



DEVELOPMENT POLICY

APPLICABILITY: ACCIR Staff & Partners

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AUTHORISED BY: ACCIR Board

DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

ACCIR understands development as a holistic way of working with people and communities to achieve sustainable improvement across the different domains of their lives.

There are many different approaches that our partners take to work with communities and therefore this policy seeks to distinguish between development and non-development activities and partners. To reflect our commitment to honesty and integrity, 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 partners to make a clear separation between development and non-development objectives and activities and to codify the core standards for development that we assess our development work against.

BACKGROUND

ACCIR operates as the relief and development arm of the Australian Christian Churches movement in Australia. ACC International Relief has been an approved organisation of the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme since 2007, operating our 'World Relief Fund' as a Deductible Gift Recipient. Eligible development activities and expenditure in DFAT listed developing countries flow through this fund.

ACCIR has a sister organisation, ACCI International Missions (ACCIM.) Where there is a clear distinction between the development activities and the religious activities of a partner, these activities may be accepted by ACCIM.

ACC International Relief Inc is registered with the ACNC as a PBI and recognised by the ATO to access the tax concessions available to PBIs. All non-development, welfare projects flow through this entity and are separated from development expenditure.

ACCIR is an ACFID member and as such our policy reflects the ACFID commitment to the separation of development and non-development activities within our work.

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 Partners**; herein including those working in Australia or abroad in development, emergency relief and/or non-development activities.

1. DEFINING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

ACCIR believes that development is a holistic process of working with people and communities to achieve sustainable improvement across the different domains of their lives. To this end, ACCIR engages in development activities, measuring the sustainable impact of those activities in the improvement of people's lives.

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 contextualised development and equitable development where individuals and communities actualise 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.

ACCIR accepts and has adopted the DFAT definition of development activities as those which 'improve the long-term well-being of individuals and communities in developing countries. With a focus on inclusive development¹ and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, eligible development activities incorporate key development principles defined 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: Participatory and Empowering

This principle recognises the importance of local people informing any development within their community, 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.

Participation by 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.

Participation without empowerment though is ineffective, empowerment ensures that power is held by the local community rather than the development partner. Empowerment is the process of strengthening someone's ability to control their own life and claim their rights. It involves giving up power so that others can access it.

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

¹ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-ngo-cooperation-program-manual.pdf>

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, addressing root causes and an exit strategy (explained below) are tools toward achieving sustained or lasting benefits.

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

Addressing root causes is a key tool in ensuring lasting benefits for a community. Identifying root causes and formulating strategies to address those ensures that development is addressing the cause not simply the visible symptom. This can assist with lasting benefits as the issue will not reappear as easily when the development activities cease because the core issues have been addressed. This often leads development work to focus on behavioural or system change including advocacy to duty bearers to fulfil their responsibilities.

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-term².

4. Inclusion

Inclusion is a key principle of development especially as it relates to those in the community who traditionally or culturally do not have power or access to the same resources as others. This relates particularly to the cross-cutting issues of gender, disability, and child participation.

The principle of inclusion asks who is included and when, it identifies stakeholders that traditionally might not be included and seeks them out to participate in development work. It ensures that barriers relating to equity and equality are identified and seeks to overcome them.

The principle of inclusion seeks to mitigate negative unintended consequences to those groups who disproportionately bear the burden of poverty and disadvantage in their communities.

Inclusion expects an understanding of how gender plays a role in the community and how development can increase gender equality and equity within the community, understanding the different experiences of different genders and how any development activities should be informed and influenced by those different experiences.

Inclusion also ensures that people with a disability are not only included but targeted to ensure that they do not disproportionately bear the burden of poverty. Inclusion ensures that people with a disability have an equal voice in development that effects their community.

The youngest and most vulnerable of a community are its children, inclusion ensures that child participation is prioritised and championed throughout the development project management cycle.

5. 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

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

humanitarian assistance activities must demonstrate: they are in response to a humanitarian crisis; meet humanitarian needs; and have an exit strategy³.

When responding to humanitarian emergencies ACCIR is guided by the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) and will apply the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality as defined in the CHS. ACCIR recognises that effective humanitarian responses require collective action and will participate in joint planning wherever possible and share information and knowledge with stakeholders. Recognising the role of local actors in humanitarian responses, ACCIR is committed to identifying and working with local communities and organisations wherever possible and to promoting the leadership of local actors, acknowledging their key positioning, often the first to respond and last to leave.

