

Disability Policy

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Unit	International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia		
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Introduction

A disability inclusive approach to development means “meeting the needs and priorities of people with disability, who are often among the poorest, most vulnerable excluded members of developing world”. This policy is to ensure that in all HFHA program activities the rights and needs of People with Disabilities (PWD) are protected. PWD are people who have short or long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment. PWD face various physical, institutional and attitudinal barriers, which affect their ability to access services such as health care, education and employment. These barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society and their communities. It is estimated that PWD make up 15% of the global population, and up to 20% of people living in developing countries.

HFHA recognises that in many places, the rights and requirements of people with disabilities are not acknowledged and that they may be passively or actively discriminated against and excluded from full and equal participation in their society. HFHA aims to protect the rights and needs of PWD and promote equal employment opportunities. Furthermore, all HFHA projects aim to provide local PWD with the same rights, dignity, opportunities and support as other members of the community by enabling them to actively participate in the design and implementation of HFHA projects. HFHA’s Disability Policy is guided by the UN convention of the rights of Persons with Disabilities and Australian laws regarding Equal Employment.

Policy statement

HFHA will encourage, respond to and support initiatives that:

- Ensure people with disabilities are treated with respect and as equal members of their workplace, volunteer team or local community.
- Ensure the active inclusion of people with disabilities in HFHA’s development program and activities.

- Ensure that people with disabilities have an easy access to all infrastructure, including houses, water and sanitation facilities.
- Recognise that people with disabilities are entitled to the same rights, dignity and opportunities as other members of their workplace, volunteer team or local community.
- Recognise people with disabilities as capable members of society who can make active and valued contributions to their workplace, volunteer team or local community.
- Increase community support for the rights of people with disabilities by ensuring that their issues, concerns and inputs are included in HFHA's project design process.
- Support people with disabilities to improve their quality of life by promoting and improving access to the same opportunities for participation, contribution, decision making, and social and economic well-being as others.
- Actively promote and support community engagement that link people with people regardless of disability, age, race, religion or gender.

Policy in Practice

HFHA will ensure that:

- HFHA is an open, accessible and inclusive organisation both in offices around Australia and abroad. All HFHA offices practice within the [Equal Employment Opportunities](#) guidelines and encourage the application of people with disabilities in the office and to participate in overseas volunteering opportunities.
- Wherever possible, specific requirements for staff and volunteers with disabilities will be implemented to enable them to perform their tasks effectively.
- Issues and priorities of people with disabilities (and their caregivers if applicable) are included in the situational analysis and project design.
- Additional and adequate time and resources are allocated to projects that involve people with disabilities to enable their participation in the project design and implementation.
- Homes, water and sanitation facilities that HFH builds should take into consideration of possible special needs of its owners and/or users.
- Efforts to change community attitudes towards people with disabilities are part of the ongoing community development program where appropriate.
- People with disabilities (and their caregivers) are included in mainstream development activities as both participants and beneficiaries. Through this process they will be in a position to articulate their needs and see that they are addressed.
- Provide all staff with regular disability awareness training and up-to-date information on disability-inclusive development practices.
- Adequately monitoring and evaluating disability as a cross cutting theme throughout all stages of the project cycle including engaging disabled people when conducting project evaluations.
- HFHA uses guides such as DFAT **Accessibility Design Guide** to better plan and design infrastructure construction. <http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/accessibility-design-guide.pdf>