

Purpose

This policy provides a framework to ensure that Oxfam Australia’s designated development funds are used specifically for development and/or humanitarian outcomes and not for non-development activities. For this Policy, non-development activities include welfare, partisan political and religious activities. Refer to the Definitions and Principles section below for descriptions of each of these activities.

OAU is an independent, non-partisan, not-for-profit, secular development organisation. Oxfam’s vision is for a just world free of poverty where people influence decisions that affect their lives, enjoy their rights, and assume their responsibilities — a world in which everyone is valued, and everyone is treated equally. In our programs and offices, we embrace diversity and oppose discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics, disability, family status, age, and political, religious, or philosophical allegiance. OAU does not seek to promote the well-being of a particular group or community because of their racial, religious, cultural, or political persuasions. OAU does not seek to change the religious or political persuasions of project participants.

Scope

The policy applies to all programs and projects funded by OAU.

Other related documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- a. [OAU People and Culture Policy PC208- Conflict of Interest](#)
- b. Clause 20 Personal Leave of the [OAU Enterprise Agreement](#)

Conventions and Obligations

OAU is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), and Red Cross Codes of Conduct which guide our actions in this area. As a recipient of DFAT funds, we also have an obligation to fulfil the accountability requirements attached to this.

ACFID Code of Conduct	<p>The Code is underpinned by a set of values which inform the behaviours of all Members all the time. The values are translated into high-level Quality Principles that are then translated into specific Commitments and associated Compliance Indicators.</p> <p><i>Quality Principle 7 – Governance</i> Development and humanitarian organisations are governed in an accountable, transparent and responsible way.</p> <p><i>Quality Commitment 7.3 We are accountable to our stakeholders</i> <i>Compliance Indicator 7.3.2.</i> Member development initiatives consistently demonstrate the separation of development activities from non-development activities.</p> <p>Members are required to extend this compliance indicator and verifiers to partners through MOUs or similar</p>
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<p><u>The Red Cross Code of Conduct</u></p>	<p>The code states that “aid will not be used to further a political or religious standpoint; we shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy; and relief aid must strive to reduce further vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs”.</p>
<p><u>DFAT accreditation requirements</u></p>	<p><i>B 1.3 ANGO can differentiate between development activities and ‘non-development’ activities.</i> This indicator is particularly relevant where ANGOs and/or their implementing partners undertake both development and non-development initiatives. Where this is the case, ANGOs must be able to demonstrate that their implementing partners understand the difference, separate the management of the different types of activities and account for funding for different types of activities. ANGOs must be able to demonstrate communication with partners which shows an understanding of the difference between the different types of activities.</p> <p><i>C2.3 ANGO ensures its implementing partners can differentiate between development activities and non-development activities.</i> This indicator is particularly relevant where ANGOs are partnering with organisations who undertake development and non-development activity. Where this is the case, ANGOs must be able to demonstrate that their partners separate their activities, account for funding for different types of activities. ANGOs must also be able to demonstrate communication with partners which shows an understanding of the difference between the different types of activities.</p>

Upholding the codes we have committed to and complying with external accountabilities are essential to fulfilling our obligations, and achieving our vision, values and goals.

Definitions and Principles

Welfare activities

Welfare Definition	Welfare activities	Example of welfare activity	Example of development (non-welfare activity)
Providing direct assistance as care and maintenance to individuals/families because of immediate needs (other than in refugee and emergency situations), rather than address the root causes of those needs.	Welfare activities aim to maintain recipients in a particular condition on a longer-term basis; are often implemented independently of other sustainable community development activities and do not include a strategy for integration into broader community development programs. They are implemented on either a one-off 'gift' basis or on a long-term basis with no clear exit strategy. ¹	Provision of a water supply system to a community without community participation and providing ongoing maintenance and all water distribution/consumption costs.	In this example, the local community is trained and involved in constructing and maintaining the water supply system.

