



POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. PURPOSE

This policy articulates Many Hands International's commitment and responsibilities to the promotion of human rights in the workplace and its development programs in recognition that the achievement of human rights is fundamental to development.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Human Rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of national or ethnic origin, gender, colour, religion, age, political belief, sexual orientation, disability or any other status. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible and include civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

2.2 Universally human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by legal statements by the international community that assert the equality and dignity of all human beings and the entitlement to human rights without discrimination. They are often found in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in a certain way or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

3. POLICY

General Human Rights

3.1 International human rights standards outline principles that affect not just the scope of development programs, but the process by which the development strategies are formulated and implemented. Many Hands International endorses these principles as the framework for our development programs, which include:

3.1.1 The inherent dignity of each person

3.1.2 The principles of equality and non-discrimination

3.1.3 The indivisibility and interdependence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

3.2 Many Hands International endorses the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), an internationally adopted development framework, supported by Australia, that is consistent with and complimentary to an approach based on human rights.

3.3 Many Hands International acknowledges that the promotion of human rights in the context of development assistance may involve complex issues not easily resolved by a policy commitment or human rights checklist, for example in cases where priorities over rights are organisations and local communities.

Cross-cutting Issues

3.4 Many Hands International endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) which states that children should be protected from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse.

3.5 Many Hands International endorses the fundamental principles of the rights to participation, and principles of inclusion and plurality as keys to support community participation in our development programs.

3.6 Many Hands International will address links between cultural asset based community asset based development and human rights in the design, implementation and monitoring of our programs and projects by undertaking consultation and reflecting local concerns in design and implementation, and through monitoring and adapting.

3.7 Many Hands International endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (CRPD) and Optional Protocols which promotes the rights of people with disabilities; Many Hands International Many commits to ensuring an appropriate focus is given to addressing the rights of persons with disabilities in our programs and projects.

3.8 Many Hands International recognises that addressing the effects of gender in equalities and inequities is fundamental to the attainment of human rights for all and hence the effectiveness of our programs and projects. Many Hands International commits to ensuring an appropriate focus is given to addressing gender inequality in our programs and projects.

3.9 Many Hands International is committed to including and addressing the needs of marginalised and vulnerable people and their representatives in all aspects of our development activity.

3.10 Many Hands International recognises that indigenous peoples have the rights to the land, territories and resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and that those rights must be recognised and effectively protected, as laid out in the ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

4. SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

4.1 International:

-Australia is a signatory to a number of international human rights agreements:

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *Optional Protocol on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*
- *Optional Protocol on Political and Civil Rights*
- *Optional Protocol on the Rights to Development*
- *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*
- *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*

4.2 Federal Legislation:

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Act 1986*
- Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

4.4 Many Hands International:

- *Child Protection Policy*
- *Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct*

4.6 Australian Council for International Development:

- *ACFID Code of Conduct*

4.7 Other Resources:

- *The Millennium Development Goals (2000)*

5. SCOPE

5.1 This policy applies to all Many Hands International board members, directors, staff, volunteers and contractors.

5.2 This policy applies to all Partner Organisations and their board members, staff, volunteers and contractors implementing development activities funded by, or through Many Hands International.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Partner Organisations

Organisations implementing development activities funded by, or through, Many Hands International.

6.2 Economic, social and cultural rights

Economic, social and cultural rights are socio-economic human rights such as the right to education, the right to housing and the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to health.

6.3 Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights are a class of rights that protect individuals' freedom from unwarranted infringement by government or private organisations and ensure one's ability to participate in the civil and political life of the state without discrimination or repression.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Board of Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that Many Hands International and all staff members, volunteers and contractors comply with all relevant legislation and Many Hands International policies (including this one).
- Ensuring that all Partner Organisations and their board members, staff members volunteers and contractors implementing development activities funded by or through, Many Hands International, comply with all relevant legislation and Many Hands International policies (including this one).

7.2 Executive Officer in partnership with the in-country Team Leader is responsible for:

- Assisting managers and supervisors with the construction of appropriate training and development programs, designed to aid compliance with policy.
- Providing staff members with support and assistance during any compliance or dismissal process
- Ensuring they comply with all relevant legislation and Many Hands International policies
- Communicating this policy to all Partner Organisations, and ensuring that Partner Organisations communicate this policy to their board members, staff, volunteers and contractors implementing development activities funded by, or through, Many Hands International.
- Approving activities and/or funding only when the requirements of this Policy have been met.
- Providing the Board with all information that relates to breaches or potential breaches of this policy.

- Seeking support and assistance from Board of Directors as required.

7.3 All Employees, Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for:

- Complying with this Policy, as required by the following procedures.

8. PROCEDURES

8.1 This policy will be included in all contracts and memorandums of understanding with Partner Organisations.

8.2 All staff, volunteers and contractors as well as Partner Organisations's executive and relevant staff, volunteers and contractors will received an induction in relation to this policy before commencing undertaking of any activities with or through Many Hands International. In this induction this Policy, its importance and consequences of non-compliance, will be presented.

8.3 All Development activities funded by or through Many Hands International and Partner Organisations and relevant staff, volunteers and contractors will be monitored to ensure they are not in breach of this Policy. Monitoring will be proportionate to the amount of funding and the risk of breach (as a result of funded activities, organisation or skills and experience of board and staff) and will be recorded in the program/project file and signed by the relevant program/project manager. Monitoring will include at least one review annually at which this Policy will be made the subject of discussion and reviewed by the Board of Directors at one Board of Directors meeting.

8.4 Applying this Policy may be difficult in some situations and sound judgement will be necessary. The Policy cannot provide a specific response for every circumstance. Many Hands International will apply the spirit of intent of this clause in the conduct of Development activities.

8.5 If this Policy does not provide a clear answer on how to comply in a particular circumstance, Many Hands International will document clearly the decisions made and the reasons behind them and make available to both recipient and donor.

8.6 Feedback is important to Many Hands International and our Partner Organisations as it helps us develop and improve. Therefore all feedback is welcome. Feedback will be directed to the relevant Department of Many Hands International for action. A complainant regarding an alleged breach of ACFID Code of Conduct can be made directly to ACFID.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DOCUMENT CONTROL

9.1 This Policy is available on the Many Hands International Shared Data Folder for all employees

9.2 A copy of this policy will be provided to any person or organisation on request

