

Independent Evaluation of the Disability Rights Fund and Disability Rights Advocacy Fund

(April 2019 – December 2022)

EVALUATION REPORT | AUGUST 2023



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“The more diverse the disability movement, the better we can have an inclusive society.”

“Funding. That is what really helps us in the work that we do. Also, partnership is extremely important. We cannot do this work alone.”

“Overall, the increased diversity within the disability movement has brought about a greater sense of solidarity, collaboration, and empowerment for our organization.”

“The collaborative environment fostered by the disability movement has provided us with opportunities for networking, learning, and sharing best practices with other organizations and advocates. Through these interactions, we have been able to broaden our perspectives, gain new insights, and enhance our approaches to supporting individuals with psychosocial disabilities.”

Acknowledgements

Universalia would like to express our gratitude to those who have contributed towards this evaluation.

We especially acknowledge and thank all those who participated in the evaluation for their time and generosity in sharing their experiences and views on the Disability Rights Fund. Special thanks go to the Disability Rights Fund staff for their kind collaboration and assistance throughout the evaluation process, and to the Disability Rights Fund grantees for the time set apart to meet with the evaluation team.

Executive Summary

Background

This evaluation provides an in-depth examination on the contributions of Disability Rights Fund (DRF)/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRAF)¹ to the disability movement from April 2019 to December 2022 in three select countries: Fiji, Indonesia, and Nigeria. Its purpose was to provide evidence, in these three countries, of DRF's contributions and the potential impact of DRF's technical assistance (TA) on the disability movement at different levels (individual, organizational, systemic/movement), and of their work towards the diversification of disability movements, including but not limited to gender diversification. The evaluation also aimed to identify DRF's specific contributions to a sample of key advocacy achievements in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities.

This evaluation was conducted by the Universal Management Group, with the evaluation team comprised of international and national evaluators in each of the three countries and persons living with disabilities. The evaluation was commissioned with the support of the United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Rights & Labor (DRL) and the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), two donors to the Fund.

Methodology

The evaluation was guided by participatory, disability-inclusive, and utilization-focused approaches; the evaluation team engaged DRF grantees, staff and key funders in co-designing the evaluation objectives and scope, in shaping the evaluation main questions, methodology and deliverables, and in analyzing data.

The evaluation drew on both quantitative and qualitative data, which were collected through key informant interviews, workshops, and document review. To further validate the interpretation of data collected and clarify any gaps, sense-making workshops were held with grantees.

The evaluation faced a couple of limitations, namely: i) reaching targeted samples for certain stakeholder groups (i.e., organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in Fiji, and government officials in Fiji and Nigeria), and ii) a compressed data collection timeline. Mitigating measures for these limitations included sense-making workshops, triangulation of data across different sources, and an online session with the DRF Evaluation Committee to further triangulate and validate data.

Evaluation Findings

DRF's approach to TA has evolved over the past couple of years. It began with a focus on support for advocacy and now encompasses broader organizational strengthening as a response to the recognition of the strong linkages between organizational capacity and effective advocacy (**Finding 1**). DRF's TA modalities have been accessed to varying degrees across the three countries and types of grantees, with data indicating that grantees in Nigeria, located in urban areas and with a cross-disability focus, have accessed TA the most (**Finding 2**). Grantees note that DRF staff's direct support is timely, responsive, and reliable (**Finding 9**). Through their various TA modalities (and other forms of support), DRF has contributed to empowering processes among grantees, with impacts both at the individual and organizational levels. Grantees, including marginalized grantees, have gained confidence to fight for their

¹ Note that all subsequent mentions of "DRF" in this report refer to both the DRAF and DRAF funds, unless specified otherwise.

rights, network with other actors and access international fora and events, and have carried out successful advocacy efforts (**Findings 3 and 4**). In the three countries, interviewed grantees have become partners of national and local authorities and key players in the development of disability-inclusive initiatives. As shown in the report section **Key Advocacy Achievements (also referred to as “key wins” or “advocacy wins”)**, DRF’s punctual technical assistance at critical moments was instrumental in supporting grantees in advocacy achievements that represent milestones in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, like the case of the passage of the Sexual Violence Law in Indonesia or the National Disability Act in Nigeria. These achievements have also become a platform and a positive precedent for future inclusive initiatives and policies (**Finding 8**). Enabling and hindering factors affecting key achievements relate to disability movement capacity, government capacities, and deeply rooted – but gradually changing – social norms, beliefs, and attitudes (**Finding 10**). Grantees noted the following challenges – some linked to structural barriers – in accessing and using DRF TA, including communication around TA’s purposes, objectives, expected results and delivery modalities; language limitations; and the shortage of disability-inclusive TA providers at the country and regional levels (**Finding 5**).

