



Policy title:	Disability Inclusion	Version 2	January 2021
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1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines IWDA's principles and practices to achieve disability inclusion and articulates IWDA's roles and responsibilities in promoting recognition of the needs, interests and multiple discriminations faced by women and girls living with disabilities. The policy reflects and demonstrates IWDA's commitment to addressing intersecting barriers to the achievement of gender justice and the empowerment of women.

2. SCOPE

The commitments made in this policy apply to all aspects of IWDA's operations, programs and partnerships, including our organisational culture and behaviour; our development programs, and our engagement with Australian and international partners.

This Policy applies to all staff (casual, fixed-term or permanent), board members, volunteers, interns, and contractors (together called "IWDA personnel")

3. POLICY

IWDA is committed to recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of all people, including those who live with disabilities. IWDA acknowledges its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), Fair Work Act (2009), the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

It is estimated that twenty per cent of the world's poorest people have a disability¹ and women with disabilities are over-represented amongst the poorest². IWDA understands that impairments of various kinds are universal, and it is physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers of various kinds that convert these impairments into barriers to rights and participation. Use of universal design principles that enable engagement and participation by people with a wide range of abilities would remove many of the barriers currently experienced by people with disabilities, as well as those who are unwell, elderly and frail, or navigating spaces while carrying or shepherding young children including in prams.

IWDA's organisational focus on progressing women's rights and gender equality informs and frames our approach to all our policies. In the context of disability inclusion, IWDA has a particular focus on women with disabilities noting one in five women globally has a disability³. IWDA recognises women and girls with disabilities experience discrimination and stigma based on their gender, the nature and severity of their disability and other perceived and actual markers of identity. Women with disabilities are two to three times more likely to experience violence than women without disabilities and men with disabilities in their communities⁴.

¹ CBM 2018 Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit

² WHO 2011

³ ibid

⁴ UNFPA (2018) Women and Young Persons with Disabilities: Guidelines for Providing Rights-Based and Gender-Responsive Services to Address Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for Women and Young Persons with Disabilities

Multiple and intersecting sources of discrimination impact on their ability to realise their rights including to participate fully in their communities and access public services, education, health and employment opportunities. Women with disabilities are frequently marginalised from development activities, including 'disability inclusive' and gender transformative activities not counted in research and their specific concerns may not be well recognised by either women-focused or disability-focused organisations. Women with disabilities have historically been excluded from the women's rights movement. These barriers could result in the development of programs, services and policies that do not adequately reflect the needs and rights of women and girls with disabilities.

This context informs IWDA's commitment to helping make visible the nature and impact of overlapping sources of discrimination experienced by women and girls with disabilities and addressing the barriers that undermine their participation. We seek to work with women with disabilities through research, programming and collaborative advocacy, and contribute to available evidence and strengthened research and development practices as they relate to women with disabilities. The research collaboration *Triple Jeopardy: Discrimination and rights violations against women with disabilities in Cambodia* is an example of this approach.

3.1 Disability inclusion in our program work and research

IWDA integrates disability considerations at all levels in our program management cycle, including design, appraisal and monitoring approaches.

IWDA aims to specifically address the needs and multiple discriminations faced by people with disabilities and to ensure our program activities consider and seek to include those who are particularly marginalised, especially women and girls with disabilities by:

- a) Recognising, respecting and promoting rights of all people, including, specifically, women and girls with disabilities.
- b) Using a twin-track approach that involves activities with disability-specific initiatives and mainstreaming to ensure all of our development programs are inclusive of people with disabilities.
- c) Supporting policies, programs and research which address the intersection of gender equality and disability inclusion.
- d) Contributing to wider sectoral awareness through communicating evidence of intersecting discrimination and its implications on women and girls with disabilities, and developing and sharing practical tools including through presentations, learning activities and other outreach.
- e) Working with women's rights organisations and Disabled Peoples Organisations that are inclusive of women with disabilities to inform our approaches and to build linkages between gender equality and disability inclusion advocacy and work.
- f) Promoting use of the Equality Insights survey to strengthen available data on the circumstances of women with disabilities.
- g) Involving Disabled People's Organisations in training enumerators for Equality Insights surveys, to support data collection and analysis, and strengthen awareness of barriers to inclusion.
- h) Joining or supporting relevant collaborative initiatives through the Australian Disability and Development Consortium to strengthen awareness of how the intersection of gender and disability affects development opportunities and outcomes.
- i) Supporting partner organisations to develop policies and programs to identify and reach women and girls with disabilities and encourage activities that address the intersection between gender and disability.
- j) Integrating the Washington Group short questions on disability into appropriate data collection tools, such as Equality Insights.

- k) Reporting disability specific data wherever feasible and appropriate and working with partners to strengthen this reporting.
- l) Developing processes to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of program activities takes into account impact on and outcomes for people with disability.
- m) Creating greater awareness among governments and other relevant institutions of their obligations to support and empower women with disabilities, individually and collectively, to claim their rights, through IWDA's policy development and influencing work.
- n) Building IWDA personnel capacity and knowledge in the area of disability inclusion through education, training, research, tool development and sharing relevant resources.

