

Disability Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose

Tearfund recognises the inherent worth and dignity of all people as created in the image of God and acknowledges the rights of persons with disabilities to have equal access and opportunities to participate in their communities. This policy seeks to set forth Tearfund's commitments to disability inclusion.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of Tearfund's operations whether undertaken by employees, volunteers, interns, fieldworkers, contractors, and supporters. It also seeks to support the work of Tearfund's International Partners as outlined in Tearfund's approach to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Handbook.

3. Policy

3.1. Disability Inclusion Principles

- Tearfund upholds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a foundation to this policy, and is guided by a rights based approach to disability inclusion.
- Tearfund upholds lived experience and values consulting with and involving persons with disability or disability focal persons in policy development, training, and working to strengthen its approach.
- Tearfund affirms the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and other relevant legislation, and bases our disability inclusion approach on awareness, meaningful participation, and comprehensive accessibility.
- In line with the UNCRPD, Tearfund aims to use person-first language which emphasises and prioritises the individual as a whole person above and before the disability (for example, speaking of 'people with disabilities' rather than 'disabled people').

3.2. Organisationally

Tearfund seeks to:

- Embed inclusive language, thinking and actions into all relevant organisational decision making, processes and practices.
- Determine enablers and barriers to Tearfund's inclusiveness, and identify actions to promote and correct each.
- Promote and encourage a diverse and inclusive workforce, by fostering an environment of mutual learning, respect, dignity, and an appreciation of difference and other perspectives.
- Ensure recruitment processes take a proactive approach to disability inclusion (as reflected in Tearfund's recruitment policy and guidelines).
- Ensure that staff and partners are able to access quality information and training regarding disability inclusion.
- Provide training opportunities to staff to deepen understanding of disability and development

3.3 International and First People's Programs

Tearfund recognises that people with disabilities face discrimination and barriers to inclusion to fully participate and contribute in their community. Tearfund also recognizes that people with disabilities make up 15 percent of the global population and are disproportionately affected by poverty. Therefore, Tearfund:

- Actively encourages, supports and resources partner organisations to uphold the rights and capacities of people with disabilities. We work alongside partners implementing multi-year projects to undertake contextual analysis to understand steps they can take to strengthen inclusion in their organisational policy and practice.

- b) Makes every effort to ensure that the projects supported are accessible to all people, including people with disabilities, by working with partners to remove barriers and enable people's full participation in those projects,
- c) Recognises the value of mainstream inclusion (disability inclusive development) alongside disability specific initiatives to enable full participation, as supported by a twin-track approach.
- d) Prioritises approaches that empower and build organisations of people with disabilities to effectively engage in advocacy.
- e) Monitors our own commitments to disability inclusion every 2-3 years, as outlined in Tearfund's approach to GEDSI Handbook.

3.4 Communications

In its communications, Tearfund:

- a) Ensures that all communication materials – electronic or otherwise – are accessible to people with disabilities to the greatest extent practicable.
- b) Uses material with appropriate language and images, which upholds the rights, dignity and capacities of persons with a disability, and which do not suggest or portray that a person who has a disability is a 'victim of' or 'suffering from disability' (In line with Tearfund's visual images policy)
- c) Maintains a high level of accessibility in regards to Tearfund's website design and functionality

3.5 Australian Programs

- a) When telling the stories of our Partners' work, Tearfund will feature stories of people with disabilities.
- b) Tearfund will strengthen disability inclusion when engaging with supporters, volunteers, planning events and activities. This will include considering accessibility requirements, efforts to value diversity and in demonstrating inclusive practices.

4. Flexible Workplace arrangements for Staff Members

A staff member with a disability may need to have reasonable adjustments made to their employment to enable them to carry out their essential work tasks, as outlined in the Flexible Workplace Policy. As part of Tearfund's commitment to disability inclusion, the following will apply:

4.1 Reasonable Adjustments

Tearfund has always had a strong commitment to social justice, access and equity. In line with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and similar state based legislation Tearfund is committed to making reasonable adjustments which enable a staff member with a disability to perform the requirements of their job in the workplace.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- a) Adjustments to work arrangements to accommodate an employee who needs breaks because of pain or fatigue issues.
- b) Modifying methods of communication to include the staff member with a disability
- c) Provision of special amenities (e.g. adjustable height desk for a person using a wheelchair, or screen magnification equipment).
- d) Sharing the cost of disability aids which enable the person to perform their role.
- e) Flexible hours.

4.2 Decision making regarding Reasonable Adjustments

Adjustments can be agreed with the supervisor in consultation with the People and Culture Director and relevant Department Directors.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- a) The person's circumstances including the nature of their disability and how this impacts on their ability to carry out the role;
- b) The nature of the job role and its essential elements;
- c) The nature of the adjustment required to accommodate the person's disability, whether this is financially viable for Tearfund and what impact it would have on Tearfund and any other employee affected by it;
- d) The consequences for the person in not making the adjustment and whether the essential elements of the role could still be carried out.

There are occasions when requests for adjustments may not be accommodated. The reasons for this may be because they would still not enable the person to carry out the essential elements of their role or because it would be financially or otherwise unsustainable. Reasons will be provided for the decision about a staff member's request. If a staff member is unhappy with the outcome of their application they can have their application reviewed by the CEO.

5 Related References

Tearfund policies and documents	
Code of Conduct Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Flexibility Policy Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Handbook Grievance Resolutions Policy	Organisational Assessment and Disability Action Strategy Recruitment Policy and Guidelines Safeguarding Children Policy Visual Images Policy

External policies and documents

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

6 Definitions/Terminology Clarification

Barriers: Barriers are defined as attitudinal and/or societal actions, physical and/or environmental factors, and policy and/or systemic issues that create a disabling effect. Examples of barriers can be stigma (social), exclusive use of stairs in buildings (physical/environment), lack of accessible information (communications) and/or lack of funding for a specific type of mobility aid (policy/systemic)

Disability-inclusive Development (DID): Disability-inclusive Development promotes equitable and effective development by recognizing that, like all members of a population, people with disabilities are both participants and agents of development. DID seeks to redress systems and processes which prevent people with disabilities from participating in, and benefiting from, development.

Person with Disability: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term (or episodic) physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”.

Reasonable Accommodation: Specific support or modifications, requested by a person with a disability, that are required to address a specific barrier to participation. The support or modification enables people with disabilities to enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others. It can also apply to addressing barriers for a person who has a care-giving responsibility for a person with a disability.

Rights Based Approach: An approach to policies, practice and programming underpinned by how human rights can be achieved for all people.

Tearfund: In this document ‘Tearfund’, ‘the organisation’, ‘we’, ‘us’ or ‘our’ means Tearfund Australia.

Twin-track approach: refers to the need for mainstream development programs to be inclusive of people with disabilities; as well as for initiatives targeting people with disabilities to address specific barriers and accelerate efforts towards disability inclusion.

7 Change History

This policy will be reviewed according to the policy review schedule (outlined in the *Key Tearfund Documents Development and Management Policy*) and in line with Tearfund Family standards.

Date	Modification
November 2021	Changed TEAR to Tearfund, updated Org chart changes (i.e. CEO, Department Director) Updated use of Tearfund policy template Updated language to be aligned with rights based approaches Updated content to reflect work included in the GEDSI handbook
May 2016	Renamed Section 2 & 3. Added Section 4 4 Flexible Workplace arrangements for Staff Members, Subsection 4.1 Reasonable Adjustments and Subsection 4.2 Decision making regarding Reasonable Adjustment. Removed list of relevant legislation.
28 Feb 2015	TEARFUND Board approved the policy and that it should be an LT level policy
Nov 2014	New Policy