



AFRICAN INITIATIVE FOR MANKIND PROGRESS ORGANIZATION -AIMPO

Disability and other special needs policy

A. INTRODUCTION

Established in 2001, the African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO) is a nationally recognized, non-governmental and non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of Rwanda's indigenous, Batwa population, legally categorized as 'Historically Marginalized Peoples' (HMP) in Rwanda. The Government of Rwanda (GoR) required our organization to change its name

from the African Indigenous Minority People's Organization to its current name in 2007, claiming that the recognition of ethnicity and indigeneity is not relevant to Rwanda.

- **Our vision** is to advance the cause and integration of marginalized people (i.e. the Indigenous Batwa population) into a society in which all citizens should be equal in terms of political decision-making, economic opportunities, and access to education and healthcare. This will contribute to a decrease in the discrimination against the Indigenous Batwa.
- **Our goal** is to deliver high-impact, cost-effective, and culturally competent capacity-building programs to Historically Marginalized People in our target regions in Rwanda.
- **Our missions** are to promote the individual and collective rights of HMP; to facilitate sustainable development in Historically Marginalized Communities; and to accelerate the social, political, and economic integration of these communities into Rwandan society.

AIMPO believes that it is worthy to have and serve a diverse community of both staff and beneficiaries with an objective to provide a supportive and equal opportunity environment for all. It is both our desire and our duty to ensure that all members of our staff, board and the communities we are serving are adequately supported to fulfill their potential, particularly those with a disability and other special needs.

This Policy translates AIMPO internal commitments to support persons with disabilities and other special needs by defining its internal commitment of observing the principles expressed in both national and international instruments related to persons with disabilities. It sets out guidelines, mechanisms and standards for AIMPO's members, staff and its relationships with beneficiaries to make the organizational collective programming efforts more effective and inclusive. It also reflects subsequent developments to be made in different projects, needs identification, inception, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, evaluations, buildings constructions, assets buying, etc. towards AIMPO vision and mission as well as accountability vis a vis these commitments.

This policy is an AIMPO commitment for observing the already disability and other special needs legal framework and policies in Rwanda namely; NATIONAL POLICY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND FOUR YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN (2021-2024), the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and its optional protocol, the Law n° 01/2007 of 20/01/2007 relating to

protection of disabled persons in general, the Ministerial order n° 01/2009 of 19/6/2009 determining the modalities of facilitating persons with disabilities to practice and follow cultural, entertainment and sports activities, the Ministerial Order N° 20/18 Of 27/7/2009 Determining the Modalities Of Classifying Persons With Disabilities Into Basic, Categories Based On The Degree Of Disability and other special needs, the Ministerial order n°02/cab.m/09 of 27/7/2009 determining the modalities of facilitating persons with disabilities on necessary travels within the country, the Ministerial Order N°20/19 Of 27/7/2009 Determining The Modalities Of Facilitating Persons With Disabilities Access Medical Care, the Ministerial Order N° 03/19.19 Of 27/7/2009 Determining The Modalities Of Facilitating Persons With Disabilities To Easily Access Employment, the Ministerial Order N° 01/09/Mininfor of 10/08/2009 Determining the Modalities of Facilitating Persons with Disabilities in Matters Relating to Communication.

B. Purpose

The African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO) is committed to the inclusion of people who have physical and cognitive disabilities and those who advocate and offer services on behalf of people with disabilities. This commitment extends from the design and implementation of AIMPO projects to advocacy for people with disabilities. AIMPO's policy on disability is as follows:

To avoid discrimination against people with disabilities in projects in the operation areas and to stimulate an engagement of partners and stakeholders within the operation areas in the country and donors in promoting a climate of nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. The AIMPO policy on disability is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities within AIMPO projects operational areas.

The disability and other special needs policy outlines AIMPO commitment to embracing a positive attitude toward the promotion of equality and diversity, taking pride in the efforts to create a working environment, a social atmosphere and services delivery manners which are inclusive of everyone.

AIMPO actively welcomes and values the diversity among the staff, members and beneficiaries as outlined in its core values (*Equality, coexistence in diverse creeds, mutual respect, accountability and transparency, integrity, sacrifice for the good of society, respect and love*).

This policy outlines AIMPO policy for supporting staff, beneficiaries and partners with disabilities in line with our legal obligations but also as our duty of care. It does not replace the legal instruments that serve and guide the work of AIMPO and the concretized strategies of implementation will be reflected in each project and even other policies.

C. Objectives

AIMPO is committed to ensuring that disability and other special needs does not present in any way a barrier to existing and prospective staff, members and beneficiaries

Our objectives are to;

- ✓ Ensure the accessibility of our physical and virtual environment for all
- ✓ Ensure recruitment criteria and policy for both members and staff do not create unnecessary barriers
- ✓ Provide support to persons with disabilities and other special needs staff and beneficiaries as well as partners and ensure that they are part of us (among staff, partners and beneficiaries)
- ✓ Encourage disability and other special needs disclosure among our staff and students, while maintaining confidentiality
- ✓ Work with persons with disability and other special needs among staff and beneficiaries to determine support needs
- ✓ Ensure the support to persons with disability and other special needs among staff and beneficiaries remains relevant
- ✓ Ensure our processes for career development take cognizance of the needs of staff with disability and other special needs
- ✓ support managers in responding to the needs of persons with disability and other special needs

D. Principles

AIMPO has made commitments in order to ensure we constantly strive to create a productive environment, representative of and responsive to different needs of staff and beneficiaries with disabilities where everyone has an equal chance to succeed at all levels through the organization.

The abilities of disabled people are recognized and valued by:

- Focusing on what **people can do rather than on what they cannot**
- **Challenging stereotypes** about people with disabilities and other special needs
- Making **reasonable adjustments in the workplace** to help people with disabilities and other special needs achieve their full career potential.

E. Commitments at organizational level

- AIMPO will ensure employees with **disabilities and other special needs have the opportunity** at any time and at least once a year, to discuss with their line managers or their group representative any actions that can be taken to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.
- AIMPO will make every effort to make sure that **employees with disabilities and other special needs or an employee who becomes disabled**, stay in employment.
- AIMPO will take action to ensure **an appropriate level of disability and other special needs awareness** is done to make this commitment work.
- Integrate an envelope for reasonable accommodation of disability and special needs in organizational budgets
- Include production and dissemination in accessible formats for persons with disabilities as part of the policy for publications
- AIMPO will consult with representatives of persons with disabilities when elaborating strategies
- AIMPO will nominate a disability and other special needs focal point or unit, with authority to influence decisions and budgets (and not only advisory)

F. Commitments et projects level

- Conduct community consultation, including people with disabilities in identifying needs before developing a project
- Ensuring an implementation in a local participatory diagnosis/assessment manner to identify the priorities of a community, including those of persons with disabilities
- Include disability and other special needs questions in any data collection

- Determine disability and other special needs-inclusive indicators within monitoring and evaluation systems

G. Commitments at staff level

- Adapt human resources practices so that they create an accessible and conducive environment for people with disabilities
- AIMPO will actively encourage persons with disabilities in its staff and interns recruitment policy.
- AIMPO will conduct training on disability and other special needs for staff of the organization and will make it one of the packages for the induction of new staff