



Institutional Policy

Mission
Scope of activity
Principles of intervention
Charter

Federal Executive Division
2013



Institutional Policy

Mission Scope of activity Principles of intervention Charter

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Mission statement

Purpose:

The mission statement expresses, in a few words, a stable and identical objective suitable for use by all of our organisation's stakeholders.

“Handicap International is an independent and impartial aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. We work alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable populations, taking action and bearing witness in order to respond to their essential needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights”.

Approved by the Federal Board of Trustees in November 2009

Scope of activity

1.

Definition of our Scope of activity

Handicap International's scope of activity is the institutional, professional and operational space in which our action is required and possible.

Required because the action conforms to our organisation's stated purpose and constitutes our reason for being and our mission.

Required because it is the undertaking to act on behalf of defined causes, populations and goals entered into with our members, sympathisers and supporters that enables us to mobilise the resources we need.

Possible because our legitimacy and capacity to implement an action is determined, in every context, by constraints, opportunities and priorities. Therefore, the possibilities offered by our scope of activities do not require us to implement, systematically and whatever the circumstances, all the actions that come within this scope.

Possible, last of all, because the notion of a scope establishes, for a given period, the limits beyond which activity is neither required nor appropriate.

Our **scope of activity** is made up of coherent thematic groups of activity, designed around **beneficiary populations**, intervention contexts and professional and organisational competencies mobilised by **sector of activity**.

To implement our scope of activity, we draw on additional sources:

- **operational and methodological guidelines** describing approaches and methods of action specific or common to our different sectors of intervention, or in other words, how we go about designing and realising our actions.
- **a strategy** proposed by the organisation's executive management and approved by its legislative bodies. This strategy underpins our multi-annual programming which is then broken down into annual implementation plans. The strategy is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains adapted to the context and to any changes in this context.



2.

Handicap International's scope of activity

Beneficiary populations, intervention contexts, sectors of activity

2.1

Beneficiary populations

In describing the categories of population for whom our mission aims to bring about change, an improvement in their situation, the bylaws of Handicap International's Federation state that our actions target:

- populations at risk of diseases, violence or accidents liable to cause disability;
- vulnerable populations and in particular disabled persons and persons living with chronic disabling diseases;
- refugee populations, populations living in disaster areas or populations displaced by crises, conflicts and catastrophes, and especially those persons among them who are vulnerable, injured and disabled;
- populations threatened by weapons, munitions and explosive devices during or in the aftermath of military.

Definition of these categories

The generic term of "beneficiary population" describes those categories of populations covered by Handicap International's mission in the countries in which we operate.

Populations at risk of diseases, violence or accidents liable to cause disability

Persons or population groups who, due to personal or environmental factors, are at risk of disability. The risk is characterised by its probability and the seriousness of its effects.

Vulnerable populations

Persons or population groups who, because of their health or social condition may find themselves unable to satisfy their fundamental needs, are particularly exposed to risks and therefore require specific measures to be put in place.

The generic notion of "vulnerable population" is variable according to the context. It may include persons made vulnerable by age, gender or temporary impairment, and notably includes destitute and excluded people.

Persons with disabilities¹

Persons with lasting physical, mental, intellectual or sensorial impairments which, when combined with certain barriers, prevent them from participating in society on the same basis as other people and therefore call for compensation measures and work on the environment.

Persons living with disabling diseases

Persons suffering from a usually chronic disease, the consequences of which may result in functional limitations. Without treatment or appropriate caremanagement the disease may at some stage result in irreversible physical, sensorial or mental deficiencies.

Refugee populations, populations living in disaster areas or displaced populations

Populations forced to flee or leave their homes or habitual place of residence, either because of armed conflict, violence or serious and repeated violations, or because of natural or man-made disasters. Highly vulnerable and exposed, these populations can find themselves in danger of death, disease, trauma or other threats to their integrity and development. Among these populations, our action is particularly focused on persons with disabilities and injuries.

