



AID & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

APPLICABILITY: ACCIR Staff & Strategic Partners

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AUTHORISED BY: ACCI CEO of International Programs

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PURPOSE

ACCIR are committed to ensuring that we accurately represent our activities to the people we work with, our donors and the public. The purpose of this policy is to guide ACCIR staff, field workers and strategic partners to make a clear separation between aid and development and non-aid and development objectives and activities.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy applies to all ACCIR activities and is application to the following ACCIR stakeholders:

- All **ACCIR Staff**; herein including employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers;
- All **ACCIM Field Workers** who run ACCIR projects; herein including career, fixed-term, partner and associates;
- All **ACCIR Strategic Partners**; herein including those working in Australia or abroad in development, emergency relief and/or non-development activities.

Within the appraisal process ACCIR will ensure all Strategic Partners meet the requirements of this policy. ACCIR Strategic Partners will be required to sign a Strategic Partnership Agreement, which includes a commitment to ensuring a clear separation— through policy or guidelines – between aid and development and non-aid and development objectives and activities. This separation must be clear in all fundraising, programs and reporting.

1. DEFINING AID & DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

ACCIR affirms that development is a ‘process’ of working with local communities and individuals towards the goal of achieving sustainable holistic improvement in all areas of their lives (economic, social, cultural, political and spiritual). To this end, ACCIR engages in aid and development activities, which include community development projects, community awareness and education programs, advocacy, provision of professional services, consultants and resources, and emergency management.

ACCIR’s development activities are people centred and aim to see local communities and individuals empowered to take an active and self-determining role in their own development. Development therefore aims to enhance their agency and address issues limiting their agency towards this goal. ACCIR places an equally strong value on culturally contextualized development and equitable development where individuals and communities actualize their rights therefore addressing issues of poverty, injustice and inequality. The communities and individuals we partner with are our primary stakeholders to whom we are most accountable and therefore should be involved in all aspects of the project cycle.

DFAT defines development activities as those which ‘improve the long-term well-being of individuals and communities in developing countries. Eligible development activities must demonstrate fair distribution; be informed by local people; and deliver sustained or lasting benefits. Further guidance is provided below.

1. **Fair Distribution**

The principle of fair distribution seeks to ensure that development activities aim to improve the well-being of those in need without favouritism or discrimination by race, religion, culture or political persuasion. This means that if an activity is targeted at a particular group, community, or location, the rationale should demonstrate that the distribution of benefits is fair.

2. **Informed by Local People**

This principle recognises that affected populations are the primary stakeholders in development. Development activities should be identified and designed in close dialogue and cooperation with local people to ensure that activities are appropriate, are in direct response to local needs, and build on local capacities.

The involvement of local people helps organisations to better understand the needs and aims of the people who will come into contact with the project. It also increases the sense of ownership of the project by local people, which increases the likelihood of project objectives being achieved and local people being committed to carrying on the activity after external support has stopped.

3. **Sustained or Lasting Benefits**

This principle recognises that the success of a development activity is closely linked to the degree to which its benefits have a lasting impact and do not create dependency. The activity itself does not need to be sustained or demonstrate that it is sustainable, but the benefits which have resulted from the activity should be lasting and able to be sustained. Capacity building and an exit strategy (explained below) are tools toward achieving sustained or lasting benefits.

Capacity building recognises that development activities should seek to build the capacity or capability of leaders, communities, organisations, and institutions to create lasting environments which foster the well-being of individuals and communities.

An exit strategy recognises the importance of organisations not creating or fostering aid dependency. While it is acknowledged that achieving sustainable change can take a long time, development activities should have clear phase-out or exit strategies that support the sustainable recovery and resilience of the affected population in the medium and long-term¹.

4. **Humanitarian Assistance**

DFAT defines humanitarian assistance as activities which “save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of humanitarian crises in developing countries. Eligible humanitarian assistance activities must demonstrate: they are in response to a humanitarian crisis; meet humanitarian needs; and have an exit strategy²”.

ACCIR is committed to ensuring our disaster responses are delivered in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. When involved in disaster relief, ACCIR

¹ Extract from- DFAT Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines (OAGDS), February 2016

² DFAT Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines (OAGDS), February 2016

is also committed upholds and follows the International Code of Conduct, alongside International Red Cross, Red Crescent and other non-government organisations (NGOs). ACCIR is also committed to abiding by the SPHERE Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. See 'ACCI Disaster Response Guidelines' for more information.

