

POLICY

Environmental

Established: June 2021	Review frequency: Every three years
Prepared by: P Simmons	Approved by: Board

Purpose

To establish a shared understanding of environmental considerations, approaches and commitments relevant to community development

Introduction

GraceWorks Myanmar (GWM) is founded on the belief that God created all things good and that ‘the environment’ is not merely property or resources to be used or exploited, but is the beloved creation of God and part of an ecosystem intended to bless all creatures.

We affirm that we have a responsibility as stewards within, and of, God’s creation. For all to live free from poverty, all people and nations need to live within God-given environmental limits and ensure that shared environmental resources are available equitably to all – now and in future generations – including allowing for environmental rest and regeneration.

We support the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and consider access to safe and clean environments to be a basic human right. We recognise that restricted access to safe and clean environments can be an indicator, or cause, of extreme poverty. Furthermore, we note that environmental degradation impacts those experiencing poverty most heavily.

Major threats caused by human destruction of the environment include the impact of climate change, flooding, salinity, habitat loss, pollution and urban expansion. Development that leads to such impacts is not sustainable because it jeopardises the opportunities of future generations and, at times, present generations.

Definitions

Environment

The environment spans animals, plants, rivers and oceans, the atmosphere, forests and deserts, hills and mountains, and all other parts of non-human creation. More broadly, it encapsulates physical circumstances and conditions supporting life, including access to fresh water, food, fuel and protection from natural disasters.

GWM

GWM seeks to minimise the environmental impact of our activities by:

- ◆ Considering environmental impacts when making decisions, including in relation to procurement, and advocating for practices that protect our shared home and the ecologies of vulnerable communities
- ◆ Minimising waste in our offices/workspaces, using recycled materials where possible and streamlining printing and the distribution of publications to reduce printed materials
- ◆ Actively reducing emissions across our work, including minimising travel, such as air travel, and identifying sustainable and responsible offset options to mitigate unavoidable emissions, seeking carbon neutrality where possible in our operations
- ◆ Raising awareness of global environmental issues among our stakeholders including supporting and campaigning for the SDGs, which call for global action to reduce climate change.



Through development partners

Most people in Myanmar rely on their immediate environment to survive. Access to a clean, sustainable environment directly influences their health and livelihoods. Myanmar is one of the countries most at risk from climate change and many of its people, particularly those experiencing poverty, are already vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters.

Good development practice builds environmental awareness and protection in a community. Through our work, including our work with partners, we aim to raise awareness of environmental sustainability and mobilise Myanmar's people for their own sustainable development.

Practical activities in support of a healthy environment include:

- ◆ Encouraging an environmental impact assessment during the design phase of programs/projects to ensure no detrimental effect on flora and fauna, or traditional culture and practices
- ◆ Ensuring compliance with relevant environmental laws, particularly in Australia and Myanmar
- ◆ Enabling our team to educate themselves and improve their skills in relation to environmental sustainability
- ◆ Empowering people by encouraging them to consider their environment and build the knowledge and confidence to protect it, including advocating for people by helping them access their rights
- ◆ Providing and supporting water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems and maintenance training as well as disaster preparedness training
- ◆ Supporting the production of sustainable food and fuel sources
- ◆ Helping groups identify responses to climate change, including to drought, flood and cold weather
- ◆ Actively supporting national and international initiatives and campaigns that promote sustainable environmental management.

Monitoring

GWM uses the following methods to monitor the potential or actual environmental impact of our work:

- ◆ Gaining regular program/project reports including specific acknowledgement of environmental matters identified during program/project design or during delivery
- ◆ Conducting program/project visits with progress checks including scanning for environmental impacts and considerations
- ◆ Encouraging informal feedback from stakeholders at any time between program/project visits
- ◆ Assessing partner capacity for environmentally sustainable management skills, when necessary, to ensure they align with environmental laws in Myanmar and any multilateral environmental agreements to which Australia is a signatory.

References and related documents

References

- ◆ United Nations SGDs

Related documents

- ◆ Code of Conduct

Review

Previous reviews: n/a
Next review: June 2024