

# Operational Guidelines

## 1. Guidelines for practical compassion and aid

The following guidelines are intended to help identify issues of communication and understanding between Australian and African churches where cultural misunderstandings may arise and to also encourage ourselves to be accountable to one another.

The Baptist World Aid Australia document, 'Church to Church Partnerships - A Guide for Australian Churches That Want to Develop a Direct Missional Relationship with an Overseas Church', identifies and defines the three main forms of response of churches to the needs of communities in the third world ie, Relief, Welfare and Community Development:

### Relief

*Relief is the short-term provision of goods and services to meet immediate need during times of emergency (eg earthquake, flood, famine, war).*

### Welfare

*Welfare is the ongoing provision of goods and services to meet the immediate need of others. For example, a church may choose to provide the medicines for a community based medical centre or to build a school and pay the teacher salaries.*

### Development

*Development is building the capacity of communities to generate their own income and provide their own goods and resources. For example, your church might pay for an indigenous agriculturalist to teach farmers how to use fertilisers and improved cropping methods to gain a higher yield from their land. This builds the skills of the farmers, enables them to increase their income and so meet the educational, nutritional and medical needs of their own household, and requires only short to medium term input from your church (ie once the farmers have acquired the new skills they no longer need the agriculturalist).*

Church to Church Partnerships. Baptist World Aid Australia 2006

While most of the responses of AFOA churches will tend to fall into the 'welfare' basket it is important to keep in mind a longer term view of encouraging programs that help communities to become self sustaining. Because of the overwhelming need, the request for help may focus on fulfilling the immediate need, while a longer term solution may be possible. For example, a request for clothing for orphans may best be met by providing a number of sewing machines and training for some women in the community who can use their skills to make and sell goods to generate income.

With this in mind, the ABWAID document goes on to highlight the key principles that should be considered in the delivery of welfare/development projects:

### Capacity building

*Capacity building means that members of the local community are acquiring the skills and abilities required to take responsibility for their own development.*

*Churches planning to send teams to work in projects must pay particular attention to this principle. In the worst case scenario, church teams can be capacity depleting. For example, if my church sends a team of construction workers to build community facilities, not only may local craftsmen be deprived of work, but if the pattern continues over a long period of time fewer and fewer locals will develop construction skills, leading to a loss of local building capacity. Any team that goes*

*to a developing community must be able to identify how their presence will build the capacity of that community.*

### **Community directed**

*Local communities must take responsibility for the ways in which their communities are developed. When people take responsibility for identifying the challenges facing their community and the ways they will meet these challenges, the challenges are owned, motivation to meet the challenges is high, and the activities undertaken are appropriate to the culture and sensitivities of the community. The community learns together, grows in its capacity and is more likely to reach the desired outcome.*

*The role of those outside the community is not to direct development, but to facilitate it as requested and required. When outsiders attempt to direct development, members of the local community are disempowered and serious mistakes are frequently made.*

### **Culturally Sensitive**

*Any engagement with people in another culture must be sensitive to the practises and values of that culture. For example, I once found myself in a difficult situation after suggesting to a church leader from the developing world that I would discuss with some colleagues the possibility of providing some support for his ministry. I went to great lengths to explain that I was not making any promises and could guarantee nothing until I had discussed the issue with others. Yet the leader went back to his community convinced that support would be forthcoming. I later discovered that in his culture, when you offer something, even tentatively, it is taken as promised.*

*Misunderstandings and inappropriate actions are very common when communicating across cultures.*

### **Conditionality**

*...we suggest that a key principle of community development must be a "no strings attached" policy. By this we mean that while we seek to make the good news about Jesus known through both our words and our actions, the good we do in Christ's name should never be conditional upon a person's response to Christ.*

### **Sustainability**

*Community development projects need to be sustainable in both the short, medium and long term. This is a particularly important issue for churches seeking to sponsor an overseas based community development project. On the "sending" church side the question to be asked is: can the church's enthusiasm and giving be sustained for the time required to see the project to completion?*

*On the "receiving" church/community side, it is important to establish that the personnel, infrastructure and skills base can be maintained and developed for the life of the project.*

### **Accountability**

*Community development projects in poorer communities can often see very substantial sums of money and resources flowing into that community. While the total amount may not be large relative to the wealth of an Australian church community, they can be large relative to the wealth of a poor community. As with all situations where there are substantial resources involved it is important that*

these be used in the fashion intended.

