



SSCFE Policies and Procedures Manual

Version control

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Our vision is for a just and peaceful community in South Sudan, where everyone can access education and health care, and the community works together to create opportunities for a better life.

Our mission: SSCFE links the South Sudanese diaspora community in Australia with local communities in the most disadvantaged areas of South Sudan, supporting them to deliver grass roots projects in the areas of health, education and peace building. We focus on the most disadvantaged people in the community, such as orphans, girls and widows, to make sure they benefit from the projects we support.

1. Introduction

1.1.SSCFE status and structure

SSCFE consists of two related organisations, which are described in this document as SSCFE (Australia) and SSCFE (South Sudan). Currently, the membership and officers of the two organisations are largely the same. The relationship between the two organisations is documented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

SSCFE (Australia)

South Sudan Child First Education (SSCFE) Incorporated (“SSCFE (Australia)”) is a not-for-profit association that was incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (Vic) in June 2015. Details of how SSCFE is governed and how office-holders are elected are set out in the **SSCFE (Australia) Constitution**.

SSCFE (Australia) is governed by a Committee consisting of 3 ordinary members and the following office-holders:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

SSCFE (South Sudan)

South Sudan Child First Education (SSCFE) (“SSCFE (South Sudan)”) is an unincorporated association which was registered in South Sudan under the *Non-Governmental Organisations Act 2016* on 10 February 2020, to carry out projects locally on behalf of SSCFE (Australia). SSCFE (South Sudan) has offices in Juba South Sudan and Pannyok Twic, Warrap state.

Details of how SSCFE (South Sudan) is governed and how office-holders are elected are set out in the **SSCFE (South Sudan) Constitution**. The Constitution is based on the ACNC Rules for Unincorporated Associations. Currently, the office holders are the same as for SSCFE (Australia).

1.2.This Manual

This manual sets out the policies, guidelines and procedures used by SSCFE in carrying out its mission. It was developed by SSCFE (Australia) with assistance from the Diaspora Action Network and has been endorsed by the Committees of both SSCFE (Australia) and SSCFE (South Sudan). Where the Manual mentions SSCFE without stating the country, this refers to both organisations or to each organisation in accordance with its Constitution and applicable laws, depending on context.

This Manual should be read together with the Constitutions of SSCFE (Australia) and SSCFE (South Sudan) respectively. SSCFE Committees, members and volunteers should consistently apply the policies set out in this Manual.

SSCFE (Australia) will continually review the Manual and may amend it by a decision of the Committee. SSCFE(Australia) will also develop procedures and guidelines for specific projects as needed, which will come into effect when endorsed by the relevant Committee.

The Secretary, SSCFE (Australia) is responsible for ensuring the current version of the Manual is available on the SSCFE Website and will provide a copy to any SSCFE member on request.

1.3.Governance policy: How we manage SSCFE

For SSCFE (Australia), the applicable laws include the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, which sets out a list of Governance Standards. SSCFE (Australia) must also comply with the ACNC External Conduct Standards in relation to its activities in South Sudan. At its AGM, SSCFE (Australia) will evaluate whether it is meeting these standards, and ensure the Manual is updated if necessary.

SSCFE (South Sudan) must not do anything that would put SSCFE (Australia) in breach of the ACNC External Conduct Standards.

The Manual incorporates the requirements for the ACNC Governance Standards and the External Conduct Standards in effect at the date of approval.

2. Code of Conduct

The Committees of SSCFE, as member-based, not-for-profit associations, must manage SSCFE (Australia) and SSFE (South Sudan) in accordance with SSCFE’s Vision and Mission statements and Constitution.

This Code of Conduct will apply to any staff who may be employed by SSCFE, as well as the Committees and any volunteers working for SSCFE.

The Committee, staff and volunteers of SSCFE must demonstrate professional ethical behaviour at all times in their responsibilities to SSCFE, in their professional relationships with each other, and in their service to the community, and are bound by this Code of Conduct.

