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## Code of Good Practice

May 2020

<b>Board Ratification Dates</b>	May 2020 2017 2010	
<b>Revision Date</b>	Sept 2019:	Revised according to the revised ACFID Code of Conduct wording on human rights, inclusion and open information, our Core Humanitarian Standards commitment, and Fundraising Institute of Australia standards. Incorporating a commitment to the five principles of the Global Humanitarian Platform. The Code has been reformatted to meet the format requirements of the Act for Peace Policies Policy.
<b>Reaffirmation Date</b>		
<b>Next Review Date and Cycle</b>	May 2023	Every three years from date of ratification or last full review or earlier if required.

### 1. Policy Statement

The Act for Peace Code of Good Practice confirms our organisational level commitment to the attainment of the highest possible principles, standards and laws, along with a commitment to continuous improvement and best practice to ensure the quality, accountability and effectiveness of our work. Act for Peace's decisions and its strategies are consistent with its values and beliefs, and its operations are informed by these values. The Code of Good Practice informs our Code of Conduct, which governs the behaviour of all Act for Peace staff and associated personnel.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Objective

This Code of Good Practice sets out the core principles, standards and laws that inform our policies, shape our procedures and guide our humanitarian and development work. It outlines the minimum professional and ethical standards required from Act for Peace and our partners, whether secular, faith-based, ACT Alliance members or others.

### 3. Principles, Standards and Laws

The Code of Good Practice confirms our organisational commitment to these foundational principles, standards and laws:

1. International human rights, humanitarian and refugee law
2. Red Cross Red Crescent-NGO Code of Conduct (the humanitarian principles)
3. Sphere Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and Core Humanitarian Standards
4. ACFID Code of Conduct
5. DFAT 'Full' Accreditation Standards
6. Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission
7. Fundraising Institute of Australia Code
8. ACT Alliance policies and membership requirements

<sup>1</sup> A board-endorsed Code of Good Practice and Code of Conduct is mandatory requirement for all ACT Alliance members.

The Code of Good Practice provides principles focusing in four key areas:

- **Overarching principles:** the fundamental principles that guide our work.
- **Organisational principles:** the principles that promote professional leadership, management and support and guide how we work. They provide the foundations for effective and accountable programs.
- **Programmatic principles:** the principles that guide our program work, address capacities, and promote justice and equality in line with humanitarian principles and standards.
- **Relational/Partnership Principles:** the principles that support working together in partnership and promote collaboration, cooperation, complementarity with our partners and among ACT Alliance members.

#### 4. Scope

The principles and standards in the Code of Good Practice apply to all of our work: from our partnerships and programs, to marketing, communications, advocacy and other areas. Accordingly, all Act for Peace staff and associated personnel are expected to understand and employ the principles when making decisions and taking action on behalf of Act for Peace.

These Principles and Standards apply to all Act for Peace policies.

#### 5. The Code of Good Practice Principles:

##### A) Overarching Principles

Act for Peace commits to:

- 1) Respecting and protecting human rights. We will act in ways that respect, empower and protect the dignity, uniqueness, and the intrinsic worth and human rights of every human being regardless of their race, religion, nationality, displacement status, ethnicity, language, indigeneity, age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, caste or socio-economic status;
- 2) Working with communities and individuals on the basis of need and human rights without any form of discrimination, ensuring that the capacities and capabilities of communities are considered at all times, and especially targeting those who suffer discrimination and those who are most vulnerable;
- 3) Speaking out and acting against those systems, structures and conditions that increase vulnerability and perpetuate poverty, injustice, inequality, human rights violations and the destruction of the environment;
- 4) Promoting the role and leadership of local actors and working in ways that respect, strengthen and enable local and national-level organisational capacity;
- 5) Prohibiting the use of Act for Peace resources for welfare or to further a particular religious or political partisan standpoint;<sup>2</sup>
- 6) Upholding the highest professional, ethical and moral standards of accountability, recognising our accountability to those with whom we work, to those who support us, to each other, and ultimately to God;
- 7) Meeting the highest standards of truthfulness and integrity in all of our work, including the use of ethical research standards<sup>3</sup>; and

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<sup>2</sup> See definitions in Act for Peace's Policy on Non-Approved Development Purposes, which prohibits Act for Peace support for welfare, proselytising, or furthering a religious or partisan political standpoint.

- 8) Endeavouring not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.

