

## Religion and Development Policy

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<b>Department</b>	International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia
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### Introduction

HFHA is a tolerant organisation that respects the dignity of those with whom it works. HFHA does not exploit vulnerability or use the power of development and humanitarian programs to proselytise.

### Purpose

This policy is to ensure that HFHA International Program activities, while guided by the desire to give tangible expression to the love of God, are also in keeping with the principles of fostering mutual respect and acceptance of all religions. This policy serves as a practical guide to HFHA staff in our relationships with partner organisations and the communities in which we work, to ensure our project activities are carried out within the affirmation of individual religious freedom as enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

HFHA also adheres to Australia's obligations under the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights*.

HFHA ensures that funds and other resources designated for the purpose of aid and development will be used only for those purposes and will not be used to promote a particular religious adherence.

### Policy Statement

HFHA will encourage, respond and support initiatives that:

- Ensure religious freedom and whilst undertaking any programs overseas, it does not proselytise.
- Ensure that development assistance is not provided on the basis of religion, or the acceptance of any particular religious belief or membership of a particular religious group.
- Ensure that programming is not designed to convert people from one religious faith to another.

- Ensure that it does not build a structure which has as its primary purpose the worship or the administration of any faith apart from non-denominational facilities.
- Ensure that it does not engage in any promotion or controversies of a religious nature, when undertaking any of its programs either in Australia or overseas.
- Do not discriminate against people based on their religious affiliations or beliefs, and instead fosters a policy of respect and acceptance.

### Policy in Practice

HFHA is motivated by Christian values and ethos, and therefore, HFHA's marketing, public relations, development, education, and advocacy initiatives consistently communicate the Christian values of the organisation so that donors and other constituencies are aware of its Christian identity and motivation. HFHA however strives to maintain the principle of religious tolerance and acceptance when undertaking any developmental work. HFHA therefore ensures that:

- Program staff and local counterparts understand HFHA's Christian Vision, Mission and Principles, but practice the principles of non-discrimination and non-judgement on the basis of religion.
- If necessary to support inclusiveness, program staff and local counterparts take into account the faith and religious beliefs of development participants when planning and implementing activities.
- Project activities are identified and designed on the basis of need only and implemented in communities where diverse religious beliefs are respected and accepted.
- Development assistance activities comply with the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936, which does not permit the use of tax-deductible donations for the purposes of evangelism.
- In agreements and communication with Governments, International, Multilateral, Non-Governmental and Civil society organisations, HFHA may openly identify itself as a Christian organisation concerned for the physical, social and spiritual needs of all people, however, none of its program activities are carried out in order to proselytise but to demonstrate in a practical way the values that HFHA holds.
- Through regular monitoring and evaluation, funds are being utilised for the purpose of proposed developmental activities, and not to advocate any religion.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Use of Stories and Photos Policy which commits HFHA to respect the religion of development participants in the collection and use of stories and photos.