

DISABILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

ORGANISATION:	Kokoda Track Foundation
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POLICY TITLE:	Disability & Social Inclusion Policy
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ALLIED POLICIES:	Code of Conduct Anti-Discrimination Policy Child Protection Policy Gender Equality Policy
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INTRODUCTION

Internationally, about 1 billion people live with disability (15% of the population). Of these people, 80% live in developing countries. Children, youth, and carers with disability have the same rights as everyone else. However, they are frequently ignored, discriminated against, and marginalised.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) requires governments to uphold the rights of people with disabilities and protect them from discrimination. This Treaty is considered an instrument of human rights for people with disabilities, enabling and empowering all people with disabilities to be active, fully integrated members of society. It provides people with disabilities the same status as people without disabilities, as affirmed in the Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

KTF is committed to development in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs indicate that disability is an internationally agreed development goal with the focus on inclusion and equal opportunities.

Social inclusion calls for equal opportunities to be promoted to all, regardless of ability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, stature, race and ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, family and social background, economic status, physical and mental health, by facilitating participation in society for those disadvantaged and marginalised by their identity. We recognise and address the intersectionality of these identities, understanding that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination. We are committed to identifying and eliminating barriers that marginalise groups, ensuring inclusivity for everyone.

PNG CONTEXT

The CRPD was ratified by PNG in 2013 and the government is therefore bound by law to uphold this agreement. Whilst there are no official statistics for the number of people with disabilities in Papua New Guinea (PNG), we can apply the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s estimate that 15% of the world's populations have some form of disability or impairment. This equates to approximately 1,290,900 people in PNG who are living with some form of disability or impairment. Of this group about 2%, or about 26,000 people receive services. This means that the bulk of people with disabilities (i.e. the remaining 98%, or 1,264,900 people in PNG), are not receiving any support.

Persons with disabilities and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) community often face barriers such as lack of access to services and limited opportunity to participate in matters that concern them. These groups can be excluded through legal systems, education systems, labour markets and through attitudes and stigmatisation. Removing physical and attitudinal barriers which exclude the participation of marginalised people in our projects is the reason for the development of this policy.

Failure to address barriers leads to exclusion. Exclusion of groups has an economic impact on both the person and on a country's GDP through reduced participation in economic activity. Exclusion can lead to poverty and poverty can exacerbate the impact of a disability. Children and females with disability are particularly vulnerable and at greatest risk of being excluded from regular activities. There is a link between poverty and disability through exclusion, which affects education outcomes and income earning opportunities. Poverty may increase the risk of disability through malnutrition, inadequate access to education and health care, unsafe working conditions, a polluted environment, and lack of access to safe water and sanitation. Disability may increase the risk of poverty, through lack of employment and education

opportunities, lower wages, discrimination, and increased cost of living with a disability.

Disability and social inclusive development envisions a society that values and enfranchises all people with disabilities, people of all ages, all gender identities and all ethnic and racial groups. Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF) adopts a rights-based approach to disability, gender, and ethnic identity and as such views the person first, and recognises capacity, right to participation, and inclusion for all. KTF is committed to ensuring that all individuals have equal access to its education, health, equality, and leadership programs in PNG. KTF works to ensure that all of its development projects include a disability and social inclusion perspective and are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

International cooperation through NGOs such as KTF can assist low-resource countries in implementing the activities required to adhere to the CRPD.

POLICY

KTF's programs and projects seek to remove barriers to participation, fostering equal opportunities and equitable outcomes for all. KTF is committed to the core principles of "twin-track" programming approaches and ensuring accessibility to empower individuals, including people with disabilities and people from marginalised backgrounds, in exercising their human rights on an equal basis with others. KTF actively engages with Disabled Persons Organisations, local communities, and marginalised groups to guide program design and delivery, ensuring inclusive participation. This commitment extends to raising awareness about meeting the needs and upholding the rights of people with disabilities and individuals facing marginalisation. This policy has been developed in line with the Articles of the UN CRPD.

