



misean cara
Mission Support from Ireland

The Missionary Approach to Development Interventions (MADI)

Conceptual Framework and
Current Development Context

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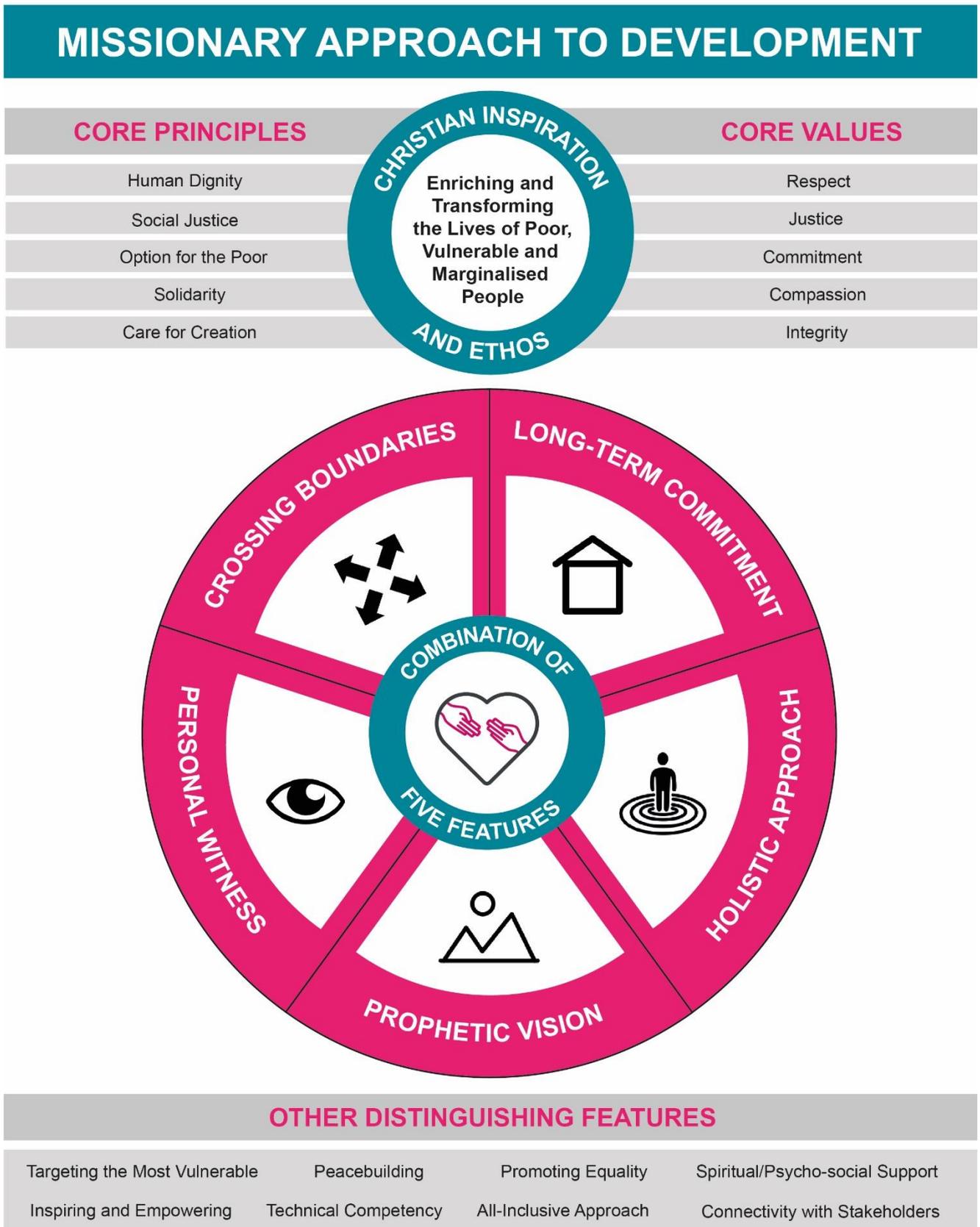
Acronyms

