

## **Philosophy and Principles Policy**

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy sets out the principles and philosophies that guide Foresight Australia's development work.

## 2. OUR PURPOSE

Foresight Australia is an Australian not-for-profit organisation committed to the prevention and cure of blindness around the world.

Foresight Australia undertakes a range of activities designed to promote eye health in developing countries. These include educational programs, training initiatives, early intervention programs, critical healthcare services, and support for human and infrastructure development.

## 3. CONTEXT

Foresight Australia's aim is to contribute to the global effort dedicated to eradicating preventable and treatable blindness. Currently, approximately 285 million people are blind or vision impaired, and more than half these people live in the Asia Pacific region.<sup>1</sup>

Disproportionately affecting the poor and disadvantaged, 80 percent of global blindness is preventable or treatable.

Foresight Australia recognizes the potential of strategic and well-managed health and development interventions to help alleviate the economic and social burden that blindness and low vision place on developing nations. Initiatives aimed at preventing avoidable blindness have been shown to be amongst the most cost effective of all public health interventions. Working in collaboration with governments and non-government organisations, Foresight Australia endeavours to ensure people from all walks of life may enjoy sight for life.

## 4. OUR PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

4.1 Foresight Australia's guiding philosophy is the belief that sight for life is a fundamental human right.

4.1.1 Also, reflected in its operational guidelines, vision and strategies, Foresight adapts other

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<sup>1</sup> Pascolini D, Mariotti SPM. *Global estimates of visual impairment: 2010*. British Journal Ophthalmology Online First published December 1, 2011.

Human rights principles that formed the United Nations agreement on Human Rights<sup>2</sup> such as:

- Recognising the right of all stakeholders to participate in and have an equal voice in all decisions (allowing for the fact that in some project situations equality of voice may defeat the objective – e.g. projects dealing with violence against women).
- Promoting empowerment at the community level particularly among marginalized groups.
- Protecting the rights of marginalized groups through prioritizing resources, actions, and advocacy and enabling such groups through active participation.

4.2 Foresight Australia's work is characterised by our:

- **Desire to work in partnership with our host country partners**
  - Foresight Australia's programs, volunteers and staff strive to respect the culture, wishes and capacities of the countries in which we work, both in designing and in implementing our activities.
- **Focus on sustainable development**
  - Foresight Australia understands the importance of building local workforce capacity. Activities dedicated to the training and education of eye health workers in their own countries form a core component of our development work. In all our projects designs we include management of risk and exit strategies to ensure continuation of activities beyond the life of the project.
- **Holistic approach**
  - Foresight Australia is dedicated to empowering the communities in which we work. In order to enable the provision of essential eye healthcare, Foresight Australia trains the health workforce and supports the development and resourcing of eye clinics, surgical services, training facilities and other eye healthcare. All Foresight Australia initiatives are demand-driven, transparent and accountable.
- **Special focus on children**
  - Children are given special attention through early intervention programs and other initiatives.
  - Wherever possible Foresight promotes the participation of children in the design of its intervention programs.

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<sup>2</sup> A summary of United Nations Agreements on Human rights, <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/undocs.html#UDHR>

- **Disability**

- The Foresight's focus is on blindness but it is aware of other forms of disability. As a result, It seeks to ensure that people with other disability will be provided access to medical services.
- Disability can lead to social and economic disadvantages, the denial of rights and limited opportunities to equally participate in the life of the community.
- Addressing the impairment of avoidable blindness together with the disabling barriers, through improving access to comprehensive quality eye care services, means that the impact of this disability can be reduced.
- Foresight is committed to ensuring the involvement of persons with disabilities in all of its activities through the inclusion of a person with lived experience of visual impairment on its advisory board; and through the inclusion of persons with disabilities or a Disabled People's Organisation on project design and monitoring teams in Australia and in fieldwork countries.
- Wherever possible it undertakes to tailor its approaches to all activities to include persons with physical impairments, unseen or undisclosed impairments, psychosocial or intellectual impairments. Where practicable it will seek to employ persons with disabilities.
- Effective approaches to disability and development require a strong understanding of the importance of human rights, poverty-reduction strategies and other linked issues.