Persons suffering from disabling injuries and trauma

Persons having suffered trauma as a result of an accident or violence, the

immediate or longer-term consequences of which may result in functional limitations. Without treatment or appropriate care-management, these consequences may lead to irreversible impairments.

Populations threatened by weapons, munitions and explosive devices

In conflict zones where various kinds of weapons, mines and munitions have been employed, all persons and communities in danger of death or physical or psychological injury, or liable to suffer material injury or substantial infringement upon the exercising of their rights due to the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

2.2

Contexts

The context describes the situation justifying our intervention, its environment and the conditions and difficulties encountered.

Emergency

Situations of serious crisis, conflict or disaster, the effects of which are unmanageable and threaten people's lives, health and living conditions, as their basic needs are no longer covered. In complex emergencies, the direct and immediate effects of the crisis are further aggravated by the inability to meet basic needs and the gradual or rapid weakening or destruction of political and social institutions.

1. This definition is based on that given in the International convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Post-emergency

Situation of varying duration following on from the acute phase of the crisis, characterised by the unavailability of services for covering the population's needs, and preceding any reconstruction and rehabilitation processes. Although considered part of the emergency phase, it calls for different responses to be offered to the populations.

Reconstruction or Rehabilitation

A post-crisis, post-disaster or post-conflict situation during which the damaged economic, physical and social infrastructure is gradually restored and those services interrupted by the crisis are re-established.

Development

Although often marked by poverty and exclusion, a stable context allowing processes for improving economic, social, cultural and political conditions to be implemented.

Chronic crises

A situation of regular or enduring instability, generally caused by failing political, administrative and social institutions, and resulting in insecurity that, as in emergency or post-emergency situations, seriously affects the population's living conditions.

2.3

The goals of our action in these contexts

In these contexts, Handicap International's action aims to achieve the following **goals**:

- To prevent invalidity, impairment and disability linked to diseases, accidents and violence.
- To ensure the service offer in our sectors of activity is available, adapted and accessible.
- To strengthen capacities, to promote social participation and the application and exercising of our beneficiary public's rights.

In the time and space of conflicts and disasters, or in their immediate wake:

- To prevent and limit the consequences of crises and disasters on persons and communities.
- To help organise relief, provide adapted assistance and cover basic needs, with a special focus on persons who are particularly vulnerable and those with injuries or disabilities.

2.4

Areas of competence and sectors of activity

Handicap International's employs its professional and organisational competencies in the following **sectors**

of activity:

- ▀ Health
- ▀ Prevention
- ▀ Rehabilitation
- ▀ Economic inclusion
- ▀ Social inclusion
- ▀ Education
- ▀ Local development
- ▀ Accessibility
- ▀ Disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction
- ▀ Demining and mine/ERW risk education
- ▀ Coordination and management of camps
- ▀ Basic needs
- ▀ Reconstruction

Different levels may be concerned by the implementation of these sectors of activity:

- ▀ individual and community, services, systems and policies,
- ▀ local, national and international.

In addition to its thematic or technical competencies, Handicap International also employs expertise in the advocacy field, with the aim of influencing or improving national and international public policy:

▀ **Advocacy**

- ▀ Campaigns and mobilisation of public opinion
- ▀ Testimony, violation alerts and denunciations
- ▀ International aid and development education
- ▀ Lobbying of decision-making bodies
- ▀ Participation in joint institutional bodies
- ▀ Promotion of regulatory and legal frameworks and convention-based instruments relative to Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Disarmament.

