

MISSIONS AGENCY
DISABILITY IN DEVELOPMENT
POLICY TEMPLATE

APPLICABILITY: [Mission Agency] Staff, Partners and
Strategic Stakeholders

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AUTHORISED BY: [Mission Agency/Organisation] Board/CEO

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PREAMBLE

Purpose

The focus of this policy paper is inclusivity in missions and missions development. This policy paper addresses the subject of disability¹, inclusion and the body of Christ in missions. In the Preamble, we outline in broad strokes the core tenets, beliefs and values undergirding the policies and procedures detailed in the body of the document.

Theological mandate

The body of Christ (the church) is quintessentially an inclusive body. It is inclusive because all people were created in Him, through Him and for Him (John 1:3; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Genesis 1:26-27). We believe, therefore, that inclusion is theologically mandated for all parts of the body of Christ. Using broad definitions, we see this theological mandate as applicable to all churches (both denominations and individual congregations), all Bible colleges and Christian training centres, and all Christian missionary organisations.

Onus on missions

With respect to missions, we therefore believe that there is an onus on all engaged with missions to purposefully construct a missions structure that embraces people with disabilities. Mission structures must offer people with disabilities meaningful, sustainable avenues for receiving salvation (Mark 16:15; 2 Peter 3:9b), for developing the image of God within them (Genesis 1:26-27; Colossians 1:27) and for allowing the Holy Spirit to develop their unique, God-given gifts and witness (Ephesians 2:10; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:8) – just as such avenues are developed for people without a disability.

We recognise that all people, with or without disability, have unique strengths and giftings, difficulties and challenges. Each set differs from person to person. As such, each missions worker (prospective or active) with disability should be considered unique, and their specific circumstances considered when supporting and counselling them in missions.

Whilst we give priority to Christian theology and sound biblical principles in developing the policies and procedures detailed in this document, we also acknowledge the need to comply with all relevant legislation; both that enacted in the missions sending nation and that enacted in the host nation (see **Standards** section).

Values & ethics

We recognise that missions activity is multi-faceted and multi-sectoral, and that policies and procedures will be adapted to suit the different national, cultural and social contexts within which missions activities are carried out. Notwithstanding, in the application of these policies and procedures a core set of values and ethical standards will be common across all contexts.

We believe that love for and empowerment of people with a disability will drive all policies and procedures. In order to empower people with a disability, it is imperative that we develop a space and a relationship with them so that they are able to express their own preferences, life objectives and dreams, being assured that their voice is heard and valued.

¹ The definition of disability is that defined by the United National Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability (CRPD), 2006

We understand that all people with a disability live in a web of significant others – family members, care-givers, support workers, etc. – all of whom are impacted by our policies and procedures. Whilst empowering persons with a disability, we need to involve their significant others in all facets of the development and application of policies and procedures. In line with this holistic approach, we acknowledge that all people with a disability grow up in a given culture and an established community. Not only does this oblige us to consider community when applying policies and procedures in a given context but it may require community involvement too. All policies and procedures must be applied in a culturally relevant manner or risk imposing a ‘foreign way’ of doing things.

Finally, all policies and procedures are to display the highest ethical standards. All communications – oral, written or via images (photos, videos, etc.) – will portray disabled people in a dignified way, holistically, accurately and with an emphasis on their capacity and agency to share in the determination of their own future and the future of their community.

STANDARDS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) outlines the rights of people with disabilities and the responsibilities of nations and other duty bearers to uphold and promote these rights. In applying our theological mandate, as outlined in the preamble, we shall inherently support the CRPD and the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals related to inclusion.

We equally acknowledge our obligation to act within the laws of the countries in which we operate, as well as to hold duty-bearers within those countries accountable for promoting and ensuring disability inclusion.