*Australian churches should keep in mind that notions of equity and responsibility may be different in a traditional community than they are in the Australian community. For example, many traditional communities operate on the basis of patronage - that is, a wealthy and powerful person controls the wealth and power (and often a disproportionate amount of it) and distributes it, not to the entire community, but to those connected to himself/herself (eg by family ties, group memberships). In such communities the attitude to the use of wealth and power may be very different to what Australians might expect.*

### Key Questions

*Based upon the principles we have spelled out, any church seeking to initiate a community development project in the developing world should be able to answer the following questions:*

1. Who are the key decision makers in this community? Have they been involved in the decision making process?
2. Who are the key stakeholders in this decision (ie who are the people who will be impacted by this decision)? Have they been involved in and driven the decision making process?
3. Have the key decision makers and the key stakeholders identified this project as a priority for their community?
4. Is this a relief, welfare or development program?
5. How is this project building capacity within the community?
6. If we send teams to the project what will they do?
  - a. Will their work take work away from already skilled people in the community?
  - b. Will their work take work away from potentially skilled people in the community (ie by performing necessary tasks the need to train locals is negated)?
  - c. Will the time that needs to be given to the team by expat workers or community members unfairly take away from the work of those who assist the team?
  - d. Will their work build the capacity of the community? How?
7. Is this project sustainable?
  - a. How much are we contributing and for how long? Is this sustainable for us? Is this sufficient to sustain the project?
  - b. What skills and resources are needed within the community to ensure this project is sustainable? Does our partner group possess these? Is there a clear plan for ensuring these skills and resources are available?
  - c. Does the project have a clear end-point built into it? What happens then?
8. Who is accountable for how funds and resources are used and how is accountability ensured?

## 1.2 Trips of African Pastors to Australia

Arranging trips by pastors of African churches to visit and preach at Australian churches include the management of visa applications funding airfares orientation and debriefing for African pastors in Australia church bookings for preaching, attendance at other church group meetings, and billeting accommodation and transport requirements gifts and donations.

Visa applications are processed in Africa in the last month before travel, therefore it is only two or three weeks before they come that people granted visas is confirmed. The process is complex, as African requirements are subject to change, is impacted by the level of concern that Australia governments have about risk in relation to people overstaying their visa in addition to the usual care taken in relation to granting of visas.

In this context, best endeavours are made to plan who and how many pastors are visiting Australia and arrangements are made with churches on probable plans and preaching dates for those who will visit. Some churches have better capacity for changes to the arrangements than others, and it is sometimes more difficult for churches who have well advanced preaching programs in place. Less churches are booked than the number of planned visiting pastors to ensure that all preaching booking commitments can be met.

Churches are required to arrange accommodation, meals and transport for pastors during the days they spend together. Some churches make a contribution to the arrival, orientation and departure costs. The focus of the pastors in visiting the church is support for various projects. There is no pressure from Australian Friends of Africa to give a "love offering" and there is a strong desire that relationships develop and grow between church communities to encourage each other in discipleship, evangelism, worship as well as the support of community projects.

Support from churches for various projects takes a number of forms. A "love gift offering" may be part of the church service at which the pastor preaches. Some Australians give personal gifts and money to individuals. Some church communities give regular donations to the work of the partner African church community. Some donations or regular commitments are made for particular projects. AFOA funding structure specifically supports the management of these funds. It is intended that, for accountability purposes, all funds other than personal gifts are banked through the AFOA account. This secures transparency of the management of funds and their clear transfer to specified projects.

It has been common for African pastors to raise loans to cover part of the airfares to Australia and to rely on gifts from Australian churches to repay these loans. Australian churches do not guarantee that they will receive love gifts and offerings from the churches they visit so the practice is a high risk for the pastor and may result in unexpected financial burden for the person and the group. Australian Friends of Africa recommend that the pastors raise their full airfare before they travel to Australia.

Arrival in Australia on a Thursday provides adequate time for rest, orientation and travel to participating churches in time for preaching commitments. Accommodation at a conference facility (eg Camp Kedron) at the beginning and the end of visits to churches has proved a successful way for Directors of AFOA to conduct orientation and debriefing sessions for the group. Orientation ideally starts from lunch time on Friday for the afternoon and evening. Travel to church destinations can be comfortably arranged on Saturday. Return to the conference facility on Monday provides time on Monday afternoon and evening for the group to reconvene and debrief/review their visits. Departure is planned for the Tuesday. Management of luggage, particularly additional gifts from churches may require specific management at departure. Transport to and from the airport through access to a bus is a convenient and secure way to support the group's travel needs

## 1.3 Trips by Australians to African church communities

The over-riding purpose of these trips is for Australian Christians to go with a servant heart, a desire to esteem, encourage and affirm African Christians, and a willingness to learn. There is a dynamic spirituality in the African Church that provides a rich learning opportunity for other Christians.

The team leader develops a program of work that may include working alongside church members in the life and ministry of the local church, leadership training, seminars, building programs, and care programs for

orphans and widows. The team leader sets the itinerary and liaises with interested persons about joining the team.

