



Financial Contributions and Donations by Prospective Adoptive Parents

This document outlines the Australian central authorities' views on financial contributions and donations in the context of intercountry adoption and provides families with some best practices given the complexities that arise during the intercountry adoption process.

What is a financial contribution?

A **contribution** is an amount of money required by the country of origin when the application for adoption is made. Contributions are intended to support the development of child protection or adoption services in the country of origin. Prospective adoptive parents will be advised by their local central authority if a contribution to the country of origin is required.

A contribution includes:

- **Fees for services provided in the country of origin**, such as application fees, visa and passport processing fees, legal costs, care of the specific child prior to the adoption, medical assessments and general administrative fees.
- **Fees for child protection services**. These payments are considered contributions so long as they are transparent and accountable (for example, the same amount is paid by all prospective adoptive parents, and an acknowledgement of or receipt for the payment is provided).

What is a financial donation?

A **donation** is an amount of money that may be offered by prospective adoptive parents to authorities in the country of origin or sought by the country of origin before or after the adoption takes place. Donations are not required as part of the adoption process. Donations may be sought or offered prior to the issue of the final adoption or order or following the issue of the order.

Prospective adoptive parents are welcome to make donations to countries of origin, provided the donation is **transparent**: the amount of money is known to others, recorded, accounted for and does not influence the adoption outcome.

Prospective adoptive parents must not make a **non-transparent** donation to a country of origin. A donation is non-transparent if the amount of money is unknown to others, not recorded, not accounted for and/or intended to influence an adoption. Making non-transparent donations risks the integrity of the intercountry adoption process, the cancellation of an allocation due to improper behaviour and puts Australia's reputation as a receiving country, and the ongoing operation of the country program, at risk.

Australian central authorities' view

The *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption* expressly prohibits improper financial or other gain from an activity related to intercountry adoption. Families, institutions and authorities must not be induced by compensation when placing children for adoption.

Advice for prospective adoptive parents

The Australian Central Authority strongly recommends prospective adoptive parents exercise judgement and caution when making financial contributions or donations and, if in doubt, seek advice from their local central authority.

Where the purpose for which a donation is sought appears improper, prospective adoptive parents should politely decline making the donation and report the request to their local central authority as soon as possible. Circumstances where a donation may be improper include requests for money to:

- expedite an application or any part of the adoption process
- ensure a child with particular characteristics is allocated
- ensure an allocation is made
- support or assist the orphanage where the child was living prior to the adoption
- support or assist the family of the child.

Some country programs have specific restrictions on donations. Your local central authority can provide advice on any donation guidelines or restrictions that exist in relation to specific country programs.