



Pacific Assist

Inspiring Self-reliance

Rights, Protection and Inclusion Policy 2020

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Pacific Assist's commitment to human rights, the protection of vulnerable and marginalised communities, and inclusion.

Scope

This policy applies to the organisation as a whole and to all Pacific Assist projects and is to be adhered to by all personnel, volunteers, partners, and service providers as it relates to their involvement with Pacific Assist and its projects.

Policy

Rights, Protection, Inclusion

In harmony with Pacific Assist's four core principles of self-reliance, and in accordance with Australian Government regulations and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)'s Quality Principal 1 (Rights, Protection and Inclusion), Pacific Assist acknowledges the need to consider human rights, inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups, anti-discrimination, and child protection as priorities during all of our projects and any related activities. We agree to comply with the Convention on the Rights of Children, Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Convention against Torture (CAT) consistent with the principals of freedom and thought, conscience and religion, as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the associated international covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Australia ratified. In short, we affirm that human rights are for everyone, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status.

Our commitment to rights, protection and inclusion is expressed in practice through:

- Organisational culture
- Training and development
- Project design processes
- Project monitoring and evaluation processes

Protection

To promote the protection of primary stakeholders from, and identify their risk of, discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect Pacific Assist:

- Undertakes screening and due diligence process when recruiting and considering, partners and service providers
- Undertakes an initial assessment of the contexts projects are to be conducted in, including a power analysis
- Implements a range of policies and procedures through its:
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Child & Youth Safety & Well-being Policy
 - Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct
 - Human Resources Policy
 - Workplace Code of Conduct
 - Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
 - Complaints Handling Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy

Inclusion

At the heart of Pacific Assist's vision of building self-reliance is building individuals' capacity to envision a self-determined future and the freedom and capacity to access the necessary spiritual, mental, emotional, social and physical resources to enact that vision. An essential element of such self-reliance is inclusion in the identification of individual and community needs and the decision making and implementation of initiatives that respond to those needs. Pacific Assist's policy is to foster opportunities for as many representatives from the communities we serve, including those from vulnerable and marginalised groups, to be included in our project needs assessment, design, implementation, evaluation, and leadership. Specific procedures for seeking the input and participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups such as children, women, the racially discriminated, and the poor are outlined in the Primary Stakeholder Participation and Contribution Policy, and form part of the initial assessment and engagement (see the Initial Engagement Template). Further, it is our policy to seek feedback on our project design and implementation from local communities and others well qualified and experienced in the context and domain of any given project to ensure we are acting in ways that promote inclusion in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Pacific Assist achieves this through:

- Establishing cultural boards of advice
- Establishing local project leadership and management committees
- Evaluating performance (see Pacific Assist Primary Stakeholder Participation and Contribution Policy)

In line with our core principles of community and development mindset, to improve effectiveness and efficiency, and to broaden the organisation's knowledge, capacity, expertise, and perspectives, Pacific Assist's policy is to build relationships and partnerships with NGOs, corporates, government departments, and other organisations and individuals working in the development sector who share common values and goals. This includes building relationships and partnerships with individuals and organisations from diverse gender, social, political, cultural, academic, and religious backgrounds. We build these relationships and partnerships through:

- Networking
- Face-to-face on-the-ground engagement
- Hosting and/or participating in discussion groups, workshops, seminars, conferences, and symposiums
- Undertaking professional development

Humanitarian Aid

When Pacific Assist projects focus on the delivery of humanitarian aid in response to humanitarian emergencies, we will be guided by The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), and apply the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality as defined in the CHS as summarised below:

Humanitarian action is guided by four widely accepted principles:

- **Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.
- **Impartiality:** Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no adverse distinction on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinion.
- **Independence:** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

- Neutrality: Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. (Core Humanitarian Standard, 2014, p.8)

Pacific Assist recognises that effective humanitarian responses requires collective action. Pacific Assist will share information and knowledge with other stakeholders, and participate in joint planning and integrated activities wherever possible, including national and local authorities, without compromising humanitarian principles. Further, in determining its humanitarian responses, Pacific Assist commits to work with local communities and local organizations wherever possible, recognising that they are the first to respond, better positioned to respond and often last to leave.