



Pacific Assist

Inspiring Self-reliance

**Empowerment of People with
Disabilities
Policy
2020**

Version Number: 1

Approved by Board on: 02/10/2020

Last updated: October 2020

Scheduled review date: October 2022

Policy Statement

Pacific Assist is committed to building empathy for the individuals and communities we serve. This includes people with disabilities. We believe that all individuals and communities have a right to a voice and to be heard and understood. We are committed to listening with a sincere desire to understand how life is experienced by disabled primary stakeholders. We will listen to their insights, opinions, concerns, and feedback. In addition, Pacific Assist is committed to inspiring self-reliance through allowing individuals and communities to freely act in accordance with their values and to be full participants in determining and implementing their own goals and strategies.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Pacific Assist's position on and commitment to empowering people with disabilities and specific policies and procedures supporting that commitment.

Scope

This policy applies to all Pacific Assist personnel, volunteers, partners, and service providers as it relates to their involvement with Pacific Assist and its projects.

Policy

As part of inspiring the communities we work with to be self-reliant, project coordinators are expected to reach out and build relationships of trust and empathy with individual disabled primary stakeholders and their families, and their broader support and advocacy community. When creating project briefs, undertaking context analysis, and developing project plans, consideration should be given to the disabled members of the primary stakeholder community, how the proposed project will impact on them, how to engage with them, and how to engage them in the project design, implementation, and evaluation. As part of this process, project coordinators should counsel with disabled primary stakeholders and/or their advocates and seek their input and direction about the project and their involvement in it. These discussions should include identifying barriers preventing disabled primary stakeholders from participating in the project design, implementation and evaluation process, and how barriers might be removed.

Procedures

When planning how to connect with and counsel with disabled primary stakeholders, project coordinators use the Initial Engagement Template in conjunction with this policy. In addition, project coordinators should:

- Work with established local partners, NGO's, government agencies, and/or other social support providers to identify the advocacy groups and leaders/spokespersons representing disabled primary stakeholders the project is intended to support
- Work with disabled primary stakeholder families, advocates, and leaders/spokespersons to reach out to, connect with, and get to know disabled primary stakeholder through:
 - Large and small community meetings
 - One-on-one meetings/conversations in homes, parks, cafes, or local community venues
 - Participating in and/or hosting community events such as conferences, workshops, dinners, and cultural, recreation, and health and well-being activities suited to the needs and interests of disabled primary stakeholders
- Prior to commencing broad engagement, meet with disabled primary stakeholders and their families, advocates, and leaders/spokespersons to engage them in the design of the community participation and contribution process (consider how to engage the disabled primary stakeholder community in the complete project design process – needs and capacity assessment, developing solutions, implementation, evaluation, and leadership)
- Work with local disabled primary stakeholders and their families, advocates and leaders/spokespersons to identify barriers that may prevent disabled primary stakeholders from participating in the project design and implementation process. Work with advocates and leaders/spokespersons to remove these barriers where possible
- Conduct project specific training for personnel, volunteers, partners, and service providers on including and empowering people with disabilities. Invite disabled primary stakeholders and/or their families, advocates, and leaders/spokespersons to conduct all or part of the training
- Engage disabled primary stakeholders and/or their families, advocates, and leaders/spokespersons in project evaluation processes

For detailed monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures see the Project Monitoring and Evaluation section of Pacific Assist's Project Development, Implementation, and Evaluation Policy

- During and after the project, utilise one-on-one conversations, spot interviews, and feedback mechanisms such as suggestion boxes to check in with disabled primary stakeholders and/or their families, advocates, and leaders/spokespersons about their views on the project

Related Policies

- Pacific Assist Primary Stakeholder Participation and Contribution Policy
- Pacific Assist Child Safety and Well-being Policy
- Pacific Assist Project Development, Implementation, and Evaluation Policy