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OXFAM

India

Disability Mainstreaming Policy – Oxfam India

Note on creating a policy

January - 2015

Rationale

Persons with disabilities constitute a crosscutting and silent minority who are discriminated against on account of a range of disabilities when it comes to access and equal participation in economic, social and political aspects of lifeⁱ. It is established that disability is cross cutting and often compounded by gender and social identity. Further, disability is seen as a cause and a consequence of povertyⁱⁱ. Without recognising and embedding disability rights in our programme, we would not be able to stand completely with Oxfam India's organization vision of "Right to Life and dignity for all".

Oxfam's strong focus on ensuring equality social, economic and political necessitates that disability rights are mainstreamed across the organisation, partners and programmes.

Currently, OIN does not have a stated programmatic or organisational policy on disability rights mainstreaming. With this internal policy note, we are moving with determination and clarity towards creating it.

By Disability Rights mainstreaming, we mean a structured engagement with the issue as an organisation, at workplace, programme and policy levels. This would reflect in a visible change in the organizational policies in terms of access, participation and inclusion, while also reflecting in programme narrative and implementation.

In disability, mainstreaming is a method to promote inclusion and to address the barriers that exclude disabled people from full and equal participation in society.

Purpose

This policy provides a framework for ensuring disability rights is mainstreamed across Oxfam India's programmes. This policy is intended to guide OIN's work and provide staff and partners with guidelines on disability rights mainstreaming. This document will be shared with all staff along with an action plan to guide implementation.

Guiding Approach and Principles

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities offers an ideal opportunity to consolidate disability-related activities, and to develop policies and structures that ensure that persons with disabilities are mainstreamed within the United Nations system. Lessons learned from gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming can provide valuable guidance, and there are an increasing number of tools to inform and guide this process, which when coupled with strong political will can lead to significant positive gains.

Furthermore, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also provides the opportunity for human rights and development actors to actively combine and integrate these two areas. New and innovative thinking and collaboration are required to utilize the Convention so as to bring the maximum benefit to persons with disabilities and society. It is both a human rights and a development instrument that elucidates how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities, and identifies practical measures to create development programmes that are inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities.

- Disability, and disability mainstreaming, is essentially matters of rights.
- It is essential that disabled people and their organisations play an active role in all mainstreaming activities.
- Mainstreaming is about building disability into existing agendas, frameworks and processes, not adding on separate disability activities.
- Effective mainstreaming requires strong management commitment. It needs a clear structure, with ongoing activities and follow-up, and appropriate budget and time allocated to it. It cannot be a 'one-off' activity, or left to individuals with no wider support.
- Disabled people are not a single group – they have different priorities and face different levels of discrimination. In particular, disabled women and girls may face double discrimination based on both disability and gender.
- It is necessary to address both people's specific needs as a result of their impairment, and also the wider social issues of discrimination and exclusion.

Key Principles

The mainstreaming policy and practices will be guided by:

Rights-based: OIN will use a rights-based framework to mainstream disability rights drawing in particular on CEDAW and BPFA. The aim is to transform the existing relations between women and men.

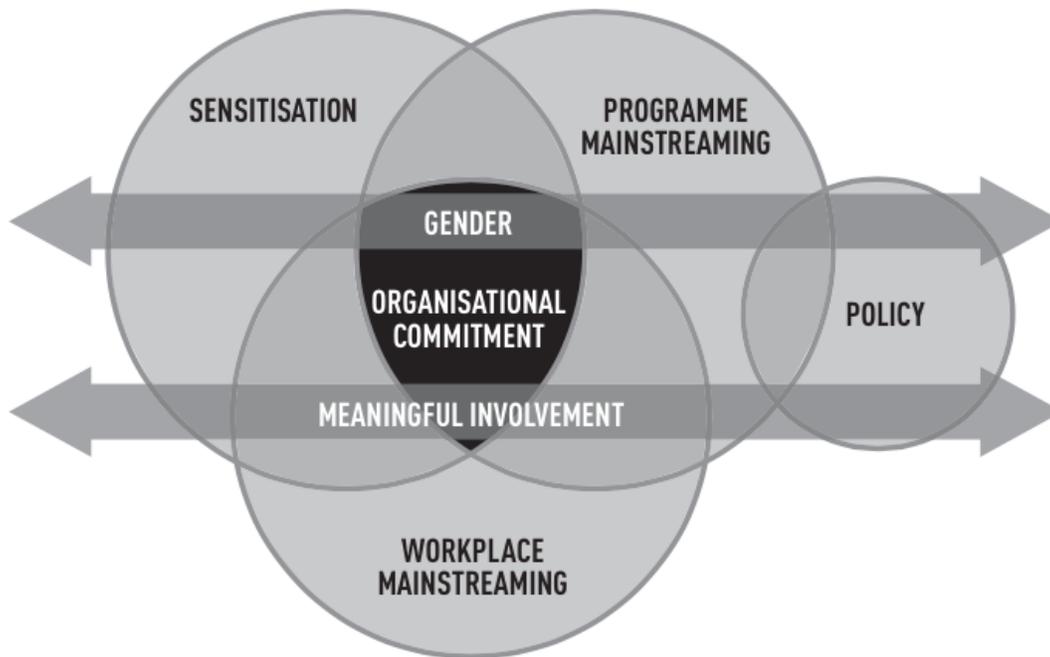
Inclusion and participation: OIN will support full and meaningful participation by persons with disabilities in own and partner activities informing our priorities, objectives and strategies in implementing long-term development, humanitarian, and advocacy programmes and campaigns.