OAU staff are responsible for upholding the following key principles in their work:

- a) OAU applies a human rights framework in its work and will not fund welfare activities. OAU programs are based on the belief that people and communities around the world are active participants in their own development rather than passive recipients of welfare. OAU programs are not directed to a single family or individual in isolation and seek to develop a community's ability to sustain activities beyond the life of OAU support.
- b) OAU will ensure that if any elements of a program/project can be categorised as welfare during program design, it will be subject to close analysis. The program/project proposal must present a rationale as to why it is not a dependency-creating model and ensure a clear exit strategy in place. Any such elements must also be closely monitored over the life of the program/project to ensure compliance with this policy.
- c) Responding to emergency needs is not considered a welfare activity, since it has a clear exit strategy and may in some circumstances turn into a long-term development initiative. However even during emergency relief, efforts shall be made to reduce dependency and to increase accountability to the beneficiaries.

¹ Adapted from <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/ancp-manual-march-2020-v2.pdf>

Religious activities

Religious activities definition	Religious activities	Example of religious activity	Example of development (non-religious activity)
OAU defines religious activities as activities that promote one religion, faith or denomination and/or attempt to convert people from one religion, faith or denomination to another	Religious activities may discriminate on the basis of belonging to a particular group or aim to persuade or develop religious beliefs and faith practices among project beneficiaries.	Building up the knowledge and faith of believers such as theological training and study, converting people to another faith and the building and maintenance of places of worship.	Support to a faith group in circumstances where the structure is specifically designed to provide relief or development outcomes, such as working through a mosque to provide emergency relief.

OAU staff are responsible for upholding the following key principles in their work:

- a) OAU is non-sectarian and will not implement or fund program/project activities that are religious in nature and are designed to promote a particular religion, faith or denomination including activities that persuade people to join a particular religion, denomination or faith.
- b) OAU will uphold the right of individuals to choose and practice their own religious or spiritual beliefs.
- c) OAU does not attempt to control or regulate staff and volunteers' personal affairs or use of leisure time including their involvement in religious activities. However, it is expected that all OAU staff and volunteers are able to maintain a clear distinction between participating in such an activity and their work with OAU.

Partisan Political activities

Partisan political definition	Partisan political activities	Example of partisan political activity	Example of development (non-partisan political activity)
Activities that align with a political party and are designed to persuade people to support a particular political party.	Supporting or aligning with a particular political party or organisation, candidate, politician or faction to gain power within a government or party-political structure. ²	An activity encouraging voters to vote for a particular political party or candidate.	Straight Talk event - promoting participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to more actively engage in political institutions, decision-making and change processes.

OAU staff are responsible for upholding the following key principles in their work:

- a) OAU is non-partisan and will not implement or fund program activities that further a particular party-political adherence, endorse any party, candidate or organisation formally affiliated to a political party or those that involve partisanship.
- b) OAU recognises that political processes are an important part of the development process. OAU seeks to promote good governance and political participation in the communities with whom we work and will support civic and political awareness campaigns.
- c) OAU also seeks to influence policies and practices of governments and political parties to benefit poor and marginalised women and men and uphold basic human rights for all. However, this does not involve the support for or promotion of a particular political party or candidate.
- d) OAU will uphold the right of individuals to participate in political activities.
- e) OAU 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 work with OAU. This participation cannot be deemed to threaten the security and reputation of the staff/volunteer involved or OAU.

² <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/ancp-manual-march-2020-v2.pdf> page 20

Responsibility and Accountability

This policy applies to all Oxfam Australia program staff. Specific responsibilities and accountabilities for ensuring implementation are as follows:

Accountable	Activity
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold Section Directors accountable to this policy and promote policy principles, as appropriate, in the Oxfam International Confederation
Director, Programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor policy implementation and ensure OAU funded development, advocacy, campaigns and humanitarian programs and projects are not funding or supporting welfare, religious activities or partisan political parties
Unit Manager or Country Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share this policy with staff and partners• Promote awareness of the Policy and ensure staff and partners are held accountable to the policy• Promote the use of program management systems such as the appraisal process, working agreement and regular partner reporting and monitoring to ensure that religious, political or welfare activities are not included in OAU funded programs and projects
Programs staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand policy requirements, monitor OAU funded international and domestic programs/projects and/or local/national partners' activities and report any breaches of the policy