



Ntengwe for Community Development

Guidance Policy on Working with People with disabilities

1.0. Policy statement: Ntengwe for Community Development's Guidance policy on people living with disabilities (herein referred to as PLWDs) shall provide guidelines towards how Ntengwe staff and stakeholders shall handle PLWDs during the execution of their duties on behalf of Ntengwe, employment of PLWDs, and HIV/AIDS and PLWDs and any other provisions that may be brought into effect by this or any related local, regional or international policy in support of PLWDs. The purpose of this policy is to inform Ntengwe staff, partners and stakeholders of the employment and workplace relations requirements in relation to people with a disability. This policy also seeks to ensure a transparent and consistent approach to creating equal opportunity for people with disabilities who are currently employed or seeking employment with the organisation; provide all employees, partners and concerned parties with the opportunity to develop professional learning, understanding, and positive attitudes about disability in the workplace and outside.

2.0. Definition of terms

2.1. Persons/ people with disabilities- people "who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities)

2.2. Access in its fullest sense refers to physical access, communication access, and social access to facilities, services, training, and jobs. Physical access means that people with disabilities can, without assistance, approach, enter, pass to and from, and make use of an area and its facilities without undue difficulties.

2.3. Disability: The interaction between a person with impairment or health condition and the negative barriers of the environment (including attitudes and beliefs, etc.).

2.4. Impairment: A characteristic or condition of an individual's body or mind which unsupported has limited, does limit or will limit that individual's personal or social functioning in comparison with someone who has not got that characteristic or condition. Impairment relates to a physical, intellectual, mental or sensory condition; as such it is largely an individual issue. Accordingly, disability is the way(s) in which people with impairments are excluded or discriminated against; as such, it is largely a social and development issue.

2.5. Disability Models (Source: *Working Group on Disability and Poverty Reduction* www.stakes.fi/sfa/disabilityandpoverty/index.htm in *CBM's Disability and Development Policy*).

2.5.1. The medical model that sees disability as a health issue (source: The International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH, WHO 1980) in *CBM's Disability and Development Policy*),

2.5.2. The social model that understands disability as a social issue characterised by unequal opportunities for participation (The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities reflects this stream

2.5.3. The multi-dimensional model conceptualises disability through four dimensions: impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions and environmental barriers and facilitators. It can be called the bio-psychosocial model of disability⁹, and

2.5.4. A political perspective understands the issue of disability as a human rights issue. The work towards an International (UN) Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities may be seen to emphasise this perspective

2.6. 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.

2.6.1. Discrimination also means any distinction, exclusion or preference based on certain grounds which nullifies or impairs equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. General standards that establish distinctions based on prohibited grounds constitute discrimination in law. The specific attitude of a public authority or a private individual that treats unequally persons or members of a group on a prohibited ground constitutes discrimination in practice. Indirect discrimination refers to apparently neutral situations, regulations or practices which in fact result in unequal treatment of persons with certain characteristics. Distinction or preferences that may result from application of special measures of protection and assistance taken to meet the particular requirements of disabled persons are not considered discriminatory.

2.6.2. Discrimination can be both direct and indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats someone with a disability less favourably than a person without a disability, in the same or similar circumstances.

2.6.3. Indirect discrimination occurs when a person imposes an unreasonable requirement or condition which appears to be neutral, but which has the effect of disadvantaging a person because of their disability.

2.7. Inclusive Development refers to the planning and implementation of policies, programs, projects and actions for the human and socioeconomic development. It makes feasible the ideal of equal opportunities and the exercise of rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural for every person, regardless of his / her social status, gender, physical or mental condition and ethnic affiliation.

2.8. Mainstreaming Disability implies that all development interventions are planned and implemented in such a way that people with disabilities, their needs, rights and

potentials, are taken into account on equal terms with those of other population groups.

2.9.Equal opportunity: Equal access to and opportunities for all persons in employment, vocational training and particular occupations, without discrimination, consistent with Article 4 of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 159.

3.0.Background and rationale

The physiological, psychological, social and economic challenges faced by people living with disabilities are significant and complex, and are accompanied by high levels of stigma, discrimination and exclusion. While poverty and disability are inextricably linked, the situation of those living with a disability is made considerably worse by an acute lack of services and support, as well as social and cultural norms which exclude them and fail to prioritise their access to basic services like education. As a result, children and other people living with disabilities are not able to lead dignified lives or access their rights to equal opportunity and participation. There is, therefore, a policy and practice framework within which Ntengwe will work, leverage expertise and engage government and local authorities for greater support for children living with disabilities.

Within this context, Ntengwe continued with its work of assisting children living with disabilities. Ntengwe for Community Development (Ntengwe) is a not-for-profit organization registered with the Government of Zimbabwe as Private Voluntary Organization (P.V.O 42/2010) with over 20 years of experience responding to the needs of vulnerable communities and the environment. Ntengwe is the Tonga name for a black bird whose shrill, urgent call, alerts people of danger.