A key objective of DRF grantmaking has been to increase inclusiveness of persons with disabilities and expand the diversity and geographic reach of OPDs involved in advancing the application of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), especially at grassroots levels. Guided by their Strategic Plans and Gender Guidelines, DRF has applied a gender transformative lens to grantmaking, technical assistance and advocacy work by investing in dedicated funding to marginalized groups, such as Deafblind and women-led OPDs, and increasingly reflecting the interests of marginalized and grassroots grantees. The evaluation showed that these efforts contributed to increased awareness among grantees of the intersectionality of disability, for example in considering the intersections of gender, Indigenous identities, or sexual orientation, gender identity and expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) with disability. Grantees in all three countries shared that there is increasing visibility and inclusion of OPDs focusing on intellectual disabilities and mental health, with different degrees of progress towards gender diversification and the representation of women-led OPDs, and less consistent progress regarding the inclusion of SOGIESC dimensions. Several good practices and effective strategies emerged from the evaluation in terms of DRF’s contribution to the diversification of the disability movement, including the support to the registration and strengthening of emergent OPDs, the use of coalition grants that include emergent OPDs, and the participation of persons with ‘less visible’ disabilities in grantee convenings and other fora (see also the report section **Lessons Learned**). DRF’s approach on diversification has also been instrumental to the development of more frequent and stronger collaborations between intersecting groups within the disability movement and, to some extent, with other social justice movements. Grantees in the three countries, particularly in Indonesia, reported growing awareness of other diverse persons with disabilities and their specific challenges. Diversification has also been exemplified by the expanded scope of grantees’ disability advocacy agendas, which include elderly with disabilities, children with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) with disabilities, the deaf-blind community, psychosocial disabilities, children in conflict with the law, persons with disability living with Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDs), leprosy, and those in emergency or disaster risk reduction (DRR) contexts. With this expansion in scope, DRF has also supported important collaborations on cross-cutting issues with non-disability focused organizations and ‘non-OPDs’ (**Finding 6**).

Diversification of the disability movement is a long-term process and DRF is contributing towards it with their group of grantees. Several barriers and points of division remain within the disability movement and among grantees, including rivalry among OPDs, non-recognition of some types of disabilities, limited knowledge of intersectionality, and limited awareness of the challenges faced by the most marginalized

groups. This is compounded by external factors that challenge collaboration among grantees and more broadly OPDs and other organizations (**Finding 7**).

Conclusions

The importance of leaving no one behind through sustained, multidimensional, flexible and unrestricted support required for change is underscored by this evaluation. This evaluation confirmed that DRF's support between 2019 and 2022 contributed to impacts at the three levels; individual members of grantee organizations acquired confidence and self-esteem to begin or continue advocacy work, OPDs strengthened their organizational capacity, and governments, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other societal actors are slowly changing their beliefs, attitudes and actions towards disability and persons with disabilities.

This evaluation also confirmed that DRF's trust-based approach with their grantees is key to supporting them in their advocacy and organizational strengthening processes: grantees developed strong relationships and diverse networks of allies, exercised the knowledge acquired, and continued to build their confidence and capacity for advocacy.

Participation and accessibility have been principal commitments for DRF, who have avoided the 'one-size fits all' approach. However, balancing donors' requirements with the diverse realities on the ground still represents a challenge for intermediary funds like DRF, who aim to avoid transferring the burden from donors to grantees. Indeed, this burden oftentimes translates into strict administrative requirements and paperwork that ultimately reduce OPDs' capacity to access funds and thereby participate in advocacy efforts.