Members of the team are responsible for all of their own costs including accommodation, transfers, departure taxes, most meals, Visas, travel insurance game park and excursion costs and fees. The trips include a few days of formal debriefing en route back to Australia.

People who join the team will provide the following information to the team leader:

- full name as it appears on the person's passport
- address
- email
- phone numbers
- date and place of birth
- full names of family that the person will be travelling with
- passport numbers, place and date of issue, validity and Country of issue
- health matters the team organiser should know about
- details of earlier trips to Africa
- occupation
- team preferences
- church affiliation
- if visiting a sponsored child is desired

## Section 2: Structure

### 2.1 Financial Structure

Australian Friends of Africa operates an interest bearing account with Baptist Investment Fund (BIF). AFOA recommends to all our partner churches that they take advantage of the account keeping and convenience of this BIF account.

The Finance Officer of this account is Lynn Layland who will keep records of all transactions, details of the projects for whom the funds are intended and the transfer of money to the intended recipients. Lynn's contact details are:

Lynn Layland  
c/- Narrabeen Baptist Church  
13 Grenfell Avenue  
Narrabeen NSW 2101  
Mobile: 0407 998 473  
Email: llayland@covenant.nsw.edu.au

All cheques for projects should be written to Australian Friends of Africa.

AFOA's accountant, Harvey Gartrell of Guardrail will prepare financial statements at the end of each financial year.

### 2.2 Overview of African church community

Through being close to the community, local African church communities are sensitive to new issues and changing community needs and are well placed to develop innovative forms of service delivery. In many instances they may act as an advocate for their clients and frequently provide services to those groups which feel alienated from and have difficulty accessing basic services and life supports. The skills and professional base of African churches are a valuable part of the local community system, bringing their expertise in community development, social research and community consultation.

### 2.3 Grant Funding Program

AFOA Grant Funding Program offers financial assistance to eligible organisations for the provision of

specified services and projects in local African communities. Funding assistance is generally available to meet the core costs of the specified service or project. This includes necessary recurrent costs (direct and indirect) and may include capital funding. These Guidelines apply to the administration and management of the AFOA Grant Program and aim to ensure consistent funding practice whilst encouraging effective service provision which is responsive to local and regional community and consumer needs.

These Guidelines do not cover circumstances where formal tendering process for funds would be undertaken. The guidelines includes organisations which provide services to a local or regional base.

## 2.4 Program aims

The aims of the AFOA Grant Program are to:

- support projects developed by local communities which maximize access and support community participation;
- build self reliance and responsibility at a personal and community level by the development of networks and initiatives;

The roles and responsibilities for administration are as follows:

## 3.1 The Board of AFOA

The Board of Directors approve all grants to African church communities under the AFOA Grant Program. Where any variations to grants are recommended by the Directors or African church communities within the funding period, these must also be approved by the Board.

However, the following delegations relating to the AFOA Grant Program are:

3.2 Where a grant surplus is realised and identified for the project/service, which is: o \$500 or less for grants up to \$20,000, or

- up to 2% of the grant up to a maximum surplus of \$10,000 then, the surplus may be retained by the African church community without approval by the Board, but must be used for the currently approved project/service and identified in the subsequent accounting period as surplus grant funds brought forward.

3.3 Where the identified grant surplus for the project/service exceeds the maximum amount outlined in 3.1.1 then approval for the use of the surplus must be sought by the African church community from the Board of AFOA prior to utilization of the funds. Such an application is to include an explanation of how the surplus came about.

The Board is responsible for the overall policy of the AFOA Grant Program.

The Board will ensure that contract elements include the efficient and effective management of the administration of the Grant.

The Board will consult with the African church community representatives on the roles and responsibilities to be contained in the Performance Agreement in regard to the AFOA Grant Program.

Any review of the effectiveness and appropriateness of these contract elements shall be conducted in consultation with the African church communities.

The Board will be responsible for the funding, the negotiation of Funding and Performance Agreements and the monitoring of all projects/services of African church communities.

The Board will maintain comprehensive data of information on all funded agencies and funding.

The Board will have responsibility for addressing all expressions of interest, applications for new and recurrent funding, negotiation of Funding and Performance Agreements, administering funding and monitoring the organizational performance of African church communities services and projects falling within the AFOA program

Any disputes arising from this process, excluding breaches of the Funding and Performance Agreement and issues regarding funding recommendations, (see Operational Guidelines Section 4.2.5) will be managed

consistent with the Disputes Resolution Process as outlined in Part 5 of the Agreement. Consultative mechanisms will be established to assist in establishing priorities and in liaising with the African church communities.

Board approval must be sought for the reallocation of any surplus grant funds realised under the Program to other African church communities, except as indicated in Section 3.1.