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DAC:	Development Advisory Committee
FBO:	Faith-Based Organisation
HIV:	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
MADI:	Missionary Approach to Development Interventions
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLWHA:	People living with HIV and AIDS
PWD:	People with Disabilities
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
VfM:	Value for Money

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Figure 1: MADI Conceptual Framework



Summary Table: Key Characteristics of the Missionary Approach (MADI)

No.	Feature of the Missionary Approach	Key Characteristics
1.	<i>Crossing Boundaries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A global missionary movement of great scale, reach and diversity • Support from central level to the field • Advocacy and networking from field to international levels • Crossing borders in all directions: north to south; south to north; north to north; south to south; east to west; and west to east • Learning from and influencing each other across geographic, political and cultural contexts • New and evolving models of mission.
2.	<i>Long Term Commitment and Local Presence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rootedness in the community • Understanding of culture and context • Trusted by the community • Closeness to the community • Stay when others leave.
3.	<i>Personal Witness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving witness to beliefs and principles • Demonstrating values/ congruence • High level of personal commitment • A way of life • Solidarity with the poor • Care for the environment
4.	<i>Prophetic Vision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking risks • Action orientated – proactive • Pioneering - starting something, and letting it evolve • Availing of opportunities • Solutions-based approach • Faith in community, selves and others to deliver • Developing models of good practice.
5.	<i>Holistic Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual, person-centred care • Whole of person is considered • Accompaniment • Family and dependents are considered • Moving beyond sectoral (e.g. health or education) support.
6.	<i>Other Distinguishing Features</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the most vulnerable • Influence on conflict-resolution and peacebuilding issues • Promoting equality for all • Spiritual / psycho-social support • Inspiring and empowering people • High technical competency • An all-inclusive approach: nobody left behind • Influencing and connectivity with other stakeholders.

1. The Missionary Approach – Conceptual Framework

The missionary approach to development interventions is driven by the Christian inspiration and ethos of the global movement of missionary organisations¹ (see Figure 1, above). Specific features of the missionary approach make it unique within the development sector, while it also incorporates other features that are common to a wider range of international development agencies. The ultimate aim of the missionary approach is to enrich and transform the lives of poor, vulnerable and marginalised people across the globe.

1.1 Christian Inspiration and Ethos

Missionary development projects all take their ultimate inspiration from the Christian values, ethos and approaches of the organisations that implement them. Core principles and concepts such as human dignity, social justice, option for the poor, solidarity, subsidiarity and care for creation are fundamental to the way in which projects are designed and implemented for the benefit of poor, vulnerable and marginalised people throughout the world. Projects are also influenced by the particular key commitment or ‘charism’ (spiritual gift) of the implementing congregation. Some, such as Misesan Cara members, further emphasise the related core values of respect, justice, commitment, compassion and integrity.

1.2 The Unique Approach of Missionaries

The approach of missionaries to development work is defined by five features that, when taken in combination, describe a way of working that is unique to missionaries when compared to the approaches of other development agencies, including the approaches of other faith-based organisations (FBOs). These five features are as follows:

- 1) **Crossing boundaries** in a whole variety of ways, as a global missionary movement of great scale and diversity
- 2) A **long-term commitment and local presence** on the ground where projects are being implemented;
- 3) A **personal witness** of commitment to Christian and missionary values;
- 4) A **prophetic vision** that inspires missionaries to take action to address community problems, even when the outcome is uncertain or unclear; and
- 5) A **holistic** (whole of person) **approach** towards working with individuals.

Other FBOs also take their inspiration from the same Christian values, but many of the international bodies amongst them do not commit themselves to a long-term presence on the ground. Other Christian organisations have their own diocesan and parish structures locally, but do not necessarily link to international networks or structures. Missionaries go beyond borders, cross boundaries and operate on a global basis, seeing the world as one place, while at the same time being fully embedded in the local community.

