

# Policy on Non-Development Activity

As approved 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016 & 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016



## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly establish International Needs Australia's (INA) position regarding religious activities and partisan political activities in development projects.

## Definitions

Evangelism:

1. Evangelism is the announcement, proclamation, and/or preaching of the Christian gospel or any other faith.
2. To proselytize is to use unethical means, material or otherwise, to try to persuade someone to change their religious or political beliefs or way of living to your own.

Political activity (for the purposes of this policy):

Activities that could be construed as being political are those that involve 'party' politics or partisanship. General support for civil society participation does not fall within this definition of 'political'; examples of such general support could include civic awareness campaigns or activities that promote the participation of women in the political and civil society arena for leadership positions (without promoting specific parties).

## Policy

INA does not have political objectives within its mandate and all activity is supported on the grounds that it is politically non-partisan and the promotion of civil society.

- No Australian Government or INA funds are to be used in political activities, as defined above.
- No Australian Government or INA funds are to be used to convert people from one political persuasion to another or to build up political structures, except in circumstances where those structures are specifically designed to provide relief and/or development assistance.
- Funds will be used in development on the basis of need without distinction on the basis of caste, creed, class, race, gender, religion or political persuasion.

INA does not support proselytism or any coercion to convert from one faith (or no faith) to another. No tax deductible INA funds or DFAT funds are to be used for Evangelism, nor to build up church or ecclesiastical structures. INA may, however, use non-deductible private funding to support Christian evangelical activities of partner organisations. Such activities will always be clearly identified and segregated from tax deductible development activities, including in Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE) calculations. INA will also ensure that partner organisations understand and act upon this differentiation in their delivery of such activities.

As an agency guided by Christian values INA will seek to demonstrate positive Christian and human values in all our undertakings; we believe these are essential elements for sustainable and transformed communities (e.g. Honesty and advocacy against dishonesty and corruption, inclusion versus exclusion of disabled and stigmatised people, love and care and social and community responsibility of those most vulnerable etc.) INA and our partners will model and demonstrate these values when engaging with and working amongst communities and other stakeholders. However, development

by its very nature demands a recognition of and engagement with the cultural mores of the host community (including beliefs and religion) and requires that agents of development work in concert with these informants, toward a healthy and sustainable community.

For most communities in developing countries, spirituality and religious belief and practice are interwoven with daily life. This means that the formation and promotion of existing community-agreed values and appropriate spiritual nurturing are integral to transformational community development. INA will hold these principles of good development as fundamental to our work and will seek to ensure, and hold our partners to the same.

INA aligns with both the ACFID (Australian Council for International Development) Code of Conduct and the principles of the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) Code of Conduct and implements aid and development activities in alignment with these codes and the principles they contain.