The implementation of the activities described in the scope of activity should also take account of the following documents:

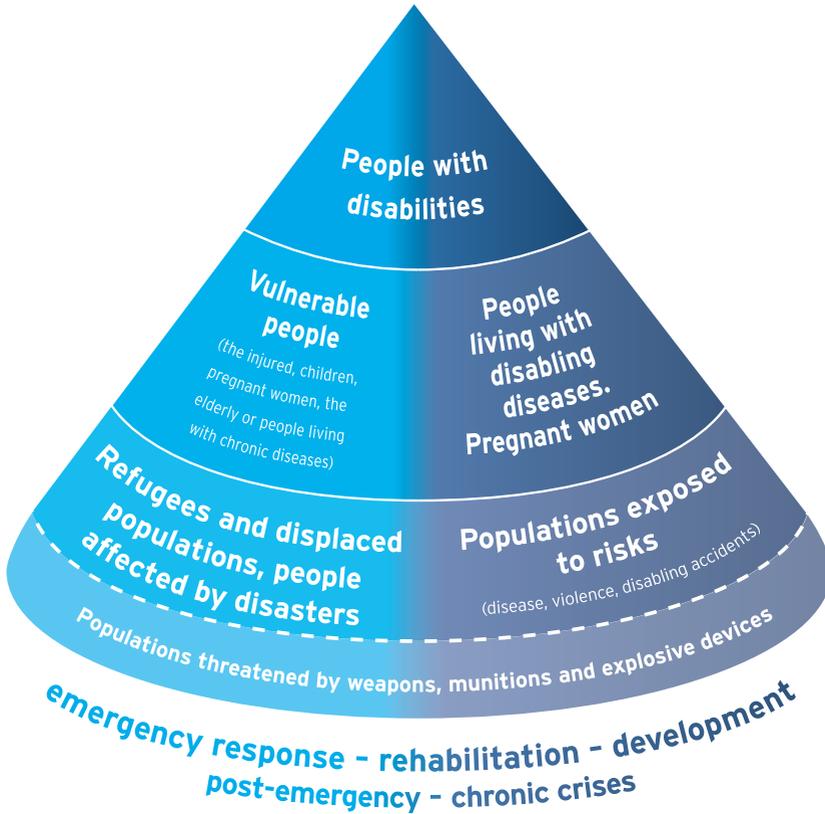
▀ **Approaches and operating methods**

- ▀ Intervention principles
- ▀ Operating methods
- ▀ Thematic/technical frameworks

▀ **Multi-annual strategy**



The beneficiaries of our actions



Principles of intervention

Scope and purpose of the principles of intervention

1. The principles of intervention are intended for use by all Handicap International staff involved in the design, programming, implementation and evaluation of initiatives of any kind that fall within the organisation's scope of activity.
2. The principles of intervention reflect the essential characteristics of our institutional and operational positioning. Principles of intervention:
 - apply when implementing any aspect of our action;
 - determine the practical orientation of our choices and intervention methods;
 - provide a framework for the approaches and methods used in designing and carrying out our activities.

This paper sets forth principles with regard to the following subjects:

1. Beneficiaries and levels of intervention
2. Methods of intervention
3. Coordination, partnership and sustainability
4. Quality and impact
5. Approaches and methods
6. Use of Law
7. Testimony and advocacy
8. Impartiality
9. Responsibility and transparency

1.

Principles relative to our beneficiaries and level of intervention

- 1.1 Our choices, in terms of programming, approaches and actions, are guided first and foremost by the desire to have the greatest possible positive and measurable impact on the lives of our final beneficiaries.
- 1.2 Our action focuses primarily on the most vulnerable populations and those most exposed to risk, as well as on victims of discrimination and exclusion.
- 1.3 Our actions take gender, childhood and old-age issues into account in analysis and programming.
- 1.4 We seek to involve beneficiaries, their families and communities, and support solidarity mechanisms within the community.
- 1.5 Our action is implemented primarily at local level and at the services level, alongside the populations, groups and individuals concerned. This groundlevel experience gives us legitimacy in seeking a greater and more lasting impact through working to influence systems and policies.



2.

Principles relative to methods of intervention

- 2.1** We seek solutions that are both realistic and adapted to the context. We reject stereotypical approaches, preferring to analyse the specificities of each situation or context and identify the most suitable actions and operating procedures possible.
- 2.2** We take the Relief-Rehabilitation-Development contiguum into account, adapting our methods of action, our activities and their duration to the specificities of each situation.
- 2.3** The principle of 'operational differentiation' enables us to adapt our operating procedures to the context and to the areas of competences concerned, using specific methods and management.
- 2.4** Our emergency action is characterised by preparedness and a rapid reaction capacity that enable us to respond in a timely manner and in accordance with the scale of the event.
- 2.5** Emergency response and mine action may be implemented anywhere in the world, regardless of whether we are already on site and without any obligation to follow up with development action.