Missionaries will generally be invited to work in a local diocese or parish in order to provide particular services, or to fill particular gaps in existing services for poor people. They generally do not rely on the local parish for funding or capacity (which may often be very limited in any case) and tend to be very proactive in identifying the needs and rights of communities and individuals, and in establishing projects to address those needs and rights. Each of the five features of the unique missionary approach is discussed further in Sections 1.2.1 to 1.2.5, below.

1.2.1 Crossing Boundaries

Missionaries work as part of a **global missionary movement** that, when considered in its entirety, is enormous in scale, but also has a high degree of diversity and autonomy of operation for the members within it

¹ Specific missionary communities may be referred to as congregations, orders or societies, depending upon the way in which they are structured.

(subsidiarity). The key unifying factor for the movement is its **very strong base in a core set of Christian values and principles**. Other international development agencies or networks may also contain a significant degree of internal diversity, but they generally develop their organisational values during strategic planning processes. The core values and principles of the missionary movement are based on many centuries of Christian philosophy, thinking and practice, and are the **driving force** for all of its activities.

The global or international nature of missionary organisations provides particular advantages to their members and projects in the field. Many missionary projects are small in nature, and based in isolated locations, but the structure of the organisation can allow for technical or financial support to be provided to a project from a more central level, within the country or region, or from the headquarters (e.g. in writing and / or submitting funding applications to potential donors). **Country, regional and international level structures, where they exist, can also be used to address advocacy issues on a broader level.**

The continuous movement of missionaries within and across continents provides **significant opportunities for learning and sharing of experiences across the globe**. Missionaries have traditionally been associated with travelling and working from the Global North to the Global South, but they now work increasingly from South to North. Most missionary organisations provide services or implement justice projects on specific social issues (e.g. on health, education, disability or homelessness) within their own countries, enabling them to have strong roots in their own societies also – a factor that is not always the case for other international development agencies. Missionaries also cross boundaries to work across different cultures and contexts in neighbouring or distant countries, both in the North and South (e.g. an Irish priest working in the US, a Nigerian or Filipino sister working in Kenya). The missionary personnel resource base is increasingly from the South.

1.2.2 Long-Term Commitment and Local Presence

The long-term commitment of missionaries to local communities has many benefits as a development approach. Missionaries have long histories of involvement, often based on inter-generational experience, which are further complemented by their intentions to remain well into the future. Because they are engaged so closely with the communities over a long period of time, the missionaries are **highly trusted by those communities**, in terms of issues such as financial probity, delivering on promises made, and acting in the interest of the community and its members. Many communities speak of the closeness of the missionaries to the community in comparison with government agencies or other external actors.

Given the significant (sometimes very negative) impact that local culture, beliefs and superstitions can have on development initiatives, the rootedness of missionaries in the communities enables them to obtain a much better understanding of the local **context and culture** than would be possible for an agency with a short-term presence on the ground, or those acting from the outside. While addressing cultural issues, missionaries do not automatically assume that Western values and approaches are supreme. Rather, they take their guidance from the primacy of the Gospel in relation to issues such as justice, peace, love and equality, particularly as a starting point when challenging contentious local cultural practices. Another factor in terms of commitment is that missionaries are not influenced by general donor or NGO trends, so that when other many other organisations decide to leave a particular region, country or area *en masse*, the missionaries are often the only development agencies remaining to address the difficult social and economic issues that are still present.

1.2.3 Personal Witness

When working within communities (or elsewhere) missionaries seek to give personal witness to the Christian values that they espouse, through living a frugal and simple lifestyle, avoiding unnecessary luxuries, maintaining a high level of **commitment** to their work, demonstrating their **solidarity** with the poor and their care for the **environment** that surrounds them. In doing so, they hope to also influence others to follow a similar set of values (but not necessarily within the same religion). The high degree of personal commitment to their work is driven by their spiritual view of missionary work as a **way of life** rather than just a particular

job to be done, or a project to be completed. For many missionaries, this includes operating out of a paradigm of **presence** that allows time and space for real and transformative relationships to develop. Such processes are also viewed as multi-directional, whereby the missionaries themselves, as well as those with whom they relate, are transformed and their respective world views are broadened.

