



# DEVELOPMENT POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

Marist Mission Centre (MMC) is the international development arm of the Marist Fathers for the Province of Australia. Our motto is 'sustaining hope'. Our primary focus is to promote sustainable change for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged especially women and children. A core value of MMC is promoting the dignity of the human person as affirmed by the Gospel and internationally recognised human rights conventions.

MMC manages two charities: Australian Marist Centre for Overseas Aid (AMCOA) and the Marist Fathers International Mission (MFIM). AMCOA in partnership with International Marist networks aims to: Support community development projects for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged; alleviate poverty via sustainable community and education projects and empower women and children and those with disabilities. MFIM in partnership with our Marist International networks aims to: Foster the development of people and facilities for mission; promote initiatives for the vulnerable as well as programmes for faith development including the education of priests and religious and advance the social and faith development of local communities.

## PURPOSE

This policy seeks to provide clear definitions of development and non-development/welfare activities, as defined by the Australian Commonwealth Government, thereby ensuring that AMCOA continues to deliver overseas aid activities in accordance with the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme (OAGDS).

This policy also endeavours to ensure that AMCOA complies with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct by:

- accurately representing its activities to its donors, partners and the public;
- ensuring that funds raised for development activities are not used for non-development/welfare activities; and
- making clear separations between development and non-development/welfare objectives and activities.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to Trustees, MMC committee members, employees, volunteers, partners and other stakeholders who operate under the auspices of MMC.

## POLICY

### Development Activities

Development assistance includes activities undertaken in order to reduce poverty and address global justice issues. MMC adopts the Australian Government's definition of development activities as described in the OAGDS Guidelines:

*Development activities improve the long-term well-being of individuals and communities in developing countries. Eligible development activities must demonstrate fair distribution; be informed by local people; and deliver sustained or lasting benefits.*<sup>1</sup>

For a project to be considered by AMCOA, the following key criteria must be met by the project partner:

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<sup>1</sup> OAGDS Guidelines, February 2016, Page 9



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- The project seeks to improve the well-being of a community without favouritism or discrimination by race, religion, culture, political persuasion or gender;
- The project is identified, designed and implemented in close cooperation with primary stakeholders and local people to ensure that project activities are appropriate, are in direct response to local needs, and build on local capacities;
- The benefits which result from the project are lasting, sustainable and likely to continue after the funding from AMCOA has ceased.

In addition to these criteria and in alignment with its mission and vision, AMCOA has a particular interest in projects that support vulnerable people especially women and children, educational initiatives and the work of Marists.

For more information regarding key OAGDS criteria, see the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme Guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

AMCOA supports development projects that:

1. Recognise the human person not as the passive beneficiary of development interventions, but as its active subject, claimholder and participant;
2. Promote and prioritise the human rights of all beneficiaries, with emphasis on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights enshrined by international standards;
3. Are initiated as outcomes of consultation with communities and involve those affected by activities in decision making processes – including women, children and young people;
4. Provide evidence of being community based and have indications of working towards sustainability;
5. Are planned and executed with a view to handing control and ownership of activities over to the local community;
6. Provide ongoing benefits; and
7. Benefit whole communities without favouritism or discrimination for reasons of race, religion, culture, political persuasion.

### ***Non-Development/Welfare Activities***

The characteristics of non-development/welfare activities include the following:

- Projects which provide direct assistance to individuals or communities because of an immediate or urgent need;
- Projects which seek to address immediate needs rather than address the root causes of these needs;
- Projects which provide activities for or on behalf of beneficiaries, without requiring their participation in the planning and evaluation; and
- Projects which do not have the capacity to become sustainable.

Such activities are not eligible for funding under OAGDS. However projects of a non-development/welfare nature, if deemed still worthy of consideration, might be referred by AMCOA to MFIM.

<sup>2</sup> <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/oagds-guidelines.pdf>



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## Activities not funded by AMCOA

AMCOA will not consider funding any activities which may compromise AMCOA's status as an 'approved organisation' under OAGDS. Such activities include:

1. Partisan political activities (supporting a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party either in Australia or overseas). This includes, but shall not be limited to:
  - MMC personnel, representatives or partners (when using AMCOA's or MMC's name or resources) being involved in party political activities;
  - using funds or resources to facilitate or support a specific political party, candidate or political organisation in a local, regional or national election in any country;
  - using funds or resources to facilitate or support a particular politician or faction to gain power within a government or within a party-political structure.
2. Evangelising, proselytising or attempting to convert people to another religion or faith. Activities which are undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denominational affiliation to another, or which make aid and/or development activities conditional on participation in religious activities are not supported.
3. Activities that are not covered by adequate child protection policies, including providing funds that support an individual with any conviction under the *Crimes (Child Sex Tourism) Amendment Act 1994*.
4. Activities that are not covered by adequate anti-terrorism policies.

## Separation of Development and Non-Development/Welfare Activities

AMCOA holds Deductible Gift Receipt Item 1 Status. In compliance with the requirements of the Australian Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Taxation Office and ACFID, AMCOA funds development activities exclusively, as defined in this policy.

## Project Assessment

Projects are assessed as either development or non-development/welfare activities by MMC staff and the MMC Advisory Committee, according to the criteria outlined in the MMC Project Appraisal Form.

Project partners are required to agree that project funding provided by AMCOA will only be used for the approved activity type and for the agreed purpose.

## Partnership Agreements

In submitting an application for funding, partner organisations agree to be bound by this policy and to ensure that funds allocated for development purposes are not misapplied or misused. The MMC Project Application Form, together with a Letter of Approval from MMC granting funds to the partner organisation and the Project Agreement Document constitute an MOU as per DFAT's guidelines.

## Humanitarian Assistance

AMCOA works to provide long term development assistance to its partners. While it does, on occasion, work with communities who have experienced humanitarian emergencies, it does so only after the immediate crisis has subsided and its work is focused on long term recovery. As such AMCOA does not consider itself a humanitarian actor or agency.



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## **MONITORING & REVIEW OF POLICY**

MMC will undertake a review of this policy every three years or sooner if required. This review will be undertaken initially by the Executive Officer and MMC staff and then reviewed by the MMC Advisory Committee.

**Related documents** include the following:

- ACFID Code of Conduct
- MMC Project Application Form
- MMC Project Assessment Form