3.

Principles relative to coordination, partnership and sustainability

- 3.1** We coordinate our activities with stakeholders at the local, national and international levels in an effort to foster geographic, thematic and technical synergies. We pay particular attention to contributions by local actors.
- 3.2** When the context and nature of the activities allow, we seek partnerships with written agreements on common objectives, methods of intervention, roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3** Well-chosen and successful partnerships, whether established to obtain complementary expertise, broaden the impact of our action, or strengthen local capacities, favour the sustainability of the actions undertaken.
- 3.4** When carrying out emergency operations, we seek to support responses that emerge from the community. We encourage contributions that will lead to lasting improvements.
- 3.5** We plan an exit strategy at the programme or project design stage, planning for appropriate support during the transition period.

4.

Principles relative to quality and impact

- 4.1** The quality of our action is based on:
- needs analyses and the identification of priorities,
 - environmental and actors considerations,
 - the provision of sufficient resources,
 - a tailored choice of operational approaches,
 - proximity to the beneficiaries,
 - an evaluation of outcomes,
 - clear processes and procedures.
- 4.2** We provide enhanced and up-to-date expertise (knowledge and know-how).
- 4.3** We ensure that the outcomes of our actions are objectively evaluated and we measure the impact of our activities on the lives of beneficiaries.
- 4.4** Through knowledge-management – lessons-learned, experience-sharing, and innovation – we seek to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of our actions.

5.

Principles relative to conceptual frameworks, approaches, references and methodological tools

- 5.1** Our understanding of disability is based on the original model of the Disability Creation Process (DCP).
- 5.2** We design and carry out actions based on continuous learning from experience in our key areas of competence. In this way, we develop and improve our own standards.
- 5.3** We interpret and make critical use of external sources and guidelines, so as to draw from them useful aspects that conform to our mandate, our status as a non-government actor and are in the interests of the organisation.
- 5.4** Our approaches, guidelines and standards are knowledge that is shared openly with our partners and other stakeholders.



6.

Principles relative to the use of law

- 6.1** We make reference to universal human rights instruments and to international humanitarian law in support of our action.
- 6.2** When designing and proposing measures for achieving change, we take into consideration the laws and customs of the countries in which we work.
- 6.3** Instruments of human rights and humanitarian law enable us to identify violations and discrimination, and serve to support our testimony and advocacy.

7.

Principles relative to testimony and advocacy

- 7.1** Legitimacy for our testimony and advocacy lies in our field experience and action alongside beneficiary populations. Founded on needs and facts, these activities must be pertinent and potentially useful to these populations. Depending on the circumstances, our advocacy and testimony may take the form of public outcry or remain confidential.
- 7.2** Advocacy is a lever that is complementary to our humanitarian and development work. It aims to promote a political environment that is favourable to improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries of our action and to the exercising of their rights.
- 7.3** We undertake direct advocacy at the international level. In the countries where we work, we encourage advocacy by local groups and individuals.
- 7.4** Our advocacy is in line with our scope of action and we are vigilant with regard to local political, cultural or religious controversies.

- 7.5** We are watchful and vigilant with regard to any exactions and violations that may occur within our programmes' environment. Where necessary, we take appropriate steps to inform and alert those organisations and institutions in charge of ensuring the protection of the populations.
- 7.6** In conflict situations, testimony and advocacy are carried out with caution and remain focused on protection and assistance for the populations and victims.

8.

Principles relative to impartiality

- 8.1** We pursue our commitment to our beneficiaries in all circumstances, without becoming involved in any existing political struggles.
- 8.2** In conflict situations, our actions do not favour any of the parties involved. The assistance we provide is granted without discrimination and without any consideration other than the needs of the persons affected, whatever their origin or affiliation.



