

DISABILITY INCLUSION POLICY

First Adopted 1997 as a Cross-cutting Issues Policy

Revised May 2021

Date of next review: 2024

Disability inclusion means understanding the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society, and making sure everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.

PURPOSE OF POLICY:

This policy outlines Every Home Global Concern's (EHGC) principles and practices for the achievement of disability inclusion in its work and determines the roles and responsibilities needed to ensure recognition of the needs, interests and discriminations faced by men, women, boys and girls living with disabilities. This policy takes into account the interaction of gender and disabilities across both organisational and program design and practice.

SCOPE OF POLICY:

The commitments made in this policy apply to all aspects of EHGC'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, board members and volunteers in Australia and to EHGC's partners overseas.

POLICY

EHGC is committed to recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of all people, including those who live with disabilities. It is estimated that twenty per cent of the world's poorest people have a disability, one in five being women.

EHGC is committed to the use of *universal design principles*, which make it possible for all people to be included in development activities, with some reasonable accommodation so that people with disabilities can enjoy their rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others.

EHGC will take a *twin track approach* – specifically targeting people with disabilities AND integrating disability sensitive measures into project and policy design, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation approaches.

Data collection and analysis with regard to both disability and gender will be encouraged to strengthen awareness of *barriers to inclusion* and to help formulate improved practices.

Reporting will include *disability-specific data* wherever feasible and appropriate and EHGC will work with partners to strengthen this reporting and to develop processes that will ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of program activities take into account the impact on and outcomes for people with disability. EHGC is committed to evidence-based programming, which supports more effective development.

EHGC will work with *overseas partners* to build personnel capacity and knowledge in the area of disability inclusion through education, training, tool development and sharing of relevant resources. In undertaking research or program activities that specifically focus on women and girls with disabilities, EHGC will involve women and girls with disabilities as active agents in determining program activities, enabling empowerment and leading to targeted outcomes.

EHGC acknowledges the significance of access and equality for people with a disability, and the provision of a workplace free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. **EHGC will make reasonable adjustments as required, for personnel with a disability**, having due regard for each person's right to privacy and confidentiality when seeking information about their disability.

IMPLEMENTATION

EHGC will proactively support an organisational commitment to disability inclusion and the Executive Director in liaison with the Board of Directors will be responsible for the interpretation and application of this policy.

An **organisational commitment** requires -

1. *Contracts of Employment* which will require EHGC personnel to understand and implement this policy in the context of their position and responsibilities.
2. EHGC personnel can make a *complaint* using the process outlined in the Complaints, Bullying and Harassment Policies where they believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably in any matter related to their employment because of their disability.
3. The development of *supporting documentation to guide the shift from policy to practice* so that EHGC has clarity on how the policy will be implemented, both within the organisation and with implementing partners.
4. Implementing disability inclusive practices through *recruitment processes and reasonable accommodation*.
5. Implementing *disability inclusive practices in overseas development programming*, such as –
 - consultation with persons of disability and analysis of barriers,
 - meaningful participation and empowerment, including participation in decision making
 - monitoring, evaluation and learning to understand progress in implementing disability inclusive practice

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, EHGC 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 (HIV). 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, EHGC'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.

EHGC acknowledges its *obligations* under –

- the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- the Fair Work Act (2009)
- the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities(UNCRPD).

Related EHGC Policies:

Protection of Vulnerable Individuals Policy

Policy on Gender and Development

Child Protection Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Complaints Policy