

Appendix 4. Disability Inclusion Policy

(Next review by June 2027)

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Responsible person	CEO	Scheduled review date by	June 2027

Introduction

Assisi Aid Projects (Assisi) is committed to recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of all people, including people with disabilities, in all of Assisi's organisational and program level activities.

Assisi adopts the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) consideration of 'persons with disabilities' to 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".

The explicit inclusion of people with disabilities as active participants in development processes leads to broader benefits for families and communities, reduces the impacts of poverty, and positively contributes to a country's economic growth.

Barriers faced by people with disabilities can be **environmental** (physical barriers relating to building structures and accessibility), **institutional** (exclusion due to a knowledge gap; inadequate or inflexible legislation, policies or standards), **communicative** (where information is presented through limited forms of communication), or **attitudinal** (stigmatisation or discrimination is based on assumption of what people with disabilities can or can't do and what they need or do not need).

People with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than those without disabilities, and are denied basic human rights. They often have limited access to health care and education, have difficulty finding employment, face significant stigma and discrimination, and are often excluded from fully participating in community life. They face further marginalisation due to intersecting factors such as gender, sexuality, or geographical location. Women and girls with disabilities can experience multiple disadvantages and discrimination resulting from the interplay between poverty, disability and gender.

Purpose

This policy outlines Assisi's approach to supporting and strengthening the inclusion of people with disabilities across all aspects of the organisation's operations in Australia and overseas.

Scope

The policy applies to all Assisi staff, members, Governing Body members (including Committee of Management and subcommittee members), volunteers, interns, representatives, contractors, and visitors to project sites (hereinafter referred to as "personnel").

In addition, Assisi supports in-country partners to incorporate the principles of this policy into their workplace practices, and to implement strategies that strengthen the inclusion of people with disabilities across all aspects of their operations.

Policy

Assisi's organisational focus on progressing gender equality frames the approach to all its policies. This context informs Assisi's commitment to helping make visible the nature and impact of intersectional discrimination experienced by people, in particular women and girls with disabilities, and addressing barriers to access and participation.

Strengthening disability inclusion in Assisi's work extends to two areas: Australia and overseas.

Assisi's Approach

To strengthen disability inclusion, Assisi adopts the following approach:

- Using a twin-track approach that involves disability-specific initiatives and disability mainstreaming to ensure all of Assisi's development programs are inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Integrating disability considerations at all levels of the program management cycle, including design, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation approaches, together with all implementation (e.g. appropriate accommodations that ensure people with disabilities can fully access and participate in project activities).
- Integrating disability inclusion in all of Assisi's organisational policies and guidelines.
- Adopting a "do no harm" approach to ensure that projects and activities do not unintentionally perpetuate or reinforce stigma or discrimination of people with disabilities.
- Adopting a 'nothing about us without us' approach, which recognises that people with disabilities have the right to participate in all decisions that affect them.

Disability inclusion in Assisi's head office work in Australia

Assisi is committed to creating a work environment that is safe, with equal opportunities for all staff and volunteers. Assisi will act in accordance with Federal Legislation, specifically the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Fair Work Act 2009.

Assisi will:

- Provide reasonable adjustments for Assisi personnel with disabilities to participate in organisational processes on an equal basis with others, whether the disability is an existing or an acquired condition, or of a temporary or permanent nature.
- Provide adequate resources to ensure that appropriate equipment and support services are available to personnel with disabilities where reasonably possible.
- Develop and strategies to respond to any identified barriers to disability equity and inclusion, including discriminatory attitudes.
- Support relevant collaborative initiatives through the Australian Disability and Development Consortium by sharing knowledge, particularly in relation to evidence of intersecting discrimination for women and girls with disabilities and how programming can promote their equal rights.
- Provide training and awareness raising on disability inclusive practices to Assisi personnel.

Disability inclusion in overseas programs supported by Assisi

Assisi is committed to mainstreaming disability inclusion in its programming work. Assisi recognises the importance of working with local partners to strengthen their capacity in disability inclusive development, including:

- ‘Nothing about us without us’ - Encourage partners to involve people with disabilities in program-related decision-making at all stages to ensure that they are primary agents in addressing their own development priorities.
- Ensure program activities target the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities, by addressing barriers to their participation and benefitting from projects on an equal basis and taking into consideration the interaction of gender, disability and poverty when designing program activities.
- Ensure all concepts, proposals and project designs (including risk assessment and project budgets) are appraised to ensure disability equity and inclusion is adequately addressed.
- Support partners to integrate disability analysis into their situation analyses in consultation with persons of disabilities where possible.
- Ensure representation of people with disabilities in project level activities.
- Monitor and evaluate program activities in relation to reach, access and outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Encourage partners to liaise closely with local women’s organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities, to support understanding of local issues and priorities for women and girls with disabilities in particular.
- Support partners to develop policies and programs that take into account the rights of, and equitable outcomes for, people with disabilities.

- Support partners with disability inclusion training and up-to-date information on disability inclusive development practices when identified as a gap.

Responsibilities

As outlined in the Good Practice Manual, there are roles and responsibilities that apply to all policies. There are no other specific responsibilities that apply to this policy.

Related Documents

Assisi – Human Resources section

Assisi – Program Manual

United Nations – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Legislation – Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Legislation – Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Legislation – Fair Work Act 2009.