In undertaking research or program activities that specifically focus on women and girls with disabilities, IWDA will be guided by the following principles and learnings:

- a) Nothing about us without us'. Involving women and girls with disabilities as active agents in research and program activities informed by rights based approaches to disability demonstrates IWDA's commitment to enabling voice and empowerment. For example, employing women with disabilities as professional researchers.
- b) Involve women's organisations and disabled people's organisations, to support understanding of issues and priorities, action on findings, and accountability for change.
- c) Use mixed methods. Qualitative methods enable women and girls with disabilities to speak directly about their experience, underline its impact and significance and the ethical and political imperative of acting. Quantitative data points to the scale of an issue and can communicate the importance of acting.
- d) Where appropriate, compare the experiences of women and girls with diverse disabilities and women and girls without disability, to highlight differences and similarities and support comparative understanding by individuals without lived experience of disability.
- e) Use research to inform programming, and follow up research with program activities. Evidence-based programming supports more effective development. Research without follow up action is less likely to lead to change.
- f) Focus tools development and programming on addressing key barriers to inclusion.
- g) Co-design and/or test materials with women with diverse disabilities as women with different types of disabilities experience different communication barriers and materials/messages may need to be tailored for a variety of audiences
- h) Promote both policy and practice change.

3.2 Disability inclusion in our organisation

Acknowledging the significance of access and equality for people with a disability, and the provision of a workplace free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, IWDA is committed to:

- a) Applying human resources policies and practices that support and enable diversity and inclusion.
- b) Providing reasonable adjustments for IWDA personnel whether the disability is an existing or an acquired condition, or of a temporary or permanent nature.
- c) Providing adequate resources to ensure that appropriate equipment and support services are available to IWDA personnel with a disability where reasonably possible.
- d) Endeavoring to make workplace information and IWDA internal and external communication more accessible for people with a disability.
- e) Maximising the accessibility and usability of IWDA's work environment, and making reasonable adjustments as required, for IWDA personnel with a disability. For example, both our current office space and our previous office space were modified to

be accessible, including provision of accessible toilet and shower facilities.

- f) Having due regard for each person's right to privacy and confidentiality when seeking information about their disability for the purpose of making reasonable adjustments.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the interpretation and application of this policy.

IWDA contracts of employment require each IWDA personnel to understand and implement this policy in the context of their position and responsibilities.

IWDA personnel can make a complaint using the process outlined in IWDA's Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy where they believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably in any matter related to their employment because of their disability.

5. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

The policy and supporting procedures will be formally reviewed every three years and any amendments made at the discretion of the Board.

6. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, IWDA acknowledges the definitions of disability below, contained in applicable legislation.

Disability - Includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities. It also includes physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms, such as human immunodeficiency virus. It covers disabilities that people have now, had in the past, may have in the future or which they are believed to have. (The Disability Discrimination Act 1992).

In Victoria, it is also against the law to discriminate against a person because they have: an assistance aid, such as equipment including a palliative or therapeutic device; an assistant, for example, an interpreter or a reader; or an assistance dog (Equal Opportunity Act 2010).

Reasonable adjustment – These are changes that employers, educational authorities and goods and services providers are required to make so that a person with disability can do their job, participate in education or access good and services (Equal Opportunity Act 2010).

In its policy and programming work, IWDA's approach is also informed by a social model of disability, which sees 'disability' as the result of interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It is these barriers that need to change if people living with impairments are to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

7. REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy is to be read in conjunction with IWDA's Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Working from Home Policy and Code of Conduct together with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) and the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Useful resources and tools:

ACFID (2015) *Practice Note: Disability Inclusive Development*, available at: https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Disability-Inclusive-Development-Practice-Note.pdf

Astbury, J. and F. Walji (2013). *Triple Jeopardy: Gender-based violence and human rights violations experienced by women with disabilities in Cambodia*, AusAID Research Working Paper 1, January 2013, available at: https://www.iwda.org.au/assets/files/20130204_TripleJeopardyReport.pdf

CBM (2018) *Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit*, available at https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/CBM-DID-TOOLKIT-accessible.pdf

CBM (2015). *Collecting and using data on disability to inform inclusive development*, available at: http://www.addc.org.au/documents/resources/plan-cbm-nossal_disability-data-collection-practice-note_july2015_1607.pdf

CBM (2012) *Inclusion Made Easy: a quick program guide to disability in development*, <http://www.cbm.org/Inclusion-Made-Easy-329091.php>

Crawford J., AM. Nobelius and J. Webber (2015), 'Triple Jeopardy: Ethical considerations in researching violence against women with disability in Cambodia', *ACFID University Network Case Study Series: Ethical Research in Development*. Available at: https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Triple-Jeopardy.pdf

IWDA, Monash University, CBM Australia, Cambodia Disabled Persons Organisation Banteay Srei (2013), *Challenging Discrimination against Women with Disabilities: A Community Toolkit*, available at: <https://www.iwda.org.au/assets/files/Triple-Jeopardy-Community-Toolkit.pdf> in English and Khmer.

IWDA, Monash University, CBM Australia, Cambodia Disabled Persons Organisation and Banteay Srei (2013), *Research Policy Brief: Triple Jeopardy: Violence against women with disabilities in Cambodia*. Australian Government, Australian Agency for International Development. Available at <https://www.iwda.org.au/assets/files/Triple-Jeopardy-Brief-English.pdf>

Pacific Disability Forum (2015). *Toolkit on Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities in Fiji*, available at: [http://www.pacificdisability.org/getattachment/Resources/PDF-Resources/Toolkit-on-Eliminating-Violence-Against-Women-And-Girls-With-Disabilities-In-Fiji-\(1\).pdf.aspx](http://www.pacificdisability.org/getattachment/Resources/PDF-Resources/Toolkit-on-Eliminating-Violence-Against-Women-And-Girls-With-Disabilities-In-Fiji-(1).pdf.aspx)

UNFPA (2018) *Women and Young Persons with Disabilities: Guidelines for Providing Rights-Based and Gender-Responsive Services to Address Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for Women and Young Persons with Disabilities*. <https://www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/women-and-young-persons-disabilities>

World Health Organization & World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability 2011*. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44575>