Addressing multiple layers of discrimination: OIN will pay particular attention to the multiple layers of discrimination persons with disability face on account of gender, age, and religious or ethnic discrimination.

Positive representation: OIN will ensure that all our work enhances and promotes equality for persons with disabilities.

Elements of mainstreaming policy

- **Organisational commitment:** Organisational commitment to mainstreaming disability, in terms of values (why the organisation is committed) and purpose (what the organisation hopes to achieve). This commitment underpins all mainstreaming activities.
- **Sensitisation:** Building people's engagement with the issue and personal commitment to mainstreaming. Sensitisation is about individuals buying in to the organisational commitment.
- **Workplace mainstreaming:** Ensuring organisational policies and practices in the workplace are inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory, and do not create barriers or reinforce the negative effects of the issue. *In disability mainstreaming, this is about making appropriate adjustments to workplace policies, practice and environment so that disabled people can participate equally in the workplace, as employees or volunteers.*
It is important for OIN staff handbook and working space to be made accessible and barrier free.
- **Programme mainstreaming:** The organisation's programmes and services are inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory, and do not create barriers or reinforce the negative effects of the issue. As well as looking at programme design and service delivery, this means including excluded people in programme planning, implementation, management and reviewing. *In disability, this involves non-disability service providers and development organisations including disabled people on an equitable basis, in the same settings as non-disabled people.*
- **Policy mainstreaming:** Addressing wider policy and institutional barriers that exclude people from equal participation or reinforce the negative effects of the issue.



Source: VSO

Specific Elements of the Policy

In addition to upholding the above-mentioned principles, all OIN programmes will:

- Ensure disability and inclusion is incorporated into the situational analysis of all programme and sectoral contexts (including policy, advocacy and influencing contexts).
- Ensure that targets are set for the inclusion and active participation persons with disabilities in all OIN programmes as appropriate based on the above analysis.
- Ensure that programmes, policy recommendations, advocacy and influencing interventions do not exacerbate barriers built and perceived for the persons with disability.
- Develop a realistic and robust evaluation process which will ensure:
 - Collection of project relevant disability data

- Inclusion of appropriate indicators in its strategic framework and performance indicators
 - Inclusion of appropriate indicators in monitoring and evaluation of programmatic intervention
 - Initiate the inclusion of appropriate indicators in the financial, operational, communication and organisational aspects
- Ensure project / programme reporting and organisational documents reflect persons with disabilities have been included and impacted by the intervention(s) both as standalone and as a cross-cutting issue.
 - Develop appropriate tools and train Oxfam India staff and partners to strengthen their capacity to undertake disability rights analysis and mainstreaming.
 - Ensure all staff and partners have an awareness of mainstreaming principles and approaches and how these align with a rights-based approach.
 - Ensure relevant programme staff have knowledge and competencies in implementing practical strategies to promote gender mainstreaming

Mainstreaming delegation and responsibility

Specific responsibilities and accountabilities for ensuring implementation are as follows:

WHO	For
OIN Board	Ensure that OIN work enhances equality opportunity and inclusion of persons with disabilities
CEO	Hold Directors accountable to this policy and promote policy principles, as appropriate, in the OI confederation
Directors, Programme & Advocacy; Policy, Research & Campaign	Ensure a disability rights and mainstreaming perspective informs the planning, prioritisation, design, appraisal, implementation, evaluation and learning strategies for all OIN development and humanitarian response work, including advocacy and influencing and collaborative work with other Oxfam affiliates
Director - Communications	Ensure OIN's communications and branding work is informed by a disability rights perspective – including accessible online platforms
Director - Fundraising	Ensure OIN's marketing and fundraising work is informed by disability access and inclusion framework,
Director - Operations	Ensure OIN's operations work is informed by disability mainstreaming perspective, promoting access and participation
All staff	Understand and apply the policy to your work, highlight challenges

	and provide appropriate solutions to the relevant teams as and when
MEL Team	Ensure there is periodic monitoring and tracking of compliance and implementation of the policy
HR Team	Socialise, review and update policy

Annexure

For the purposes of this policy, the key definitions are:

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

Discrimination of basis of disability: "Discrimination on the basis of disability" means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation

Disability and disasters/humanitarian: In accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

<http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-right-of-persons-with-disabilities-bill-2014-3122/>

ⁱ The high numbers of persons with disabilities who are disproportionately represented among the world's most marginalized groups have a profound significance with respect to the achievement of the MDGs, which thus far seems to have gone largely unnoticed in the international discourse on the Goals. Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, and the failure to include and integrate them in all development activities will mean failure to achieve the MDGs.

ⁱⁱ There is a strong bidirectional link between poverty and disability. Poverty may cause disability through malnutrition, poor healthcare, and dangerous living conditions. Case studies in developing countries show that higher disability rates are associated with higher rates of illiteracy, poor nutritional status, lower immunization coverage, lower birth weight, higher rates of unemployment and underemployment, and lower occupational mobility. Disability can cause poverty by preventing the full participation of persons with disabilities in the economic and social life of their communities, especially if the appropriate supports and accommodations are not available.