

<b>Disability Inclusion and Equity Policy</b>	
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## Oxfam Australia Disability Inclusion and Equity Policy

**According to the World Health Organization a disabled person is anyone who has “a problem in body function or structure, an activity limitation, has a difficulty in executing a task or action; with a participation restriction”.**

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) notes the following: “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”**

### 1.1 Purpose

This policy aims to ensure Oxfam Australia (OAU) takes the rights, needs and perspectives of people with disabilities into account at all stages of the program cycle. By doing so, people with disabilities have equal access to, meaningfully participate in, and benefit equally from, OAU’s programs. This policy identifies key definitions and concepts, guiding principles, responsibilities and approach of OAU to fulfilling our commitment to integrating disability inclusion within our program work.

### 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all program activities undertaken by Oxfam Australia, including development programs, humanitarian responses, influencing and campaign activities, whether implemented in Australia or internationally. The policy applies equally to all OAU funded programs directly implemented by OAU or those implemented through partners and other Oxfam Affiliates and country teams.

### 1.3 Background and Rationale

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pledges to “leave no one behind,” where dignity of an individual person and equality among all is applied as the fundamental principle when building a peaceful and prosperous world. Disability as a cross-cutting issue is explicitly addressed in five SDGs, namely on education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, and data, monitoring and accountability. Moreover, a series of post-2015 development frameworks incorporated the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Paris Agreement, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the New Urban Agenda, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The World Report on Disability (2011) estimates that 15% of the global population have a disability, and that 80% of these people live in low-income countries. According to the United Nations (2011) unemployment among people with disability is as high as 80 per cent in some countries and disability is more prevalent amongst women compared to men. In fact, women and girls with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and marginalized within society, and often face multiple discrimination and often violence on account of their gender, disability, and because they are amongst the poorest of the poor. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience disproportionately high rates of disability with 24% aged 15 years and over reported having a disability in 2018.

OAU recognises the strong link between poverty and disability where poverty is both a cause and consequence of disability, resulting in compounding vulnerabilities to social and economic exclusion. Disability affects not only the individual, but families and carers too.

People with disability are also particularly vulnerable during and after natural disasters and in conflict. During disaster responses, people with disabilities are often invisible and excluded from accessing emergency support and essential services such as food distribution, medical care, shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, along with specific needs such as medication and assistive devices. People with disability are also excluded from emergency response efforts due to their social invisibility, mobility and access difficulties that may be aggravated by loss of support

people and assistive devices, and changes in terrain. In such situations, women and girls with disability face additional risks.

Disability inclusive development is central to good development practice. People with disability have experiences, skills and attributes which make their contribution to development processes unique and valuable. Failure to include people with disability in aid programs inadvertently perpetuates discrimination. Oxfam is a rights-based organisation committed to ensuring disability inclusive programming and by doing so achieving our development goals.

## Commitment

Oxfam Australia is committed to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. OAU is committed to ensuring that OAU staff, and partner staff, have the required skills and awareness to ensure and support effective targeted, mainstreaming or twin track approaches to disability inclusion and support the organisation’s commitment to inclusive development practice.

### 1.4 Key Principles

OAU disability inclusion policy and practices are guided by the following principles

Addressing multiple layers of vulnerability	OAU will seek out people with disabilities who often experience multiple layers of vulnerability or exclusion (women, children, sexual and gender minorities, people in emergencies, Indigenous peoples)
Inclusion & participation	OAU will ensure that people with disabilities (and their representative organisations) are included as participants in all stages of the program cycle and have the same opportunity for participation, leadership and decision making as all other program participants.
Value of diversity & contribution	OAU will value the diverse experiences, capacities and contributions of people with disability and incorporate these to develop effective approaches to improving outcomes.
Equal Access	OAU recognizes people with disability have equal rights to program resources, activities and infrastructure, and will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its programs and benefit equally from them. A common misconception is that accessibility is only about physical access, however persons with disabilities have different access requirements, for example, for the deaf, or for persons with sight and other impairments.
Accountability	OAU will demonstrate its accountability to people with disability by ensuring formal and informal feedback and complaint mechanisms are accessible to them, and that its programs are evaluated from the perspectives of people with disability.

