

ETHICS POLICY MARCH 2014

INTRODUCTION

Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) is committed to ensuring that our work in communities across Asia and the Pacific is conducted to the highest ethical standards possible, and in accordance with the Code of Conduct developed by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide an ethical framework within which ABV conducts all our work. In addition to ABV's core value of altruism, as a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, it is important that all our stakeholders adhere to its eight values as a minimum.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy is to apply to all ABV activities. It is applicable to the ABV Board, ABV employees, members and volunteers. The policy also extends to ABV funding and implementing partners. It should be read in conjunction with ABV's *Aid and Development Activity Policy*.

VALUES

ABV is an international development, volunteer sending agency whose mission is to strengthen businesses and, through them, communities. With our core value of altruism driving our actions, our programs are developed in accordance with the belief that the private sector is the engine for economic growth, which can alleviate poverty by contributing to job creation and higher incomes. By working directly with local communities in Asia and the Pacific, we are able to support those organisations at the grassroots level who can directly benefit from the advice and mentoring provided by our volunteers.

In addition to our core value of altruism, and as a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, our work is guided by the following values:

1. Sustainable, fair and equitable solutions that address the root causes and symptoms of poverty and disadvantage.
2. Accountability to all ABV stakeholders for our performance and integrity.
3. Building creative and trusting relationships with the communities in which we work:
 - based on an understanding of their history and culture
 - giving priority to their interests
 - involving them to the maximum extent possible in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects and programs, encouraging self-reliance, and

- valuing men and women, boys and girls in ways that respect the dignity, uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every person.
4. Active learning, innovating and continuously improving our aid and development work.
 5. Honesty and transparency in all our dealings.
 6. Respecting, protecting and promoting internationally recognised human rights including civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights and with particular emphasis on gender equality, the protection of children, people with a disability and the rights of minorities and vulnerable and marginalised groups.
 7. Environmental sustainability in both our aid and development and domestic operations.
 8. Strengthening civil society in Australia and the countries where we work.

ALIGNMENT OF VALUES, ETHICS AND ACTIONS

ABV will partner with organisations where there is alignment between the values, ethics and actions of ABV and the proposed partner. This is particularly important so that our partners support ABV in working towards our mission and development outcomes with a view to long-term impact and sustainability of our work.

Where this alignment is in doubt, ABV will undertake due diligence on the proposed partner as part of the appraisal process noted below.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Bearing in mind the aforementioned values, ABV undertakes programs and projects which:

- Focus on empowering others to reduce poverty by creating opportunities for economic growth.
- Recognise the importance of each person having the means to determine their own future.
- Encourage self-help and self-reliance among the beneficiaries to achieve their agreed outcomes.
- Involve beneficiary groups to the maximum extent possible in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects.
- Seek to enhance gender equity.
- Respect our partner's needs, cultures, regulations, moral codes and traditions.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is to be implemented through mechanisms, including:

- The appraisal of all partnership proposals by the Executive Team to ensure compliance with this *Ethics Policy* before entering into a formal agreement, noting that all partnership agreements require Board endorsement.

- The appraisal of all project proposals to ensure adherence to this *Ethics Policy* before a project is approved, in accordance with ABV's *Delegations and Authorisations*.
- The monitoring of all projects over the life cycle to ensure continued adherence using ABV's *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Procedures* as a guide.
- All ABV Board directors, employees, members and volunteers will sign a statement confirming their agreement to uphold the values stated in this *Ethics Policy*.

Ensure that all partners agree to adhere to this *Ethics Policy* which is reviewed through ongoing dialogue with the partner.

ARISING ETHICAL CONCERNS

If an ethical concern arises following the implementation of this policy in accordance with the above mechanisms, the person identifying the concern must bring it to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as soon as possible. The CEO will then consider the level of seriousness and take steps to address the concern as soon as possible.

Incidents that contravene this policy will be reports to the Board as ABV's governing body.

RELATED ABV DOCUMENTS

Aid and Development Activity Policy

Human Rights Policy

Child Protection Policy

Gender Policy

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Delegations and Authorisations