9.

Principles relative to responsibility and transparency

- 9.1** Handicap International exercises its professional responsibilities as an international aid organisation according to the following principles:
- “do no harm”, by measuring the consequences of our acts and causing no injury;
 - “overlook nothing”, by seeking to mobilise all suitable means available.
- 9.2** We create internal mechanisms for monitoring our efforts to live up to our responsibilities towards the beneficiary populations.
- 9.3** We condemn all forms of abuse and human exploitation. In all contexts we make certain our staff and partners help ensure respect for the dignity of populations and individuals.
- 9.4** We undertake to keep the different stakeholders in our actions informed: beneficiaries, the authorities of the countries in which we work, public opinion, our donors and supporters and our professional and institutional backers.
- 9.5** We submit our management, our working methods and our outcomes to the external evaluations and audits of control bodies and institutions and of institutional donors.

Approved by the Federal Board of Trustees in February 2010. Published in the Board Letter in May 2010

Charter

Guided by our aspiration to promote and defend human dignity, we identify with these ETHICAL PRINCIPLES to which our approach to disability lends a special meaning:

– **Humanity:**

We see disability as a reason for bringing human beings closer together. Toward that end we strive to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to all aspects of society. We adopt a comprehensive approach in our work, so as to best provide people with a response that meets their specific needs and improves their living environment. We respect the populations with whom we intervene. In all our activities, including advocacy and communication, we endeavour to acquire the best possible understanding of people's beliefs, culture and practices and to establish with them a relationship of trust. We draw advantage from operating in a cross-cultural environment, reinvesting what we learn to enhance our actions.

– **Solidarity:**

We focus on situations of extreme vulnerability – socioeconomic or political insecurity, armed conflicts, natural or man-made disasters – in which persons with disabilities are at particular risk of being overlooked as a result of the disruption to traditional expression of community-based solidarity. We encourage all initiatives designed to strengthen or contribute to

reinventing these systems. We use our competencies to prevent disabilities and to provide access to essential services as regards emergency response, health, rehabilitation, social and economic inclusion as well as civil society support, in order to satisfy the needs of the peoples that are our reason for being.

– **Impartiality and equity:**

We support the principle of equal opportunities for all and undertake to deliver aid that is adapted to the needs identified. We therefore work alongside persons with disabilities to assist them in obtaining the same rights as any other person.

– **Independence:**

We assert our NGO status, implement our mission with no political agenda and reject all attempts to direct or control our action. Aware of the constraints on our working environment, we maintain our capability to decide where, with whom and with what funds we work.

– **Commitment:**

In carrying out our actions, we are determined to do no harm, to overlook nothing and to refute and combat discrimination. Defence of humanitarian space and humanitarian law, promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and the fight to prohibit weapons with unacceptable humanitarian consequences are particularly important parts of our Federation's



mission. We stand prepared to bear testimony in order to warn about intolerable acts that we may witness.

Mindful of the codes and practices specific to our sphere of activity, and determined to develop relevant, concrete, effective and innovative action that is adapted to the reality of the situations we encounter in the field, we conform to the Mission, the Scope of Activity and the Principles of Intervention adopted by the Handicap International Federation.

Committed to avoid exposing our staff, partners and the populations with whom we work to danger, we develop our activities with necessary caution, keeping in mind the need to assist and to protect both aid workers and beneficiaries.

In adhering to this Charter, members of Handicap International Federation and their personnel undertake to respect and promote its founding components.

Charter adopted by the Handicap International Federal Board of Trustees on the 19th of January 2013



In the same collection

- **IP 01:** Child protection policy (2007)
- **IP 02:** Gender Policy (2007)
- **IP 03:** Protection of beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse (2011)
- **IP 04:** Policy and mechanisms for the prevention of, and fight against, bribery (2012)
- **IP 05:** Tackling the risk: Safety and Security Policy (2012)

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Mission

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This paper presents Handicap International's mission, scope of activities, principles of intervention and charter.

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