



Social Justice for All

Approved by Board: 25 November 2023

Managed on behalf of the Executive Director and Board by: Head of Programs

1. Purpose of this Policy

To outline ActionAid Australia's commitment and approach to social justice for all, as an integral part of its human rights-based approach (HRBA). The aim is to recognise and value diversity and promote peaceful co-existence of all individuals and groups in all aspects of ActionAid Australia's work.

ActionAid Australia strives to promote and value diversity and ensure the inclusion of diverse individuals and groups by avoiding any form of prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs, political persuasion, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, or disease status.

This policy is supported by the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Policy, the Disability Equity and Rights Policy and the Equal Employment Opportunity and Workplace Behaviour Policy (in the Human Resources Manual).

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to the following people:

- ActionAid Australia staff members, contractors, consultants and suppliers;
- ActionAid Australia office-based volunteers and interns, and Grassroots Network leaders and members;
- ActionAid Australia Board of Directors;
- Visitors to ActionAid Australia programmes and
- partner organisations.

3. Definitions

Disability: An interaction of physical, sensory, mental and intellectual impairments with barriers (including attitudes and behaviours of others) which prevent people with disabilities from obtaining their full rights, effectively participating in society and thus achieving their full potential. A disability may be visible or invisible and it can be permanent, temporary or episodic.

Non-normative sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI): Includes people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse (LGBTQIA+) communities.

Indigenous people: Given the diversity of the world's indigenous peoples, there is no internationally accepted or agreed definition of the term 'indigenous'. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms that indigenous peoples themselves have the right to self-identify. The International Labor Organisation uses the following characteristics for the purposes of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: *"peoples in independent countries (who) are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions."*

4. Principles

ActionAid Australia is guided by the following principles in all aspects of its work:

- a recognition that communities are not homogenous;
- promoting and establishing partnerships with organisations that are recognised and respected by people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ communities, and indigenous peoples (and therefore seen as legitimate), and that represent and advocate for their interests, where that aligns with our strategy;
- strengthening the participation, agency and voice of diverse individuals and groups in our programming and campaigning, rather than speaking on their behalf, embodying the principle of 'nothing about us, without us';
- ensuring awareness and respect for cultural and collective rights when working with indigenous peoples; people with disability and people with non-normative SOGI.
- promotion of transformative social protection¹ to enable everyone to obtain their full human rights and integrate equally into society;
- countering the notion with partners that the agenda of these groups is too sensitive and/or not relevant to ending poverty, inequality and injustice;
- continually examining one's own behaviours and attitudes closely and recognising how these can lead to a denial of rights and social exclusion;
- ensuring respect for indigenous rights to self-determination, for the rights of people with disability and for the rights of people with non-normative SOGI and the principle of free, prior and informed consent in our programming and campaigns;

¹ **Transformative social protection:**• ActionAid's vision builds on the initiative of a "social minimum", specifically the UN's "social protection floor" (UN, ILO, WHO, 2010). This "social minimum" comprises of both transfers and basic rights provision and entitlements, and allows a staged process to achieve a full social protection package. It is regarded as transformative as it addresses unequal power relations, aims to reduce inequality by linking cash transfers to a broader rights framework and seeks to deliver long-term and universal impact. (*ActionAid HRBA 2.0*)

- striving to 'do no harm' and ensure protection of human rights defenders, recognising that in some countries where we work, non-normative SOGI is illegal.
- Ensuring all communications materials follow the processes in the communications manual

5. Legislative Framework and Standards

International

ActionAid Australia abides by the following nine core international human rights instruments (as well as a number of other instruments pertaining to the rights of specific groups) and other frameworks across all aspects of its work:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and its two Optional Protocols;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966),
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969);
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979);
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment (1984);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989);
- International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 (1989)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990);
- United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993)
- International Convention on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006);
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006);
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007);
- Yogyakarta Principles (2007)
- Sustainable Development Goals (2015)
- International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 190 (2021)

Australian

ActionAid Australia abides by the following Australian anti-discrimination legislation and frameworks across all aspects of its work:

- ACFID Code of Conduct 2019;
- ACFID Resolution (2016) on combatting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity;
- DFAT International Development Policy (2023)
- DFAT Development for All Policy: 2015-2020;

- DFAT Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda
- Racial Discrimination Act (1975), Australia;
- Anti-Discrimination Act (1977), NSW;
- Sex Discrimination Act (1984), Australia;
- Disability Discrimination Act (1992), Australia;
- Native Title Act (1993)
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999), Australia;
- Age Discrimination Act (2004), Australia.

