

Global Health Activities Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy provides a framework for global health activities conducted in low- and middle-income countries consistent with the strategic vision and mission of Murdoch Children’s Research Institute (MCRI) and the principles of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) *Code of Conduct*.

Global health is defined as an area of research, education and training that places a priority on improving health and achieving health equity for all. It involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences, and synthesises population-based prevention with individual-level care.¹

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
Complaint	Any expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its services or activities, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Developing countries	A list of developing countries is available from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
Health equity	Is the absence of disparities in health (and the social determinants of health) among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically.
Health systems strengthening	<p>The process of identifying and implementing the changes in policy and practice in a country’s health system, so that the country can respond better to its health and health system challenges.</p> <p>Initiatives or strategies that improve one or more of the building blocks of the health system and that lead to better health through improvements in access, coverage, quality, or efficiency. Health system building blocks include: leadership and governance (stewardship), service delivery, health workforce, health information system, medical products, vaccines and technologies, and health system financing.</p>
Human rights	Human rights recognise the inherent value of each person, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status. They are based on shared principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect. Human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law.

¹ Adapted from Koplan JP, et al. Towards a common definition of global health. *Lancet*. 2009;373:1993–5.

Low- and middle-income countries	Low- and middle-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita of \$12,225 or less in 2016 calculated using the World Bank Atlas method.
Non-development activities	Includes activity undertaken to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.
Promoting a particular religious adherence	Activities undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denominational affiliation to another.
Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE)	RDE is the annual eligible expenditure of an NGO, using contributions from the Australian community. Eligible expenditure is for the NGO's own development assistance, emergency relief or rehabilitation activities overseas and development education in Australia. Eligible contributions include donations of cash, gifts-in-kind and volunteer services.
Supporting a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party	Activities that align with a political party and are undertaken with the intention of persuading people to support a particular political party or doctrine.
Welfare	Activities that do not contribute to sustainable development outcomes, often with a narrow focus on specific assistance to individuals, families and communities. Where activities deliver specific services within a context of increasing local/national capacity and enabling individuals, families and communities to engage more fully and more effectively in the development process they are not considered as welfare activities.

3. Scope and Governance

- 3.1 This policy applies to MCRI staff, contractors and partner organisations involved in global health activities in developing countries, including when their work is conducted in Australia.
- 3.2 MCRI is part of the Melbourne Children's, together with The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, the University of Melbourne, Department of Paediatrics and The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation.
- 3.3 Melbourne Children's Global Health is an initiative of the Melbourne Children's endorsed by Campus Council to provide strategic advice and function as a focal point for engagement in global health research, education and training.

4. Health equity and human rights

- 4.1 MCRI is committed to undertake global health research, education and training in low- and middle-income countries, with a focus on achieving health equity and human rights. The right to health and other human rights are described in international human rights instruments, including the:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In line with these frameworks, MCRI is committed to the inclusion and representation of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion.

5. Effectiveness and sustainability

5.1 MCRI is committed to ensure that our global health activities are effective and sustainable. In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) the concept of effectiveness encompasses the following:

- Ownership
- Inclusive partnerships
- Capacity building
- Delivering results

MCRI is committed to sustainable outcomes and will not promote or support non-development activities, including welfare activities, a particular religious adherence; or a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.

5.2 Ownership

5.2.1 MCRI aims to enable low- and middle-income country partners and communities to share in ownership of global health activities, including by:

- Ensuring that our activities contribute to health systems strengthening.
- Considering national and community priorities in the planning, design and implementation of all activities.
- Working with and building the capacity of local partners in low- and middle-income countries.

5.3 Inclusive partnerships

5.3.1 Collaborations with governments, universities and research institutes, hospitals, and a range of other international partners are central to MCRI's global health activities.

5.3.2 To ensure effective partnerships, MCRI undertakes a partnership capacity assessment to inform memoranda of understanding or contractual agreements with partners and ensure that our partners are aware of a number of MCRI policies and procedures, including:

- Child Safety Policy and Procedure
- Fraud & Corruption Control Policy & Procedure (including Anti-Terrorism clauses)
- Non-development Activity (5.3.5, below)
- Breaches of the ACFID Code of Conduct and complaints procedure (7.3, below)
- Global Health - Gender Policy
- Global Health - Disability and Early Child Development Policy

5.3.3 MOUs and agreements must comply with relevant guidelines and standards, including:

- WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

5.3.4 MOUs and contractual agreements and partnership capacity will be reviewed yearly.

5.3.5 *Partnerships and non-development activities*

Where a partner organisation or service provider undertakes non-development activities (defined at 5.1), there is a requirement for a clear separation between non-development activities and activities undertaken in partnership with MCRI. Contractual arrangements with collaborators and service providers may address requirements for separation.