1.2.4 Prophetic Vision

Throughout their history, missionaries have operated from a pioneering or '**prophetic**' vision. Unlike other development agencies, they will often start a project where they see a need, regardless of whether there are resources to complete it or not, or whether a baseline has been completed or not. In this way, they are inspired to be proactive and to **take risks** in starting badly needed projects, while believing that if they make a start, the resources will eventually become available. This faith in themselves, in their communities and in outside agencies (e.g. donors) enables them to address important social issues through a process of evolution and adaptation as necessary, and to create models of good practice for others to follow. In many senses, missionaries feel a strong impetus to respond in whatever way possible, an impetus that is driven by their closeness to and relationships with the local community. For many missionaries this embodies their effort to **respond to 'the cry of the poor'** in very real and immediate terms.

1.2.5 Holistic Approach

Most development agencies tend to focus on specific sectoral projects for communities, that typically address particular health, education or livelihoods needs of those communities. They sometimes make connections across different sectoral projects to address the needs of particular groups. Missionaries also deliver specific thematic or sectoral projects, but in doing so they look at individuals as well as communities, in a person-centred manner. They don't just look at the specific health or education needs, but (in line with their commitment to human dignity) they seek to support the **whole of the person**. This approach is often very personal, and can involve a high degree of **accompaniment** of groups or individuals, e.g. people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), including support also for family members and dependents, that would often be outside the scope of other development projects.

1.3 Other Distinguishing Features of the Missionary Approach

Apart from the five key features of the missionary approach described above, there are a number of other characteristics that are strongly associated with missionary development work:

- Missionaries deliberately seek out the **poorest and most vulnerable communities** to work with. They are often found in very remote or isolated locations, in areas prone to droughts, floods or other natural disasters. They also work with highly disadvantaged communities in urban slums and in locations prone to conflict;
- A capacity to address **conflict resolution and peacebuilding** issues at various levels because of their local presence and influence, but also because of the credibility of Church and faith-based institutions;
- Within the communities where they work, missionaries deliberately seek to address **equality issues**, with a particular reference to gender equality for **women and girls**, and the rights of **particularly marginalised groups** such as people with disabilities (PWD), PLWHA, orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), minority ethnic or religious groups etc.;
- Within the humanitarian sector, much emphasis is placed on the concept of resilience in emergency-prone areas and in post-emergency situations. Unlike many other humanitarian organisations, missionaries place a strong emphasis on the **spiritual and psycho-social resilience** of individuals and communities, a factor that is much appreciated by those communities;
- People who experience the work of missionaries on the ground frequently refer to the **inspiring and empowering** approach that they adopt towards local communities;

- Missionaries that work in specific services such as health or education are generally well known to be highly qualified and **technically very competent** to undertake the work that they are doing;
- Missionaries adopt an **all-inclusive** approach to their work, so that individuals and communities are supported regardless of their religious, cultural or ethnic background, or other characteristics that might define them. Nobody is left out, and the key defining factors for support are the existing levels of need, and the requirement to fulfil the rights of all individuals in an equal manner. Missionaries make a special effort to ensure that people from other faith backgrounds (or no faith background) feel welcome within missionary-run projects;
- Missionaries on the ground tend to have a high degree of **connectivity** to both political and traditional leadership structures at local level. Missionaries are generally good at working with government in relation to the provision of services, but can also maintain an **independent approach**, where they feel that it is appropriate and necessary to do so.

2. The Missionary Approach in the Current Context

2.1 The Missionary Approach and Current Development Practice

As illustrated in Section 1, missionary development projects contain several features that distinguish them from the initiatives of other development agencies, while also having much in common with the projects and approaches of others within the development sector.

