

Act for Peace is committed to mainstreaming cross cutting issues re counter terrorism, gender, human rights, child protection, disability, environmental sustainability, as well as policies to differentiate between development and welfare, evangelism and partisan politics.

1.1 HUMAN RIGHTS

Act for Peace acknowledges and seeks to preserve the fundamental human rights of all human beings. As stated in the Act for Peace Mandate, “we commit ourselves to work together in meeting human need, in a prophetic and compassionate way, where justice, peace and creation are threatened. This work includes overseas relief and development, support and advocacy for uprooted people, support for the work of Australian Aboriginal and Islander people, education for justice, advocacy and human rights and concern for International Affairs”. (Act for Peace Mandate, July 1996)

Act for Peace believes that what constitutes the uniqueness of human beings is their ability to exercise basic human rights within a community of human beings. Whenever these human rights are violated, or prevented from being fulfilled, a human being falls short of his or her right to human dignity. The work of development is very inadequate if it does not help to enhance the human dignity of the community wherein this work is carried out.

Development and human rights are seen as interdependent and mutually reinforcing. For development to be sustainable, individuals in developing countries need to have secure and long-term access to the resources required to satisfy their basic needs, be they economic, social, cultural, civil or political.

Act for Peace will not knowingly endorse or support any project that demeans human dignity either through its design or promotion



Act for Peace undertakes to act in keeping with the ethos underlying the following principles in relation to refugees, migrants and internally displaced people, developed by WCC GEN:

- We will treat all human beings, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, gender or legal status with dignity and respect
- We will respect the culture, customs, and religious beliefs of the people we seek to serve
- All assistance will be given on the basis of need alone and without regard to the race, creed or nationality of the recipients
- We will seek ways of ensuring the participation of all those we endeavour to help in the development and implementation of all programmes
- We recognise that all those providing assistance to people in need are in privileged positions and we commit ourselves to not abusing that power in any way. Exploitation of vulnerable people, including sexual exploitation, runs counter to Christian values.
- We will be good stewards in carrying out programmes for all those we endeavour to help. While we are accountable to those who support our work, we are also accountable to those we seek to serve
- While we recognise the importance of assisting those we endeavour to help, we also commit ourselves to working to address the root causes of poverty, inequality, conflict and Human Rights abuses in the struggle for justice and peace.

1.2 CHILD PROTECTION

Please refer to separate our Child Protection Policy

1.3 TERRORISM

Again, Act for Peace condemns all forms of violence. The international community have taken strong measures against terrorism through UN Security Council resolutions and domestic laws. The penalties for directly or indirectly supporting a terrorist or terrorist organisation are severe. In addition, a breach of anti-terrorism laws would have a very negative impact on the integrity and credibility of the organisation.



We aim to ensure that Act for Peace complies with Australian laws and that our partners comply with local domestic laws through processes and policies that minimise the risk of support for terrorists and terrorist organisations, especially those on the Australian Government's Consolidated List and List of Terrorist Organisations.

We have been in partnership with most of our partners for over 20 years and endeavour to know their staff and work as well as possible.

We take the following steps to ensure that we do not support terrorist organisations:

- we will undertake a thorough assessment of any new partners
- we ensure that an anti-terrorism clause is part of all partnership agreements
- ensuring that funds are used for stated objectives and that adequate information about the nature of their projects is provided
- we seek the approval of local Councils of Churches or similar bodies when selecting non-church partners
- we monitor projects in line with responsibilities to supporters, AusAID, ACFID and other groups/agencies
- we will monitor changes to the Consolidated List and List of Terrorist Organisations and notify partners of any relevant listings

1.4 DISABILITY

Act for Peace is committed to supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities in its own employment policy of non-discrimination and in its helping shape, fund and implement projects of our partners, and to support advocacy within the ACT Alliance, with governments, disabled people's organisations and other networks, so as to extend the benefits of development to all and to promote the dignity and well-being of people with disability. This involves pursuit of the same opportunities for participation, contribution, decision-making and social and economic well-being as others in society. Disability considerations are important for every phase & sector of responses to, and emergence from, disaster and conflict environments.



