



Safety & Security Policy

Details

Policy & Procedure Owner	CEO Office	
Approved by	ERFA CEO	
Date Approved	Date of Last Revision	Next Review
Month Year	September 2021	September 2024

Abbreviations

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ERFA	Edmund Rice Foundation Australia

Definitions

ACFID Member	A not-for-profit organisation that has obtained accreditation with ACFID
Partner	Any organisation which has an MOU / contract with / or receives funding from ERFA
Program	Programs are overarching development approaches and initiatives that set priorities and guide project outcomes, results and activities. Programs can comprise ministries or entities
Projects	Projects are the development activities of a Program supported by ERFA
Project Beneficiaries	Children and adults who participate in and benefit from ERFA-funded programs
Staff	Employees, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, volunteers, employers and any other person who performs work for ERFA or ERFK

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Attached documents

- ERFA's Image Use Consent Form
- The ERFA Clause for Collection of Personal Information

Related policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment Policy

Compliance

This policy applies to all staff and associates that act for, represent or visit ERFA and ERFA's implementing partners. Failure of ERFA implementing partners to fully comply with this policy could result in termination of agreements including, but not limited to, MOUs, partnerships agreements and funding contracts.

Organisational overview

Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA) believes education is the key to sustainable change. We are an international development organisation that focuses on sustainable and transformational education. We operate in some of the poorest communities in the world, including in Africa, East Timor, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea. We also partner with domestic programs in Australia. ERFA's goal is to design and implement high impact education programs that will enable our beneficiaries to stand independently and break free from the cycle of poverty. ERFA-funded education programs range from kindergartens to advanced microfinance projects and are designed with the needs of the community at their core.

Legal definitions

Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) is a company limited by guarantee. The objects of the company are set out in clause 3 of ERFA's constitution. Clause 3 (f) reads as follows:

To develop partnerships with overseas aid agencies or formal arrangements with other delivery agents related to the Company but resident in Developing Countries for the implementation of the objects in paragraph (a).

One of ERFA's roles is to act as trustee of the Edmund Rice Overseas Aid Fund.

Throughout its policies and official documentation ERFA uses the term **Partners** for those organisations with which it has formed alliances in developing countries for the receipt of overseas aid funding for the in-country delivery of education programs. Whilst ERFA has an active, engaged and qualitative role with these programs, working to build capacity and maximise the impact of best practice development outcomes, these are not partnerships in the legal sense. Rather they are alliances that ERFA has formed with in-country organisations with whom ERFA has communicated its vision, mission, values, policies and expectations with respect to sustainable development and whose own vision, mission, values, policies and development goals are congruent with those of ERFA. The in-country organisations implement the programs and ERFA supports them.

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1.0 Policy overview

ERFA Staff will occasionally embark on overseas travel for work-related purposes including conducting project site visits include assessing the viability of potential Partners and monitoring and evaluating the performance of partner projects.

ERFA has historically conducted immersion programs, such as the “Gone Fishing” and “Gone Trekking” programs. These are challenging professional and personal development programs which provide Australians with the opportunity to visit and participate in ERFA partner projects in developing countries.

ERFA is aware that the projects it supports often operate in unstable and potentially hazardous environments. ERFA is committed to maintaining the safety and security of ERFA Staff and immersion participants visiting overseas countries as part of ERFA-funded and -organised travel.

2.0 ACFID context

Compliance Indicator 9.2.3 of the ACFID Code of Conduct requires that ERFA have in place a policy, procedure or guidance document outlining:

- requirements for the safety, security and travel for staff and volunteers;
- appropriate travel insurances;
- guidelines for staff travel;
- anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment policies;
- Workplace, Health and Safety policy and training for staff and volunteers.

This Safety & Security Policy completely satisfies the first three of these conditions. The fourth point is addressed in ERFA’s PSEAH Policy and the fifth point in ERFA’s Workplace, Health & Safety Policy.

3.0 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 ERFA Board of Directors

The ERFA Board are responsible for providing formal approval for the overseas travel of ERFA personnel. The Board will not approve travel to destinations where they are not assured of the safety and wellbeing of ERFA personnel and the people in their care. The Australian Government’s Smartraveller “Advice Level” is consulted to guide this decision. Advice Levels of a 3 or 4 will warrant serious reconsideration of the need of ERFA personnel to travel.

3.1 Staff and immersion participants

ERFA advises Staff and immersion participants before travelling, to attend to the items listed below.

