

AFP Age and Diversity Inclusion Policy

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1. Introduction

Diversity refers to the variety of visible and invisible differences between people within a community, target group or work place environment. Some of the points of difference that comprise diversity between people include culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical and/or mental abilities, family/marital status, religious beliefs, perspective, nationality, and education.¹ These differences can contribute to different ways of thinking and ways of working within a group.

Three of the focus areas for this Policy within its wider work fostering diversity inclusion are:

1. Age: Age is an important consideration in our work, as elderly people and young people face different risks, social pressures and obstacles, and have differing abilities and strengths.
2. Sexual orientation including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Inter-sexed people (LGBTI): The UN and others have documented widespread physical and psychological violence against LGBTI persons in all regions - including murder, assault, kidnapping, rape, sexual violence, as well as torture and ill-treatment in institutional and other settings. LGBTI youth and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are at particular risk of physical, psychological and sexual violence in family and community settings.² UNHCR has found that LGBTI displaced persons have multiple vulnerabilities³ that compound each other.
3. Race, ethnicity, religion, social grouping and political affiliation: In subscribing to the IFRC-NGO Code of Conduct,⁴ AfP recognises that aid must be given in an impartial manner, regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are determined on the basis of need alone. It is therefore imperative that all groups be included in consultations and delivery of programs to ensure no unintentional bias affects programming.

¹ AfP has separate policies address gendering and people with disabilities. This policy focuses on other diversity criteria.

² UNAIDS www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2015/september/20150929_LGBTI

³ UNHCR 'Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons in Forced Displacement' www.refworld.org/pdfid/4e6073972.pdf

⁴ IFRC-NGO Code of Conduct www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/code-of-conduct/#sthash.pRXO5FRH.dpuf

AfP's approach to gender and disability inclusiveness is elaborated in detail in our Gender Policy and Disability Inclusion Policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with these policies.

2. Rationale

As an organisation that operates within diverse international contexts, AfP⁵ values diversity and promotes inclusion of diverse people in all cycles of programs, advocacy, initiatives and aspects of work places. Our commitment to inclusion of diversity in our agency and in our program and advocacy work is founded on:

- Our belief as a Christian organisation that all persons are created in the image of God and are thus equals with the same basic rights and human dignity.
- Our commitment to uphold humanitarian principles, particularly impartiality; our rights-based commitment to anti-discrimination, and; our protection principles.
- A recognition that in understanding and appreciating individual difference, program effectiveness can be enhanced through the active participation and inclusion of all voices in program design and implementation.
- Our recognition that discrimination prevents people from achieving their full development potential and undermines development.
- Only through recognising and respecting diversity can AfP ensure that its work targets those in greatest need and is accountable and representative.

3. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all AFP staff and volunteers, in addition to all AfP-supported programming overseas and in Australia.

The purpose of this Policy is to acknowledge the skills and perspectives that people may bring to programs and workplace by gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or other difference. It also acknowledges our responsibility to enable the equitable participation and benefit of all people within a community, in recognition of the diverse elements that comprise an overall community and in recognition of our responsibilities to not discriminate.

4. Applicable Humanitarian Standards and Guidance

As a humanitarian agency working in a wide range of protracted conflicts, AfP endeavors at all times to uphold its two main frameworks of accountability and quality, and the standards, guidance and indicators designed to ensure gender equality in humanitarian response, namely *the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief*⁶ and the *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*⁷.

⁵ The humanitarian and development agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia

⁶ *The Code of Conduct* states that "the right to receive humanitarian assistance...is a fundamental humanitarian principles which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries". It also recognises "the crucial role played by women in disaster-prone communities" and aims to ensure "that this role is supported, not diminished, by aid programs."

⁷ CHS standard 4 is 'communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them' and one of the key actions is to "encourage and facilitate communities and people affected by crisis to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received, paying particular attention to the gender, age and diversity of those giving feedback".

www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf

AfP also adheres to the standards described in detail in *the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (2006)* and *The Sphere Project – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (2011)*⁸.

As an ecumenical humanitarian organisation and a member of ACT Alliance, AfP is committed to implementing the ACT Alliance Humanitarian Protection Policy. AfP is also committed to fulfilment of UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security, which urges member states to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels⁹, and UN General Assembly Res. 46/91 (1991) on Principles for Older Persons including appreciating the contribution that older persons make to their communities.¹⁰ The Policy complies with the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation which emphasizes the importance of partnerships for development. In line with AfP’s Human Rights Policy, recognises that “to respect, protect and fulfil international human rights law helps to ensure not only that the dignity of all human beings is respected through access to basic rights but that human beings also experience equality and freedom from discrimination.” As a member of the ACT Alliance and signatory to the ACT Code of Good practice (2011), AfP has undertaken to ‘act in ways that respect, empower and protect dignity, uniqueness and the intrinsic worth and human rights for every women, man, girl and boy’.

5. AfP Policy Objectives

The core objective of this policy is to promote and actively practice inclusion of diversity within our organisation and programs in order to ensure the participation of all parts of communities affected by conflict, disaster, displacement or under-development. This inclusion is crucial in order to ensure AfP effectively targets those in greatest need and also to identify challenges, obstacles and strengths of the target group.

