

WELFARE, EVANGELISM & PARTISAN POLITICS POLICY

Vision

For all people to transcend the injustice, indignity, and inequality of entrenched poverty.

Mission

Empowering changemakers to break the cycle of poverty.

1. Background

AOP is an independent, secular, not for profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO). Founded in Australia in 1968, AOP was incorporated in the state of New South Wales in 1983. AOP works with partners and communities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

AOP works to address the root causes of poverty as well as provide supportive, sustainable, strength-based structures to help people lift themselves out of poverty. We do not want our work to create a cycle of dependency or to disempower the individuals or communities that we are working with in the long term. Our work is based on meeting stated objectives, do not discriminate, and meet identified needs.

AOP is committed to supporting work that is of a high standard, and in doing so, holds full accreditation with the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). DFAT requires all accredited NGOs to develop an evangelical, welfare and partisan political policy, and ensure that all NGO personnel implementing DFAT-funded activities abide by it.

AOP is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct which requires high standards of corporate governance, public accountability and financial management to be in place. The ACFID Code of Conduct requires members to ensure that funds and other resources designated for the purpose of aid and development will be used only for those purposes and will not be used to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a political party, or to promote a candidate or organisation affiliated to a particular party. The Code obliges members to be accountable to our stakeholders and to consistently demonstrate the separation of development activities from non-development activities. The Code requires signatories to extend this compliance indicator and verifiers to partners.

2. Purpose

This policy provides a framework to ensure that the Action on Poverty (AOP) operates under a development philosophy that is consistent with the objectives of the Australian Aid Program and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct. AOP is committed to ensuring that we accurately represent our activities to the people we work with, our donors, and the public, including by distinguishing between development and non-development activities, and striving to ensure that resources raised for development purposes are used exclusively for such purposes.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all AOP activities, including:

- Programming
- Expenditure and reporting
- Fundraising
- Advocacy campaigns

- Communications
- Choice of donors
- Partnerships

This policy applies to all board members, employees, volunteers, and Partner Organisations

4. Policy

4.1 AOP recognises the distinction (as per Section 6) between Aid and Development Activities and Non-Development Activities and will identify, monitor, manage, report on and account for Non-Development Activities wherever they occur, including in activities implemented by way of partnership arrangements and contracts.

4.2 AOP must not fund or otherwise support:

- Evangelism and/or Evangelism, Proselytism and Missionary Work
- Partisan Political Activities
- Welfare-Based Programs

4.3 Partner Organisations must not use any resources received from AOP to fund or otherwise support:

- Evangelism and/or Evangelism, Proselytism and Missionary Work
- Partisan Political Activities
- Welfare-Based Programs

4.4 Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors of AOP must not, during AOP hours of work, undertake or participate in:

- Evangelism and/or Evangelism, Proselytism and Missionary Work
- Partisan Political Activities
- Welfare-Based Programs

4.5 If in their own time, board members, staff, volunteers and contractors of AOP, or Partner Organisations and their personnel undertake or participate in:

- Evangelism and/or Evangelism, Proselytism and Missionary Work
- Partisan Political Activities
- Welfare-Based Programs

They must ensure that their activities:

- are not perceived or viewed as being on behalf of AOP;
- are not perceived or viewed as being representative of the views of AOP;
- do not use the AOP logo, AOP funds and/or resources (e.g. computers, email systems, website, mobile phones, stationery or other office supplies); and,
- do not use funds and/or resources provided to implement aid and development activities funded by, or through, AOP.
- Particular care must be taken when activities or views are expressed on social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email etc) to ensure that personal views or activities are not associated with, or reflect upon AOP in any way counter to this policy.

4.6 Funds and other resources that are raised by or provided to AOP for the purpose of **Aid and Development Activities** must only be used for the purpose of **Aid and Development Activities**.

4.7 Funds and other resources disbursed or used by AOP which were designated as being for the purpose of **Aid and Development Activities** must only be used for the purpose of **Aid and Development Activities**.

4.8 Partners Organisations implementing **Aid and Development Activities**, funded by, or through, AOP, must use the funds and/or resources only for (a) the purpose of **Aid and Development Activities**, and (b) the particular **Aid and Development Activities** for which the funding and/or resources were provided.