Act for Peace will remind ourselves and our partners of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, from which AusAID has taken its six guiding principles. These principles are: *Active central role by people with disability; recognise and respect rights; respect and understand diversity; take into account the interaction of gender and disability; focus on children and support people-people links and promote partnerships.* Also, Act for Peace will adopt a “strengths based approach”, seek to be sensitive to cultural factors in achieving positive change and to emphasize “capacity development” for individuals and organizations rather than the achievement of specific, pre-conceived targets or outputs.

Issues of disability and inclusion of people with disabilities will be considered when conducting program appraisals, evaluations and monitoring reviews.

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Act for Peace is mandated to act responsibly where a sustainable environment for all humanity is threatened. A sustainable environment is made up of sustainable development, sustainable communities and a healthy environment.

An understanding of ecological as well as social, cultural and economic sustainability is crucial to the delivery of Act for Peace programs around the world. Programs need to consider their impact on the environment and adequate attention needs to be given to potential environmental problems or benefit, and that appropriate mitigation or enhancement measures should be considered in planning and implementing projects.

Act for Peace supports the Australian Government (AusAID) ‘Aid and the environment – building resilience, sustaining growth An Environment Strategy for Australian Aid Summary August 2007 and the three themes identified as the main environmental focus of the Australian government policy in the Asia – Pacific region, namely climate change, water and environmental governance.

Act for Peace also supports the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) policy on climate change in recognising the dimensions of the climate change crisis (ecological, social, economic, political and spiritual) and from an ethical perspective, that climate change is a matter of justice, as “those who are and will increasingly be affected are



the impoverished and vulnerable communities of the global South” (Minute on Global Warming and Climate Change, 2008).

Act for Peace acknowledges the threat to creation caused by human destruction of the environment, specifically the impacts of climate change, flooding, salinity, habitat destruction, desertification, pollution and urban expansion

Development is not sustainable if it steals from present and future generations. Poverty and environmental degradation are interwoven, and it is the poor who suffer most from this degradation. Sustainable development cannot be defined in economic terms alone, but must begin in a commitment to care for the poor, the marginalised, and the voiceless. In this sense, through our work with partner agencies across the world, Act for Peace strives to fulfil our obligations to respect and preserve the rights and existence of peoples, practices and the natural environment.

In practical terms Act for Peace supports the following measures to ensure our environmental accountability as a humanitarian agency:

- That where programs have a specific focus on the environment, partners will develop and adhere to an environmental management and sustainability policy
- That Act for Peace will request, where appropriate, for partners to undertake an environmental assessment prior to the implementation of specific programs to demonstrate that proposed activities will not have a detrimental affect on land, flora and fauna and traditional culture and practice
- That all partners will comply with the relevant environmental laws that prevail in their country
- That Act for Peace will support and communicate with partners any relevant policies or decisions relating to sustainable environmental management (i.e. from relevant UN agencies, AusAID)



- That as an agency committed to ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability Act for Peace will actively support national and international campaigns and initiatives that promote sustainable environmental management
- That Act for Peace will provide where possible opportunities for developing improved knowledge and skills relating to environmental program management through access to training opportunities, consultancies or collaborations through the Act Alliance, World Council of Churches or other networks and agencies

1.6 GENDER

1.6.1 Introduction

Gender based discrimination is the most systemic and widespread of all forms of discrimination. Gender inequalities permeate all families, social networks and institutions and the broader social, political and economic systems in which they function. Other forms of discrimination – based on age, ability, race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion or membership of a social group – also affect men, women, boys and girls differently.

Act for Peace and its partners, along with ACT Secretariat and all ACT Alliance members, have a common commitment to ensure gender equality. Act for Peace believes that all persons are created in the image of God and are thus equals with the same basic rights and human dignity – regardless of faith, gender, culture, ethnic origin or traditions. Women and men are equally responsible for the stewardship of creation and are equally entitled to its enjoyment (Genesis 1). Gender, however, defines what roles women and men are allowed or expected to assume. Gender decides inequalities between women and men in access to and control over resources and power to make decisions. Act for Peace believes this *gender bias* is a distortion of God's mission entrusted to human beings to live in harmony and mutual respect, with equal rights and responsibilities.

