



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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*This policy has largely been modelled on the **Caritas Australia's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy**. The REACH for Nepal foundation expresses its thanks to Caritas Australia for making this resource available*

Purpose of this Policy

At REACH for Nepal (RFN), we are committed to promoting inclusive and equitable practices that recognise the inherent dignity of every person. This policy outlines our commitment to work in partnership with all people with whom we engage. In particular, we are committed to individuals and groups who are vulnerable, marginalised and under-represented. The Foundation commits to help empower all with whom we engage with to be drivers of their own development and for this commitment to inform our operations, programs and partnerships. RFN commits to respect, protect and promote internationally recognised human rights for all, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status.

Key elements of this Policy

- RFN values human dignity by including everyone.
- RFN does not discriminate.
- RFN recognises that our differences make us stronger.

To whom does this Policy Apply?

The commitments made in this policy apply to all aspects of RFN's operations, programs and partnerships, including our:

- Organisational culture and behaviour, including all Directors, Executive, volunteer and third party members
- Development and humanitarian programs, and
- Work and communication with the Australian community



Guiding Principles

Impartiality

We serve people impartially, particularly those who are experiencing poverty and are most vulnerable, according to objective assessments of their situations and the needs they express, irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status, indeed without adverse distinction of any kind.

Respect

We recognise the value, dignity and diversity of each person. We respect religious traditions, culture, structures and customs in so far as they enhance and uphold the dignity of the human person.

Participation

We ensure that people we serve are involved in the design, management and implementation of our work, including the projects we support and the associated decisions from assessment through to evaluation.

Empowerment

We help people realise their full potential so they can control and improve their quality of life. Through integral human development and empowerment, we promote active, powerful local communities with all members playing a significant role in civil society.

Equality

We commit to the promotion of equal enjoyment of, and access to, internationally recognised human rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities. We work to ensure that the interests, needs and priorities of all people are taken into consideration, and that the barriers or discrimination to achieving these are removed.

Policy Commitments

As an agent of positive social change and justice, RFN is committed to the understanding and promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion in all facets of our work - internationally, in Australia and within our organisation. For this to happen, we will be accountable and commit to:

Organisational culture and behaviour

Maintain a culture of inclusive, safe and protective environments for all, including our employees, volunteers, contractors, partners and the communities and individuals we work with, particularly those most vulnerable to exclusion.

Uphold a zero-tolerance to, and take all reasonable and proportionate action to eliminate, any forms of violence, discrimination, harassment, abuse or victimisation.

Value, promote and increase awareness of diversity and inclusion within work practices at all levels including decision making, planning, and employment.

Have in place organisational policies and practices that reflect and respect the diversity within RFN, our partners and the communities we serve.

Ensure all personnel understand, sign and comply with RFN's Code of Conduct and professional behaviour standards for protecting Children and Vulnerable People.

Preferential option

Provide preferential option for, and with those most vulnerable to being excluded or unable to fully participate in RFN's operations, programs or partnerships including, but not limited to:

Disability inclusion

RFN recognises that disability is a complex, multidimensional development issue. We recognise that people living with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the most disadvantaged, with disability being both a cause and a consequence of poverty. As such, for disability we additionally commit to:

- Enhance the dignity, safety, well-being, resilience, influence and independence of people with disabilities, and
- Work to identify, address and remove barriers for people with disabilities, including social, physical and attitudinal.

Gender equality

RFN commits to the empowerment of women and girls, as we recognise this is key to redressing the power imbalances and inequalities that exist, and to achieving gender equality. We commit to:

- Adopt zero-tolerance to violence against any person based on their gender



- Recruit and retain personnel with a commitment to gender equality
- Ensure women are represented in leadership roles, decision making, planning, and employment, and
- Engage with partners to ensure they have, or are supported to develop, capacity to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

Child protection

RFN recognises that children are particularly vulnerable to exclusion and inequity. We commit to:

- Protect the rights of children and keeping them safe from harm and abuse, as documented in our Child Protection Policy, and
- Work with children so that their voices can be heard, empowering them to engage with decisions that impact them, and to realise their full potential.