2.1.1 Human Rights Approach

As for many other agencies, missionaries operate from a human rights approach. They implement a **wide range of human rights projects** in line with their social justice agenda, including projects on women's empowerment, children's rights, land rights, combatting trafficking, disability rights, peacebuilding and environmental rights. Given their long-term presence on the ground, missionaries are particularly well placed to identify and understand rights from a local perspective, and to feed information into broader discussions on rights at national and international levels. The rights approach also applies to service based projects such as those in livelihoods, education and health.

2.1.2 Provision of Services

Missionaries have a particular history and strength in the delivery of services in health, education, disability etc. The manner in which these services are delivered parallels that of other development agencies in terms of adherence to national and international standards and practices, but the missionary approach also adds another dimension to this work.

Education is seen by missionaries as a means to empower individuals and communities to fulfil their rights over time. In this context, a particular emphasis is placed on **education for girls** as a key priority. Many missionary education projects place a strong emphasis on issues such as **self-discipline, personal development, self-confidence and leadership skills**, while also ensuring that academic performance is at a high level. A significant level of programming is on non-formal education initiatives that are intended to address the personal development needs of people living in very difficult social circumstances, or people with special needs.

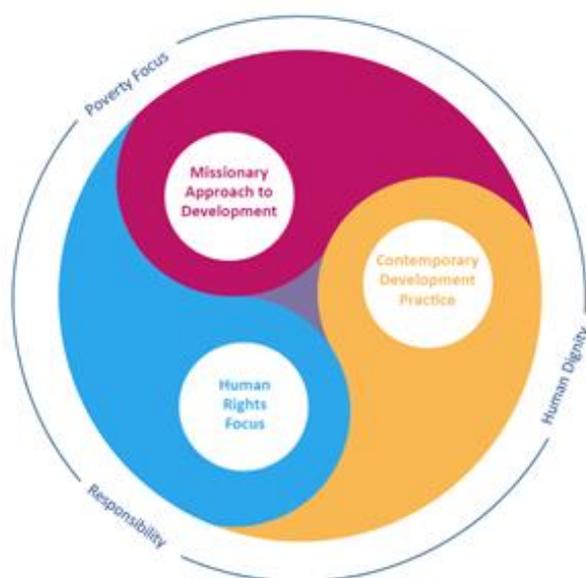
Missionary health projects generally go beyond looking at the health needs of individuals and meeting local health standards, to look at **broader family needs** arising from illness. In addition to providing health services in line with international best practice, projects also focus on mental health and cultural issues, with a particular emphasis on **countering stigma** (including self-stigma) and providing support for PLWHA and PWD.

Many health and non-formal education projects incorporate a livelihoods component to address the holistic needs of beneficiaries and their families. The accompaniment role in enabling people to access health services is also prominent through the use of community health workers and volunteers.

2.1.3 An Integrated Approach

The *Misean Cara Strategic Plan 2017-2021: Walking Together to Transform Lives* (see Figure 2, below) illustrates the interface of the missionary approach, a human rights approach and contemporary development practice in diagrammatic form, with these approaches being seen as fully complementary in nature, and with the overall aim of alleviating poverty, respecting human dignity and realising the responsibility that each of us has to each other as human beings.

Figure 2: Interface of the Missionary Approach, Human Rights Focus and Contemporary Development Practice



2.1.4 Working within the International Development Sector

The agenda and processes within the international development sector have evolved rapidly in recent years. These changes within the sector are largely driven by the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2015, and the international Development Effectiveness agenda.² An increasing (and welcome) emphasis on accountability within the sector has, in some cases, led to an overzealous approach to measurement of results and value for money (VfM) at the expense of a more nuanced understanding and approach towards the promotion of human dignity and the progress of human development over time, as encompassed in the approach of missionaries. The emphasis on VfM in particular, while having some merit, runs the risk of prioritising the requirements of donors over the needs and rights of poor and marginalised people.

Missionaries are making significant progress in developing results based management systems and their overall technical capacity to meet the demands within the sector. They are also seeking to ensure that a full understanding of contemporary development practices, and how they relate to the missionary approach in particular, becomes an integral part of the overall formation process of postulants (candidates) and novices within congregations or missionary organisations.