#### 4.3 Foresight

- works with partners to treat and prevent avoidable blindness, with the goal of contributing to reducing both the incidence and the impact of this specific disability;
- maintains a focus on treating and preventing the disabling impacts of avoidable blindness in order to contribute to achieving the VISION 2020: The Right to Sight. This is a joint initiative between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) that seeks to eliminate avoidable blindness and vision impairment globally by 2020. In the long term, the initiative seeks to ensure the best possible vision for all people, thereby improving their quality of life. The guiding principles of this initiative are summarised in the acronym of 'I SEE' that stands for: Integrated into existing health care systems; Sustainable in terms of money and other resources; Equitable care and services available to all, not just the wealthy; Excellence a high standard of care throughout.
- Ensures that key personnel and partners are given training that covers disability inclusion issues and the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).<sup>3</sup> (CRPD)
- Conducts its activities towards prevention of avoidable blindness in ways that build capacities of DPOs and other groups that advocate for the fulfilment of rights

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<sup>3</sup> Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

of persons with disabilities in support of and in alignment with the Millennium Development Goals.

- promotes the general principles of the CRPD.

## 5. PEOPLE, CULTURE AND TRAINING

5.1 Foresight is committed to ensuring that its people act with integrity, fairness and honesty to:

- Respect the dignity of others.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Do not use oppressive or misleading practices, or falsify or wrongly withhold information.
- Ensure that others are treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- Respect the confidentiality of information within Foresight, respecting the law and act accordingly.
- Comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Australia and its individuals States and Territories.
- Scrupulously observe the Australia Taxation Acts and other legislation relevant to the conduct of the affairs of Foresight.
- Apply the provisions of the law to others with humanity and charity.
- Not place themselves in a position of conflict of interests and using the assets of Foresight only for assigned projects.

5.2 Foresight will provide staff and volunteers with information about and training in all Codes and Standards relevant to their roles as part of their induction or pre-deployment. Staff and volunteers will be provided with key Foresight policies including child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment as part of this training. Training will include information on complaints and whistleblowing procedures. Refresher training will be provided to staff and volunteers before any new missions.

## 6. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In the design and implementation of all its initiatives, Foresight Australia follows a human rights based approach and does not discriminate based on nationality, race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, class or political opinion.

## 7. THE PLACE OF WELFARE, EVANGELISM OR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

7.1 Foresight Australia does not undertake activities that involve:

- Welfare: financial assistance given to individuals, without community integration or clear and sustainable development goals;
- Evangelism: the promotion of a particular religion; or
- Partisan Politics: support (financial or other) of a political party or individual.

7.2 In selecting an international project or activity, Foresight Australia shall have reference to its guiding policies and philosophy and assure itself that the proposed work will not involve the diversion of AusAID or tax deductible funds for welfare, evangelistic or partisan political activities. Due care and consideration must be taken during project identification, design and implementation to ensure funds and resources are used, either by Foresight Australia or by international partners and affiliates, only to support development-related activities.

## 8. MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

8.1 Foresight is committed to taking a reflective approach to all of its projects. To this end:

- Appraisal and selection processes for all projects include an assessment of the perspectives of primary stakeholders in project locations, including marginalised groups and DPOs. Such processes also involve research into existing programs operating in the area of proposed project. Where appropriate consultations are undertaken with organisations already operating in the area so as to ensure complementarity in objectives and project coverage.
- All new projects are subjected to risk assessments to ensure that the ‘do no harm’ principle is respected. To this end, risk management in appraisal and selection processes includes express requirements relating to protection and safeguarding (see also Foresight’s Fraud, Corruption and Transparency and Communication Policies).

8.2 Foresight is committed to monitoring, evaluation and learning across the whole organisation. To this end:

- All projects are subjected to regular evaluations that include the perspectives of primary stakeholders in project locations, including marginalised groups and DPOs. Project reports are published annually through the Foresight website and through direct dissemination to primary stakeholders, partners and donors.
- Where practicable, Foresight invests in the quality assessment of its work

- Foresight is committed to reflecting on assessment of its work and to sharing assessments with stakeholders and applying results and lessons to adapt and change its approach and activities.

## 9. INFORMATION STATEMENT

In order to explain and promote the principles and philosophies of Foresight Australia, the following statement may be added to promotional and/or information material, including the Foresight Australia website, and email communications between Foresight Australia and volunteers, international counterparts and/ or other organisations:

- “Foresight Australia is an Australian not-for-profit organisation committed to the prevention and cure of blindness around the world. Across all its activities, Foresight Australia makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, class or political opinion.”



*14<sup>th</sup> September 2022*

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(Signature)

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(Date)

Kevin Gardner

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(Print name)