While achievements of the DRF grantees and the broader disability movement are noteworthy, there is still an enormous amount of work expected from persons with disabilities and their organizations, as they receive very little support in the current funding landscape which does not prioritize persons with disabilities or OPDs. DRF is a small partner and their contributions alone cannot address the enormous structural and external barriers that still hinder advancing truly disability-inclusive societies. For change to happen and be sustainable, it needs to be at the systemic level, which would require – among other things – financial and non-financial support that moves away from project-based approaches, stronger coordination among development partners and national actors at all levels, mainstreaming of disability in all interventions, and increased resource mobilisation for disability.

Summary of Recommendations

Overarching recommendations

Recommendation 1: DRF should provide more frequent and regular opportunities for grantees to connect, share experiences, and learn from each other and from others. In doing so, DRF should maintain an intersectional lens to support diversity within the disability movement and the renewal of OPDs' leadership.

Context: This recommendation is based on recurrent requests from grantees across the three countries to have more meetings and exchanges with other grantees, and to participate in regional and international conferences and learning events. DRF could do so by leveraging the regional and multi-country scope of their work and presence. This requires funding agreements with DRF's donors that allow DRF flexibility to meet different organizational needs and finance learning exchanges among grantees.

Recommendation 2: DRF should maintain – and wherever possible, strengthen – their current participatory and grantee-led approach in grantmaking, technical assistance, and advocacy.

Context: As pointed out in **Finding 9**, grantees most value DRF’s trust-based approach, which relies on grantees’ decisions and no intention of influencing their agenda or setting their priorities. This is a recurrent finding in other evaluations of the work of DRF. As the organization develops a new strategic plan, it will be important that it maintain this approach and, whenever possible, strengthen it to ensure that its grantees and the disability movement in each country are the ones defining their advocacy and capacity strengthening priorities.

Recommendation 3: As DRF shapes their new Strategic Plan, special consideration should be given to make aspects of their grantmaking model and other support increasingly fit for purpose.

Context: The evaluation raises the need for DRF to consider how the grantmaking model can be increasingly fit to support advocacy, technical assistance, and diversification of the movement. In terms of supporting advocacy, potential options include creating a contingency fund that can be used by grantees for advocacy initiatives as needed, the provision of multi-year grants, and continuing to make the reporting requirements less onerous for grantees. For technical assistance, DRF may consider using a more long-term approach by de-linking it from the needs of a specific project, and instead linking it to the objective of strengthening the capacity of grantees and of the whole disability movement in each country (see also Recommendation 4 on the shortage of disability inclusion TA providers). In terms of diversification, if this is to remain a priority in the new strategic plan, additional efforts should be invested to ensure the accessibility of their processes, tools, and communication for the diverse range of their grantees with various disability types, English-language fluency, and technological capacities.

Area of Priority: Technical Assistance

Recommendation 4: As DRF reviews their new TA strategy, they should make sure that the strategy clarifies the expectations for TA, including the objectives, purposes, expected results, and modalities for accessing TA. They should also ensure that the approach to TA is consistent with the expected results. Once the strategy is adopted, it should create regular spaces for its socialization among staff and grantees. It should also focus on the priorities identified so far in the draft TA Strategy 2.0.

Context: As shown in **Findings 1** and **5**, there have been blurred lines between TA and organizational strengthening, with confusion among grantees and different understandings among the DRF staff as to what constitutes TA and how to access it. The new TA Strategy shall communicate – in clear and simple language – the purpose, objectives, modalities, and expected results. Some concrete measures for the socialization of the TA strategy may include simplified guidelines provided in relevant languages, quarterly or biannual learning exchanges about grantee’s access and utilization of TA, and webinars per country or region to further explain calls for expressions of interest when they are released.

Recommendation 5: To address the shortage of disability inclusion TA providers, in the short term, DRF should keep building a roster of TA providers to be identified among their grantees. In the long term, DRF together with their grantees and their long-standing funders may consider developing strategic partnerships with a wider range of actors to collectively strengthen national capacity on disability inclusion.