5.4 Capacity building

5.4.1 MCRI is committed to building the capacity of our partners in low- and middle-income countries. Research capacity building includes any efforts to increase the ability of individuals and institutions to undertake high-quality research and to engage with the wider community of stakeholders.

5.5 Delivering results

- 5.5.1 MCRI is committed to improving our global health activities by sharing results, good practices and lessons learned.
- 5.5.2 To facilitate monitoring and evaluation of global health activities against our effectiveness framework, copies of protocols, agreements and memoranda of understanding, mid-term and full-term evaluations for all global health activities should be supplied to the Programs Manager, Global Health and reported to the Global Health Leadership Team.

6. Alignment with national and international guidelines, standards and legislation

6.1 MCRI's global health activities must be compliant with relevant legislation and aligned with our commitment to national and international guidelines and standards, including:

- Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission External Conduct Standards
- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct
- Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) policies including, Child Protection Minimum Standards (2018) and Minimum Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Minimum Standards (2019)
- Core Humanitarian Standard
- Modern Slavery Act 2018
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Human Research, Chapter 4.8 People in other countries

MCRI ensures that our activities are compliant with relevant legislation, standards and guidelines through our policies and procedures.

6.2. Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) External Conduct Standards

6.2.1 The [External Conduct Standards](#) are a set of standards that govern how MCRI (as a registered charity) must manage its activities and resources outside Australia. The standards include:

- Standard 1: Activities and control of resources (including funds)
- Standard 2: Annual review of overseas activities and record-keeping
- Standard 3: Anti-fraud and anti-corruption
- Standard 4: Protection of vulnerable individuals

6.3 Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct

6.3.1 MCRI is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) *Code of Conduct*. Global health activities undertaken by MCRI are required to comply with the principles and obligations detailed in the Code. All staff involved in global health activities are required to comply with the Code and associated MCRI policy and procedures.

6.3.2 Staff involved in global health activities should complete the ACFID Code E-learning module, which offers an introduction to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The module is available: <https://acfid.asn.au/content/code-e-learning>

6.3.3 Complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct should follow the general procedure set out in MCRI's Complaints Handling Policy.

Should the outcome of the procedure not be satisfactory to the complainant and the complaint is regarding a breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct, the matter should be escalated to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

Complaints regarding breaches of the ACFID Code of Conduct can also be lodged directly with the Australian Council for International Development:

ACFID
Private Bag 3 Deakin ACT 2600
Telephone: +61 2 6285 1816
Email: main@acfid.asn.au

6.3.4 MCRI will promote our commitment to the ACFID Code of Conduct and our Code complaints handling process on our website and, where appropriate, in staff orientation and training and in promotional material and documentation provided to partners and stakeholders.

6.4. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

6.4.1 MCRI aims to align our policies and procedures to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) requirements outlined in the following policy and strategy:

- [Child Protection Policy](#)
- [Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program](#)
- [Environmental and social safeguards](#)
- [Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy](#)
- [Humanitarian policies](#)
- [Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment](#)

6.4.2 Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE)

All grants received from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and donations and grants from the Australian community (individuals, philanthropies and companies) that are expended on global health activities (known as Recognised Development Expenditure) must be managed in accordance with DFAT policies and the procedures governing project design, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation outlined on the MCRI Intranet.

6.5 Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

6.5.1 MCRI's programs in humanitarian and emergency settings are guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality defined in the [Core Humanitarian Standard](#) and the Nine Commitments for quality and effectiveness. MCRI is working towards application of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

Our work in humanitarian and emergency settings should be undertaken with local communities and local collaborators and international collaborators that support or are verified against the Core Humanitarian Standard to ensure that humanitarian response is co-ordinated and complementary.

6.6 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Human Research, Chapter 4.8 People in other countries

6.6.1 Research conducted overseas by researchers from Australian institutions must comply with the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Human Research. When a researcher from an Australian institution proposes to conduct research in another country, additional ethical issues may arise. The guidance in the National Statement Chapter 4.8 should inform any resolution of these issues.

6.6.2 The Royal Children's Hospital Research Governance and Ethics (REG) require all applications for ethical review of research conducted in another country to explicitly address the requirements of the National Statement [in a covering letter](#) submitted with their application.

7. Related policy

Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) *Code of Conduct*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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