Separation of Development and Non-Development activity

POLICY NAME	SEPARATION OF DEVELOPMENT AND NON-DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY POLICY
REFERENCE NUMBER	7-SI-PO-1
POLICY OWNER	CEO
POLICY APPROVER	SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL BOARD
RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE	PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE
RELATED POLICIES	TRANSPARENCY POLICY PREVENTION OF FINANCIAL WRONGDOING POLICY COMPLAINTS POLICY
RELATED DOCUMENTS	N/A
ACFID CODE REFERENCE	7.3.2
APPROVAL DATE	2 JULY 2022
REVIEW DATE	2 JULY 2025

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide and outline Symbiosis International intent to make clear separation between development and humanitarian activity and non-development activities. For the purposes of this policy *Non-Development activity* is the same as that given in the General Definitions held within the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) code, which is, activity undertaken to promote a particular religious adherence or to support a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all personnel and activities undertaken by Symbiosis International, including its Board Members, Employees, Volunteers, Contractors, Donors and Partner organisations.

For clarity, the definition of *Promoting a particular religious adherence* and *Supporting a particular party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party* is the same as that given in the General Definitions held within the ACFID code (Revision 2020).

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1   Symbiosis International is a development organisation, helping to transform the lives of some of the poorest people in Bangladesh, such that they are freed from exploitation and dependency.

3.2   Symbiosis International's primary stakeholders are those who are illiterate, semi literate and, functionally landless, mainly women in rural areas. Importantly, participation in Symbiosis International aid and development projects is not exclusive to people of a particular faith, religion or political affiliation.

3.3   We seek to treat all people who come into contact with our organisation with respect and dignity regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, or socio-economic status.

3.4   The vision, mission, and values of Symbiosis International are aligned with principles of faith, especially relational commitment, justice, integrity and belief in human accountability.

3.5   These principles underwrite Symbiosis International's non-discriminatory and relationship centred approach in all its development and humanitarian activities.

RELIGIOUS ADHERENCE

3.6 Symbiosis International recognises its development activities are operated within a multi-faith context and that faith of various religions and belief systems matter to the people we work with.

3.8 Symbiosis International recognises that all ideas, policies and actions are guided by interpretative principles (world view) whether these are classified as religious or non-religious. Symbiosis International holds that these interpretive principles cannot and should not be imposed on others. However, Symbiosis International holds that people should have the freedom to change their views, that is, their interpretative principles.

3.7 Symbiosis International recognises that faith and religious affiliation (and non-faith) is a dimension through which people and communities formulate their world view and understand their circumstances.

3.9 Symbiosis International believes that good development practice is not just concerned with addressing physical needs but should engage and draw upon primary stakeholders' ideas of faith and values as an essential step in the process of conscientization and for creating sustainable change.

3.10 Symbiosis International will not operate non-development activities, however it recognises the role of faith and religious affiliation in the programming of other aid and development actors.

3.11 Symbiosis International projects are sometimes coordinated in partnership with organisations who undertake non-development activities. This is due to the strength of relationships which are formed between partner organisations and communities by engaging with primary stakeholders about their faith.

3.12 Symbiosis International will not give funds it has raised for development work to partners to undertake non-development work.

3.13 It is the expectation of Symbiosis International that any planned non-development activities by partner organisations at development projects funded by Symbiosis International are disclosed both to Symbiosis International and to primary stakeholders before commencement.

3.14 Symbiosis International does not raise funds for non-development activities but may pass on to local partners funds raised by other organisations for such purposes. Funds allocated for aid and development will always be used as intended and reported accordingly to ensure transparency with the public and supporters of the organisation.

3.14 Symbiosis International or its partners do not place any conditions or obligations on primary stakeholders in terms of non-development activities that would affect their access to services being offered by the organisation.

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

3.15 Symbiosis International is not affiliated, aligned with and will not seek to endorse political parties, candidates or organisations.

3.16   Symbiosis International aims to respect all levels of government within countries where it operates and will seek to cooperate fully with the directives of government agencies.

3.17   Symbiosis International seeks to fund projects which complement government efforts to alleviate poverty and will not seek to compete with or replace government programs and services.

3.18   Symbiosis International will strive to empower primary stakeholders through its functional education courses to become aware of their human rights, including their right to participate in civic and democratic processes.

3.19   Symbiosis International is supportive of primary stakeholders who seek to undertake advocacy roles or election into government positions; however, will not favour or provide funding for candidate campaigns, lobbying or endeavours of any elected officials.

4   RESPONSIBILITIES

COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND REVIEW

4.1   To ensure compliance with this policy, Symbiosis International will:

4.1.1   Undertake orientation training for all new board members, staff, and volunteers to ensure the organisation's position is understood.

4.1.2   Extend the expectations in this policy of separation of aid and development activities and non-aid and development activities to partners through a Memorandum of Understanding.

4.1.3   Appraise project proposals to determine whether they include non-aid and development components and adhere to the expectations in this policy.

4.1.4   Guarantee that if funds were raised for non-development activity they will be tracked, managed, reported, and accounted for separately to those raised for development and humanitarian components.

4.1.5   In the event of any funding being sought for non-development activities, funds will not be solicited from the public but requested from donors or philanthropic parties with a direct interest in the activities being proposed.

4.1.6   Review activities on an annual basis to ensure our policies accurately the work of the organisation.

REPORTING

4.2   To demonstrate its commitment to integrity and transparency, Symbiosis International commits to maintaining a clear separation between aid and development and non-aid and development activities at all times using the following guidelines:

    4.2.1   Accurate representation of Symbiosis International activities and partnerships to donors and organisations we work with in reporting the separation of development and non-development activities, particularly in:

- Programming
- Expenditure reporting
- Fundraising
- Communications
- Donors and Partners

    4.2.2   All solicitations for funding from donors must be transparent. If a project integrates non-development programming donors must be informed and given the opportunity to give to aid and development activities only.

    4.2.3   Ensure that funds raised for aid and development purposes are not used to exploit people and communities who are vulnerable and do not place conditions or obligations on recipients in terms of non-development, religious or political outcomes that would affect their access to services being offered.

4.3   If anyone wishes to report a breach of this policy it can be directed via the mechanisms outlined in Symbiosis International complaints policy, or externally to the organisation via ACFID.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

4.4   Any reported breach of this policy must be recorded as per protocols outlined in the Symbiosis International Complaints Policy.

5   DEFINITIONS

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Aid and Development actors: A term used to describe any organisations, network, public or private enterprises and institutions which operate within the aid and development sector.

Conscientization: As defined by Paulo Freire, the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action.

Primary Stakeholders: The term used in the ACFID Code of Conduct (Revision 2020) to refer to those whom we seek to support, work with and directly benefit

through development and humanitarian initiatives. The women and men, boys and girls who are participants in, and are directly affected by, development and humanitarian initiatives. At Symbiosis International, the term 'beneficiaries' is also commonly used when referring to the people we seek to support and work with.

Multi-faith context: A community or society in which multiple religions or people of different religious faiths live together. They may or may not adopt aspects or practices of each or some of the different religions into their own practices of belief.