Gender equality is thus a core value of Act for Peace and gender mainstreaming and targeted actions to address gender inequalities are critical methods of attaining gender equality.



Act for Peace recognises that gender rights are human rights and not special privileges. Women and men are entitled, on an equal and equitable basis, to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres. Act for Peace therefore aims to promote the rights and freedoms of the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed and those at most risk of violence, coercion, deprivation and abuse – whether they be women, men, girls or boys - through means that address and remove the barriers to women’s and men’s full enjoyment of their rights. In short, “to break down the structures that oppress”, which is a core part of Act for Peace’s mandate. This requires the use of both rights-based and community-based approaches to humanitarian assistance and protection in order to maximise and ensure empowerment and accountability.

1.6.2 Applicable Humanitarian Standards and Guidance

As an ecumenical humanitarian organisation and a member of ACT Alliance, Act for Peace endeavours at all times to uphold its two main frameworks of accountability and quality, and the standards, guidance and indicators designed to ensure gender equality in humanitarian response, namely, *the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief*¹ and *The Sphere Project – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (2004)*².

Act for Peace also adheres to the standards described in detail in *the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (2006)*. As a humanitarian agency working in a wide range of protracted conflicts, Act for Peace is also committed to fulfilment of the *UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) - Women, Peace and Security*.³

¹ *The Code of Conduct* states that “the right to receive humanitarian assistance...is a fundamental humanitarian principles which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries”. It also recognises “the crucial role played by women in disaster-prone communities” and aims to ensure “that this role is supported, not diminished, by aid programs.”

² *The Sphere Handbook* states that “women and men, girls and boys, have the same entitlement to humanitarian assistance; to respect for their human dignity; to acknowledgement of their equal human capacities, including the capacity to make choices; to the same opportunities to act on those choices; and to the same level of power to shape the outcome of their actions”(p.11)

³ UNSC Res. 1325 recognises the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into all activities related to support, restoration and provision of peace and security. It highlights the urgency of promoting protection of girls and women and increased participation of women at all decision making levels in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and calls on all the actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including: a) the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction; b) support local women’s peace initiatives, and; c) the protection of and respect for the human rights of women



As a member of the ACT Alliance, who works with ACT Secretariat, ACT members, ACT National Forums and ACT Working Groups, Act for Peace fully endorses the ACT Alliance Gender Policy (April 2008). Like Act for Peace, ACT Alliance is committed to promoting gender equality as a common value and gender mainstreaming and targeted action to address gender inequality. This approach, which forms the basis of ACT Alliance Gender Policy principles (April 2008) has been mainstreamed in the ACT Manual and all ACT members, ACT National Forums⁴ and associated bodies are expected to meet these obligations. Act for Peace's revised Gender Policy is designed to be both compliant with ACT policies and complementary in reinforcing a set of common standards and approach in order to maximise synergies among common partners. Gender is also a core component of the ACT Capacity Assessment Tool.

Act for Peace Gender Policy supports the third UN Millennium Development Goal, which is "to promote gender equality and empower women", and is in line with AusAID's gender policy.

1.6.3 Act for Peace Policy Objectives

The core objective of this is to empower women and men to transform gender and power relationships in order to build just, equitable and inclusive societies that enhance and sustain peace.

Short-to-Medium Term Objectives:

- Prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence
- Eliminate gender inequalities in access to and control over resources, material benefits and education
- Targeted protection and assistance to reduce threats and vulnerabilities, increase capacity and address structural gender inequalities
- Gender mainstreaming within Act for Peace and its partners
- Greater women and girl's participation in decision making affecting their lives

and girls, and to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse.

⁴ ACT Forums and their members must "prioritize the promotion of gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender in all it aspects of their work", p-5, ACT Alliance *Policy and Guidelines for National and Regional ACT Forums*.



Long-Term Objectives:

- Equal rights for women, men, girls and boys
- Eliminate all forms of systemic gender-based discrimination.
- Equal participation of women and men in decision-making affecting their lives at all levels of society
- Strengthened women's political influence in society
- Active involvement of men in promoting gender equality strengthened

1.6.4 Act for Peace Approach

Act for Peace's rights-based approach recognises women, men, girls and boys as 'rights holders' and states as the primary 'duty-bearers' in all of its work. As rights-holders, all men, women, boys and girls men at risk or affected by conflict or disasters have a legal and moral right to request and receive assistance and protection.