Activity / Issue	People who must comply	Code of Conduct requirement
Meetings and decision-making	Committee	Attend all meetings (or tell the Secretary in advance if unable to attend) and prepare for meetings so you can take part in discussions and decision-making.
	President, Vice President	Ensure that all Committee members can participate fully in Committee meetings, and the independent views of Committee members are considered.
Management & reporting	Treasurer, Committee, staff, volunteers	Ensure that all transactions, agreements and records of SSCFE are accurately recorded in its books and records, and no entries are made which obscure the true nature of a transaction.
	Committee, staff	Ensure that SSCFE monitoring and reporting systems are followed, so that the Committee receives accurate and timely information about all SSCFE projects and operations.
	Treasurer and Committee	Ensure there is a clear separation of duties and responsibilities within SSCFE so that no individual can make decisions or spend

Activity / Issue	People who must comply	Code of Conduct requirement
		money without at least one other Committee member signing off on it.
	Committee	Ensure that SSCFE's assets are protected through a suitable risk management strategy.
	Committee	Ensure that members and other stakeholders receive accurate reports of SSCFE's activities, projects and financial situation.
Working for and representing SSCFE	Committee	Understand and comply with the SSCFE Constitution, this Manual and any other SSCFE policies and procedures. Review and update the policies and procedures at least annually.
	Committee, staff, volunteers, members	Publicly and privately support SSCFE and each other, and do not do anything that would bring SSCFE or its Mission into disrepute.
	Staff, volunteers	Perform your duties to the best of your ability. Be punctual and reliable in attendance.
	Committee, staff, volunteers	Comply with this Manual and any other SSCFE policies and procedures, and ensure that SSCFE operates in accordance with the law and its Vision and Mission.
Work Health and Safety	Committee, staff	Assess Work Health and Safety risks for each project, including projects carried out in South Sudan, and develop specific procedures and guidelines where appropriate.
	Committee, staff, volunteers	Observe safe work practices so as not to endanger yourself or others.
Confidentiality	Committee, staff, volunteers	Respect the confidentiality of any confidential or personal information you acquire through your role with SSCFE and do not disclose it to anyone else.
Personal ethics	Committee, staff, volunteers	In all activities for SSCF place the interests of SSCFE over your own interests or those of anyone else. Make sure that your personal and financial interests do not conflict with your duty to SSCFE.
	Committee, staff, volunteers	Do not use any SSCFE resources for your personal or business purposes, or any purpose other than those of SSCFE, unless the Committee has given permission in writing.
	Committee, staff, volunteers	Act honestly and in good faith at all times in the interests of SSCFE and its Vision and Mission, ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly those who receive services, are treated fairly.
Professional skills & knowledge	Committee	Regularly review the Committee's decision-making and arrange for any necessary training to ensure Committee members have the skills to carry out their roles effectively.

Activity / Issue	People who must comply	Code of Conduct requirement
	Committee, staff, volunteers	Do any necessary training to make sure you can carry out your role for SSCFE effectively.

2.1. Conflict resolution

If there is a dispute between members of SSCFE (Australia) or of SSCFE (South Sudan), the parties will follow the dispute resolution procedures set out in their respective Constitutions.

SSCFE may also develop policies to address other potential conflicts, for example involving stakeholders in South Sudan (such as communities where SSCFE is supporting projects). SSCFE will consider potential conflicts, and dispute resolution processes, as part of the risk assessment process in developing projects and in drafting agreements for projects.

3. Financial Management

3.1. Not-for-profit status

As required by their Constitutions, both SSCFE (Australia) and SSCFE (South Sudan) will operate as not-for profit associations: they will not distribute any surplus, income or assets directly or indirectly to their members except to pay for goods and services supplied, or to reimburse members who have paid for goods or services on behalf of SSCFE.

3.2. Financial transparency

In maintaining the accounts of SSCFE, the Treasurer must:

- keep full records of all money received and spent by SSCFE, and maintain them for at least seven years;
- keep the records as securely as practicable and regularly back up all financial records;
- ensure that authorised people are able to access the financial records;
- comply with the applicable [ACNC requirements](#) and use accounting practices that are generally accepted in Australia;
- ensure that the accounts identify any grant money received, and separate such money from the general funds of SSCFE; and
- keep all receipts recording SSCFE spending on file for at least seven years.

3.3. Fraud

Fraud means dishonestly obtaining a benefit or causing a loss, usually by deceiving others. For example, using SSCFE funds for personal purposes and creating false records to stop others finding out would be fraud.

SSCFE will not tolerate fraud in any aspect of its operations. To manage the risk of fraud, for each of SSCFE (Australia) and SSCFE (South Sudan):

- at least two Committee members must have detailed knowledge of the relevant SSCFE accounts and financial processes.
- SSCFE will have clear processes for reporting issues and acting on them promptly.
- all Board members must have access to the full accounts of the relevant SSCFE association and if necessary get training to understand them properly.