PRINCIPLES

KTF is committed to the following principles:

- Commitment to social inclusion – KTF is committed to equal opportunity and social inclusion for its staff, directors and volunteers and actively promotes inclusion and participation by all;
- Representation of Disabled Persons Organisations (DPO's): The slogan of the disability movement is "Nothing about us without us". This means that people with disabilities need to be represented in all activities and decision-making processes that affect them. DPO's are representative organisations run by and for people with disabilities and provide a way for the voices of people with disabilities to be heard and their perspectives included. DPO's are a critical partner in disability inclusive development.
- Accessibility to programs – KTF is committed to ensuring that individuals with a disability have access to its education, health, equality, and leadership programs in PNG. It can do this by:
 - Consulting with DPOs and employing or engaging local people with disabilities in line with the "Nothing about us without us" principle;
 - Ensuring the physical environment is accessible, including accommodation and transportation;
 - Provision of disability training and awareness for staff, directors, volunteers, and partners;
 - Appointing a person with authority who has responsibility for disability inclusion;
 - Specific training for staff involved in assessing project/partner applications and developing proposal assessment criteria;
 - Disaggregating research and monitoring data according to disability, including types of disability and impact.
 - Ensure equal opportunities for all;
 - Ensure full participation and inclusion with a focus on age and gender;
 - Understand the different issues faced by females with a disability compared with males with a disability and ensure gender balance in project participation;
 - Promote an attitude of respect towards people with disabilities
- Twin-track approach: Implement concurrent activities that include disability-specific initiatives targeted at people with disabilities, as well as disability mainstreaming initiatives ensuring that all development programs are inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Create a discrimination-free workplace – KTF is committed to fostering a discrimination-free and inclusive workplace in both its administrative base in Australia and its PNG programs.
- Human rights-based approach– KTF is committed to the following human rights-based principles:
 - Equality and non-discrimination in all actions
 - Participation and inclusion as a goal and a means
 - Placing people at the centre of development as agents for change
 - Awareness of the barriers face by persons with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, racial and ethnic minorities, and the elderly

- Need to work with the most excluded and disadvantaged to improve the situation for the whole community
- Right to education, health, social protection and employment

DEFINITIONS

The Preamble of the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities states “Disability is an evolving (ever changing) concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments (things that limit their ability to function) and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders (limits) full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. Disability is sometimes summarised in the formula impairment + barriers = disability. It is not just the person and not just the barriers in their environment but the combination of both of them that lead to a person having a disability.

Types of disability may include:

- loss of physical or mental functions, for example, a person who has quadriplegia, brain injury, epilepsy or who has a vision or hearing impairment;
- loss of part of the body, for example, a person with an amputation or a person who has had a pacemaker implanted;
- infectious and non-infectious diseases and illnesses, for example, a person with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis or tuberculosis, a person with allergies or who carries typhoid bacteria;
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body, for example, a person with diabetes or asthma or a person with a birthmark or scar;
- a condition which means a person learns differently from other people, for example, a person with autism, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or an intellectual disability;
- any condition which affects a person's thought processes, understanding of reality, emotions or judgment or which results in disturbed behaviour, for example, a person with a psychiatric condition, neurosis or personality disorder; and
- mental illness such as depression, anxiety.

And a disability is one that:

- is present; or
- once existed but doesn't any more, for example, a person who has had a back injury, a heart attack or an episode of psychiatric illness; or
- may exist in the future, for example, a person with a genetic predisposition to a disease, such as Huntington's disease or heart disease or a person who is HIV positive.

The World Bank defines social inclusion as “the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity”.

Intersectionality refers to the recognition of the interconnected and overlapping nature of various social identities. KTF recognises the multidimensional nature of disability and that individuals encompassing various identities, such as people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, ethnic and racial minorities, and the elderly, have the same human rights as others. This includes the right to full participation in development. Intersectionality acknowledges that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination or privilege based on the combination of these identities. KTF is committed to addressing intersectionality by considering diverse needs of individuals from marginalised backgrounds.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

KTF will abide by a rights-based approach in the implementation of all activities. The policy dictates that disability and social inclusion-sensitive measures will be incorporated into all aspects of each project, as a key cross-cutting issue, from project design, operation and implementation, through to monitoring and evaluation. This will facilitate inclusion and build the capacity of people of marginalised groups. Targeted support will be provided when required.

Greater inclusiveness will be achieved by engaging and collaborating with Disabled People’s Organisations in-country.

DPOs will be consulted at critical stages of project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

KTF's disability-social inclusive development will avoid widening the gap between persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities. Without full inclusion in development projects, it is likely that the socio-economic status of marginalised persons will remain unchanged while that of other members of society will grow, resulting in a greater disparity and development gap.

KTF will apply the "twin-track" approach endorsed by the Australian aid program which will provide both targeted support to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities and mainstreaming to ensure inclusion in all project activities.