Ntengwe's Vision is to provide a better tomorrow for all. Ntengwe works in partnership with all sectors to inspire hope through the improvement of health, livelihoods, rights and the environment to sustain a thriving community and support our ecosystem for present and future generations. Therefore, development of this policy has become important to put disability into a more specific context in which Ntengwe, partners and concerned personnel need to follow in order to assist PLWDs. The policy falls under the broader framework of Ntengwe's diversity management and reflects the Organization's zero-tolerance of stigma and discrimination of any kind.

3.1.Purpose of the policy: The purpose of this Disability Policy is to provide direction for Ntengwe and its partners to strategically support people with disability within programs, procedures, systems and accountabilities.

3.2.Scope of Policy: This policy applies to all Ntengwe staff, partners, stakeholders and associated personnel.

3.2.1. 'Staff' refers to: full time, part time, international and national, and those engaged on short term contracts such as consultants, contractors, researchers, photographers, interns, journalists and media personnel.

- 3.2.2. ‘Associated Personnel’ refers to: volunteers, board members, visitors and personnel in partner agencies that have a formal/contractual relationship with Ntengwe.
- 3.2.3. Ntengwe is committed to providing equality of access to employment, advancement and retention in the Organization, recognizing that it is in the Organization's interest to recruit and maintain a diverse and skilled workforce that is representative of the diverse nature of society, which includes persons with disabilities.
- 3.2.4. The Organization undertakes to promote a workplace culture based on fair practices which will safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy equal terms and conditions of employment. However, treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them the same. People with disabilities may have specific requirements which must be met in order for them to be included in the workforce. Every member of the WHO workforce is expected to contribute to creating and sustaining such a workplace.
- 3.2.5. The policy also applies to persons with disabilities entering or already working in the Organization, those being supported or not supported by Ntengwe interventions including those who may acquire a disability in the course of employment by Ntengwe

4.0.Guiding principles:The Ntengwe Policy on working with people Living with Disabilities (herein referred to as PLWDs) is underpinned by the following principles:

4.1.People with disability have equal rights:Ntengwe believes that every individual should be valued as a full member of society. Disability awareness and inclusion are anchored upon respect for human equality and diversity. Ntengwe approach to disability inclusion will ensure the full and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of family, community and societal life.

4.2.Supports are needed to allow people with disabilities to exercise their rights: Ntengwe believes that accessibility is a core element of many social and economic rights. Removing multiple barriers which prevent access in society is a key requirement for the inclusion of people with disabilities. If people with a disability are to exercise their human rights, they need a range of facilitators to help them negotiate this ‘inaccessible’ able-bodied world. Accessibility includes the following dimensions:

4.2.1. *Physical accessibility:* removing barriers in the infrastructural environment. Ensuring access to buildings, water supply and sanitation facilities, roads and transport services means designing them in a way that they are usable by all people, including all persons with disabilities.

4.2.2. *Information and communication accessibility:* ensuring information provided can be read or understood by persons with disabilities. Accepting and facilitating the use of sign language, Braille, plain language, barrier-free documents and other alternative modes of communication.

4.2.3. *Institutional accessibility:* ensuring equal access to justice, property and financial services, social services (e.g. in the health or education sector), as well as social protection and poverty reduction programs.

4.2.4. Economic accessibility: ensuring affordability of services and information and communication technologies.

5.0. Address non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and gender equality: Ntengwe believes that participation is both a means and an aim to empower rights holders, including people with disability, to articulate their expectations towards the State and other duty bearers, and to claim their rights. The slogan of the disability rights movement “Nothing about us without us” summarises this principle. Participation and empowerment are also key principles of the twin-track approach, i.e.:

5.1. Development of the conditions under which people with disability can fully participate in social and political processes, i.e. support from government and other stakeholders in society to strengthen civic and political participation mechanisms.

5.2. Development of the capacity of people with disability to use these mechanisms, participate in political processes, communicate on an equal basis with governments and other stakeholders in society, and network with other groups.

5.3. Ntengwe believes that cultural, systemic and environmental obstacles to access and participation for people with disability should be removed.

5.4. Ntengwe believes that children have the right to freedom from discrimination, respect for the dignity of the child and the cultivation of her or his potential to assume a responsible and independent life in society. A child with mental or physical disabilities is entitled to enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions that ensure dignity, promotes self-reliance and facilitation of the child’s active participation in the community. All necessary measures shall be taken to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disability of fundamental freedoms on equal basis with other children.

5.5. As women with disabilities are often subjected to discrimination, on the grounds of gender and disability, the need to incorporate a gender perspective in all efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities should be emphasised.

6.0. Our Commitment

6.1. Ntengwe is committed to ensuring inclusion in all areas of the organisation, and ensures that both women and men are provided with equal opportunity to be involved in the organisation and its work. Discrimination in any form, including on account of disability, will not be tolerated.

6.2. Ntengwe will continue to ensure all recruitment processes are based on individual qualifications and work experiences. Ntengwe commits to refraining from any discriminatory recruitment and employment practices, and Ntengwe management practices will aim to minimize access barriers for people with disabilities.