- SSCFE will communicate transparently with members and stakeholders, and inform them of SSCFE policies and of any incidents of fraud (provided this will not affect any ongoing investigation, or disclose sensitive details).

Reporting suspected fraud

Any person who suspects fraudulent activity related to the operations of SSCFE must immediately report it to a member of the relevant SSCFE Committee, unless the person suspects the SSCFE Committee is involved in the fraud.

On becoming aware of suspected fraud, the Committee must take immediate steps to safeguard SSCFE assets and notify:

- the police; and
- (if the suspected fraud is in Australia), the ACNC; and/or
- (if the suspected fraud is in South Sudan), the appropriate local authorities.

SSCFE must not punish a person who reports a suspected fraud (unless a person makes repeated unfounded accusations).

The Committee must cooperate fully with police or other official investigations.

Following any such investigation, whether or not any criminal activity is identified, SSCFE will review its financial and accounting policies and seek appropriate professional advice to make any necessary changes.

4. Risk Assessment and management

A risk is defined as the chance that something will happen that could cause harm to our organisation, our staff, our volunteers, our stakeholders, or the general public, or could jeopardise the success of an SSCFE program or project.

SSCFE maintains a Risk Register and Risk Management Plan which will be reviewed at least annually, and will develop specific risk registers and risk management plans for each project.

5. Guiding principles for SSCFE

This section sets out the principles that guide SSCFE in all decision making. The first section sets out how SSCFE will work; later sections provide more detail on specific principles.

5.1. General principles for SSCFE activities

SSCFE recognises that carrying out projects in South Sudan is complex, expensive and subject to rapidly changing conditions. Starting out as a small organisation with limited resources, SSCFE will target its projects carefully, and control the scope of each project. To assist in planning its Mission, the Committee may establish broad programs which provide a foundation for specific projects.

The following principles should guide all decisions concerning SSCFE activities:

1. All SSCFE activities must be consistent with the SSCFE Vision and Mission.
2. SSCFE programs and projects must build capability within the South Sudanese communities where they take place, primarily through projects that provide local access to education, knowledge and health services.
3. SSCFE looks for opportunities to build peace and create dialogue between South Sudanese people through social gathering or media forums.

4. SSCFE programs and projects should improve life for the most disadvantaged in the relevant community (see detailed sections below), create better opportunities for women, young people, and people with disabilities, and/or help the community as a whole to become more self-sufficient.
5. SSCFE projects should be short term, limited in scope, and manageable within the available resources.
6. SSCFE will learn from experience by:
 - establishing criteria for success for each program and project;
 - monitoring and evaluating progress against those criteria; and
 - regularly reviewing the monitoring and evaluation data and take it into account in planning the next stage of the project or program, planning future projects, and in reviewing any relevant policies, procedures or guidelines.
7. SSCFE will promote transparency and accountability in its projects by entering written agreements with the community involved and with any partner organisations, clearly setting out:
 - the role, obligations and responsibilities of each party; and
 - how they will work together to complete the project.

5.2.Overseas activities

SSCFE (South Sudan) and all individuals, communities and organisations who work with SSCFE in South Sudan must:

- comply with the policies set out in this Manual at all times, especially the policies about gender equality, disability, child protection and counter terrorism;
- treat everyone with respect, and not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religious or political views;
- ensure the cultural safety of children from different tribes;
- report unethical behaviour involving children to the appropriate authorities;
- ensure decision-making is consistent with human rights obligations in South Sudan;
- understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality and ensure sensitive information is protected; and
- not consume alcohol or drugs on SSCFE premises or while taking part in SSCFE activities.

5.3.Key value: Child protection

SSCFE is committed to being a child safe and child friendly organisation that recognises, respects and promotes children's rights. SSCFE (Australia) will comply with the Child Safe Standards published by the [Victorian Commission for Children and Young People](#).

SSCFE will ensure that the safety of children is always its top priority and will do all it can to keep children safe from abuse from anyone associated with SSCFE.

In becoming a child safe organisation SSCFE will:

- actively encourage children to have a say about things that are important to them, especially in relation to SSCFE projects that concern them;
- regularly assess and manage the risk of abuse to children who come into contact with SSCFE through any of its projects or activities;
- welcome concerns being raised about the safety of children with whom we come in contact;
- listen to and act decisively on any child safety concerns or allegations of abuse that are made; and

- develop specific policies, procedures and supports in relation to SSCFE programs to meet these obligations.