KTF will undertake the following activities to fulfil its Disability and Social Inclusion Policy commitments:

- Promote the importance of disability-inclusive development practices in poverty alleviation and sustainable development to staff and partner organisations;
- Provide staff with regular disability and social inclusion awareness training and up-to-date information on inclusive development practices;
- Allocate adequate time, budget and human resources to enable persons with disabilities to participate in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Implement Anti-Discrimination Workplace Policy which upholds human rights and prevents discrimination against people with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, ethnic and racial minorities, and the elderly working for KTF;
- Conduct a disability and gender analysis for all projects. This is needed to identify the different risks, barriers and strategies for responding to individuals' vulnerability, particularly persons with disabilities. A disability analysis should be holistic, and explore the system around people with disabilities, considering the various genders. This includes Disabled Persons Organisations, service providers and community groups, recognising their potential impact on persons with disabilities. Disability analyses will aim to strengthen the program or project aligning with a twin-track approach, strengthen stakeholder and partner capacity and aim for inclusive participation of marginalised people.
- Implement disability-specific initiatives targeted at people with disabilities, and mainstream disability-inclusive practices into all other programs and projects;
- Identify marginalised people within communities to ensure their inclusion in KTF projects - outreach awareness to remote villages will achieve this;
- Monitor and evaluate projects and programs in order to track the difference they are making to marginalised people and use disability and social inclusive M&E (including data disaggregation and information about barriers to inclusion);
- Partner with DPOs, persons with disabilities and persons from gender, sexual, racial, ethnic and age minority groups in order to build an understanding of their lived experience, including experiences of exclusion and vulnerability, and how to best respond using local resources and services and to gain a local perspective;
- Use appropriate and respectful language and terminology, and challenge staff and partners who perpetuate discrimination against people;
- Aim to ensure all KTF development programs, meetings and communications are accessible and inclusive;
- Remove physical barriers so that all KTF facilities/venues are accessible;
- Advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and all social identities and build awareness of their access and participation requirements among project partners, local government officials and the broader community;
- Understand there is a diversity of disabilities and context is required to ensure maximum inclusiveness;
- In determining the level of inclusiveness in projects, measuring participation levels and levels of difficulty in daily tasks and activities can be more effective than asking whether people have a disability or belong to a minority group.

Monitoring and evaluation processes will include gathering evidence, in the form of stories and case studies, about the approaches to inclusion which work well in different settings. Such processes need to include the voices of persons with disabilities and minority groups who are or were involved in the programs or activities.

GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION DURING EMERGENCY RESPONSES/NATURAL DISASTERS

Marginalised groups are more vulnerable during a state of emergency including a health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Persons with disabilities often have underlying health conditions which make them more susceptible to developing severe symptoms of COVID-19. Gender and family violence rates have increased with lockdowns and members of the LGBTIQ+ community and ethnic minorities are more likely to be excluded from health services, potentially leading to higher mortality rates than the wider population.

The following measures will be implemented by KTF to ensure all people are included in emergency mitigation strategies:

- Ensure people with disabilities and all social identities are included in awareness programs and have access to information. Using a range of mediums to communicate including radio messaging, leaflet drops and face-to-face awareness campaigns will help to overcome limitations imposed by the diversity of disabilities;
- Nominate health workers and village leaders to ensure all people in their communities have access to health care, WASH facilities, and food and shelter during a crisis;
- Engage DPOs and disability networks to provide additional, targeted support to people with disabilities during emergencies or pandemics.

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 outbreak can be applied to projects to ensure maximum inclusion. KTF's experiences during the pandemic lockdown have shown that education and training can be successfully delivered via video conferencing and/or social media and with the use of electronic tablets. These provide a means to increase the number of people with disabilities participating in KTF projects.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Disability-Inclusive-Development-Practice-Note.pdf

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=134&Lang=EN

<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/disability/Toolkit/Disability-inclusive-development.pdf>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability>:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion#1>

https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/

AGREEMENT: Please tick each box

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the Kokoda Track Foundation's Disability and Social Inclusion Policy. I have had the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the understanding and application of the Disability and Social Inclusion Policy.

☐ I agree to comply with the Disability and Social Inclusion Policy.

☐ I understand that it is my responsibility, as a person engaged by KTF, to follow all policy behaviours and maintain expected standards.

Name:

Role:

Sign:

Date: