

Disability Equity and Equal Opportunity Policy

Purpose

Outlines Mary MacKillop Today's principles and commitments to achieve disability inclusive operations and development.

Additional Authority: Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Scope: All employees and representatives of Mary MacKillop Today.

Responsible Party: CEO, Mary MacKillop Today Board Directors.

Policy Statement

Mary MacKillop Today is committed to ensuring people with disability have equal access and meaningful participation within our programs and workplace. We recognise that people with disability make up 15% of the global population, and one in five of the world's poorest people live with a disability (WHO, World Report on Disability).

This policy outlines our responsibilities and commitments to disability inclusive development in alignment with Australia's Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), and compliance strategies from ACFID and DFAT.

Scope

This policy applies across Mary MacKillop Today's operations, country programs, development projects, and organisational culture. It is binding for all staff, Board members, senior leadership, and contractors, and influences our partnerships both in Australia and internationally.

This policy establishes core principles and accountability mechanisms to influence programming and internal operations.

Policy Principles

Mary MacKillop Today's disability equity and equal opportunity work is guided by the following principles:

Understanding Disability

Disability results from the interaction between impairment and barriers—attitudinal, environmental, communicational, and institutional. The focus is on removing these barriers rather than on individual impairments.

"Nothing Without Us"

We uphold the rights of people with disability to actively and meaningfully participate in all decisions affecting them. This includes:

- Consulting with people with disability and their representative organisations (OPDs).
- Partnering with OPDs in our program countries.
- Promoting equity across all stages of the program cycle and in the workplace.
- Seeking feedback from people with disability to inform improvements.

Diversity and Intersectionality

We acknowledge the complexity and diversity of disability and its intersection with gender, age, income, race, identity, and other social determinants.

Accessibility

We commit to removing physical, institutional, attitudinal, financial, and communication barriers, ensuring access to all programs, opportunities, and services.

Twin-Track Approach

We combine disability-specific initiatives with mainstreaming efforts to embed equity throughout our programs, ensuring empowerment, awareness, and participation.

"Leave No One Behind"

We support the SDG commitment to reach all segments of society, including people with disability.

Inclusive Workplace

We strive to create a discrimination-free, inclusive workplace at all our locations.

Do No Harm

The Do No Harm principle prioritises human welfare by protecting safety, safeguarding, preventing sexual abuse and harassment, fraud, or exclusion on the basis of gender or disability.

Core Commitments

Mary MacKillop Today is committed to strengthening disability equity and equal opportunity in our:

Operations

We commit to:

- Integrate and strengthen disability equity and equal opportunity through the Impact Strategy and Measurement Framework.
- Increase disability technical expertise within our staff and partners through targeted training aligned with capacity building plans and upcoming priorities to strengthen policy implementation procedures, tools and guidance.
- Prioritise disability equity and equal opportunity in internal agendas including through organisation wide meetings.
- Conduct biennial self-assessments.
- Report highlights to the Board annually.
- Celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and awareness raising days.
- Engage in national and local disability networks.
- Incorporate disability analysis into Country Strategies.

Programs and Projects

We commit to:

- Support our project staff to apply the twin-track approach to disability equity and equal opportunity.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to perform stakeholder analysis and set realistic baselines, including ensuring time and resources to dedicate to data collection, as well as by

performing a disability analysis at the commencement of each new project.

- Analyse barriers (internal/organisational and external/cultural context related barriers, which are physical, attitudinal, institutional and communication) to the participation of people with disability during monitoring activities and evaluations, including intersectionality between gender and disability and other factors.
- Ensure comprehensive accessibility in project design based on disability analysis, explicitly showing how barriers to equity are addressed and integrated into project design activities, outputs and outcomes (where relevant), to maximise positive impact for people with disability and minimise potential negative consequences/risks and uphold do no harm principle.
- Partner with OPDs to ensure we are involving people with disability from project design through to evaluation in the spirit of “Nothing Without Us”; ensuring their voices are reflected in design processes, ongoing implementation activities, monitoring and evaluation; and ensuring equity of people with disability as part of the project target group.

Partnerships

We commit to:

- Support and learn from implementing partner organisations in developing policies, programs, projects and tools and strengthen reporting and accountability mechanisms in line with Mary MacKillop Today's Disability Equity and Equal Opportunity Policy.
- Strengthen partnerships with aligned OPDs and ensure adequate resources are available to ensure OPDs are financially compensated for their contribution.
- Encourage partner participation in disability networks to promote awareness and advocacy.

Evidence and Accountability

We commit to:

- Develop processes and DMEL tools that are inclusive, to ensure we are able to monitor disability-specific outcomes and program impact for people with disability.
- Collect disability-specific data and change stories.
- Disaggregate data using the Washington Group Questions (WGQs) (and by gender where possible).
- Incorporate findings into design and policy reviews.
- Support partners in conducting disability analysis.
- Strengthen integration and disability equity and equal opportunity focus in Mary MacKillop Today's design, monitoring, evaluation, communication and other tools.
- Support partners to undertake disability analysis (at a minimum risk and barriers assessment) for all projects.

Human Resource Management and Organisational Culture

We commit to:

- Provide disability equity and equal opportunity training and professional development for all staff.
- Create a capacity-building plan based on needs, to increase awareness, capacity and leadership to integrate disability equity and equal opportunity in programming.
- Identify and address workplace accessibility needs through an accessibility audit, which is reviewed every six months.

- Ensure inclusive HR policies, including reasonable adjustments that support and enable diversity and equity.

Finances and Administration

We commit to:

- Allocate operational budgets for policy implementation in line with the development of annual operational plans.

Fundraising, Marketing and Communications

We commit to:

- Use accessible communication formats by practicing at minimum two formats of accessible communication (for example, simple texts and videos) and gradually practicing other means of adaptations (sign language, large prints, etc).
- Apply people-first language across all reports and communications.
- Portray diversity and dignity by using images and messages that honestly portray the diversity of people including age, disability and other marginalised groups.

Linked Policies

- 1.1 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- 1.4 Equal Opportunity Policy
- 5.6 Recruitment Policy

Linked Documents

- N/A