



## DEVELOPMENT, PROSELYTISATION, PARTISAN POLITICS AND WELFARE POLICY

Approved by Board: 30 April 2019

Next review date: May 2020

Managed on behalf of the CEO and Board by:  
Program Manager

\*Revisions to this version are identified on the last page

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### 1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy provides a framework to ensure Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) operates under a development philosophy that is consistent with the objectives of the Australian Aid Program and the ACFID Code of Conduct.

In particular, Interplast understands and ensures that all development designated funds may only be utilised for activities that contribute towards development outcomes and will not be used for the purposes of promoting or supporting:

- welfare activities;
- religious teaching and proselytisation; nor
- partisan politics.

### 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the following people:

- Interplast staff members and consultants;
- Interplast volunteers<sup>1</sup>;
- Interplast Board of Directors;
- Local implementing partners<sup>2</sup>; and
- Observers/visitors accompanying an Interplast activity.

### 3. Definitions

Interplast defines evangelism, partisan politics and welfare as follows:

**Evangelism:** activities undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denominational affiliation to another.

**Partisan Politics:** activities that align with a political party and are undertaken with the intention of persuading people to support a particular political party or doctrine.

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers include medical volunteers (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied therapists) undertaking an activity overseas or participating in professional development in their own country or overseas and non-medical volunteers, such as those in administrative, promotional or fundraising roles.

<sup>2</sup> Partner agencies overseas with whom Interplast collaboratively delivers program activities (i.e hospitals, universities).

**Proselytisation:** the attempt of any religion or religious individuals to convert people to their beliefs, or any attempt to convert people to a different point of view, religious or not.

**Welfare:** activities that are undertaken but do not contribute to sustainable development outcomes. Welfare activities often have a narrow focus on specific assistance to individuals, families and communities leading to an increasing dependence on the assistance given. 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.

#### **4. Legislative Framework and Standards**

As a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, Interplast is committed to having its funds or any other resources designated for the purpose of aid and development, and not to be used to promote a particular religious adherence, to support a particular political party or promote an individual or organisation affiliated to a particular party, nor to undertake welfare activities. (*Quality Principle 7, Commitment 7.3.2*)

As a DFAT-accredited NGO, Interplast must ensure that it can differentiate between development and non-development activities, and that where implementing partners undertake non-development activities, that they understand the difference and separate management and funding of development and non-development activities. (Accreditation Criteria B1.3)

#### **5. Policy Statement**

In line with Interplast's mission and development philosophy:

- **Interplast's values reinforce its commitment to work in a manner that is "independent of any political or religious affiliations":** Interplast does not engage in evangelical activities and adopts a non-partisan political approach at all times in all aspects of its work.
- **Interplast is committed to the development of sustainable health systems:** While stand-alone, welfare or limited focus service delivery programs are not Interplast's preferred mode of operation, it does recognise that some partner organisations require service delivery as an entry point to the longer-term process of capacity building. Support for direct service delivery assistance activities are strategically phased out as in-country partners progressively strengthen their capacity along the relief-recovery-development continuum.
- **Interplast works to build capacity, confidence and optimise sustainability in all our activities:** The degree of capacity building and long-term sustainability will vary from activity to activity depending upon the specific strengths, capacities and resources available within that health system and/or community.
- **Adheres to its values:** Interplast does not discriminate on the basis of people's religious or political beliefs and works with people and provides services for all faiths, political world views and backgrounds.

- **Interplast uses funds only for the purposes for which they are intended:** Given the humanitarian imperative, there are occasions where Interplast may respond from a service orientated approach in certain situations, but it does so only with funds specifically designated for that purpose.

## **6. Policy in Practice**

Interplast will embed this policy into its organisational culture and practice as follows:

- a) Interplast ensures its proposed activities do not include evangelical, partisan politics or welfare activities through its project pre-appraisal process;
- b) Interplast checks that all prospective partners do not have an evangelical, partisan politics or welfare orientation when participating in Interplast-supported program activities, through its partnership appraisal processes, conducted with all prospective partners

If the partner does engage in evangelism, partisan politics or welfare activities in other areas of its work, Interplast ensures there is a clear, documented separation of development and non-development activities (in line with the standards outlined in the ACFID Code of Conduct).

- c) Interplast ensures a non-evangelical, partisan politics and welfare clause is written into all Memorandums of Understandings (MoU) and formal agreements with relevant partners;
- d) Interplast monitors compliance with the principles outlined above through its monitoring and evaluation processes, including program reporting and monitoring visits;
- e) Interplast ensures its fundraising and communications activities accurately portray its country program activities in a way that complies with the principles outlined above;
- f) Interplast does not discriminate against prospective and existing staff members, contractors, consultants and Directors on the basis of religious or political beliefs and affiliations;
- g) Interplast does not discriminate against prospective and existing Interplast volunteers, partner organisations, observers/visitors accompanying an Interplast activity and patients seen and/or treated on Interplast activities; and
- h) Interplast ensures that where a staff member, volunteer or Director's affiliation with a political party or organisation may affect their work and/or create a potential conflict of interest, they understand it is their responsibility to raise this matter promptly with Interplast management or with the Board for discussion and decision. This commitment is included in Interplast's staff, Board and Committee codes of conduct and program activity participant protocol & observer guidelines.

## **7. Monitoring and Review of Policy**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed in line with the process outlined in the Policy Framework. The Program Manager is accountable to the CEO and Board for managing and maintaining this policy.

Where compliance issues are identified, the designated Program Manager will work with staff and other stakeholders to address these issues promptly.

Any updates and revisions to this policy must be endorsed by the Program Manager and CEO before being submitted to the Interplast Board for its approval. Policy changes will be reflected, as necessary, in updated operational manuals.