2. DEFINING NON-DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

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

Those activities that meet the definitions of these three categories will not be approved in the ACCIR Development partner or project appraisal process. However, where there is a clear distinction between the development activities and the religious or welfare activities of a partner, these activities may be accepted as a PBI project by ACCI Relief or 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 Development 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 development funds will only be designated to approved development activities through approved development partners.

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;*

³ DFAT Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines (OAGDS), February 2016

- *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 strategy⁴.*

In all cases, welfare activities will be clearly distinguishable in practice, will not be promoted as a development activity.

ACCIR acknowledges that welfare work is not the same as development, but also acknowledges that the outworking of our faith is often reflected in acts of charity and generosity. In some cases, welfare work might form an addition to the work of our fieldworkers across the world. In these cases, welfare activities will be undertaken through the PBI entity through ACCIR. These non-development welfare partners will be designated with a P code to ensure separation from development partners.

2. Religious 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 Religious activities. Religious activities are defined by DFAT as activities '*supporting or promoting a particular religious adherence.*⁵ *Examples include:*

- *Activities undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denominational affiliation to another; (Proselytism)*
- *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. churches⁶.*

Whilst the work of ACCIR is motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, it is the policy of ACCIR to distinguish development activities clearly and consistently from religious activities in both promotion and practice. Holding a high value on integrity, we do not finance or promote religious activities as either development or PBI projects. Religious activities are clearly separated and funded and supported by our sister organisation ACCI Missions.

3. Partisan Political Activities

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

- *NGO 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 independence or separatist movements.*
- *using funds or resources to facilitate or support a particular politician or faction to gain power within a government or within a political party structure."⁷*

⁴ DFAT Australian NGO Cooperation Program – Recognised Development Expenditure, Jan 2017

⁵ [Australian NGO Cooperation Program Manual \(dfat.gov.au\)](http://dfat.gov.au)

⁶ DFAT Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines (OAGDS), February 2016

⁷ [Australian NGO Cooperation Program Manual \(dfat.gov.au\)](http://dfat.gov.au)

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 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

3. COMMITMENTS

ACCIR is an agency which supports partners who do holistic work in their communities; however, we have a strict commitment to separating development and non-development within our work. This separation must be clear in all fundraising, programs, and reporting.

Development partners are clearly separated from non-development projects in the following ways:

- Development partners are issued with an ‘R code’ which reflects their development partner status.
- Any funding that flows through that partner must be allocated to approved development projects appraised against core development standards.
- If a development partner is involved in non-development religious activities these activities are funded and supported through ACCIM.
- R code partners are not funded through ACCIR to do non-development welfare activities. Any non-development welfare activities must be funded through the partners own funds and only development activities are accepted in the program framework and budgets.
- ACCIR does not fundraise for non-development activities for R code partners.

Non-Development will be funded and supported through the following ways:

- If welfare activities meet the standards of a PBI partner they will be considered under that and measured against those criteria. All activities under this framework will remain separate from development activities.
 - o All non-development PBI partners are classified with P code to distinguish between development and non-development partners.
 - o Non-development P code partners are clearly identified as P code partners and projects through fundraising and communications.
- Religious activities shall not be classified as development (or tax deductible) and shall be administrated through ACCI Missions.
 - o Missions’ projects are designated with an M or FW code to distinguish their non-tax deductible status.
 - o Funding is handled separately for ACCIR and ACCIM
 - o No donations to ACCIR flow to ACCIM. Unless reimbursement for eligible expenses or fair contribution to shared administration, fundraising or M&E costs.

REVIEWING THE POLICY

ACCIR Development Policy will be reviewed every three years. ACCI General Manager will manage the review and stakeholders will be consulted during this process.

Version	Date	Key Changes
Version 1	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Aid and Development Policy to replace previous guidance documents.
Version 2	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection of funding non-development welfare partners through PBI • Clarification of commitments around development partners

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of development principles to include inclusion and empowerment. • Clarification of commitments.
Version 2.1	October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of Humanitarian assistance based on ACFID Code of Conduct guidance.
Version 3	Due for review 2025	