2. DEFINING NON-DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

For the purpose of making a distinction between aid and development and non-aid and development activities, ACCIR classify non-development activities under three broad categories: Welfare activities, Proselytism activities and Partisan Political activities.

1. Welfare activities;
2. Proselytism activities; and
3. Partisan Political activities.

Those activities that meet the definitions of these three categories will not be approved in the ACCIR Appraisal process. However, where there is a clear distinction between the development activities and the evangelistic or welfare activities of a program, these activities may be accepted by our sister organisation, ACC International Missions. This structure and process ensures that:

- ACCIR will uphold our commitment as per our OAGDS endorsement and ACFID membership while maintaining a holistic approach to development;
- ACCIR will maintain and require Strategic Partners to maintain a clear distinction between development and non-development activities in all fundraising and financial systems, including the use of separate bank accounts; and
- ACCIR tax-deductible will only be designated to approved development activities.

1. Welfare Activities

Welfare activities are defined by DFAT as *'care and maintenance, other than in refugee and emergency situations, which aims to maintain people in a particular condition on a longer-term basis. Substantial and broad impact on social and economic conditions in the community is not normally expected from welfare programs. Welfare may be provided to an individual or family basis including home-based and institutional care programs, such as those provided by orphanages, homes for the elderly, hospices and the provision of food for those who are destitute. Welfare activities are typically:*

- *implemented independently of other sustainable community development activities;*
- *include no strategy for integration into broader community development programs;*
- *provided on an individual or family basis, rather than on a community basis, and are unconnected to emergency needs; and*
- *implemented on a long-term basis with no clear exit strategy³.*

It is ACCIR's mission to develop sustainable solutions to combat injustice, poverty and reinstate the value of life. As such, we ensure that we engage in programs/projects that are designed to achieve development, not those designed to deliver welfare. In all cases, welfare activities will be clearly distinguishable in practice, will not be eligible for tax deductible funding and will not be promoted as a development activity.

³ DFAT Australian NGO Cooperation Program – Recognised Development Expenditure, Jan 2017

2. Proselytism Activities

Having a predominately Christian support base and having been birthed from ACC International Missions, it is necessary to clearly state ACCIR's policy on proselytism. Proselytism activities are defined by DFAT as activities *'supporting or promoting a particular religious adherence. Examples include:*

- *Activities undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denominational affiliation to another;*
- *Using funds to support religious clergy - e.g. priests, ministers, imams, nuns, monks, rabbis – outside of the context of delivering overseas aid activities;*
- *Using funds to construct or support the running of religious institutions or places of worship - e.g. churches⁴.*

Whilst the work of ACCIR is motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, it is the policy of ACCIR to clearly and consistently distinguish development activities from proselytism activities in both promotion and practice. Holding a high value on integrity, we do not finance or promote proselytism activities as development or tax-deductible projects.

Development initiatives shall aim to see local communities and individuals empowered to take an active and self-determining role in their own development. In the event that both development and non-development activities are used to achieve this, evangelistic activities shall not be classified as development (or tax deductible) and shall be administrated through ACC International Missions.

ACCIR implement development initiatives on a non-discriminatory basis. Adherence to religious beliefs will not constitute an explicit or implicit condition of participation in programs. Further to this, ACCIR is concerned to ensure that the local communities, families and individuals who are our primary stakeholders understand that their inclusion in our programs and projects is unrelated to their conversion/adherence to our denomination or faith. ACCIR development funding will be used on the basis of need, without distinction of caste, creed, class, race, gender, religion or political persuasion.

3. Partisan Political Activities

Partisan political activities are defined by DFAT as supporting a political party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party. Examples include:

- Australian entity or partners' staff being involved in party political activities;
- Using funds or resources to facilitate or support a specific political party, candidate, or party political organisation in a local, regional or general/ national election;
- Using funds or resources to facilitate or support a particular politician or faction to gain power within a government or within a political party structure⁵.

ACCIR does not have political objectives in its mandate and it is our policy to not provide support for partisan political activities. We will at all times ensure that funds and other resources collected and designated for the purpose of aid and development will be used only for those purposes and will not be used to support a political party, or to promote a candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.

⁴ DFAT Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines (OAGDS), February 2016

⁵ DFAT Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines (OAGDS), February 2016

3. ADVOCACY

ACCIR does engage in some advocacy and campaigning activities. However, we are committed to ensuring that the advocacy work we engage in:

- does not include partisan political activities;
- does not do harm or increase the level of risk facing affected groups;
- is evidence-based and accurate; and
- reflects the perspectives of the affected population.