## **B) Organisational Principles**

Act for Peace commits to the core organisational principles common to all ACT Alliance members:

- 1) Responsible and transparent governance and management including upholding the highest ethical standards and being accountable to all stakeholders;
- 2) Developing and maintaining the organisational capacity necessary to support humanitarian and development programs and advocacy in terms of mobilisation of resources and creating management conditions to achieve strategic objectives;
- 3) Act in ways that will protect God's creation, and restore the environment;
- 4) Promote gender equity as a common value and gender mainstreaming as a method of work;
- 5) Take responsibility and hold ourselves accountable for ensuring the safety, dignity and security of our staff and volunteers;
- 6) Make a 'core commitment' to prioritise protection in all work, including mandatory provisions to ensure the safeguarding of children, and to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of gender-based violence;
- 7) Make a concerted effort to engage with churches and their local ministries, recognizing their role in providing religious and spiritual care as well as essential humanitarian and development assistance to local communities;
- 8) Manage financial resources in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner;
- 9) Reflect in communication and fundraising materials the dignity, resilience and initiative of affected communities; and
- 10) Commit to being open and transparent in our work and accountable to our key stakeholders, to the extent our Privacy Policy allows. We share information with beneficiaries, partner organisations, supporters, donors and the general public, and are accountable to our staff, volunteers, supporters, donors, suppliers and the Australian government. The information we publish and how we respond to requests for information are important aspects of accountability. We proactively publish information, and on request disclose information, or give reasons for any decision not to disclose (for example, to respect confidentiality or privacy or to protect the safety of staff or beneficiaries). Our key criterion for the decision will be an on balance assessment of the risks and the impact on our purpose, to improve the safety, justice and dignity of communities affected by conflict, disasters and displacement. We will publish guidance about how to request information and the types of information available on request.

## **C) Programmatic Principles**

Act for Peace commits to the core programmatic principles common to all ACT Alliance members:

- 1) Uphold high ethical, human rights and programmatic standards in all of our work (as relevant) such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, The Sphere Humanitarian Charter, Sphere Protection Principles, and Sphere Standards, the ACT Code of Conduct, and all other ACT Alliance policies and codes.
- 2) For the purposes of emergency response, where a full rights-based approach may not be achievable, Act for Peace's humanitarian assistance will be guided by the use of the

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<sup>3</sup> See as example the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network Principles for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development.

humanitarian principles (humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality) as defined by the Core Humanitarian Standard.

- 3) Listen to, and incorporate into all stages of programmatic work, the perspectives of those women and men whose lives are affected by crises, poverty, exclusion, rights deprivation and injustice and support them as they claim their human rights and work to improve their situation and overall wellbeing.
- 4) Address the root causes of poverty, rights deprivation, injustice, and exclusion in appropriate ways, including working for relevant changes within both formal and informal institutions.
- 5) Work to ensure that appropriate and timely support reaches the most deprived men, women and children within communities.
- 6) Proactively seek equal and meaningful participation from the communities with whom we work in initiatives and decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods, making a concerted effort to include those who are disproportionately excluded and/or marginalised.
- 7) Promote an integrated, community-based approach to our work, creating a link between development and humanitarian assistance and related advocacy work, recovery, reconstruction, and disaster risk reduction.
- 8) Use approaches that develop community capacity, strengthening existing community capacity and prioritise the use of local resources (human, material, cultural etc.).
- 9) Enable the active participation of communities in determining appropriate self-protection and risk reduction measures.
- 10) Work to foresee and understand the impact of our work on existing and potential conflicts and inequalities, incorporating “do no harm” principles in our work and where possible, grasping opportunities to support peace.
- 11) Ensure the people that we work with have access to information about the ACT Alliance, our programmes, our budget, funding sources, how they can give feedback or complain, and participate in our work.
- 12) Ensure rigorous, high quality standards in all our work, having effective systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating.
- 13) Use moral and ethical business practices when relating and cooperating within the ACT Alliance and with external organisations such as other NGO’s, UN agencies, the private sector and the military.
- 14) Work in a complementary and collaborative manner with other national and international development and humanitarian institutions and agencies.

#### **D) Relational/Partnership Principles**

Act for Peace recognises that diversity among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors can be an asset, and that we have shared goals and objectives and are interdependent.

Act for Peace commits to the six relational/partnership principles common to all ACT Alliance members:

- 1) Nurture and sustain partnerships to support more effective, fair and satisfying ways of working together with an emphasis on greater sharing of power, learning and knowledge;
- 2) Being transparent with, listening to, learning from, and sharing experiences with our partners, ACT Alliance, ACFID, the Church Agency Network (CAN) and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) members and other key stakeholders in order to improve the quality of our work and draw on the rich diversity among our networks and alliances.
- 3) Recognise and value the unique gifts that each of us has been given.
- 4) Build relationships, strengthen effectiveness and work collaboratively, adopting complementary strategies in our work.

- 5) Build and sustain transparent and accountable relationships to support coordinated and effective humanitarian, development and advocacy responses.
- 6) Strengthen the capacity of churches who are responding to the developmental needs of their communities, paying particular attention to enhancing the capacity of ecumenical organisations and to support programmes undertaken by multi-faith groups.

Act for Peace also endorses the five Principles of Partnership of the Global Humanitarian Platform<sup>4</sup> (equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity), the most widely recognised principles of partnership in the humanitarian sector.

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<sup>4</sup> Principles of Partnership, May 2008: [www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org](http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org)