## 2. Expectations for implementation of all projects / programs

### 2.1 Standards

In addition to upholding the above-mentioned principles, **all OAU programs** will meet the following expectations within the Program/Project cycle;

#### Design & planning

1. Ensure persons with a disability are incorporated into the situational analysis of the program/project and sectoral context. This analysis should identify the key barriers and enablers faced by men, women, boys and girls with a diverse range of impairments, relevant to the given context.
2. Projects are required to consider how to remove barriers and reinforce enablers to participation in projects and set feasible targets for the inclusion of people with disability and carers.
3. Seek out people with disability as they may be hidden within their community.
4. Explore formal or informal partnership with a range of Disability Partner Organizations (national or local) to ensure the inclusion of people with different kinds of disability at all stages of the program cycle in development, humanitarian, advocacy programs/projects and campaigns.

5. All project/programs are required to ensure appropriate budgeting for reasonable accommodation, mainstreaming or targeted activities for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, whenever possible meeting a 5% commitment to disability inclusion in project budgets.

### Implementation

6. Ensure staff and partners have an awareness of the principles of disability inclusive development.
7. Ensure staff have knowledge and competencies in implementing practical strategies to promote disability inclusion across their work.
8. Ensure programs/projects are working towards providing equal access and promoting full participation of program participants with disability, with systematic reviews or reflections on progress
9. Ensure equal access to program information and feedback mechanisms – particular attention given to people with vision and hearing impairments and people who may not leave their homes.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

10. Ensure baseline surveys and needs assessments done prior to the design and implementation of programs and projects take into account the particular needs and concerns of people with disability.
11. Ensuring indicators are inclusive of people with different kinds of disability (consider setting specific indicators)
12. Measure engagement of people with disabilities across the program/project.
  - a. Ensure that the collection of data is disaggregated by disability to provide evidence about the extent to which people with disabilities are participating in and benefiting from the program.
  - b. Collecting quantitative and qualitative information on how people with disability are impacted by Oxfam programs/projects.
  - c. Ensuring people with disabilities participate in the evaluation of all projects/programs
13. Ensure project / program reporting documents explain how people with disability have been included and impacted by the intervention.

## 2.2 Disability Inclusion Responsibilities and Accountabilities

This Policy applies to all OAU funded programs. Specific responsibilities and accountabilities for ensuring implementation are as follows:

<b>Accountable</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Program/Project Managers or Coordinators in-country and Portfolio Managers in Oxfam Australia</b>	Responsible for ensuring all program staff and partners read this policy and understand how it relates to their areas of work. Work with staff to build or strengthen disability inclusion across the project/program cycle by incorporating disability inclusion principles into design and annual planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning, partnership discussions, risk management and other program cycle events/discussions.
<b>Country or Regional Director / Pillar Lead</b>	Responsible for ensuring relevant program staff have the necessary awareness, skills, and attitudes to effectively implement this policy and engage in disability inclusive practice Responsible for translation of this Policy and related resources as required for use by Oxfam Country teams and Partners and for incorporating consideration of this policy in unit and country level planning, budgeting and resource allocation. Required to ensure that all hiring practices, building infrastructure and similar barriers are disability inclusive for a range of impairments.
<b>Directors, Programs and Public Engagement</b>	Responsible for ensuring Programs and Public Engagement programs meet the principles and expectations outlined in this Policy
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	Responsible for holding Section Directors accountable to implement this Policy. Demonstrate leadership and commitment to promoting the principles set out in this policy.

