

Stronger Organizations, Stronger Human Rights

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Equity and efficiency aren't competing; the OPPI shows they're interdependent.

Many disability organizations face pressure to balance operational performance with person-centered values. For many leaders, it feels they must choose between running a sustainable organization and advancing human rights.

Findings from the OPPI, drawn from 383 disability sector leaders and Leadership Institute graduates, suggest that this trade-off isn't necessary. **In fact, agencies that excel in operational performance also report stronger commitment to human rights priorities and practices.**




THE BIG TAKEAWAY

Human rights and organizational performance go hand in hand!

Disability professionals who reported stronger leadership development, employee participation, and diversity, equity, and inclusion practices also reported stronger implementation of self-determination, community inclusion, and stakeholder participation. These findings suggest that organizational performance and human rights are not competing priorities; instead, they appear to reinforce one another.




KEY FINDING

Human Rights

-  Self-Determination
-  Community Inclusion
-  Stakeholder Participation

**STRONG
POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIP**

Org. Performance

-  Employee Support
-  Leadership Development
-  Diversity, Equity, Inclusion



$r = 0.737$

Means a Strong Relationship
Between **Human Rights** Priorities
and Practices and **Organizational
Performance**



$r = 0.733$

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WHY IT MATTERS FOR DISABILITY LEADERS

Leaders don't need to fix everything at once—OPPI findings show that focusing on equity, values-based leadership, and employee engagement drives meaningful improvements in inclusion and self-determination.

Disability sector leaders often feel squeezed to balance operational demands with person-centered values. These findings suggest that leaders do not need to choose between the two. Investments in leadership development, employee engagement, and inclusive workplace practices foster stronger environments that promote autonomy, inclusion, and meaningful stakeholder participation.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE DISABILITY FIELD

Strong correlation between organizational performance and human rights:

- Challenge the idea that organizational performance and human rights are competing priorities. Strong correlation between the two means that when one improves, so does the other.
- Show that more sustainable organizations tend to be better positioned to implement person-directed, inclusive, and rights-based practices.
- Inform integrated strategies for quality improvement. Efforts to improve organizational performance should integrate operational strategies and inclusive person-directed approaches.
- Reinforce the importance of investing in leadership, workforce development, and organizational culture as part of broader systems transformation efforts.

WHAT CAN DISABILITY LEADERS DO?

✓ **Assess organizational performance and human rights outcomes together.** Use data to understand how leadership, workforce practices, and organizational culture may be influencing person-centered outcomes.

✓ **Invest in leadership and workforce development.** Strengthening leadership capacity, employee participation, and inclusive workplace practices supports both organizational effectiveness and human rights implementation.

✓ **Embed human rights into organizational improvement efforts.** When planning quality improvement initiatives, explicitly consider how changes may affect autonomy, inclusion, and stakeholder participation.

✓ **Break down organizational silos.** Encourage collaboration between quality improvement, human resources, leadership, and service teams to align operational goals with person-centered values.

✓ **View human rights as an organizational strategy, not just a service outcome.** Building stronger systems, cultures, and leadership practices may help create the conditions needed for sustainable human rights implementation.