Before travelling, Staff and immersion participants must:

- register their travel plans on the DFAT travel registration portal “Smartraveller”;
- ensure that they have appropriate travel insurance (ERFA takes out an insurance policy for travelling Staff and immersion participants);
- ensure that they have all necessary travel documents including passport and visas (where required);
- provide ERFA with a copy of their passport with at least 12 months’ remaining until it expires;
- see a specialist travel doctor well in advance of travelling and ensure that all necessary vaccinations have been obtained. Yellow Fever vaccination is mandatory for Africa and certified documentation of its administration must be carried. Other vaccinations likely to be recommended are: updates for Tetanus, Polio, Whooping Cough, Measles, Mumps and Rubella and vaccinations for Rabies, Hepatitis A & C and Typhoid;
- discuss Malaria medication with their travel doctor as many projects supported by ERFA are located in areas subject to Malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases, so Malaria medication will need to be carried;

- complete ERFA’s CP Self-declaration;
- complete ERFA’s pre-departure medical form;
- complete ERFA’s pre-departure waiver;
- pay an invoice of the necessary travel costs;
- provide ERFA with a copy of their Working with Children Check (Bluecard);
- provide ERFA with evidence of their purchased travel insurance;
- provide ERFA with their contact details;
- provide ERFA with the details of their appointed emergency contact.

ERFA maintains a running register “Travel Checklist Register” to ensure that pre-departure steps have been completed by all immersion participants. Participants will not be approved to travel on ERFA-trips should they fail to satisfactorily complete the checklist and pre-departure steps.

Before travelling it is strongly recommended that Staff and immersion participants:

- access for their destination the country-specific safety & security advice on the DFAT website at DFAT Smartraveller Advice: <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>;
- research online their destination country – geography, demographics, politics, culture, history and current affairs and travel tips;
- ensure that all critical insurance and travel documents have been copied and are being held securely in Australia;
- ensure they have the up-to-date contact information of relevant overseas personnel and the Australian embassy or consulate where they are travelling.

It is formally expected that Staff and immersion participants travelling on an ERFA-funded trip will:

- recognise their duty and responsibility to protect their own health and safety and that of the local community where they are travelling;
- abide by the workplace requirements of the Program or Project in which they are involved;
- follow the advice of local Program or Project Staff.

3.2 Implementing Partners

ERFA expects its implementing Partners to reinforce the advice given to ERFA Staff and immersion participants and to take the initiative in providing it. This is codified in clause 7.15 of ERFA’s Partnership and Funding Contract:

- 7.15 Assist in facilitation of immersion visits by ERFA staff, volunteers and supporters. This may include arranging logistics, staffing, other activity and coordination of finances provided by ERFA for this purpose.

Implementing partners who host ERFA Staff or immersion participants at their Project site are required to complete the document International Partners Pre-Departure Safety and Security Checklist. This checklist is provided to assist Partners:

- engage in forward planning to mitigate risk;
- have in place appropriate procedures to ensure the safety and security of all in-country personnel including ERFA expatriate Staff and immersion participant travelling overseas;
- establish procedures to respond to potential risk scenarios.

4.0 Safety and wellbeing

The safety and wellbeing of travelling Staff and immersion participants is the top priority of the ERFA Board of Directors when deciding whether or not to formally approve travel proposals. The Board will consult the Australian Government website Smartraveller to inform their assessment of the safety of a country as a travel destination. If Smartraveller has allocated an “Advice Level” of 3 or 4, that is, “do not travel,” or “reconsider your need to travel” will warrant serious assessment of the need to travel.

5.0 Pre-departure documents

Staff and immersion participants are provided with the following documents before embarking on an immersion:

- Pre-Travel Guide;
- Wellbeing Guide for Immersions in Developing Countries.

The above documents provide immersion participants with information and advice regarding:

- vaccinations and medical issues;
- travel documents – passports and visas;
- items to pack;
- travel insurance;
- registration with DFAT;
- in-country safety;
- in-country accommodation;
- in-country telephone and Wi-Fi access;
- in-country currency and shopping;
- in-country customs and gift giving;
- recommended clothing and personal items;
- dealing with culture-shock;
- dealing with post immersion re-entry;

6.0 Pre-departure training

Staff and immersion participants travelling overseas are provided with training sessions before travel.

Training session topics include the following:

- how to maintain safety and personal wellbeing;
- ERFA's child safeguarding policy and processes;
- pre-departure tasks;
- an overview of the travel itinerary.

Travelers are assigned to groups of at least two Staff and/or immersion participants. Travelers are advised to always travel around in a group for reasons of safety. A "Team Leader" is assigned to every group whose role is to be the main point of contact between their group and the trip organiser. Travelers are informed of a "safe word" that is to be used if necessary in crisis situations, such as to provide proof of life in a hostage situation.

7.0 Post-travel debriefing

ERFA acknowledges that returning to one's home country after travelling to a foreign country can present returning Staff and immersion participants with an array of challenges, which are sometimes referred to as "reverse culture shock". Duty of care requires that appropriate debriefing opportunities are provided for returning Staff and immersion participants.

AHI Assist insurance app that we download onto team leaders' phone. [Operations] [Finance] [Insurance]

ERFA encourages immersion participants and Staff to contact ERFA following an immersion or work-related trip should further follow-up support be required. ERFA provides immersion participants and Staff with the contact details of Australian Volunteers International, an organisation that conducts re-entry programs for persons returning from working in developing countries.

8.0 Travel insurance

ERFA takes out an insurance policy for Staff and immersion participants whenever they are travelling overseas on an ERFA work-related trip. Travelers are instructed to download the insurance application of ERFA's chosen travel insurance provider.