

Disability Policy

Development Wheel (DEW)

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I. DEW Disability Policy

DEW is committed to the inclusion of people who have physical and cognitive disabilities and those who advocate and offer services on behalf of people with disabilities. This commitment extends from the design and implementation of DEW programming to advocacy for and outreach to people with disabilities. DEW's policy on disability is as follows: To avoid discrimination against people with disabilities in programs which DEW funds and to stimulate an engagement of host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in promoting a climate of nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. DEW policy on disability is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities.

For purposes of this policy, a disability is defined as a physical or cognitive impairment that affects a major life function, consistent with the definition of the Rehabilitation Act.

II. Policy objectives

The objectives of the DEW policy on disability are:

- A. to enhance the attainment of DEW program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in DEW policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation;
- B. to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities;
- C. to engage governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and
- D. to support international advocacy for people with disabilities.

III. Policy framework

A substantial segment (often ten per cent or more) of any population has impairments. Those individuals are often limited in participating in society by obstacles in the physical or social environment. It is widely recognized that the response to this problem must be a balanced combination of prevention, rehabilitation and measures for the equalization of opportunities. Individuals with disabilities and their caregivers often are taken out of the workforce. The reasons are many: discrimination, lack of educational, vocational rehabilitation or training opportunities, etc. These factors place further economic burden on poor countries where DEW has sustainable development programs. People with disabilities have the same needs as others for nutrition, family planning, health care, training and employment. Many mainstream

programs, with minor modification at the design stage, help address these needs. For example, education programs can be developed which promote inclusion of children with physical or cognitive disabilities to the maximum extent feasible. Economic growth activities, such as small business loans lending, can be developed to assure that people with disabilities have equal access to credit. Infrastructure projects can be designed, with acceptable marginal cost, to assure barrier-free access.

In providing humanitarian assistance in post-conflict situations and disaster assistance, early strategically aimed programs both help address the immediate needs of people with disabilities and also provide a foundation on which these individuals more effectively make a positive contribution to the economic development of their country. The disabling injuries caused by landmines provide yet another compelling reason for such programs. DEW promotes advocacy as an integral part of its democracy and governance objective..

DEW also recognizes the appropriate role of country government in creating the enabling environment for disability advocacy and services. Government not only create the regulatory environment, but also assure quality standards and, for donor programs, provide the basis for sustaining these efforts.

IV. Operational procedures

A. Consultation

DEW must determine the best ways to consult with the disabled and with those who advocate on behalf of, or provide services for individuals with disabilities. DEW must also determine best ways for consulting with appropriate government officials to assure that issues are reviewed with respect to the enabling environment, regulatory concerns, quality assurance standards and maintenance of donor-financed disability activities. DEW will also look to organizations and individuals with in-depth local experience to assist in designing and implementing participatory mechanisms to ensure that DEW strategic objectives and activities incorporate, to the extent feasible, the priorities and values of people with disabilities and groups pursuing these issues and interests in the country.

B. Areas to be considered in the consultative process

The concerns of people with physical and cognitive disabilities should be considered in the variety of DEW programs for the poorest elements of society including but not limited to programs for children and women, especially early childhood interventions, child survival programs and curriculum development for special education within basic education programs; mass communication and printed materials; development of basic infrastructure (e.g., roads, water and sanitation, public transportation, telecommunications); development of small scale industries or workshops; introduction of new machinery; development of products the use of which requires specific skills; urban or rural community development; development of health care facilities or systems; development of formal and non-formal education,

training, career development and job placement services; family planning and health education programs; design and construction activities; and activities related to democracy and good governance, human rights initiatives, and income generation. Where appropriate, DEW may also encourage relevant policy dialogue with government.

C. Supporting partner NGOs

Partner NGOs, as part of the host society, can serve as a voice for the interests and perspectives of the community of individuals with disabilities or groups interested in their issues. DEW will look to an increasing role for partner NGOs to carry out service delivery and to advocate on behalf of the interests of people with disabilities. DEW will actively encourage the formation of effective partnership relations between other NGOs and partner NGOs interested in issues of concern to people with disabilities.

D. Training and enhanced awareness

DEW employees will be trained in issues of relevance to people with disabilities so that, as appropriate, DEW programs reflect those issues. Employees will be encouraged to provide relevant training to their staff.

V. Reasonable workplace accommodation for Persons With Disability include (but are not limited to)

1. Ensuring large font options are available in printed documents for employees with low vision and audio versions of printed documents are available for employees who are blind
2. Providing handheld magnifiers or digital stand magnifiers for employees with low vision, but who may need to read printed material
3. Providing on-site Sign Language services or Video Remote Interpreting to assist with in-person communication in the workplace, as well as providing employees with hearing disabilities access to Video Relay Services to aid in communication with outside parties
4. Purchasing office equipment that allows for height adjustable work surfaces to accommodate different wheelchair heights and limb mobility
5. Shifting heavy-load lift and carry responsibilities to other staff and offsetting this redistribution of tasks with another comparable task for the employee needing that accommodation
6. Ensuring employee has access to quiet, low stimuli workspace if requested
7. Providing the employee with a written description of weekly or daily job duties

8. Allowing for the use of paper notebook, digital personal data assistant or other task and scheduling assistance devices for employees with difficulty remembering or creating new memory
9. Establishing flexible hours, extended breaks, and work-from-home procedures to assist those who have difficulties with concentration and decision-making
10. Maintaining consistent job tasks for employees who have difficulties coping with rapid change
11. Allowing personal care attendants or job coaches to accompany employees to work

Accommodations are developed in a dialogue between the employer and the employee with a disability. Many accommodations are low-cost. Employers are not required to make accommodations that would place a substantial financial burden—also known as an undue hardship—on them, but are instructed to look for less costly or less disruptive alternative accommodations

VI. Office environment for PWD

The Organization will take steps to ensure that the office environment is suited to staff members with disabilities. Where appropriate, an occupational assessment of the workplace will be carried out when:

- a newly recruited staff member with a disability commences employment;
- a staff member becomes disabled during his/her employment with the Organization;
- a disabled staff member's move to a different office entails a significant change in the office environment - for example, a move from headquarters to a field office.

VII. Flexible work arrangements

- 1) Where appropriate, flexible working arrangements may be agreed upon by the supervisor and staff member concerned, drawing upon the Organization's work-life policies, with the objective of meeting DEW's work exigencies and the staff member's particular needs
- 2) DEW will take steps to protect the rights of disabled persons to have access to information and to communication.
- 3) The entire workforce should have access to information technology tools, including the Intranet and Extranet, applications, databases and event information displays. Wherever possible, and based on demand, these tools will be made available in accessible formats. In this regard, staff members with disabilities shall be consulted concerning special equipment or furniture that may be necessary to enable them to perform the essential functions of their job, including effective access to information technology tools.

VIII. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.