6. Policy in Practice

In order to implement this policy, ActionAid Australia will:

In relation to international programming:

1. Support staff and partner organisations with training and capacity development, as required, so they can implement the Human Rights Based Approach and engage with unequal power relationships, in a way that recognises and values diversity, is non-discriminatory, fair and equitable for all individuals and community groups.
2. Ensure that partners pro-actively identify and meet with diverse community groups and their representatives (e.g. with people with disabilities and their local organisations where they exist) to improve staff and community understanding of the rights violations experienced by these groups and to ensure inclusive programming). This includes engaging with carers of people with disabilities.
3. Strive to ensure that all programming is as inclusive as possible and recognises the gender dynamics within diverse groups, and the intersecting and compounding nature of exclusion. ActionAid Australia staff will role model this inclusive approach in all work with partners and communities.
4. Ensure that partners actively involve representatives from diverse community groups in the situational and rights assessment process, and in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programs.
5. Ensure that all programs build rights awareness among community members and government officials as well as a commitment to make changes in attitudes, behaviours and/or policies so that all members of the community can flourish and have their human rights recognised, protected and fulfilled.

In relation to campaigning, fundraising and communications

6. Ensure that all campaigns, fundraising, and communications activities that engage the Australian public are fully consistent with ActionAid Australia's values, the HRBA and the Campaigns and Community Organising, Fundraising and Communications Manuals.
7. Ensure that all communications promote women's voices, their experiences and their alternative strategies and solutions to poverty, inequality and injustice and that they portray local people in a way that is accurate and respectfully portrays the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people. All local people will be portrayed as people with personal agency and equal partners in rights-based programs (rather than as victims and passive recipients of welfare). Through work with partners, interrogate and mitigate unequal power relationships, ensuring the voices and demands of local people are amplified and compensation / resources are provided when appropriate. The processes relating to this are detailed in the Communications Manual.

8. Ensure that all marketing and fundraising materials are accurate and consistent with ActionAid Australia's values, HRBA, the ACFID Code of Conduct, and the Fundraising Institute of Australia Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
9. Ensure inclusion of case studies on people with disabilities, non-normative SOGI and indigenous peoples, on social and other media when promoting our programs and campaigns.
10. Ensure that all case studies produced follow consent procedures as detailed in the Communications Manual.

In relation to human resource management:

11. Ensure that all human resources processes and practices are fully consistent with ActionAid Australia's values and HRBA and with the policies in the Human Resources Manual.
12. Ensure respect for diversity within in our recruitment practices and work towards becoming a more diverse organisation where all staff members can thrive, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexual orientation and HIV status.
13. Build cultural competency in the organisation to ensure we have behaviours, policies and procedures that enable us to understand and implement the HRBA and engage with unequal power relationships, in a way that recognises and values diversity, is non-discriminatory, fair and equitable for all individuals and community groups, to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander movements, disability rights movements and LGBTQIA+ rights movements.

Monitoring and evaluation of inclusiveness

14. Ensure that the annual ActionAid Australia Participatory Review and Reflection Process and Participatory Monitoring Evaluation and learning processes include a focus on inclusiveness and non-discrimination.

7. Reviewing and Monitoring this Policy

The Head of Programs is accountable to the Executive Director and Board for managing and maintaining this policy. All members of the Leadership Team are accountable for ensuring that their functional teams understand and adhere to this policy in their day-to-day work. When compliance issues surface, the Leadership Team members will work with staff members to address these issues promptly.

Any updates/revisions to the policy must be endorsed by the Executive Director and Leadership Team before being submitted to the Board for their approval.

REVISIONS TO POLICY

Nature of changes	Date of Board approval
Policy created and rolled out	22 November 2012
Policy updated to strengthen AAA's documented commitment to people with disabilities, indigenous people and people with non-normative sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).	12 May 2017
Policy updated to current context	13 November 2023