

Proselytism and Partisan Politics Policy

Version 2.3

Introduction

ChildFund Australia is an independent, non-partisan and secular international development organisation that works to create community and systems change which enables vulnerable children and young people, in all their diversity, to assert and realise their rights. ChildFund Australia does not discriminate on the basis of political or religious beliefs.

This Policy provides a framework to ensure that ChildFund Australia funds are used for activities that contribute to aid and development outcomes and will not be used for the purposes of promoting or supporting religious teaching and proselytization or partisan politics.

Frameworks

ChildFund Australia is guided by the following standards:

- The Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct commits members to demonstrate the separation of development and non-development activities.
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (The Code of Conduct) stipulates that aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- The Code of Conduct stipulates that aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint and that NGO's will endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.

Key Principles

Impartiality: ChildFund Australia does not discriminate based on nationality, race, religious belief, class or political opinions. ChildFund Australia endeavours to provide development and humanitarian assistance according to need.

Independence: ChildFund Australia is a child and youth focused independent and secular organisation. It holds no membership or affiliation to any political or religious. It formulates its own policies based on international human rights and humanitarian frameworks and independent of the Australian and foreign governments.

Neutrality: ChildFund Australia is a politically neutral organization. It does not engage in ideological activity. ChildFund Australia does not consider that the principle of neutrality precludes undertaking advocacy on issues related to child rights, accountability, and justice.

Respect: ChildFund Australia will endeavour to respect the rule of law in countries of operation and the culture, and customs of the individual communities it works with.

Policy Statement

ChildFund Australia is independent and not affiliated with any political party and ChildFund Australia does not proselytise or support religious teaching. ChildFund Australia does not solicit funds for these purposes. People are free to participate in and benefit from projects and programs we support, regardless of their political allegiance or religious beliefs. ChildFund Australia does not use

development or humanitarian assistance as a means to further a political or religious standpoint and does not tie funding to the acceptance of a particular political belief or religious creed.

ChildFund Australia formulates its own policies and does not seek to implement any government policy, except where it coincides with our own independent policy. ChildFund Australia recognises that working closely with Governments and local authorities and - in some cases also religious institutions and leaders - is integral to the long-term success and sustainability of its development programs and humanitarian assistance.

ChildFund Australia recognises the need for transparent separation between aid and development and non-development objectives and activities in program designs, fundraising, advocacy, choice for donors and in public communications and expenditure reporting.

ChildFund Australia respects that employees and directors are entitled to have their own political and religious beliefs and does not permit discrimination on this basis before or during employment. Employees and directors engage in political and religious activity at their own discretion and in a personal capacity.

Policy Commitments

ChildFund Australia will:

- not form partnerships with terrorist or extremist networks and personnel.
- not accept funding that requires compliance with any political or religious ideology.
- terminate any partnership with a religious or political organisation that compromises ChildFund Australia's ability to deliver development and humanitarian assistance in a non-discriminatory manner.
- ensure that partisan politics does not influence ChildFund Australia's actions.
- terminate partnerships that compromise ChildFund Australia's neutrality.
- ensure the organisation maintains its independence from national or international churches and religious groups.
- ensure that where a staff member or Board Director's political involvement or affiliation with a political party or religion may affect their work with ChildFund Australia and/or create a potential conflict of interest, they understand that it is their individual responsibility to declare this matter promptly with management for discussion or with the Board for discussion and decision e.g., if a Board member or staff member decides to stand for pre-selection.
- ensure that project resources are not used for political or religious purposes.
- assess potential new partners' political and religious affiliations in order to identify whether they may compromise our independence.
- ensure partners do not proselytise or promote partisan politics in the course of their work with children and communities supported by ChildFund Australia.
- not form any link to terrorist or extremist networks.
- not implement government policy, except when it correlates with ChildFund Australia's independent policy.
- not act as instruments of foreign policy for donor governments.
- not gather information of a political, military, or economically sensitive nature for governments or organisations.
- challenge, in an appropriate manner, religious beliefs and traditional practices that are contrary to children's rights.

Guidance Notes

Consult the International Program Team for support documents, such as templates, resources and checklists, to assist with the implementation of this policy.

Document Information

Document details	
Name of document	Proselytism, Politics and Development Policy
Owner	Global Programs Director
Approved By	Program Review Committee
Date of Approval	28 February 2023
Date of Effect	28 February 2023
Assigned Review Period	Every three years after Date of Approval
Date of Next Review	27 February 2026

Version control				
Version No.	Version Date	Amendment Details	Amended By	Approved By
1.0	12/12/2007			Board of Directors
2.0	06/02/2013			Board of Directors
2.1	13/11/2017	Politics & Development Policy and Proselytism & Development Policy merged.		International Programs Director
2.2	27/09/2019		Head of Programs	International Programs Director
2.3	28/02/2023	Strengthening of the definition of independence; and updated definition of neutrality to clarify that it doesn't preclude advocacy	Global Programs Director	Program Review Committee