Recruitment and Employment

RFN promotes diversity, equity and inclusion in recruiting people to the organisation including:

- Conducting equitable and inclusive recruitment practices to promotes a diverse workforce in line our commitments to attract, hire and retain a diverse workforce, and
- Not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies in line with Australia's federal anti-discrimination

Reporting, Feedback and Complaints

RFN is committed to maintaining mechanisms for safe, accessible reporting and response to concerns or allegations of breaches of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

RFN commits to ensuring that all RFN personnel, partners and stakeholders are proactively informed of our Complaints and Whistleblower Policy and procedures so any complaints or concerns in regards to employee's compliance with the principles and commitments in this Policy are appropriately identified, reported and responded to.



Breaches

RFN is committed to treating seriously all reported incidents of alleged unlawful discrimination or victimisation.

Proven allegations of improper conduct and non-compliance of this Policy by RFN personnel, partners or representatives may result in disciplinary action, including termination of contract or employment and/or legal action.

Accessing and Communicating the Policy

This policy will be available on our website and shared with our personnel.

All personnel affiliated with, and working for, the Foundation will be notified of and made aware that they are required to follow the terms outlined in this Policy.

Reviewing this Policy

We are committed to continuous improvement to our policies, procedures and practices. This Policy will be reviewed at a minimum of three years by the Manager HR and Planning to ensure it is working in practice and reflects current legislative principles.

Feedback on this, and other, policies is openly encouraged. We use this feedback to strengthen this and related policies and procedures.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Gender equality	<p>Gender equality between men and women refers to women, girls, men and boys' equal enjoyment of, and access to, rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.</p> <p>Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, and that the barriers or discrimination to achieving these are removed.</p> <p>Gender equality, more broadly (including people who do not identify as male or female), is that all people have equal enjoyment of, and access to, rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities.</p>
Gender identity	<p>The term 'gender identity' refers to a person's deeply held internal and individual sense of gender. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indeterminate: a person of indeterminate sex or gender is either someone whose biological sex cannot be unambiguously determined or someone who identifies as neither male nor female • Transgender*: The term 'transgender' is a general term for a person whose gender identity is different to their sex at birth • Intersex*: The term 'intersex' refers to people who have genetic, hormonal or physical characteristics that are not exclusively 'male' or 'female'. A person who is intersex may identify as male, female, intersex or as being of indeterminate sex. <p>(*as defined by The Australian Human Rights Commission).</p> <p>It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status under Australian federal law.</p>
Integral Human Development (IHD)	<p>We view development as based on a holistic understanding of the human person, within the context and experience of the family and the wider community, embracing spiritual, psychological, emotional, physical, material and economic elements. Wherever we work we strive for the development of the whole person and the whole community, and transform unjust social systems. In our work we ensure strong and consistent links between the relief, rehabilitation and developmental components.</p>
Barriers	<p>Barriers are physical/environmental, institutional, attitudinal, communication or economic obstacles to full inclusion in society.</p>

Disability	Disability includes long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Discrimination	Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is where a person is treated unfavourably because of certain personal attributes, including the persons race or ethnic background, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical features, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding requirements, social origin, parental and carer responsibilities, industrial activity, political or religious beliefs. Indirect discrimination occurs where an unreasonable condition or requirement is imposed on a group that, on its face is neutral, but which disproportionately adversely affects members of the group because of any of the above attributes.
Personnel	Any person doing paid or unpaid work for, or on behalf, of RFN including Australian-based staff, in-country employees, Board of Directors, volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment consists of conduct of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome to its recipient, and which a reasonable person would consider the possibility that the recipient may have been offended, humiliated or intimidated.
Sexual orientation	The term 'sexual orientation' refers to a person's emotional or sexual attraction to another person, including, among others, the following identities: heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or same-sex attracted.
Victimisation	Victimisation includes treating a person unfavourably because of the person's involvement, in whatever capacity, in any complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment