



School for Life Foundation Australia Ethics Statement

School for Life Foundation Australia exists to educate poverty out of existence. We operate across multiple countries and cultural contexts. Each country and region that we operate in has different values, beliefs and policies on education, health care, security and human rights.

For many of the countries that we choose to work in, we cannot understand their situation, without first understanding the geopolitical history and context of colonialism and neoliberalism. These global forces have created the conditions and drivers of poverty that many countries are still working to undo.

Over the past 50 years there have been classifications used to separate the world into groups.

- First world, second world, third world.
- Developed or developing countries
- Global North and Global South

These classification systems are flawed in their own ways and perpetuate notions of superiority and inferiority. They also reinforce global power dynamics, in many ways, they are a substitute for coloniser:colonised¹. They also do not acknowledge that there is no perfect country, human rights issues, equality issues and cultural issues are present in every nation on Earth, including Australia.

As a first principle, School for Life Foundation Australia should not sit in judgement of the countries and communities we work with. We must acknowledge differences, acknowledge history and work collaboratively to address the drivers of poverty in culturally appropriate ways.

¹Thinking developed by Shose Kessi, a South African social psychologist at the University of Cape Town.

As such, we will be required to operate in contexts that may have different values to School for Life Foundation Australia, and indeed those values and the way they impact on the lives of the people we serve may conflict with our personal, organisational and national beliefs and values.

Choosing to withhold funding and investment or forcing organisations to adhere to Australian based standards may do more harm than good. As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wrote in 2005: *'We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed.'*

School for Life Foundation Australia must be clear and forthright about its beliefs without forcing organisations that we partner with to adopt them, particularly when that could cause legal or cultural conflict for locals in their communities.

School for Life Foundation Australia is committed to human rights for all and as such, we must find ways to create systemic change where possible. This could be:

- Advocating and supporting change when it emerges locally.
- Support organisations we partner with to understand human rights frameworks and consider how they might integrate them into their work. For example embedding the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child into governance frameworks, investing in civics education for students.
- Supporting cross cultural exchanges for students, donors and staff.

There is no one size fits all approach to how School for Life Australia should address ethical issues that arise from our work partnering with education organisations. Careful, contextual consideration must be given and decisions should be made in dialogue with our partner organisations.

Our beliefs:

- We believe in the rights laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Statement on the Rights of the Child.
- We believe in an inclusive and fair society that appreciates difference and creates spaces for all to belong.
- We believe that local communities are best positioned to and should decide what is right for them.
- We can create opportunities for change and impact by working shoulder to shoulder with organisations and communities, and sharing ideas and values.