6.3. Ntengwe is committed to ensuring that its staff would receive training to enable them to work in alignment with Ntengwe Policy on working with PLWDs. Ntengwe staff will also be encouraged to work with partners to assess or develop their capacity to work in alignment with Ntengwe Policy on working with PLWDs.

6.4. Ntengwe is committed to implementing programs that contribute to the participation of people with disability, and to the development and implementation of national policies and programs that support the inclusion of people with disability.

6.5. Ntengwe is committed to promoting participation and leadership of people with disability in decision making at all levels, including towards strengthening the structure and functionality of Associations/ Organisations of PLWDs.

6.6.The use of out-dated language and words to describe people with disabilities contributes greatly to perpetuating old stereotypes. Ntengwe will ensure that any communication and/or promotional material (printed and/or electronic) which include people with disability, they are portrayed in an honest and dignified manner. When applicable, the emphasis and priority will be on the individual above and before the disability, through naming individuals (where appropriate) and using empowering language (speaking of a person who is blind, rather than a blind person).

7.0.Ntengwe Programs: Disability Considerations

7.1.Ntengwe regards disability as a cross cutting issue in its programming and disability considerations are mainstreamed where appropriate into Ntengwe programs. Ntengwe's disability inclusion work is aimed at the full, equal and meaningful participation of people with disability in various spheres of community and societal life.

7.2.Ntengwe will continue to work with its partners to address issues that are critical to people with disability, particularly in breaking down the barriers that prevent people with disability from realising their equal rights and opportunities. To do this, Ntengwe will:

7.2.1. Ensure that all women, men boys and girls benefit from and participate in all Ntengwe programs and projects, irrespective of their mental or physical abilities.

7.2.2. Continue to utilise approaches that address issues faced by persons with disabilities where they are central to our programmatic areas.

7.3.This policy shall uphold and respect the international, regional and local conventions, treaties and legislation for people living with disabilities and these include the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC); the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child; Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and optional protocol article 7; the constitution of Zimbabwe (2013); Government policy on Inclusive Education and Community Based Rehabilitation; the disabled persons Act; the Education Act; Ministerial circulars and ministerial directives.

8.0.Employment and people living with disabilities

The organisation, its staff, partners and all other concerned parties must ensure full protection of people living with disabilities from unfair labour practices. Ntengwe shall ensure that all employees sign and adhere to this policy.

9.0.Rights protection

9.1.The rights of persons with disabilities will be protected on an equal basis with others, including the right to just and favourable conditions of service, and to equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value. This also encompasses safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment and the redress of grievances

9.2.Persons with disabilities will not be discriminated against at any point in the employment cycle. This concerns all matters related to recruitment, selection, appointment, career guidance and development, learning opportunities,

performance evaluations, promotions, transfers, retention in employment and return to work (See Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27.1(a)).

- 10.0. Inclusion of people living with disabilities:** People living with disabilities must be provided with full opportunities to utilise the community learning and resource centres available within their means of reach. They must also be accorded with equal opportunities in all other life spheres.
- 11.0. Programmes for people with disabilities:** Ntengwe shall ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected, adhered to and upheld in all the interventions.
- 12.0. HIV/AIDS and people with disabilities:** People with disabilities shall need to be protected from HIV/AIDS, and they deserve equal access to HIV/ AIDS health education. Their health rights need to be upheld just like any other person.
- 13.0. Abuse of people with disabilities:** People with disabilities must be protected against all forms of abuse and violence, which is physical, neglect, emotional and sexual. In a situation where people with disabilities are exposed to victimisation, discrimination, abuse and/ or violence and other malpractices, all concern stakeholders must take a role in ensuring justice in the sensitive case management, and all necessary procedures must be taken.
- 14.0. Caregivers of people with disabilities:** Parents/ guardians/ caregivers of children/ people with disabilities shall uphold the rights of people with disabilities; and all suspected cases of abuse or violence against people with disabilities shall be reported to the responsible authorities within the national case management system.
- 15.0. Dissemination of information and learning:** In collaboration with partners, Ntengwe will undertake periodic information dissemination across the Organization and stakeholders to ensure understanding of the policy, as well as awareness raising and learning activities and complementary communication strategies.
- 16.0. Breach of policy:** In case of breach of the policy provisions by Ntengwe staff, partner, or any concerned parties may call legal action depending on the gravity of the breach.
- 17.0. Review:**
 - 17.1.** This Policy will be monitored on an on-going basis and may be reviewed every year to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs of Ntengwe and its partners.
 - 17.2.** Ntengwe should keep the recruitment process under review, in order to ensure that it is accessible to people with different types of disability.
 - 17.3.** The competent authorities should undertake regular reviews of the effectiveness of measures to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, and take steps to improve the effectiveness of these measures, where necessary. These reviews should be carried out in consultation with employers and worker representatives, as well as representatives of PLWDs.