The Board will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of potential conflicts of interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, to ensure the integrity and impartiality are not compromised, consistent with our Christian code of conduct.

#### **4 Local African Church Communities**

African church communities which receive funding through AFOA will negotiate and specify the service description, the objectives and the evaluation criteria on behalf of their community in the Funding and Performance Agreement.

African church communities which receive grant funding will be accountable to the AFOA Board and the community for the use of that funding to provide services at an acceptable standard. African church communities shall provide adequate notice to the Board of any significant changes within the funding which they provide for projects/services which may impact on the delivery of those services.

African church communities may at times have serious adverse incidents occur within a service and it may be appropriate to advise the Board as they could be of public interest and concern. The type of incidents that may be reported would include suicides, serious assaults, serious public health risks and criminal activity. African church communities wishing to report incidents should liaise with the Board as to the appropriate contact for reporting such incidents.

#### **5 General Administration and management**

AFOA is committed to high quality administration and management of the AFOA Grant Program. The tasks include the following and are expanded on in the following sections:

- Planning and priority setting for services and funding
- Applications and assessment of new and ongoing projects
- Negotiation of Funding and Performance Agreements
- Monitoring and Evaluation of funded organizations

Procedures need to be in place to ensure the integrity of the AFOA Grant Program and that the principles of probity, fairness, accountability and transparency of process and decision making are observed at all levels. One means of achieving this is for adequate documentation and records being maintained at all stages of the administration and management of the Grant Program.

##### **5.1 Planning**

- Priorities
- Projects and services
- Outreach and social justice

##### **5.2 Application and selection process**

Applications to fund new initiatives under the AFOA Grant Program will be called for if and when funds are available. On calling for applications a functional specification will be provided. This specification will include desired outcomes and specific targets or requests made by the funder or donor. When new AFOA Grant Program funding is available and where it is considered that more than one African church community has the potential to deliver services effectively, the Board will.....

##### **5.3 Variations to approved grant levels**

The AFOA Grant Program budget can be affected by fluctuations in donations and fund raising by churches in Australia. The AFOA Grant projects and services may also request variations to the funding agreement to

support specific needs of their service or project. All variations to grants require the approval of the Board. A letter of variation will be provided by AFOA to the African church community.

#### **5.4 Funding and Performance Agreements**

African church communities receiving funds through AFOA will be required to enter into a formal Funding and Performance Agreement consistent with the approved grant to ensure that both parties are clear of their roles and responsibilities. The Agreement will clearly define accountability of the African church community for the achievement of certain outcomes and will specify terms and conditions to foster effective service delivery, reduce poverty and encourage community development as a Christian witness to the community.

The period of the Funding and Performance Agreement will be for a maximum of 3 years which will allow African church communities scope to consolidate activities, to innovate and make refinements to services.

A multi year Agreement is subject to annual compliance review of funding and performance by AFOA

Conditions of Grant are in Appendix 1.

A pro forma of the Funding and Performance Agreement is in Appendix 2.

A standard annual reporting format is in Appendix 4.

#### **5.5 Payment of grants**

Grants will be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to approved financial institutions. Grants will be paid as negotiated with the African church community to most effectively respond to needs of that community.

#### **5.6 Monitoring and evaluation**

**Monitoring and evaluation involves the collection of project information that will allow the African church community and AFOA Board to assess whether services being provided are consistent with those documented in the Funding and Performance Agreement.**

This assessment will be carried out in relation to the following five areas and must be adequately documented.

1. The achievement of the overall aims and objectives of the program.
2. Compliance with specific terms and conditions of the Agreement.
3. Meeting targets for specific commitments made in the Agreement.
4. Conforming to any prescribed service standards.
5. Financial management.

#### **5.7 Information requirements**

Reporting requirements are stipulated in the Conditions of Grant and a standard annual reporting format is in Appendix 4. The Board and African church community will negotiate any reporting requirements which are in addition to these requirements at the time of initial funding, following annual review or as necessary.

The Board and the African church community will undertake to maximise the effectiveness of reporting requirements and minimise unnecessary requirements so that African church communities can devote maximum resources to service delivery.

#### **5.8 Financial reports**

Recurrent projects will be required to submit a full set of financial statements (preferably audited), at least annually.

One off projects will also be required to submit an acquittance in an approved format.

Financial reporting is to comply with Australian 'Accounting Standards' issued by the 'Accounting Bodies' as defined in AUS104.

Auditing of a financial report is to comply with Australian 'Auditing Standards and Auditing Guidance Statements' as defined in AUS102.

Where financial reporting requirements are not met, grant payments will be suspended and consistent defaulting will result in defunding.

Accounting and Financial Records information is shown in Appendix 3.

### **5.9 Accreditation**

A requirement of funding is that local African communities work towards meeting standards endorsed by local, regional or national government.