Context: **Finding 5** pointed out the shortage of disability-inclusive TA providers across the three countries. Meanwhile, **Findings 3** and **4** showed that grantees and OPDs are becoming key partners for governments in developing disability inclusion solutions. **Finding 4** also showed that some grantees have acquired the knowledge and experience over time to take on that role and become TA providers within the disability movement. This pool is still very small compared to the needs, but the potential is big as many grantees have been working on CRPD-related advocacy for years in many different areas. DRF is already identifying grantees who may provide disability-inclusive TA. With a view towards generating more sustainable, long-term and systemic change, DRF together with their grantees and funders should foster multi-stakeholder

partnerships, with the long-term objective of building national technical capacity on disability inclusion that would include a cohort of TA providers at the country- or, at least, at the regional-level.

Area of Priority: Diversification of the Disability Movement

Recommendation 6: To invigorate the momentum in the diversification of the disability movement, DRF can accompany their support for awareness-raising with support for further capacity building on diversity and intersectionality of OPD leaders down to the grassroots level.

Context: As indicated in **Finding 6**, there have been positive strides in diversifying the disability movement so that it is more inclusive of a wider array of groups. However, this is an ongoing process that requires invigorated and concerted efforts by all duty bearers with support from development actors to sustain momentum and leverage initial shifts in mindset that are occurring thanks to awareness-raising activities. To support this process, DRF should further prioritize the provision of targeted capacity building support to organizations working towards diversification. As part of this effort, it will be critical to continue to strengthen understanding among OPD leaders and civil society on the intersectionality of disabilities with other social identities, such as gender, race, and socio-economic status, and how multiple forms of discrimination intersect. Moreover, DRF can invest in research and documentation efforts that shed light on the experiences and challenges faced by underrepresented disability groups. This can help build a stronger evidence base and support advocacy efforts that prioritize the needs and concerns of diverse disability communities.

Recommendation 7: Diversification of the disability movement could be enhanced by greater cross-movement collaboration with hard-to-reach and excluded groups, such as rural populations, SOGIESC identifying groups, young people with disabilities as self-advocates, and other marginalized disability types.

Context: DRF can support grantees in their advocacy efforts by providing resources and guidance on how to address the specific barriers and issues faced by diverse disability groups identified in **Finding 7**, such as through awareness raising and messaging, learning exchanges, mentorship, communities of practice, and investing in intersectional advocacy initiatives and research activities. These initiatives could facilitate cross-learning and collaboration and inspire innovative approaches to diversification within the disability movement. DRF should keep deploying innovative strategies to bring in hard-to-reach groups, namely those in rural areas, and assist grantees through the whole process in forging the pathway to building and establishing organizations (e.g., by supporting the development of OPD's policies and registration and leveraging umbrella organizations to support the inclusion and integration of marginalized OPDs), and invest in peer support programs that connect mainstream OPDs with marginalized groups. Finally, DRF is highly encouraged to support the professional development of young disability advocates and intergenerational knowledge transfer of disability advocacy, to equip young people as the next generation of disability champions.

Recommendation 8: To extend cross-movement collaboration between the disability movement and other social justice movements, DRF can invest in advocating for mainstreaming disability further in spaces that are not yet inclusive, for example within women's rights movements and in climate change forums.

Context: While there is a rise of women-led OPDs, women and girls with disabilities are still not fully represented or meaningfully included in feminist movements. Interviews also reported very few if any OPDs working in the climate sector, with a lack of awareness on the impacts of climate change on persons with disability. Without this awareness, OPDs are not yet positioned to demand their rights to meaningfully participate and contribute to climate justice or environment-related decision making. There is a need for stronger awareness-raising on the impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities to

increase this demand. This requires further investment in mainstreaming disability into climate change forums, such as the inclusion of OPDs in climate change advisory councils.

Summary of lessons learned

Investing in emerging organizations is critical for movement diversification: DRF's investment in emerging organizations, including organizational strengthening, has helped to diversify the disability movement by consolidating marginalized groups as more established entities and strengthening disability leaders. DRF is encouraged to continue to invest in marginalized OPDs, particularly in scaling-up and expanding their success in supporting women-led OPDs.