² As first introduced by the OECD under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005, and updated regularly thereafter.

2.1.5 Challenges in Implementing a Missionary Approach

Apart from the specific challenges arising from the ever-increasing technical requirements of the development effectiveness agenda, the adoption and implementation of the missionary approach inevitably gives rise to some other particular challenges also:

- The high level of personal commitment of missionaries can lead to burn-out of individuals, particularly when working in remote or intense locations with few staff or little support;
- The adoption of a holistic approach towards individuals and their families can lead, in some cases, to individual missionaries spending an excessive amount of time operating at micro-level, to the detriment of overall project management;
- Some external stakeholders (e.g. some donors) operate from the misguided assumption (based on a historical perspective) that missionary work is based exclusively or primarily on an evangelization or proselytising approach;
- Determining who are the poorest or most vulnerable people to receive priority support (e.g. in relation to health user fees or school fees) can be a challenge, particularly where resources are very scarce and the needs of the community as a whole are very high;
- Adherence to Church teaching on specific ethical issues (e.g. condoms) can sometimes create complications in project delivery, and requires a nuanced approach to address the complications;
- As many missionary projects operate at micro level in remote locations, some missionary organisations may not have the internal capacity or structures to bring specific advocacy issues to a higher level (though some excel in doing so).

Missionaries are fully aware of all of these challenges, and various congregations and missionary organisations are taking particular steps to ensure that the ongoing challenges can be addressed to a maximum level, and in the most appropriate manner.

2.2 Enriching and Transforming Lives – Measuring Progress

The Conceptual Framework in Section 1 refers to the ultimate aim of the missionary approach as *‘enriching and transforming the lives of poor, vulnerable and marginalised people.’*³ The international development sector utilises the five OECD DAC⁴ criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability to evaluate the delivery of development projects. Missionary interventions are generally found (by external evaluators) to be highly **relevant** to local contexts and communities. Given the complex contexts in which these projects are being delivered, it is often necessary to change or adapt projects to changing contexts due to conflict or natural disasters. In line with the development effectiveness agenda, missionaries are increasingly measuring development **outcomes** rather than outputs, and utilising results based management systems to do so.

In terms of **efficiency** and VfM, missionary projects are generally found to provide good value in terms of costs per beneficiary. There is also a significant (often hidden) value to projects that is derived from the years of experience and local knowledge of missionaries. Evidence from external evaluations suggests that many **missionary projects are ultimately leading to significant changes in the lives of intended beneficiaries in the longer-term (impact)**, though it is often difficult to measure this change in detail without undertaking major studies, at significant financial and time cost. Given the nature of the development process, missionaries do not believe that progress can always be recorded in finite three or four-year project phases, but that it is **best measured over several decades**.

³ Enrichment in this context refers to an overall quality of life, rather than just to financial gain.

⁴ The Development Advisory Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The concept of sustainability is quite different for missionaries in relation to others, as their long-term presence on the ground significantly **reduces the need for exit strategies** that other agencies are often so concerned with at the end of a project phase. Missionaries frequently establish independent, but related, local organisations to continue the work that they are doing in the longer term.

2.3 The Evolving Missionary Model in an Irish Context

The missionary model of operation has evolved significantly over the course of its history, and is **continuing to evolve presently at a very considerable pace**. As referred to in Section 1.2.5 above, the traditional understanding of missionaries, particularly in an Irish context, was that they tended to move from Ireland and other European countries to work in developing countries in the Global South. However, this situation has changed radically over recent decades, and the numbers of missionaries going from Ireland and elsewhere in Europe to the South has declined on a very significant scale.

In line with what would be considered as best development practice, thousands of local missionaries have been trained across numerous countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. These local or Southern missionaries are now doing the work that was previously done by Irish and European missionaries. Individual missionary organisations are at various stages of this **major transformation process**, but the overall process is advancing significantly. The manner in which the missionaries are now crossing borders and boundaries in so many different places and ways was also highlighted in Section 1.2.5.