## Annex 1: Conventions and Obligations

Disability is a human rights issue. Several international human rights instruments have been developed to protect the rights of people with disability and bring about tangible changes and equitable outcomes in their lives. OAU is guided by the following national and international codes and conventions, under which it has specific obligations it must fulfill:

<b>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)</b>	The CRPD promotes and protects the rights and dignity of people with disability and is a significant contribution to redressing the profound social disadvantage of people with disability and promoting their equal participation in civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Australia was one of the first nations to ratify the convention in 2008.
<b>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</b>	Disability inclusive development is important in supporting efforts to meet the sustainable development goals which emphasise the importance of ensuring no one is left behind by development efforts and include specific targets related to disability inclusive development 11.
<b>Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.</b>	The Incheon Strategy builds on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific through 10 specific goals.
<b>Development for All 2015– 2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia’s aid program</b>	Development for All 2015-2020 outlines the Australian Government’s commitment to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities through its Aid Program. <i>[This policy was extended until 2021]</i>
<b>ACFID Code of Conduct Effective June 2017</b>	<p><b>Quality Principle 1 – Rights, Protection &amp; Inclusion</b>  <i>Commitment 1.2 We respect and respond to the needs, rights and inclusion of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion.</i>            See compliance indicators 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 and Good Practice indicators</p> <p><b>Quality Principle 2- Participation, Empowerment and Local ownership</b>  <i>Commitment 2.4 We promote the empowerment of people with disabilities.</i>            Compliance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.4.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities.</li> <li>2.4.2 Members’ planning process includes consultation with people with disabilities and contextual analysis of the barriers to social inclusion and participation.</li> <li>2.4.3 Members promote opportunities for people with disabilities and/or their representative organisations to participate in decision-making.</li> <li>2.4.4 Members monitor and evaluate their progress in promoting the empowerment of people with disabilities.</li> </ul> <p>See also Good Practice Indicators under this commitment</p>
<b>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</b>	In Australia, the Disability Discrimination Act protects people across Australia from unfair treatment in many areas of public life. It also promotes equal rights, equal opportunity and equal access for people with disabilities.

## Annex 2: Definitions and key concepts

<b>People with disabilities</b>	The term ‘people with disabilities’ is conceptualised as including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
<b>Impairment</b>	A difficulty in body functions or structure. A physical, intellectual, mental or sensory characteristic or condition, which places limitations on an individual’s personal or social functioning in comparison with someone who does not have that characteristic or condition.
<b>Types of impairment</b>	<b>Physical</b> (difficulties in moving), <b>intellectual</b> (impairment in cognitive processing measured through IQ), <b>Mental illness</b> (a broad range of mental and emotional conditions e.g. depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia) <b>Sensory</b> (vision, hearing or speech difficulties), <b>Central nervous systems disorders</b> (e.g. epilepsy, multiple sclerosis), <b>Learning</b> (including neurological based specific learning barriers)
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Disability = Impairment + Barriers.</b> Experience of disability arises not from impairments alone, but from the interaction between a person’s <b>impairment</b> and the <b>barriers</b> they have to full participation in their community on an equal basis of others. The experience of disability is diverse. A broad range of types and degrees of impairments interact with a range of environmental factors, as well as other factors such as gender and age. This means that no two people with disabilities are likely to have the same experience.
<b>Barriers</b>	Various barriers experienced by people with disabilities can be classified as <b>Physical, transportation or environmental</b> (buildings, schools, clinics, water pumps, transport, roads, paths, etc.), <b>Information or Communication barriers</b> (written and spoken information including media, flyers, internet, community meetings, etc.), <b>Policy or Institutional barriers</b> (including both legislation that discriminates against people with a disability, and/or an absence of legislation that might otherwise provide an enabling framework), <b>Attitudinal barriers</b> (negative stereotyping of people with a disability, social or cultural stigma and other forms of overt discrimination).
<b>Reasonable Accommodation</b>	Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
<b>Disability inclusive development</b>	Disability-inclusive development promotes effective development by recognising that, like all members of a population, people with disabilities are both beneficiaries and agents of development. It is an inclusive approach that seeks to identify and address barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in and benefiting from development.
<b>Twin track approach</b>	An approach to disability- inclusive development that explicitly identifies specific actions for people with a disability in conjunction with mainstream inclusion. <b>TARGETING</b> - providing disability-specific initiatives to support the empowerment of persons with disabilities (for example, a vocational skills project which specifically targets persons with disabilities). A disability-specific approach does not necessarily require Oxfam programs to run separate projects or activities targeting people with disabilities: it can involve coordinating their activities (such as referral pathways) with other disability-specific programs, such as OPDs or rehabilitation services. <b>MAINSTREAMING</b> - integrating disability-sensitive measures into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programs (for example, mainstreaming disability in areas such as human resources and budgeting). The twin-track approach to inclusion can only lead to successful outcomes for persons with disabilities if emphasis is put on both tracks, as they complement each other.
<b>Organisation of persons with disabilities (OPD) or disabled people’s organisation (DPO)</b>	Organisations run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. This guidance chooses to use OPD as this term is consistent with the concept of using person-first language. OPDs exist to represent the interests of their members. OPDs differ from service providers and other disability-focused organisations, which may advocate for the rights or interests of people with disabilities, but which typically do not have a membership and leadership made up solely or primarily of people with disabilities. Some OPDs represent people with all impairment types, while others may focus on a impairment type or sectoral issue, or represent geographical areas (local, provincial, national, regional or international) them.