4.9 AOP does not support **Welfare-Based Programs**. From time to time, AOP or our partners may engage in activities that have some welfare characteristics, but only in the case that these activities satisfy the following criteria:

- they address an immediate and pressing need (eg during a humanitarian crisis and recovery, or as a planned transition to a development activity);
- they are part of a larger fully-costed and approved development project, and;
 - they complement the other development-based activities in the program; and,
 - the program they are embedded within has logical framework and an exit strategy.

4.10 AOP does not support **Welfare-Based Programs**. From time to time, AOP or our partners may engage in activities that have some welfare characteristics, but only in the case that these activities satisfy the following criteria:

- Spending on Welfare-Based Programs must be identified and separated for accounting and reporting purposes
- Spending on **Welfare-Based Programs** must be identified and separated for accounting and reporting purposes. Such expenditure will not be accounted as Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE).

5. Policy Application

5.1 This Policy will be included in all contracts and memoranda of understanding with **Partner Organisations**.

5.2 Basic training will be provided to all AOP staff, members and Board members, volunteers, and interns, as well as partners and contractors of AOP as appropriate, about the distinction between **Aid and Development Activities** and **Non-development Activities** and the application of the WEPP policy.

5.3 AOP staff undertake an initial partner capacity desk review as well as monitoring and capacity building visits and system assessments to gauge partner capacity to comply with key AOP policies. All activities are appraised and monitored on this basis.

5.4 AOP may engage in capacity-building programs aimed at training, supporting, and monitoring **Partner Organisations** to help them transition **Welfare-Based Programs** into **Aid and Development Activities**. This may necessitate the funding of welfare-oriented programs for a strictly limited time under the conditions noted in 4.9.

5.5 All **Aid and Development Activities** funded by, or through, AOP and **Partner Organisation** will be monitored to ensure that they are not in breach of this policy. AOP will follow-up on and support the rectification of issues in collaboration with **Partner Organisations**.

5.6 AOP's Executive Management are responsible for:

- ensuring that AOP staff, board members, volunteers and contractors comply with all relevant legislation and AOP policies (including this Policy); and,
- ensuring that all Partner Organisations implementing aid and development activities funded by, or through, AOP, comply with all relevant legislation and AOP policies (including this Policy)

5.7 The distinction between funds and/or resources used **for Aid and Development Activities** and **Non-development Activities** will be maintained at all times, including in fundraising, project management, communications, annual reports and other reports.

5.8 AOP acknowledges that some circumstances may be ambiguous, and this may make the application of this Policy troublesome. In such circumstances analysis and sound judgment is necessary. In exercising its judgement, AOP will at all times strive to uphold the intent of this Policy and act in good faith.

6. Definitions

Aid and Development Activities

Activities undertaken in order to reduce poverty and address global justice issues. In the non-government organisation sector, this may occur through a range of engagements that may include community projects, emergency management, community education, advocacy, volunteering, provision of technical and professional services and resources, environmental protection and restoration, and promotion and protection of human rights.

Evangelism and/or Evangelism, Proselytism and Missionary Work

Any activity or practice associated with attempting to convert people from one religion or faith to another. Though these words are of Christian origin, they can also refer to other religions' attempt to convert people to their religion or faith.

Non-development Activities

Activities that are not **Aid and Development Activities**, or in support of **Aid and Development Activities**.

Partisan Political Activities

Activities that are political in nature, including lobbying or advocacy activities, that are carried out in support of a particular political party, candidate for public office, or organisation affiliated with a political party or candidate for public office.

Partner Organisations

Organisations implementing Aid and Development Activities supported by AOP.

Welfare-Based Programs

Activities which provided direct assistance to individuals because of a need (which is generally an immediate need). Welfare means assistance to maintain individuals in a particular condition on a long-term basis such as institutionalised care programs as provided by orphanages, child sponsorship (i.e. funds given directly to children or their families, and not funds drawn from child sponsorship used for wider development purposes), health or hospital care programs, hospices, and costs for the maintenance of structures for institutionalised care programs (e.g. projects that are largely related to infrastructure such as building of schools or orphanages). Welfare activities are implemented independently of other sustainable community development activities, and there is no strategy for integration into a broader community development program. Welfare activities are implemented on an ongoing, long-term basis with no clear exit strategy.

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