

Disability Inclusion Policy	Effective date	February 2021
	Next review date	February 2023
	Sponsor	Executive Manager - International Services
	Board committee	Governance
Level / Class Corporate Organisation	Approval / authorisation	AVI Board

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to outline AVI's organisational commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities and to uphold their rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with domestic and international laws including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Policy seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal access and opportunity to engage with and benefit from AVI's operations and its programs, and that AVI activities respond appropriately and effectively to the expressed needs of people with disabilities.

2. SCOPE / PERSONS AFFECTED

This is a cross organisational policy that will have an impact on internal and external activities and programming in all teams. It will affect all AVI stakeholders including:

- Board
- Executive
- Employees
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Deployees
- Students / Interns
- Development partners

Appropriate consultation (tick for 'yes', otherwise leave blank)

3. VALUES

AVI has a vision of a peaceful, just and sustainable world; a world of respectful global relationships where all people have access to the resources they need, the opportunity to achieve their potential, the right to make decisions about the kind of development they want and to participate in the future of their communities. Our work is guided by the principles of equity and social justice, integrity, diversity, partnership and respect for human rights.

AVI's Disability Inclusion Policy is situated within the framework of its organisational vision and values, addressing disability as a human-rights and social inclusion issue, an issue that is directly linked to global poverty and that can be addressed through people-centred development, strategic programming and partnerships.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 Nothing About Us, Without Us

The term 'nothing about us, without us' is used to communicate the idea that no policy or activity should be undertaken without full and direct participation of group(s) members affected by that policy or activity. A term used often by the disability movement, this term and approach applies equally across all areas of diversity. The implementation of this policy will be informed and led by people with lived experience.

4.2. Rights-Based Approach

People with disabilities have the same rights as all people, and society is obliged to ensure these rights are accorded and protected. Listening to the voices of people with disabilities is the critical first step in an inclusive, rights-based approach.

4.3. Mainstreaming across the organisation

AVI will mainstream disability inclusion across all of its services and activities. AVI commits to building awareness of disability and will ensure awareness of AVI's disability inclusion specific programming and appropriate rights-based responses. Communications material will be accessible, job/assignment descriptions and recruitment processes will be inclusive, and training and induction will raise disability awareness. People and Culture processes will be accessible and provide equal opportunity to people with disabilities. AVI is committed to providing accessible grounds and buildings for staff with disabilities and making reasonable modifications to facilitate this. In its communications, AVI will seek to raise awareness of the need for disability inclusion as a discrete sector in the development context.

4.4. Intersectionality

Disability intersects with other diversity areas, especially gender equality and sexuality, age, cultural diversity, indigenous people, and people in remote locations. Women and girls with disabilities experience multiple disadvantages resulting from the interplay between poverty and discrimination on the basis of gender and disability. AVI is committed to an intersectional approach to disability inclusion which links to its commitments on gender equality.

4.5. Programming

AVI will adopt the twin track approach to programming

- 1) All programs will consider people with disabilities in design.
- 2) Specific initiatives will be implemented that respond to the needs of people with disabilities

A twin-track approach will be taken to disability inclusion, with: i) mainstreaming of inclusion across all aspects of the organisation and within programming; and ii) targeted initiatives to maximise inclusion and accessibility of the program for people with disabilities - as volunteers, staff, partner organisations, Australian partner organisations and program stakeholders.

Programming will include disability as a cross-cutting issue, where possible, ensuring inclusive design and recognition of the differential impact development activities may have on people with disabilities.

In monitoring, recording and reporting of information, AVI commits to disaggregated data that enables the organisation to track our response to disability inclusion. Disaggregated data provides strong evidence to inform design, policies and programs that effectively address particular barriers for people with disabilities within specific contexts.

4.6. Partnerships

Through its partnerships with all organisations, AVI will encourage inclusive practices and processes that expand the delivery of services to, improve accessibility for, and increase the representation of people with disabilities.

Improved services and accessibility provide people with disabilities with greater quality of life, increased livelihood opportunities and better health. AVI programs will deliver skills development and knowledge building to increase accessibility and services for people with disabilities in developing communities. AVI will continue to partner with service delivery organisations and those that deliver improved accessibility and link them with Australian organisations to deliver technical skills and knowledge to organisations and/or programs.

4.7. Participation

Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPO) share the belief that empowerment and self-representation is critical for people with disabilities, that people with disabilities have rights, and that these rights need to be promoted and respected. Where possible AVI will engage with DPOs to enable knowledge and resource sharing.

As an equal opportunity employer, people with disabilities will have equal access to employment opportunities and board positions at AVI. We strive to create and maintain an inclusive work culture where diversity is recognised and valued. Recognition of unique attributes and valuing the different contributions people can make to their team and AVI enables us to deliver the best solutions to challenges and achieve positive organisational outcomes.

4.8. Reasonably practicable accommodation

AVI commits to make practicable, necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that are reasonable to ensure that people with disabilities have access to opportunities, can engage with and benefit from AVI's operations and programs on an equal basis as others.

5. POLICY

AVI supports and encourages the equal participation of people with disabilities in the process of development and ensures they benefit equally from AVI programs. To achieve this, AVI utilises an approach which:

- 1) Mainstreams disability awareness and inclusion across all programs and activities
- 2) Implements initiatives that include disability specific issues and the agenda of people with disabilities.

6. DEFINITIONS – THIS SHOULD GO FURTHER UP THE DOCUMENT

AVI interprets 'disabilities' being a result of impairments + societal barriers.

People with disabilities: The term 'people with disabilities' is conceptualised as including those who have episodic or long-term 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. This reference to disability is based on the characterisation of persons with a disability in Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.

Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO): An organisation managed by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.

AVI Program: Development program delivered by AVI including design, management and evaluation and research projects.

AVI Service: Services to AVI programs, e.g. Training and Recruitment.

People Centred Development: Development practices that place the empowerment of people and their right to make choices about their communities at the forefront of activities.

Reasonable Accommodation: Reasonable accommodation is the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that is practicable and that meet the individual needs of persons with disabilities to ensure they enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis to others.

Rights-Based Approach (RBA): RBA recognises that the poor, the marginalised and disenfranchised have basic rights, not just 'deficiencies'. These basic rights refer to access to clean water, adequate food, health, education, decent work, adequate housing, and personal security. They also relate to certain fundamental political, economic, personal and collective freedoms. The Rights Based Approach promotes empowerment by facilitating greater access to the bases of social power, such as financial resources, social networks, information, and surplus time beyond subsistence requirements, social organisation, knowledge, and skills. Critical to the development of this understanding is the active and inclusive participation of all people, whose voices ought to be reflected at all levels of decision-making.

7. EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

AVI will measure against these commitments on an annual basis. Reviews will be made against ACFID compliance verifiers. Review of progress in particular programs and projects will be more frequent to inform annual reporting and annual planning and budgeting.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Disability Inclusion Policy will be embedded across the organisation. Each team will be responsible for including and integrating disability inclusion into their activities and procedures, and disability awareness and inclusion will be reflected in operational planning and templates. The Disability Inclusion Working Group is responsible for ongoing monitoring of commitments against disability inclusion within the organisation and its programming.

9. RELATED POLICIES / STATEMENTS OR DOCUMENTS

Related AVI policies include:

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Gender Equality Policy
- Child Protection Policy

- Code of Conduct
- Theory of Change

10. REFERENCES

- ACFID Code of Conduct
- DFAT Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program (<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/development-for-all-2015-2020>)
- Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/aid/partnerships-recovery-australias-covid-19-development-response>
- United Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>
- Foreign Policy White Paper <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/minisite/2017-foreign-policy-white-paper/fpwhitepaper/index.html>

11. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision Number	Change(s)	Reference Section(s)
August 2013	1		
October 2015	2	General review with small edits to make contemporaneous	
March 2016	3	Reference to the Sustainable Development Goals added	
January 2021	4	Revision of policy to reflect contemporary theory and best practice in disability sector. Reference to intersectionality added Reference to reasonably practicable accommodation added Omission of paragraph dedicated to Sustainable Development Goals	5.3 5.7, 6