Working with Children Checks

SSCFE (Australia) will require all of its Committee members, members, contractors, staff or volunteers to provide a valid Working With Children check before taking part in any SSCFE activity where they are likely to come into contact with children.

Allegations of abuse

Any member, director, volunteer or employee of SSCFE who becomes aware of an allegation of child abuse in connection with SSCFE or its activities must immediately report this to the relevant authorities and to the SSCFE Committee.

If SSCFE becomes aware of any allegations of child abuse in connection with SSCFE or its activities, the Committee must immediately:

- report the matter to the relevant authorities and cooperate with them in any investigations; and
- take any steps needed to prevent further risk to children or other vulnerable people.

Child protection in SSCFE overseas activities

SSCFE (South Sudan) will apply the United Nations convention on the rights of the children that states children should:

- be treated fairly;
- have a say about decisions affecting them;
- live and grow up healthy;
- have their privacy respected;
- be kept safe no matter where they are;
- be cared for and have a home;
- be able to access education, play and cultural activities; and
- receive protection when necessary.

5.4.Key value: Gender equality

SSCFE is committed to ensuring that women and men have:

- the same entitlements to all aspects of human development, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights;
- the same opportunities to make choices; and
- the same level of power to shape the outcomes of these choices.

Currently in South Sudan, gender inequality is a major source of suffering. Girls are less likely to receive even basic education than boys. [Unicef has estimated](#) that over 65% of women and girls in South Sudan have experienced gender based violence (GBV), and more than half have experienced GBV in intimate relationships. Child marriage is a major issue: many girls unwillingly enter into marriage at a young age because they don't have any other options such as education or work prospects.

SSCFE will work towards gender equality in the following ways:

- providing equal opportunities for both men and women within SSCFE;
- working closely with its members and local communities to protect women's rights (SSCFE now have three professional coordinators females' lawyers who work voluntarily to help women and children); and
- encouraging women to participate in projects and become leaders.

5.5.Key value: Empowering people with disabilities

SSCFE is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities can:

- participate in all aspects of community life, including in education and vocational training;
- make decisions affecting their lives; and
- Have opportunities for employment and independence.

People with disabilities experience particular hardship in South Sudan. 84% of children with disability do not attend school as the closest schools are far away and they have no means of transport. Children with disability feel discouraged from coming to school, as many do not have the facilities they need, or teachers who are qualified to support their special needs.

SSCFE will work to support people with disabilities in the following ways:

- in each project, consulting people with disabilities about their needs and priorities;
- working with local communities to ensure that children with special needs have access to education;
- working to remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities - for example wheelchairs and access to medical clinic;
- encouraging people with disabilities to take part in SSCFE committees and projects (SSCFE have a manager in Pannyok who lives with disability and encourages other people with disabilities to participate in projects); and
- establishing and maintaining good working relationships with disability support and advocacy organisations to help make SSCFE activities more disability inclusive.

5.6.Key value: Counter terrorism

SSCFE Committee members, staff and volunteers will use their best endeavours to ensure that SSCFE funding and support does not aid or support terrorism or prohibited terrorist organisations. SSCFE recognises that good governance is essential to manage risk in this field and will review its performance in this area as part of its Risk Management.

SSCFE will:

- review the counter-terrorism information on the ACNC website from time to time, and complete the current ACNC checklist before providing any funding or equipment to overseas locations;
- ensure that counter-terrorism measures are included in its agreements with communities and organisations it assists and that those parties understand and comply with such measures;
- confirm that all funding it provides overseas is received and used by the intended beneficiaries for the intended purposes;
- Inform the South Sudan authorities and, where Australians are involved, the Australian Federal Police, immediately if it receives any credible information that indicates any links between SSCFE-supported groups and any proscribed organisations or terrorist activity.

6. Fundraising Policy

6.1.Tax deductibility

SSCFE will seek Deductible Gift Recipient status from the Australian Taxation Office and will comply with its requirements.

6.2. Fundraising principles

SSCFE will allow fundraising through crowd funding, raffles, cultural events and sports to promote peace and harmony.