The state retains the principal legal responsibility for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights within its territory and nation states should therefore always be addressed in rights-based programming. Targeted duty-bearers are often those in positions of power or influence who have an impact on the distribution of resources and rights in a given context. Other moral duty-bearers exist at all levels, spanning from the international to the household level. Important moral duty bearers are donor organisations, religious and traditional leaders and faith based organisations. In targeting women's gender rights, men are important moral duty-bearers.

Where states are either unwilling or unable to provide effective protection and assistance, Act for Peace and its partners have a humanitarian imperative to respond.

Applying a rights-based approach to the work of Act for Peace and its partners means ensuring that our support is targeted at the rights of the most vulnerable and most at risk of discrimination. This requires gender disaggregated data collection⁵ and analysis upon which to base strategic programming decisions. However, while

⁵ Age and diversity should also be captured during data collection to ensure that non-gender-based forms of discrimination are also incorporated into program design.



women and girls are often the most vulnerable, assumptions should not be made, nor should the vulnerability of men and boys and their specific gender rights which are often overlooked.

1.6.5 Act for Peace Focus areas

It is essential to ensure that gender concerns are incorporated in all actions. At the same time special programs with a specific focus on combating gender inequality are necessary to rectify gender rights deficits. Thus Act for Peace's approach to promoting gender equality is three-pronged focusing on:

- Specific actions aimed at directly addressing gender inequalities
- Gender mainstreaming (internally and externally)
- Capacity Building

1.6.6 Actions aimed at directly addressing gender inequalities

The first prong of Act for Peace's Gender Policy focuses on specific actions directly aimed at addressing gender inequalities. Recognising that women and girls are often victims of systemic discrimination and that women and girls are often less likely to enjoy the fulfilment of their rights than men and boys, specific attention must be paid to ensuring that women have access to and control over the resources and rights they deem lacking. This could be in form of support to women's organisation and women's empowerment. At the same time attention must be paid to addressing national structural factors including cultural, political and legal systems that hinder gender equality.

1.6.7 Actions to Strengthen Accountability

- Advocacy for legal and policy reform e.g. family law, protection against violence, land rights, labour laws, political rights
- Advocacy for institutional reforms: e.g. for more gender-sensitive institutions (health care facilities, financial institutions, agricultural advisory services)
- Advocacy for eliminating barriers to women's effective access to justice systems
- Measures to influence the way gender issues are discussed in the context of



promoting a positive gender discourse, e.g. communication projects, awareness-raising among important moral duty-bearers (men's groups, religious leaders, traditional leaders etc.) thereby addressing the social construction of masculinity and femininity.

- Support to participatory gender budgeting processes and gender sensitive social audits and statistics

1.6.8 Actions to Strengthen Political and Legal Empowerment

- Measures to support women's self-awareness, problem analysis and solving, political consciousness, power analysis, self-assertiveness, and leadership
- Measures to support increased knowledge of women on rights and institutional systems for rights protection
- Measures to support increased awareness and actions among men on gender issues
- Measures to support the development and strengthening of women's own organisations
- Measures to support increased networking of women's organisations e.g. support for networking across identity and ethnicity lines and for increased linkages from the local to the international level.

1.6.9 Actions to Strengthen Humanitarian *Protection*

- Capacity-building for protection
- Specialised protection programs
- Mainstreaming protection in assistance programs

1.6.10 Mainstreaming gender

The second prong of this policy focuses on mainstreaming gender in organisations and in programs.

Within Act for Peace, Partner Organisations and Joint Act for Peace-Partner Programs:

- Strong Act for Peace management commitment
- Adequate resources allocation
- Gender equality standards, guidance and indicators incorporated in all relevant



policies and procedures, including program monitoring and evaluation.

