we have the tool to fight corruption. We will not let those people steal our resources again.”

Hector, Honduras

By 2015, working alongside civil society, local communities and government, we will have:

- Increased the benefits for poor and marginalised people from activities such as climate change resilient farming, agricultural training and access to market for their products
- Improved ways poor and marginalised people access and use water, forest or coastal resources through steps like combating desertification and improving water harvesting
- Achieved demonstrable improvements in transparency, accountability and responsiveness of local and national authorities in areas like sustainable, equitable watershed management
- Secured clear accountability and responsiveness from the European Union, member states and multi-lateral institutions in advocacy areas such as illegal logging and climate change.

Our work will contribute to ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

Theme 3: HIV and AIDS

Our goal: People who are affected by or vulnerable to HIV and AIDS will have greater access to care, support and prevention and there will be a reduction in the stigmatisation and discrimination they experience

We believe that people living with HIV and AIDS have a right to life and dignity. It is the poorest and most powerless people who suffer the most, so we will work with poor and marginalised people at local and national levels to uphold this right.

We will continue to challenge deep-rooted social perceptions about HIV and AIDS. For example, we will work with faith leaders in Yemen to build greater understanding and speak out positively. And we will work with other opinion formers such as journalists in countries such as Honduras and Nicaragua so that they can challenge deeply held prejudices related to gender and stigma.

We will work with vulnerable groups such as prisoners, truck drivers and sex workers in Zimbabwe. The impact of the virus on women and girls around the world is particularly severe and we will support their struggle for rights and influence.

By 2015, working alongside civil society and local communities, we will have:

- Encouraged safer behaviour related to HIV and AIDS among vulnerable groups such as young people, sex workers and truck drivers
- Increased levels of understanding by opinion formers about gender and stigma issues related to HIV and AIDS and how tackling these issues helps people affected by HIV secure their rights
- Improved the level to which people living with HIV see their expressed needs and priorities being reflected in care and support services.

Over the next five years our work will increasingly focus on supporting people who are vulnerable to or living with HIV to effectively participate in securing changes in policy and practice locally and nationally.

Our work will contribute to combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6).

“When I told my husband I was HIV-positive he beat me. There was no information. I felt isolated. The person from Batsirai (Progressio’s partner) who counselled me gave me hope. She told me that you can live a normal life. I was burned by the fire of stigma and survived. I will die of old age, not AIDS.”

Gertrude, Zimbabwe

How we will do it

We have 12 organisational objectives over the next five years that will enable us to deliver our goals.

Capacities

We are committed to innovation and change that leads to excellence and greater impact, so we must develop our ability in the following areas:

1. Build strong partnerships with civil society in the South

Our development workers are embedded with our partners full-time and for the long term. But we must engage, listen and learn even more from our partners and others in the South who authentically represent poor and marginalised people. As we help people gain power over their own lives, we will be more responsive and collaborative, facilitating and deepening partnerships aimed at bringing lasting change.

2. Develop international and regional strategic alliances

In our drive for greater scale of impact we will form alliances with complementary organisations like think tanks, research bodies (South and North) and other international charities. This will enable us to work in new countries. We will bring to these alliances our expertise in capacity building of civil society, our specific policy knowledge, our understanding of faith and development and our track record of being on the ground in poor communities.

3. Ground communications and advocacy work in voices of the South

If poor and marginalised people are to successfully influence decisions affecting their lives, our work must increase the ability of their voices to be heard where it matters. Our analysis, theological reflection, campaigning and story-telling needs to be even more firmly rooted in the experiences and insights of the communities where we work.

4. Build a significant UK community of support to increase influence

Our work will be enhanced by a significant, well-informed supporter base. More people will support Progressio through campaigning, mobilising others and donating time and money. We will expand our reach within Catholic networks as well as others in the North who share our values.

Learning and improvement

Over the next five years we will invest in learning from our work and improving the organisation:

5. Better measure and communicate our impact

We will improve how we monitor and evaluate the impact of our work with partners in order to increase our accountability. We are committed to being better at communicating this to the public, supporters, donors and other stakeholders.

6. Increase programme innovation and share good practice

A 'one size fits all' approach is not consistent with our vision of development. So we will build on innovative work and explore different approaches. This will include such initiatives as trialling different models of development worker (eg short placements for community leaders), exchanges between indigenous people's movements, and piloting faith and environment work in Islamic countries. We will ensure gender is effectively mainstreamed into our policy and practice.

7. Improve organisational learning

We will improve our culture of learning, reflection and dialogue across the organisation.

8. Strengthen technical credibility, authority and expertise

We will build on our strong reputation for policy expertise, programme knowledge and faith input by further developing country level analysis and sector-specific understanding. We will do this in order to strengthen the quality and relevance of our work and increase our ability to influence the wider development debate.

Resources

Over the next five years we need to have the right resources in the organisation:

9. Value and develop our staff and development workers

People are at the heart of our work. We will consistently bring the best out of our development workers, country office teams, volunteers and staff in the UK. We will do this through support, professional development and learning and reflection.

10. Diversify and increase income

We seek to develop a broader funding base and enable organisational growth through increased income over the coming years.

11. Develop effective information and communication systems

Through better data management and information systems, we will be able to better engage with our supporters and have more timely, accurate information where it is needed.

12. Manage our resources strategically, efficiently and sustainably

We will ensure that we target our resources on priority areas in order to effectively implement this strategy. We will continue to pursue value for money. We will minimise our carbon footprint.



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