POLICY G016: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Responsible person:	CEO	Version:	1.0
Approved by Board of Directors:	27 February 2019	Scheduled review date:	June 2027

PREAMBLE

This policy was written by So They Can (Australian Entity) for use across all So They Can offices. So They Can operates five offices registered in each of Australia, Kenya, Tanzania, New Zealand, England & Wales and the USA, which are part of the So They Can Global Alliance. In this policy, 'CEO' means CEO of So They Can (Australian Entity). Unless specified otherwise the 'Board' refers to the board of So They Can (Australian Entity). This policy is intended for all So They Can staff, Board members and volunteers, in all 6 So They Can offices. So They Can procedures are consistent with So They Can policies.

DEFINITION

This policy adopts the definition of sustainable development provided in Our Common Future, a report published by Bruntland Commission at the 1987 United Nations General Assembly:

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs".

This definition links the issue of long term economic development and environmental stability. The concept of conserving resources for future generations is one of the main features which distinguish sustainable development policy from traditional environmental policy. The overall goal of sustainable development, long term stability of economy and environment, is only achievable through the integration and acknowledgement of environmental, social and economic concerns into all aspects of decision making. This is the key principle of sustainable development.

POLICY

This policy is founded on So They Can's belief that the principles of sustainable development are pivotal in working towards poverty eradication and all other "Global Goals" stated in the United Nations Resolution of 25 September 2015. Therefore, sustainable development is to be central in design, implementation, operation and evaluation of all So They Can projects and activities in all countries where So They Can works. So They Can is a firm advocate of sustainable community development being about enabling communities to develop their own solutions and to mobilise their resources in order to achieve their vision. Therefore So They Can is committed to close co-operation with the communities it works and their governments at all stages of project life.

PROCEDURES

With respect to sustainable development of its projects So They Can is committed to observing the following principles and procedures while working towards achieving the project goals:

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Through design and implementation of economic empowerment projects and activities, enhance the project participants' (families or individuals) capacity to generate income (through employment or setting up a business)
- Through training and capacity building, empower institutional participants to be able to mobilise and efficiently use resources (through government advocacy and Income Generating Activities, parents' and community contributions, government funding, other funding sources) to ensure sound operation of their institution
- Working in partnership with local government to take over ongoing operational costs
- Support the schools and community to ensure government capitation grants are received for all pupils enrolled at school (all children have a birth certificate, or birth registration number)

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Appointment and building capacity of local management and staff, to ensure longevity and ongoing good standard.
- Building capacity and respecting the opinions of local decision makers including government
- Identifying and managing both positive and negative impact of So They Can projects on communities
- Undertaking due diligence to avoid harming human rights and addressing any adverse impacts on human rights that might be related to So They Can's activities.
- Respecting human rights and opinions of communities on how they are governed.
- Investment into human capital (teacher training) as non-depleted resources
- Recognising and respecting cultural practises of communities and incorporating them into development processes

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

So They Can believes that work for sustainable development and work for a healthy and sustainable environment are interconnected; that poverty and environmental degradation are interwoven and it is the poor who suffer most from such degradation. Therefore, So They Can is fully committed to:

- Where appropriate, undertaking environmental assessment prior to the implementation of projects to demonstrate that proposed activities will not have a detrimental effect on land, flora and fauna and traditional culture and practice
- When possible reducing and recycling waste and using reusable materials
- Educating and encourage staff and project participants to develop improved knowledge and skills relating to environmental sustainability
- Actively supporting national and international campaigns and initiatives that promote environmental sustainability

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- All So They Can Policies
- So They Can Policy and Manual Register

Date	Version number	Comments
February 2019	1.0	New policy approved by Board
June 2021	1.0	Policy review, no changes
June 2023	1.1	Review of Economic Sustainability
June 2025	1.1	Biennial policy review, England & Wales entity added