In raising funds for its programs and projects, SSCFE will comply with the following principles:

- any fundraising activity must be approved in advance by the SSCFE Committee;
- any communication to the public connected with a fundraising activity will be truthful and not misleading;
- all monies raised via fundraising activities will be used for the stated purpose of the fundraising activity, consistent with SSCFE's mission, vision, values and purpose;
- fundraising activities must not damage the good name or community standing of SSCFE; and
- fundraising activities will comply with all relevant laws.

6.3. Dealing with donations

Any person who receives donations or fundraising proceeds on behalf of SSCFE must keep a record of the amount and must, as soon as possible, pay the entire amount to the Treasurer, or into the SSCFE bank account, and give the record to the Treasurer.

SSCFE will issue receipts to donors for all donations unless this is impracticable (for example, anonymous donations).

6.4. Relationships with donors

SSCFE, including any volunteers and staff, will:

- ensure donation processes are secure and transparent;
- communicate respectfully and professionally with those who give donations;
- respond promptly to any issues or complaints about donations; and
- raise any issues or concerns regarding donations with the Committee.

Where SSCFE collects personal information about donors (such as name and contact details) this must be kept confidential. Such information must not be disclosed to anyone (including any member of SSCFE) except in order to process the donation, unless the person has agreed in writing.

7. Privacy Policy

SSCFE (Australia) is not currently required to comply with the Privacy Act, as it is a small charity with annual turnover of less than \$3 million and does not meet the other criteria. Nonetheless, SSCFE will:

- do its best to comply with the [Australian Privacy Principles](#);
- obtain information as needed from the Office of the [Australian Information Commissioner](#);
- and
- consider the Australian Privacy Principles in planning its activities.

8. Volunteer policy and procedures (including recruitment)

SSCFE may use volunteers (who may be SSCFE members) to help with a particular activity, such as a fundraising event, or to do ongoing work for SSCFE, with the Committee's approval. Volunteers will not receive any payment or other benefit in return for their activities. Where SSCFE uses volunteers, it will appoint a Committee member to manage the volunteers (**Volunteer Manager**). The Volunteer Manager will:

- assess the Work Health and Safety risks of the activity, submit a Risk Assessment and WHS Plan to the Committee for approval beforehand, and brief volunteers on any WHS issues;

- arrange an induction session for volunteers to explain their role and the SSCFE vision, mission and relevant policies (i.e. Code of Conduct, Child Protection);
- ensure that all volunteers provide a Working with Children check if they may take part in SSCFE activities where children will be present;
- promptly report any complaints by volunteers, or complaints about volunteers, to the Committee; and
- report to the Committee regularly, and after any event involving volunteers, about any issues relating to volunteers.

9. Work Health & Safety

As a volunteer association with no employees, SSCFE is not currently covered by the Work Health and Safety Laws. The Committee will review this status from time to time and will update the policy if there is a change.

SSCFE is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for its members, volunteers, contractors and the communities it supports. SSCFE recognizes that accident prevention and working safely are a collective and individual responsibility. SSCFE will complete a risk assessment for every planned activity (e) using the following procedure.

- **Identify hazards**—find out what could cause harm.
- **Assess risks**, if necessary—understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening. This step may not be necessary if you are dealing with a known risk with known controls (eg places where people might trip over).
- **Control risks** – implement the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances and ensure it remains effective over time. (measures may include fire extinguishers and first aid supplies, having someone with a First Aid certificate present, Covid-19 plan).
- **Review control measures** to ensure they are working as planned.

Recording Injuries

In the case of an accident or incident, if medical treatment is required, someone present should seek medical or first aid help, and complete an Incident Report (detailing what happened and when, who was present, what action was taken). The Committee will review the Incident Reports at its next meeting, and consider whether there should be changes to the policy or risk assessment process.

Overseas activities

SSCFE will consider health and safety risks as part of the planning for all overseas projects and activities. Where anyone travels to South Sudan representing SSCFE, SSCFE will do a specific risk assessment and health and safety plan in consultation with that person, which may include:

- a checklist of vaccinations and other health and safety measures;
- travel insurance, including medevac coverage;
- emergency contacts in Australia and South Sudan; and
- guidelines for protecting the person’s health and safety in the areas and communities they will visit.

10. Other key SSCFE documents

- Constitution of SSCFE (Australia)
- Constitution of SSCFE (South Sudan)
- Memorandum of Understanding between SSCFE (Australia) and SSCFE (South Sudan)