2.3.1 The Irish Missionary Movement

The Irish identity or perceived '*Irishness*' of the missionary movement that sent thousands of Irish missionaries to work in foreign pastures in times past may be attributed to a number of factors:

- The **foundation and base** that these missionary organisations had in Ireland;
- The **service provision** / development work that these organisations undertook **in Ireland**;
- The considerable **support from the Irish public** in terms of finance, non-financial assistance (such as volunteering and campaigning) and public goodwill;
- The large numbers of **Irish people** working for these missionary organisations, both at home and abroad; and
- The specific support for these organisations from the **Irish Government** and other Irish agencies.

While some of the missionary organisations were founded in Ireland, many of them were not. Rather, they had come to Ireland in previous centuries, mostly from other European countries. However, they were perceived as being Irish because of the strong bases they had in the country, the level of services they provided in Ireland, and the sheer numbers of Irish people who were affiliated to them.

2.3.2 A New Missionary Model

With the numbers of Irish missionaries in rapid decline, the question now is what the new Irish missionary model will look like? The vast majority of existing missionary organisations will retain a **presence** in the country, albeit on a significantly smaller scale than before in most cases. The new model includes an increasing emphasis on the use of **lay people** to staff positions that were previously occupied by members of missionary organisations. The bulk of the overseas work is now undertaken by missionaries from the South. Overseas management positions are also being increasingly entrusted to lay people (some supported by Irish missionary volunteering agencies) and lay volunteers from abroad are working in Ireland. Some missionary organisations also have an 'associate' lay membership.

The level of work that missionary organisations are doing in direct service provision in Ireland is being scaled back considerably as the state or the private sector takes over, and they are now seeking to **target their Irish**

interventions more specifically than before (e.g. on advocacy and rights issues). Missionaries from the South are now working in Europe in increasing numbers, particularly in Ireland. Some of these missionaries are undertaking the pastoral work in parishes that was previously done by Irish priests, nuns and brothers, so that the **link with these developing countries remains, but within a different missionary model**. Individual missionaries and missionary organisations continue to obtain significant **financial and non-financial support** from the Irish public through parishes, schools and individual contributions. The new missionaries from the South are also in a position to access these resources.

The role of Misean Cara has also evolved since it was founded in 2004⁵ as a funding conduit from the Irish Government to missionaries. Over time, it has increasingly supported improvements in the quality of missionary projects, including a specific technical support function both in Ireland and through field level mentors. More recently, it has begun to seek other funding sources for the membership, and is now also communicating the collective missionary development message on behalf of its members. The increased knowledge of missionary organisations in relation to proposal and report writing, arising from both their own internal capacity development processes and the technical support from Misean Cara, is enabling them to broaden the institutional donor base for their projects. This **co-ordination, supporting and focal point role** of Misean Cara for the membership will remain very important in the future, particularly in the context of maintaining strong links between Ireland and missionary field programmes, and in order to address the ever-increasing technical demands of the international development sector.

Hence, the overall missionary model is changing radically from what went before, but **will continue to function in terms of the key components of the previous model**, including missionary bases in Ireland; more targeted work in Ireland; more limited numbers of Irish personnel, but with new missionaries from the South and lay people working to the same values principles and approaches; co-ordination and support from Misean Cara, and continuing support from the Irish public. As the overall numbers of missionaries increase worldwide, it is evident that the **legacy left by the work of Irish missionaries after more than 150 years of work is enormous in both scale and reach across the globe**.

Given the considerable success of the ongoing transition to southern missionaries, and the emphasis within the international development sector on localisation of management, projects and power, **the evolution of the Irish and international missionary model may, in time, come to be seen as an exemplary approach to transition and transformation**. The new missionary model, with all of the characteristics described above, provides a **very strong template for how a large-scale, Irish based international development agency or network should work**. In this sense, it is also comparable to the structure of many international NGOs operating from Ireland or elsewhere in Europe, within which the numbers of local staff greatly exceed those in head office in Ireland or elsewhere.