Capacities of disability organizations and advocates to work intersectionally are crucial to further diversify disability movements. This includes promoting cultural competency, fostering inclusive practices, and providing training and resources that address the specific needs of different disability types and marginalized groups. The evaluation identifies cross-movement collaboration as a best practice, sharing resources and aligning efforts to foster a stronger and more unified voice to drive positive change. Raising public awareness about the rights, needs, and capabilities of individuals with disabilities is a vital first step that plants fruitful seeds for transformative processes. Educational campaigns and initiatives that challenge stereotypes, combat stigma, and promote a more inclusive understanding of disability can further contribute to the diversification of the movement.

DRF's approach to diverse and inclusive engagement has also been considered successful; actively involving individuals with disabilities from diverse backgrounds and disability types in decision-making processes is essential. Additionally, DRF's flexibility to have a more tailored approach (rather than one-size-fits-all) was also considered as best practice in this area, as it recognizes that the disability landscape is dynamic and evolving. The movement should be flexible and adaptable to address emerging issues, changing needs, and evolving social contexts.

Sustained multidimensional support, diversification of the strategies to engage in advocacy efforts, and the timely availability of flexible resources are crucial for advocacy success. The key advocacy achievements in the three countries were the result of repeated learning from small successes and failures that built up over a long period of time. The journeys that brought about those achievements started over ten years ago and were marked by the relentless advocacy of OPDs supported by a wide range of allies including other CSOs, funders, governments, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and international development partners. What made this support effective -particularly in the case of DRF's support — are the diversity of its forms (financial support, technical assistance, networking, organizational capacity building), the values upon which it relied (trust, participation), and its repeated nature. This support has enabled grantees to build their knowledge and experience over time, to build and develop key relationships both within the disability movement and outside it, to learn from successes and failures and adapt their advocacy strategies and messages consequently, to frame and refine their narrative, to get to know their advocacy targets and the extent of their influence on them. Other important aspects of this support have been its flexibility, with the possibility of repurposing grants, and the availability of extra resources – like the case of the special opportunity grants provided by DRF to support strategic activities at key advocacy moments.

Limited participation by diverse groups also limits the success of advocacy. The evaluation showed that while the advocacy wins in the three countries were considered key achievements for persons with disability and the disability movement, their effects were somewhat limited to the OPDs involved in the efforts, often located in urban areas. This is particularly the case of the disability inclusive Coronavirus Disease (COVID)-19 responses in Nigeria and Fiji. It is also the case with the CRPD, which is still often

unknown among the most marginalized groups. The importance of leaving no one behind in the work towards the fulfillment of fundamental human rights has been reaffirmed through this evaluation.

Disability-inclusive participatory approaches to evaluation are invaluable to maximizing the relevance and ownership of the process. As per DRF's principles in grantmaking, the evaluation team applied a strong participatory and disability-inclusive approach throughout all phases of the evaluation. Engagement was pushed beyond the 'traditional' approach of providing the opportunity to participate in the evaluation only as part of data collection interviews as key informants; instead, the DRF grantees were involved in the evaluation process as intended users of the evaluation and, therefore, they played a role in shaping the evaluation design. This extent of participation helped the evaluation team to gain an early, clear perspective on what OPDs deemed to be the top priorities for the evaluation. In addition, it helped with the continuity of communication throughout the process, establishing a relationship of trust with the evaluation team, thus opening the door to frank conversations between grantees and evaluators. The way in which some grantees engaged in the process showed that they felt that the evaluation was an opportunity to influence DRF's work. Other grantees were keener on knowing the lessons and recommendations from the evaluation in order to use them in engaging donors and external partners. The disability-inclusive participatory approach did have some hiccups, namely the underestimation of the level of effort and time to engage with the various intended users, but overall, it provided invaluable learning to the evaluation team on how to better carry out evaluations that leave no one behind.

DRAF/DRF Management Response

Introduction

This independent evaluation progressed the organization's efforts to explore questions beyond the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria through the grounding of a [rights-based approach to data](#) and the application of [participatory evaluation approaches](#), [feminist evaluation principles](#) and [utilization-focused evaluation](#). As DRF enters a new phase of growth and a period of significant transition,² this evaluation will help the organization continue to support OPDs to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. The findings of this evaluation offer evidence of how technical assistance and increased diversity within the disability movement have been instrumental in the increasing the visibility and effectiveness of activists with disabilities. The findings also confirm once again how DRF operationalizes its principles through participatory and trust-based approaches impacts the results of its partners and grantees.

