



**MAHBOBA'S
PROMISE**

An Australian Aid Organisation

Disability Policy

Introduction

Due to various challenges of access, there is a lack of reliable quantitative data as to how many disabled people there are in Afghanistan. The most recent estimate by the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled (MMD) indicates that the number ranges from 80,000 to 2 million total disabled people (Trani et al. 2005). It is not clear what percentage of this group suffers from congenital or disease-related disability as opposed to being the victims of war and post-war situations.

Individuals and children suffering from mental disability are labelled *diwanas*, and face great stigma in Afghan society (Trani et al. 2005). Women with disabilities are a high-risk group, often facing discrimination within the family. They usually do not have access to health care, education or employment and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse (WHO 2003).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To acknowledge the high prevalence of disability in the communities Mahboba's Promise works with;
2. To ensure that any disabled people or children involved in our projects are not discriminated against or stigmatised in any way;
3. To establish a code of equal opportunity to be granted to the disabled in all our projects;
4. To forbid any staff member from discriminating against potential or current employees based on disability; and
5. To encourage awareness and understanding of disability in the communities where relevant.

Scope

The policy applies to any projects undertaken by Mahboba's Promise and all current and prospective staff, volunteers or beneficiaries involved in these projects.

Definitions

Disability: The conditions of disability for the purpose of this policy are taken from the Australian *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth). They are defined by:

- Total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- Total or partial loss of a part of a body
- The presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour

In addition, the condition should impact daily activities, communication and/or mobility. It needs to have lasted or is likely to last 6 months or more.

Discrimination: Discrimination can be direct or indirect.

Direct discrimination refers to the unfavourable treatment of a person with disability compared to the treatment of a non-disabled person in similar circumstances.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a person with disability is required to comply with conditions that cannot be carried out by him/her due to the disability.

Stigmatisation: The shaming, branding or labelling of a child or person with a disability with intent to exclude them from normal community life.

Policy

Mahboba's Promise is determined to prevent discrimination against persons with disability as far as possible within its projects. It aims to do this by:

- Developing and maintaining staffing procedures that are non-discriminatory towards the disabled
- Creating an environment in the projects that is free from discrimination and in which all staff, volunteers and children are treated with dignity and respect
- Providing all persons involved with awareness training to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities
- Providing a procedure for complaints relating to the issue
- Treating complaints in a fair, timely and confidential manner
- Setting standards of acceptable behaviour for all employees
- Encouraging the reporting of breaches of this policy
- Regularly reviewing the policy, complaint handling and training requirements

Equal Opportunity

The organisation is committed to staffing processes based on ability, experience and qualifications. The decisions made about staffing must be free from discrimination when:

- Interviewing and selecting employees or volunteers for the projects
- Any terms, conditions and benefits offered as part of employment
- Selecting children or community members as beneficiaries for the projects
- Selecting members to take part in vocational training courses
- Considering employees for transfer, promotion or dismissal

Women with disabilities

Mahboba's Promise recognises that women with disabilities tend to be at great risk of being discriminated against and alienated from regular community life. Particular effort will be made to engage women with disabilities in our projects, and to protect them from abuse and discrimination.

Responsibilities

All members involved with the community projects will be required to undergo training for anti-discrimination awareness.

The management has a responsibility to:

- Monitor the environment and ensure that no discrimination or stigmatisation takes place
- Model appropriate behaviour towards the disabled, treating them with dignity and respect
- Ensure that staff and other members understand the policy
- Give fair consideration to any complaints and consider appropriate action

The staff and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour
- Report incidences of discrimination against disabled members involved in projects
- Raise awareness and understanding about disability in the community where appropriate

Breaches

Disabled persons or children who believe they have been discriminated against should contact a member of management with their complaint.

All complaints of discrimination will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly and confidentially.

Any disciplinary action will be determined by the MPI Management Committee in consultation with MPA. Action may include the following:

- Meeting to discuss breach and opportunity for person to provide their account of the situation
- Performance management and/or disciplinary action
- Further education on the Disability Policy and Code of Conduct
- Formal warning and monitoring
- Transfer to other duties
- Suspension
- Internal investigation
- Report to police in case of physical abuse
- Dismissal

References

Trani, Jean Francois, Bakshi, Parul, Noor, Ayan Ahmed & Mashkoor, Ashraf 2005, 'Disability in Afghanistan: Taking a Capabilities Approach to look at Research Challenges and Policy Implications', *UCL*, Available from: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lc-ccr/lcstaff/jean-francois-trani/HDCAconf0905.pdf>

The World Health Organisation (WHO) 2003, 'The Comprehensive National Disability Policy in Afghanistan', October, Available from: <http://www.who.int/disabilities/policies/documents/Afghanistan.pdf>