## Annex 3: References

1. World report on Disability (2011), World Health Organisation, [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html) <sup>1</sup>
2. United Nations Factsheet on persons with disabilities (2011), available at <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/pwdfs.pdf>
3. ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021. 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. ABS Cat. No. 4430.0 Canberra: ABS.
4. UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 13 December 2006, A/RES/61/106, Annex I, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4680cd212.html> [accessed 16 November 2021]
5. UNFPA (2005), Promoting Gender Equality, accessed at <http://www.unfpa.org/gender/>
6. Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda: “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet”, available at [https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_Road\\_to\\_Dignity\\_by\\_2030.pdf](https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf)

## Useful resources

Plan and CBM (2015) Practice Note: Collecting and Using Data to Inform Disability Inclusive Development, available at [https://www.cbmuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/plan-cbm-nossal\\_disability-data-collection-practice-note\\_july2015\\_1607.pdf](https://www.cbmuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/plan-cbm-nossal_disability-data-collection-practice-note_july2015_1607.pdf)

CBM Australia (2012) Inclusion Made Easy: A Quick Program Guide to Disability in Development, available at [https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/cbm\\_inclusion\\_made\\_easy\\_a\\_quick\\_guide\\_to\\_disability\\_in\\_development.pdf](https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/cbm_inclusion_made_easy_a_quick_guide_to_disability_in_development.pdf)

ACFID Good Practice Guidance - <https://acfid.asn.au/content/commitment-24-we-promote-empowerment-people-disabilities#good-practice-guidance>

ACFID guidance for the development of a Disability Inclusion Policy. <https://acfid.asn.au/news/acfid-releases-guidance-development-disability-inclusion-policy>

DID4All - <https://www.did4all.com.au/>. For further information on collecting data and different options, please refer to Bush A., Carroll A. and James K., (2015), [https://www.did4all.com.au/Resources/Plan-CBM-Nossal\\_Disability-Data-Collection-Practice-Note\\_2016Update.pdf](https://www.did4all.com.au/Resources/Plan-CBM-Nossal_Disability-Data-Collection-Practice-Note_2016Update.pdf)

United Nations Social Development Network Disability Resources - <https://unsdn.org/category/thematic-areas/disabilities/>

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<sup>1</sup> [Note: no update or more recent global data was found during the review in 2021]