

Religion and Development Policy

Policy Title	Religion and Development Policy
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Department	International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia
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Introduction

HFHA is a tolerant organisation that respects the dignity of those with whom we work. HFHA does not exploit vulnerability or use the power of development and humanitarian programs to coerce conversion.

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 tolerance for 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 endeavours to adhere to Australia's obligations to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights & 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 purpose and will not be used to promote a particular religious adherence.

Policy Statement

HFHA will encourage, respond and support initiatives that:

- Support religious freedom and whilst undertaking any programs overseas, it does not proselytise.
- Ensure that assistance is not provided on the basis of religion, or the acceptance of any particular religious belief or membership in a particular religious group.
- Do not provide for programming that is designed to convert people from one religious faith to another.
- Do not provide to build a structure which has as its primary purpose the worship or administration of any faith.



We build **strength, stability, and self-reliance** *through shelter.*

- Ensure that it does not engage in any controversies of 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 tolerance.

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 nature of the organisation so that our donors and other constituencies are aware of our Christian identity and motivation. HFHA however strives to maintain the principle of religious tolerance when undertaking any developmental work. It therefore ensures that:

- Program staff and local counterparts understand HFHA's Christian Vision, Mission and Principles, but support the principles of non-discrimination on the basis of religion.
- Project activities are identified and designed on the basis of need only, and implemented in communities where diverse religious beliefs are respected and tolerated.
- Its development assistance activities comply with the Australian Taxation Act, which does not permit the use of tax deductible donations for the purposes of evangelism.
- In all formal agreements and in normal communication with Governments, International, Multilateral, Non-Governmental and Civil society organisations, HFHA openly identifies itself as a Christian organisation concerned for the physical, social and spiritual needs of people, however, none of its program activities are carried out in order to proselytise.
- Through regular monitoring and evaluation, it ensures that the funds are being utilised for the purpose of proposed developmental activities, and not to support any religious work.