[Agency/Organisation] adheres to relevant Australian law outlined in legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. These legislations have then been embodied in the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

As a member of ACFID and signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct (2015), [Agency/Organisation] has committed to promoting disability inclusion within our development and humanitarian initiatives and internal operations. [Agency/Organisation] also recognises our responsibility to promote best practice under the ACFID Code of Conduct in our development projects.

[Agency/Organisation] is guided by organisations leading the way in this area, including CBM’s work in the following document: ‘Inclusion Made Easy: A quick program guide to disability in development’².

SCOPE

Those who fall within the scope below are required to read, sign and adhere to the [Agency/Organisation] Disability Inclusion Policy.

- All [Agency/Organisation] Staff including but not limited to employees, contractors and consultants.
- All [Agency/Organisation] Field Workers.
- All [Agency/Organisation] Associates.

² CBM, ‘Inclusion Made Easy: A quick program guide to disability in development’, 2012

- All [Agency/Organisation] Strategic Partners including any organisation receiving [Agency/Organisation] funding in Australia or abroad to implement activities including but not limited to community development, disaster response or non-development activities.
- All [Agency/Organisation] Board Members.

This policy is recommended for [Agency/Organisation] Stakeholders defined below.

- All [Agency/Organisation] Volunteers including but not limited to office- and event-based volunteers.

INTERNAL COMMITMENTS AND STRATEGIES

[Agency/Organisation] Board and Governance personnel are committed to the following:

- Embed **inclusive language, thinking and actions** into all relevant proceedings and practices.
- Initiate inclusive Board and Governance **decision-making processes**, consulting with and/or involving persons with disability or disability focal persons.
- Ensure specific **budget allocation** to disability inclusion across the organisation.
- Support management to **promote experiences and resources** that train leaders and the broader staff base to practice inclusiveness and to identify gaps that require attention.
- Review advances in [Agency/Organisation]'s inclusion agenda, in part through an annual **internal audit**.
- Determine **enablers and barriers** to [Agency/Organisation] inclusiveness, and help management identify actions to promote and correct each.
- Establish and regularly review a **disability discrimination policy** for the organisation, accounting for indirect discrimination such as physical environments, reasonable accommodations.

[Agency/Organisation] is committed through its organisational development to outwork the following:

- Ensure that **barriers to employment and active participation at [Agency/Organisation] are removed** and that the workplace is accessible for people with disabilities.
- Provide **targeted support and services** to staff with disabilities.
- Assign a **focal person** with the responsibility of ensuring the mainstreaming of biblically based disability inclusion across ministry/program design and activities.
- Routinely **engage** our staff with disabilities to inform our disability inclusion standards and approaches.
- Ensure **continual learning** as a staff to enhance our awareness, knowledge, capacity and strategies in this area.
- Develop **resources and stakeholder communications** that reduce barriers and ensure accessibility for people with a disability.

[Agency/Organisation] is committed to working with our partners and field workers to undertake the following:

- Promote the **active participation and the creation of opportunities** for people with disabilities. This involves the inclusion and contributions of people with a disability in every phase of a project cycle.

- Assess all **ministry/program design documents** to ensure the mainstreaming of disability inclusion.
- Develop **capacity building** plans to ensure partners' clear understanding of disability inclusion.
- Encourage specific **budget allocation** to disability inclusion.
- Complement field programs with **targeted support and services** to empower people with disabilities.
- Continue to **network** with organisations that specialise in working with people with disabilities, and **refer** those which may be useful for partners.

STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS

All **[Agency/Organisation]** stakeholders are expected to consider disability inclusion in all programming and activities. They are also expected to create plans and strategies unique to their context, size and programs.

[Agency/Organisation] is committed to **helping stakeholders** meet these expectations through:

- providing training and capacity building opportunities;
- sharing relevant information and resources; and,
- ongoing coaching and support.

REVIEWING THE POLICY

This Disability Inclusion Policy and Code of Conduct will be reviewed every **x months/years**. **[Agency/Organisation] General Manager/CEO/Board** will manage the review, and stakeholders will be consulted during this process.