

UnitingWorld Policy

Board approved 07.08.2019

5.4.1 Communication and Transparency Policy

Commitment by UnitingWorld

UnitingWorld is committed to ensuring that all our external communications clearly reflect our work and our values and that all information and images included in our communications are collected and used ethically.

UnitingWorld is committed to being transparent in our work and accountable to our key stakeholders, particularly people living in poverty.

UnitingWorld is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct (2017). This policy addresses the Code's communication and transparency requirements. UnitingWorld is an organisational member of the Fundraising Institute of Australia (FIA) and is committed to abiding by the FIA Code.

Implementation of this policy will be guided by the *UnitingWorld Procedures Manual*.

Scope of the Policy

This policy directs all UnitingWorld's external communications, including but not limited to those with donors, supporters, partners, the Uniting Church in Australia and Australian and international communities.

All UnitingWorld representatives are bound by this policy. A 'representative' is any person who is funded by, or who undertakes tasks on behalf of, UnitingWorld. Representatives include:

- UnitingWorld staff;
- Partner staff, while undertaking tasks for UnitingWorld;
- Board members;
- UnitingWorld volunteers including individuals and groups who visit overseas partners or projects funded by UnitingWorld;
- UnitingWorld contractors (including advisors and consultants); and
- Subcontractors of UnitingWorld overseas partners or UnitingWorld contractors while undertaking tasks on behalf of UnitingWorld.

This policy covers all communications, activities and materials produced or shared by UnitingWorld representatives. Communication materials include UnitingWorld's website, social media pages, newsletters, appeals and campaigns material, advertisements, brochures, reports, images and all other print and digital media produced for public audiences. Activities include speaking engagements, training and conferences, liaising with media, networking in the sector, posts on personal social media and correspondence including email communications.

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Policy Context

The media landscape is continually shifting and evolving with technological advances. This has caused a proliferation of information sources in the public domain, often with conflicting messages. UnitingWorld notes the growing public interest and literacy in critical development discourses and acknowledges its responsibility to provide transparent, clear, factual and ethical communications to inform the public and promote the sector.

Principles

1. Our communications will be truthful and respectful

Guided by UnitingWorld's *Code of Conduct* and the ACFID *Code of Conduct*, UnitingWorld communications must:

- Clearly and accurately describe the goals, purposes and activities of UnitingWorld, consistent with our values;
- Clearly distinguish between relief and development programs and church ministry programs;
- Clearly distinguish between projects and donations that are eligible for Deductible Gift Recipient status and those that are not;
- Ensure that information and images are collected and used ethically;
- Be accessible and consistent across all of our audiences;
- Portray people's images and stories in a dignified and respectful manner;
- Respect privacy and not disclose personal information inappropriately;
- Clearly state how funds donated will be used;
- Visibly and plainly acknowledge Australian Government-funded activities;
- Only make claims which UnitingWorld can fulfil;
- Uphold the values of public accountability and transparency;
- Present our message in sustainable ways, reducing our environmental impact; and
- Not include statements about other ACFID members with the intention of creating a reputational or other advantage to UnitingWorld

Implementation of these standards will be guided by the *UnitingWorld Procedures Manual* and the *UnitingWorld Style Guide*.

2. Our communications will reinforce a brand that is consistent with our identity

UnitingWorld communications will aim to reinforce a brand (brand = ideas which are associated with our name) that is consistent with:

- Our Mission, Vision and Values;
- Our identity as a Christian organisation; and
- Our identity as an Agency of the Uniting Church in Australia.

To this end, UnitingWorld communications will:

- Report on programs and our connections with partner organisations in ways that are accurate, timely and accessible to supporters and the public;

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- Engage the Uniting Church in Australia to discern God’s purpose globally and to help lead the Church in making effective and meaningful connections, including by reducing poverty and injustice;
- Relate respectfully to our overseas partners, adding to and supporting their voices; and
- Affirm the genuine long-term relationships which underpin all our activities.

UnitingWorld’s visual branding guidelines for design, text, images, voice and use of logos are set out in the UnitingWorld Style Guide which is updated as required.

3. UnitingWorld communications will be professionally managed and be subject to an approval process

UnitingWorld communications are the responsibility of the National Director. The National Director will be UnitingWorld’s media spokesperson, unless the Board determines otherwise. If the National Director is unable to speak for the Agency, then the Chair of the Board may speak for the Agency.

UnitingWorld will develop and implement communications procedures to ensure compliance with this policy.

The Head of Fundraising & Communications or an equivalent role as appointed by the National Director is the communications focal person and will monitor compliance with this policy, update communications procedures as needed and organise periodic training for UnitingWorld staff, volunteers and other representatives as appropriate.

This policy informs our Communication Procedures, which will be updated periodically to adapt to the evolving media landscape. UnitingWorld staff will receive appropriate training on new and updated policies and procedures.

4. UnitingWorld will be a transparent and accountable organisation.

UnitingWorld will seek and respond constructively to feedback from its supporters, donors, the general public, official bodies, its partners, a local organisation with whom we work, a national government, an NGO, the Australian government and trusts and foundations.

We will share information with people living in poverty, our partners and the general public. We will be accountable to the National Assembly, applicable regulators and our volunteers, supporters, donors, suppliers and host governments.

UnitingWorld will be accountable through both the information we publish and how we respond to requests for information.

We will publish information that describes how we relate with our stakeholders in a professional manner, including our policies that refer to privacy, the protection and safeguarding of people, conflict of interest, professional conduct, development and non-development activities, complaints and incidents handling, communication and transparency.

We will publish information describing our programs, including countries, partners and project. We will publish information regarding outcomes, evaluations of our programs and our responses.

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In our Annual Reports we will follow ACFID Code of Conduct/DFAT guidance and include summary financial information from audited statutory accounts. Our Annual Reports will be available on our website, and full audited accounts will be provided on request.

We will disclose any information on request or give reasons for any decision not to disclose (for example, to respect confidentiality and/or privacy).

We will regularly survey our partners to seek feedback on the health of our partnership and the value of our joint programs to our partners. We will share the results of such surveys with our partners, and findings with our other stakeholders.

We will regularly survey our supporters to gather feedback on the quality of our communications and accountability and share findings with them.

We will have a diverse and accessible range of ways in which stakeholders can complain or raise issues or seek information from us.

In determining whether to publish or otherwise disclose information we will consider the protection of vulnerable persons and the benefit to, and impact of disclosure on, our partners, their communities and our donors and stakeholders.

UnitingWorld will develop and implement transparency procedures to ensure compliance with ACFID Code of Conduct requirements and good practice.

Related Resources

To implement this policy, the *UnitingWorld Procedures Manual* contains associated procedures and guidelines.

UnitingWorld is guided by the following policies, codes and requirements:

Uniting Church Assembly Privacy Policy;
ACFID Code of Conduct, including the ACFID Fundraising Charter;
DFAT Visual Branding;
DFAT ANCP Manual;
Privacy Act and Principles; and
Fundraising Institute of Australia Code.