- Gender included as a cross cutting issue in strategic planning
- Gender training included in capacity building programs
- Full integration of gender equality concerns into program management and evaluation systems
- Including gender equality concerns in Act for Peace awareness-raising and humanitarian advocacy

Act for Peace support to partner organisations could include:

- Ensure gender is integrated into program monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines
- Ensure gender is taken into account at each stage of the program cycle
- Encouraging gender balance in all working groups and initiatives
- Increasing the awareness of internal mainstreaming including affirmative actions to attract more female staff and/or combat gender discriminating power structures in the organisation
- Ensure gender disaggregated data collection
- Encourage and support gender training
- Increase documentation on lessons learnt and impact of gender equality policies
- Support networking on gender equality between partner organisations
- Attention to women's organisations and networks and other forces of progressive change for gender equality



1.7 DEVELOPMENT & EVANGELISM

We define evangelism as “seeking to convert people from one religious faith or denomination to another”. Act for Peace is called to stand with those experiencing oppression and injustice. Act for Peace has no mandate to engage in evangelism and does not use funds from AusAID or any other source for such activities.

Act for Peace has for a long time adhered to this policy. Furthermore, in keeping with a policy statement from 1983:

- Act for Peace does not normally provide funds for: Denominational Church centred projects such as church buildings and support of pastors. These activities are seen as the responsibility of the local church or mission board’. (section 7.2 of the International Program Policy Guidelines and Appraisal criteria)
- The Partnership Agreement with partners also clearly highlights what funds are for and these objectives and projects are confirmed during monitoring.
- The Annual Report briefly highlights each project, identifying the project name and how funds are used.

Act for Peace provides development assistance on a non-discriminatory basis and believes that acceptance of specific religious beliefs or membership of a particular religious group must not be a condition for participating in relief and development programs on an equal basis. Instead, Act for Peace uses the following criteria, which provide the framework for projects (IP appraisal Criteria, Section 6):

- A focus on need and participation of women in order to ensure gender equality
- Participation and empowerment of community members
- The organisation must have the capability to implement and properly account for the activities it proposes to undertake
- Program activities must have clear and specific objectives
- The planning of a program should include a strategy that enables the benefits of the program to be sustained after external support for the activity or intervention is completed



1.8 DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE

We define welfare as “assistance to maintain individuals in a particular condition on a long term basis such as in orphanages, child sponsorship, hospices and hospital care programs”. We do not use funding, including AusAID funds, to support welfare activities.

We will normally support the programs of ecumenical partners and will enter into partnership with other groups on the advice of recognised ecumenical organisations. Christian World Service does not enter into partnership with individuals. Act for Peace seeks to enter into two-way relationships with other ecumenical organisations that have systems in place, such as the Round Table process, to establish priorities and to co-ordinate and monitor program activities (IP Policy, p12). The IPP Manual clearly highlights the development, capacity building and sustainability objectives as a program focus. These exclude supporting welfare activities.

Two-way partnerships are based on honesty, integrity and proper stewardship of the gifts of God. They also ensure that the partner is empowered to seek assistance for projects that are sustainable, empowering and culturally appropriate. Partnership Agreements are signed by all partners, identifying the purpose of funds, and it is against these objectives that Act for Peace carries out its monitoring. Our Annual Report also highlights our policy.

1.9 DEVELOPMENT & POLITICS

We define political activities as “activities designed to convert people from one political persuasion to another, and activities that seek to build upon political structures (except where those structures are specifically designed to provide relief and/or development assistance), promote a candidate for political office or promote a political party.” Act for Peace provides assistance on a non-discriminatory basis and does not engage in any political activities mentioned above.

We recognise the political implications of our actions but reject for ourselves any alignment with a specific political ideology.





We believe that advocating on behalf of our partners for issues such as peace, human rights, the environment, or global debt, is essential to our mandate, which states that “Act for Peace work includes overseas relief and development, support and advocacy for uprooted people, support for the work of Australian Aboriginal and Islander people, education for justice, advocacy and human rights and concern for International Affairs”.

We are committed to “Providing moral and practical leadership” and “standing with those experiencing oppression and injustice” and will engage in advocacy activities as appropriate in achieving these goals. (Act for Peace Mission statement).

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia and a member of the global ACT Alliance.

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