



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Policy Number:	02	Version: 2
Updated by:	Martin Binoj, Anthony Pool, Kathleen Donnellon and Paul Taylor	Approved by Board on: 31 August 2022
Reason of Review:	Review to include ACFID CSA Regulations and Requirements	Scheduled review date: As per schedule

INTRODUCTION

Mercy Works Limited (MWL) promotes social justice through local and overseas relief and development activities that are part of the mission and vision of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The programs engage in partnerships with communities to promote justice, self-reliance and to support peoples and communities who are displaced or denied access to basic resources such as education, health and social welfare.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to describe the Instruments of the International Human Rights Framework and MWL's commitment to it.

The purpose of this Policy is also to ensure observance with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct Principles, in particular:

- Commitment 1.1 - We respect and protect human rights.
- Commitment 1.2 – We respect and respond to the needs, rights and inclusion of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion.
- Commitment 1.3 – We support people affected by crisis.
- Commitment 2.3 – We promote gender equality and equity.
- Commitment 2.4 – We promote the empowerment of people with disabilities.
- Commitment 2.5 – We promote the participation of children.

Any exemption to this Policy must be applied for in writing, for approval by the Executive Director. Any exemption granted by the Executive Director must be in writing.

2. SCOPE

This Policy provides guidance to MWL Board Directors, committee members, employees contractors, volunteers, (defined as Workers) in relation to their work with/for MWL.

This Human Rights Policy explains the Instruments of the International Human Rights Framework and MWL's commitment to it.

3. DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Terms used in this Policy are:

- **Human Rights Framework** – Existing legal instruments that provide a comprehensive legal framework for the governance of international migration. Well-defined rules address the treatment of a range of migrants including, among others: migrant women, men, children, refugees, stateless persons, migrant workers, and migrant victims of trafficking.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** – This is a milestone document in the history of human rights drafted by representatives from all regions of the world. The declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217A).

4. APPLICATION

MWL is committed to respecting human rights. Our conviction is that all people are equal. As such, all people are entitled to live a life that reflects this. MWL works in the belief that the realisation of human rights is fully consistent with the achievement of aid and development.

The United Nations (UN) set a common standard on human rights with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This declaration is premised on the fact that everyone is born free and equal in dignity and is entitled to certain rights without discrimination. The UN has since adopted many legally binding international human rights instruments.

4.1 Instruments

The instruments of the international human rights framework are:

1. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and
2. the six core human rights treaties:
 - (a) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - (b) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
 - (c) the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - (d) the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
 - (e) the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and
 - (f) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

As part of the framework of human rights law, all human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. MWL believes that universal respect for the human rights enshrined in the above-mentioned declarations and treaties is essential to enabling people to live a life that truly reflects their intrinsic worth.

4.2 Commitment

We affirm that all people - irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation (including non-binary and transgender people - those with a gender identity that is different from the sex they were assigned at

birth¹), poverty, class or socioeconomic status or other status, are entitled to the rights enshrined in the Declaration. We are mindful that those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion (such as those mentioned above), experience further vulnerabilities and potential barriers to human rights, and MWL commits to representing and including those where possible. In addition, MWL will protect, respect and promote those rights throughout our activities.

In particular, we agree that all peoples have the right to the following:

- life, liberty, security, a fair trial
- freedom of religious belief, opinion and speech, participation in government
- work, access to cultural life, means of income or food production
- basic health, education, and an adequate standard of living

MWL will ensure just and equitable work practices within our own organisation. We will ensure that the application of human rights principles will be clearly stated in our organisation's key documents and that we have policies in place that aim to produce equitable outcomes between women and men, and people with disability, in all activities of the organisation, including the following:

- engagement of volunteers and employees
- engagement of partner agencies
- senior management and governance

MWL will ensure that its programs and activities are used to strengthen internationally recognised human rights and to encourage our partners to address issues of injustice both in the communities they serve and in development projects.

5. BREACH

A breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action that may involve severance from the organisation.

6. AUTHORITY

This Policy is approved and reviewed by the Board.

7. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Other organisational policies, legislation, and codes etc. that should be read in conjunction with this Policy and with MWL's ethical value principles include:

- ACFID Code of Conduct - Commitment 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Management of Concerns, Complaints and Commendations Policy
- Partnership Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- United Nations Free and Equal- Transgender- unfe.org/wp-content/2017/05/UNFE-Transgender.pdf

8. CONTACTS

¹ United Nations Free and Equal-Transgender- unfe.org/wp-content/2017/05/UNFE-Transgender.pdf – accessed 26 July 2022.

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9. REVIEW

Review of this Policy, related forms and resources will be undertaken every three years by the Executive Director and approved by the MWL Board.

10. REVISION/MODIFICATION HISTORY


Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
27 March 2019	1	Human Rights Policy	New	27 March 2019	28 March 2019
25 November 2020	2	Human Rights Policy	Update to reflect the changes with ACFID	25 November 2020	26 November 2020
31 August 2022	3	Human Rights Policy	Update to include transgender and non-binary people		

11. APPROVAL DATE/REVISION SCHEDULE

Approved by: Board, Mercy Works Limited

Date: 31 August 2022

To be Revised: 31 August 2023

Board Chair Signature	
Date	2 September 2022