



Non-Development Activity – Religious, Welfare and Political

1. Introduction

Anglican Overseas Aid (AOA) is committed to ensuring that all development and humanitarian activities are in line with our commitments to rights-based development. In support of this commitment, AOA is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct, the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance Code of Conduct and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Contractual Agreement all of which preclude support for religious, welfare or political activities.

AOA articulates this requirement with partners during start up discussions, capacity assessment, regular monitoring and through the signing of a partnership agreement. Access, participation and support from development and humanitarian assistance is provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

2. Purpose and Scope of the application

The purpose of this policy is to:

- State AOA's commitment to a rights-based (non-welfare) approach to development and that development and relief assistance must be provided on the principles of political and religious neutrality and impartiality
- Recognise and ensure separation between development and non-development activities
- Uphold commitments as a signatory to national and international development and humanitarian activity standards
- Affirm that AOA does not support non-development activities, including religious, welfare and political activities as defined by the policy.

This Policy applies to Board members, staff, program partners, program contractors and volunteers of AOA. From here on, these groups will be collectively referred to in this policy as 'AOA parties'.

3. International and National Frameworks

- *Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) – Code of Conduct.*
- *DFAT – Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) Accreditation Framework and ANCP Manual.*
- *ACT Alliance – Code of Conduct.*

4. Guiding Principles

- AOA's projects are not for the purposes of religious, welfare or partisan political objectives.
- AOA funded activities seek to bring fullness of life to all peoples, and will be provided on an equitable basis regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, political affiliation and socio-economic status
- AOA promotes tolerance and acceptance of differences in beliefs and the practice of non-discrimination by partners based on faith and other factors in program activities
- AOA funds will not be used to seek to convert people from one faith or denomination to another, and/or build up faith structures, unless those structures are specifically designed to provide non-religious and non-denominational relief and development outcomes. AOA will communicate expectations around the use of funding with our partners and maintain a reciprocal approach to accountability and transparency, as defined within a memorandum of understanding and partnership

agreement. AOA will support programs that will contribute to the growth of resilient, independent and sustainable communities rather than a state of dependency amongst beneficiaries

- AOA will support development, and humanitarian, non-discriminatory assistance that is characterised by being impartial and neutral.

5. Implementation

5.1 *Development and Religious Activities*

Religious activities are defined as supporting or promoting a particular religion, including activities undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denomination to another. Religious activities include those that build up religious structures (including infrastructure, training or organisational activities), unless those structures are specifically designed to provide non-denominational development outcomes.

AOA is motivated to alleviate poverty and suffering, as mandated by Jesus' proclamation that '*He came that all may have life in abundance*' (John 10:10). As an Anglican development agency, AOA enacts this biblical call for fullness of life through the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance to all people based equitably on need.

Where AOA works with faith-based partners, these partners are not permitted to use AOA funds for evangelism, religious structures, or functions, unless these structures or functions are specifically supporting the humanitarian or community development work of the partners.

In a contextually appropriate manner, AOA's partners may and are encouraged to use the faith, religious beliefs, and sacred texts of participating communities to achieve community development and disaster preparedness outcomes.

As a faith-based organisation, AOA works with in-country partners during project design, monitoring and evaluation to ensure full understanding of and compliance with this policy and approach.

5.2 *Development and Welfare Activities*

Welfare activities are defined as care and maintenance, which aims to maintain people in a particular condition on a longer-term basis. 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, implemented on a long-term basis with no clear exit strategy. AOA makes a distinction between development and welfare activities under its approach to human rights. The primary development model used in AOA-funded programs is the strength-based approach (SBA) to community development. The SBA recognises, encourages, and nurtures the strengths and assets of individuals and communities to realise a more hopeful future and to achieve lasting benefits. This approach recognises the voice and agency of vulnerable people and groups, and their care givers, creating opportunities for voice and involvement in decision making that affects their lives. Development work of our partners also aims to build supportive community structures, as well as advocacy skills to access government benefits and entitlements where these exist. Careful project design and active monitoring of projects ensures the demarcation between welfare and development. AOA's programs do not include welfare as defined by this policy.

5.3 *Development and Political Activities*

Political activities are defined as supporting a political party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party. This includes 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.

AOA makes a distinction between development and political activities.

AOA does not support party political activities or partisanship in any of its activities. This also applies to individual staff (including partner staff), Board members or volunteers, when using AOA's name or resources. Development and humanitarian assistance provided by AOA must be non-discriminatory. Political allegiance is not permitted to determine who and how much individuals can participate in and benefit from AOA-supported projects.

AOA recognises that political processes are an important aspect of the development process. Therefore, AOA seeks, through its local partners, to work with government bodies and agencies, irrespective of any political affiliation, to implement effective programs and bring about sustainable change. In a non-partisan manner, AOA activities may also support participation in the political process, such as civic awareness campaigns.

AOA upholds the rights of individuals to participate in political activities. AOA also recognises that staff and volunteers can participate fully and constructively in political activities provided they are able to maintain a clear distinction between participating in such an activity and their association with AOA and AOA-funded activities. This participation cannot be deemed to threaten the security and reputation of the staff member/volunteer involved or AOA.

6. Separation of Development and Humanitarian Activity and Non-Development Activity

6.1 Programming

- All AOA project proposals will be appraised by AOA to ensure they align with development or humanitarian activity guidelines.
- Any projects that include non-development activities will be negotiated with partners, to modify activities to sit within development activity guidelines.
- AOA will not support a project unless it is deemed to be a development or humanitarian activity.

6.2 Communications and Fundraising

- AOA does not raise funds for non-development activities.
- Communication materials are screened to ensure materials communicate development or humanitarian activities.
- Fundraising resources will contain only development or humanitarian content.

6.3 Expenditure reporting

- AOA will receive and review regular financial statements, expenditure, acquittal reports and independent audits for work with international networks and consortiums.
- Annual reporting of Recognised Development Expenditure to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will reflect that AOA has no non-development expenditure.

6.4 Choice for donors

- Donors will only have the choice to donate to development or humanitarian initiatives.

6.5 Partners

- Communication with new partners will state that AOA will not financially support non-development or non-humanitarian activities.
- Partnership agreements contain a clause stating that funds are not to be used for non-development activities including welfare, evangelism or politics.
- Partners must agree to the use of funds for development and humanitarian purposes only.

References:

1. ACT Alliance Code of Conduct
2. AOA International Programs Handbook
3. Core Humanitarian Standard
4. DFAT ANCP Accreditation Standards
5. ACFID Code of Conduct