

Welfare and Development Policy

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Department	International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia
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Introduction

Habitat for Humanity Australia (HFHA) clearly distinguishes its work from the normal definition of welfare activities. Instead of providing assistance on short-term bases often not requiring active community engagement to address immediate needs of individuals and communities, HFHA seeks to foster self-reliance by engaging communities as active partners in project activities. While HFHA can provide assistance to individuals and families, HFHA's approach is integrated within a broader community development program aimed at improving social and economic conditions, improving disaster planning and response, and strengthening the capacity of communities to respond to their own needs.

Purpose

This policy is to ensure that HFHA's programs contribute to sustainable development practices and do not contribute to dependency issues in the communities we work. The policy acts to ensure development assistance is provided in a socially inclusive way, and has clear objectives and project time frames. The document encourages to make community members drivers of their own development, building their capacity for their future, to live a life without the need for assistance.

Policy Statement

HFHA adopts the strengths-based model to enable communities to respond to their own needs, by ensuring that initiatives are undertaken that:

Promote self-reliance, by strengthening existing skills and building upon capacities that communities require to respond to their own development needs.

Build upon the local resources and capacities that exist within the communities that HFHA works with.

Are socially inclusive and engage families and communities as active partners in every stage of the development process.

Reinforce the approach of ‘hand up’ and not ‘hand out’ to ensure that the dignity and equality of communities with which we work remain intact.

Focus on project activities that are time bound and include exit strategies, as well as strategies for ensuring the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

Policy in Practice

In implementing this policy, HFHA:

- Works to ensure that it provides a “hand up” and not a “hand out”. Assistance through shelter security will typically be provided on a shared-cost basis with home partners entering into a loan as part of their contribution. Exceptions may include projects assisting disaster-affected or extremely vulnerable groups who have no means of making loan repayments. In these instances, home partners are still required to make non-financial contributions to the project (e.g. voluntary labour, building materials). These activities will be incorporated within a broader program of capacity building and skills development activities.
- Facilitates community saving schemes as a means for participants to contribute financially to building their own homes and manage loan repayments (where applicable).
- Implements projects in cooperation with government and local partner organisations to ensure accountability and sustainability.
- Creates self-sustaining revolving funds which can be used to assist other disenfranchised families.
- Provides capacity building trainings for local communities that include leadership and governance training, and livelihood skills development.
- Ensures that program staff and local counterparts understand and support the principles of sustainable community development and seek expertise where required.
- Ensures that project designs go beyond the provision of individual houses and support broader social and economic development.
- Monitors social and economic development outcomes as measures of project impact.



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