2.3.3 Renewed Interest in Faith-Based Approaches

In recent years there has been a very significant renewal of interest and emphasis at international level on the value and impact that faith-based approaches can bring to development, as evidenced by the high profile of faith-based approaches and FBOs at the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2017; the founding of the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities in 2012; and the establishment of the multi-donor International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) in February 2016, to *'harness the positive impact of religion and values in sustainable development and humanitarian assistance.'* Individual donor agencies have also developed specific approaches for interacting with and supporting FBOs. Irish Aid's support for Misean Cara represents a significant component of its support for FBOs. **The renewed prominence being given to faith based approaches, is likely to ensure that there is greater recognition, space and support for the work of missionaries in future**, and presents an opportunity for missionaries to have a greater influence on the broader development sector.

⁵ Misean Cara was originally founded as Irish Missionary Resource Service (IMRS).

3. Conclusion

The missionary approach to development initiatives is strongly driven by the Christian inspiration, ethos and values of the global missionary movement. The **unique approach** of missionaries is defined by **five key features**: a long-term commitment and local presence; a holistic approach to development work; a prophetic vision; a personal witness by missionaries; and the crossing of boundaries and borders by missionaries within the global movement. Other **distinguishing features** of the approach that are also common to some other development agencies include a commitment to work with the poorest and most vulnerable people; an emphasis on promoting equality for all; the provision of spiritual or psycho-social support; and inspiring and empowering approach; a high level of technical competency on thematic development programming; an all-inclusive approach towards communities and individuals; and influencing and connectivity with other project stakeholders.

Missionaries adopt a **human rights approach** to their work, and, in terms of adherence to national and international standards, seek to implement projects in line with **best practice in the development sector**. Missionaries also have a particular history and strength in the delivery of **social services** such as education and healthcare. The missionary approach provides a significant degree of **balance and complementarity with the work of other development agencies**, both in the selection of communities and locations to work in, and in the nature of the nature of the development approaches being used. The **scale and reach** of missionary interventions and the overall missionary movement is also highly significant in the international development context. When measured against the internationally-adopted OECD criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, evidence from evaluation of projects indicates that **missionary projects are generally very successful** in terms of the stated aim of *'enriching and transforming the lives of poor, vulnerable and marginalised people.'*

The missionary model of operation has evolved considerably over the course of its history, and is continuing to evolve presently at a very considerable speed. The traditional model of missionaries coming from Ireland and Europe to work in developing countries is now being replaced by a model within which a significant majority of missionaries come from developing countries, and the bulk of missionary work is implemented through these Southern missionaries. Associate and lay missionaries are also playing a role in the management of interventions, as are local lay managers.

The factors that previously defined the **Irish identity** within the missionary movement all remain relevant, but the model under which missionary work will be done in Ireland and abroad in future will be very different from before. The transition in the missionary model towards a Southern-driven movement may well come to be seen as **an exemplary approach to transformation** within the development sector. The **legacy** of the Irish missionaries who worked across Africa, Asia and Latin America for more than 150 years is enormous, and the missionary movement, in its new evolution and including its Irish dimension, is as strong as ever. The renewed interest in and support for the work of faith-based organisations within the international development sector in recent years is likely to provide further opportunities for missionary organisations to enhance their programming and increase their influence within the broader development sector in the future.

The content of this paper is based on the results of a research exercise on the Missionary Approach to Development Interventions (MADI) undertaken by independent consultant Mike Williams on behalf of Misesan Cara in 2017. The research process included an initial review of core Misesan Cara organisational documents, and a range of specific project evaluation reports from a variety of external consultants. Individual interviews were conducted with key informants, including missionaries from several missionary organisations, Misesan Cara staff and management, and another external consultant. A more detailed discussion paper was initially presented and reviewed at a learning event for returning missionaries in July 2017, and was updated after that event to form the basis of this conceptual framework paper. The discussion paper was subsequently finalised also as a longer reflection paper on the MADI in December 2017. This summary paper was updated in July 2018.