AfP aims to do this by:

- Ensuring exclusion of any individual or group within a target group or community on discriminatory grounds is recognised as discrimination and is proscribed.
- Inclusion and respect for diversity is actively promoted within our agency and our programs.
- Ensuring safe, dignified and meaningful access to AfP and partner programs.
- Integrating Do-no-harm through our programs as it relates to different diversity groups.

6. AfP’s Approach and Focus Areas

6.1. AfP Approach

6.1.1 Within our organisation – internally

Act for Peace holds that in order to encourage recognition and acceptance of diversity in our programs in Australia and overseas, it is important to:

- Create a culture of respect for diversity within our own internal environment.
- Foster a culture that supports and respects the values and needs of individuals regardless of their age, gender or diverse background.

⁸ *The Sphere Handbook* states that “We offer our services as humanitarian agencies on the basis of the principle of humanity and the humanitarian imperative, recognising the rights of all people affected by disaster or conflict – women and men, boys and girls”, (p. 21)

⁹ UNSC Res. 2250 <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>

¹⁰ UN Principles for Older Person, UNGA Res.46/91 (1991)
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OlderPersons.aspx>

- Consider ability not disability and work to create a physical and cultural environment which supports participation.
- Promote and encourage a diverse and inclusive workforce by fostering an environment of mutual learning, respect, dignity openness for other cultures and an appreciation of differences and perspectives.

6.1.2 Within our programs – externally

AfP takes a rights-based approach which recognises all community members as ‘rights-holders’ and ensures that our support includes and targets the most vulnerable and at-risk of discrimination. This requires those who are most vulnerable and at risk to be included in all stages of our programmatic or initiative cycle, in order that they have an opportunity to articulate the needs and challenges they face, and their strengths and abilities which can be used to foster self-protection and community protection. It also requires that programs seek to reinforce the responsibilities of governments to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of vulnerable, persecuted, alienated or otherwise marginalised individuals and groups so as to address root causes and ensure effectiveness and sustainable benefits.

6.2. AfP Focus Areas

AfP will focus on implementing the following principles through this policy:

- Recognise that conflicts, disasters, displacement and under-development affect different people in different ways depending on their culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical and/or mental abilities, family/marital status, religious beliefs, perspective, nationality and education.
- Recognise that diversity can positively contribute to resilience, abilities and resources within a target group.
- Ensure that diverse voices from target groups, partners and stakeholders are consulted with and included as active partners;
 - Strengthen our programming by addressing the diverse needs of different groups,
 - Mitigate risks in programmatic responses that could eventuate through a lack of understanding of the protection and assistance needs of different groups.
- Enable different actors to work together and foster understanding in order to bring together different abilities for community protection.
- Support actions that empower vulnerable or at risks groups to claim their rights.
- Encourage actions to ensure state accountability to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

7. Conclusion

This Policy represents AfP’s current overall organisational understanding of the issue of age and diversity inclusion. In order to operationalize this policy, AfP will develop guidance in the AfP Operational Manual related to putting the policy into practice. The indicators from section 5 will be included in AfP’s Quality and Accountability Matrix in the Agency Development and Effectiveness Work Plan.

Annex 1: Policy Objectives and Indicators

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of individuals and groups within a target group or community on discriminatory groups is recognised as discrimination and is proscribed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfP staff and management are aware of this policy and implement it in their day-to-day work at AfP Partners have anti-discrimination policies that recognise different categories of diversity as outlined in the AfP policy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion and respect for diversity is actively promoted within our agency and our programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfP and partners ensure that different diversity categories are included in needs assessments, project design and M&E of implementation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfP targets those in greatest need and ensures equitable access to program benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All affected target groups have safe, dignified and effective access to AfP and partner programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do-no-harm is integrated through our programs as it relates to different diversity groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfP and partners include different diversity categories in risk assessments and have appropriate risk treatment measures.

Annex 2: Glossary

Bias: inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Diversity: Diversity refers to the variety of visible and invisible differences between people within a community, target group or work place environment.

Discrimination: The exclusion of, treatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political opinion or affiliation or disability.

Ethnicity: the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition

Exclusion: the process of excluding or the state of being excluded

Annex 3: Resource and Reference List

- ACT Alliance Humanitarian Protection Policy (2010) http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ACT-Policy_Protection_-English.pdf
- Age and Disability Capacity (ADCAP) Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action (Pilot Version) <http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/adcap-age-and-disability-capacity-building-programme/>
- Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action <http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/adcap-age-and-disability-capacity-building-programme/>
- UNHCR Gender and Diversity Policy: Working with people and communities for equality and protection (2011) <http://www.unhcr.org/print/4e7757449.html>
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre / Norwegian Refugee Council 'Age and Diversity Approach' paper. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/20150910-durable-solutions-training-package/7.AGD-and-DS/7.-IDMC-DS-Module-AGD-and-DS-Handout.pdf>
- UNAIDS Ending Violence and Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex People (2015) http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/20150929_Joint_LGBTI_Statement_en.PDF
- UN Security Council 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>
- UN General Assembly 46/91 (1991) Principles for Older Persons <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OlderPersons.aspx>