In a continued commitment to joint learning with our partners and grantees, and in an effort to broaden the understanding of disability rights advocacy, DRF is publishing the full evaluation report on our website and providing a document on lessons learned specifically for grantees to utilize in their advocacy and organizational development. In addition, the evaluation executive summary and the summary for grantees will be translated into , Bahasa Indonesia, French, and Nepalese and be available in an Easy to Read version.

We wish to acknowledge and appreciate the time and input of the OPDs and activists that contributed to this evaluation with their insights on the evaluation design and whose achievements are reflected in the evaluation's findings. We would also like to thank the Universalia Management Group evaluation team for the time and expertise they dedicated to this evaluation. We also wish to thank the grantees in Indonesia, Nigeria, and the PICs as well as the members of the DRF Gender Transformation Learning Group for their inputs into the design of the evaluation.³

Management's Views on Recommendations

Management concurs with the overall evaluation findings and recommendations and will undertake actions to address issues raised as appropriate and as organizational capacity allows. This response is written in the context of the first year of implementing a new 2024-2029 strategic plan, which outlines a new theory of change, pillars, and key activities for the organization.

Recommendation 1: DRF should provide more frequent and regular opportunities for grantees to connect, share experiences, and learn from each other and from others. In doing so, DRF should

² This transition period is transition by the following: the DRF Board is becoming more focused on policy governance, moving away from the committee of management approach of the start-up years; the Board has appointed only the second Executive Director of the organisation, a profound moment of leadership change; more staff have been appointed in countries other than the USA, increasing the diversity of the team; and DRF is moving from being a small organization in a start-up phase to a medium-sized established organisation, necessitating a shift to more formal and institutionalised structures and processes as the complexity of the organisational structure has evolved.

³ For members of the Gender Transformation Learning Group, see Table 8 of the full report.

maintain an intersectional lens to support diversity within the disability movement and the renewal of OPDs' leadership.

Agree

DRF supports OPD and disability rights movements to connect in-person and virtually. After our work in technical assistance in the past fifteen years, OPDs have shown that strong, resilient, and diverse movements are formed when OPDs and disability movements are supported to connect and learn from one another's expertise and lessons in their efforts to achieve non-discrimination, equal rights, equal opportunity and equal access for their communities.

Through the [DRF Annual Grantee Surveys](#) and the DRF TA consultations, grantee partners are increasingly asking for support to enable peer-to-peer sharing of expertise, whereas in the past they have sought external consultants to contribute to strengthening their work we will experiment with grantee partners to evolve peer-based learning opportunities.

Under the new strategic plan, DRF will continue to support grantee partners to evolve their substantive disability rights knowledge, analysis and advocacy; to strengthen connection and collective and peer-learning; and to strengthen their organisations and their sustainability. In the future, DRF plans to hire full-time and permanent staff person for a high-level Peer Learning and Connection role to lead this area of growth for DRF.

Recommendation 2: DRF should maintain – and wherever possible, strengthen – their current participatory and grantee-led approach in grantmaking, technical assistance, and advocacy.

Agree

Since its inception, DRF was designed to reflect the disability movement's foundational principle of participation (nothing without us). The participation of persons with disabilities and valuing the expertise inherent in their lived experiences is intrinsic to successfully challenging ableism. Over the years, DRF's grantmaking model has been documented in a [number of publications on the practice of participatory grantmaking](#) and found in [previous evaluations](#) to be a critical contributing factor in DRF's effectiveness and relevance.

An overarching intention in the 2024 – 2029 DRF strategic plan is to build on our innovation and expertise in participatory grantmaking to encompass all of our work. Through a range of the projects set out across the strategy, DRF will evolve our participatory approaches internally to strengthen accessibility and inclusion and apply trust-based philanthropy principles to our work. The aim of our activities will be to reframe our partnerships within the disability movement, to cultivate greater trust and solidarity, and to learn and adapt with grantee partners.

Recommendation 3: As DRF shapes their new Strategic Plan, special consideration should be given to make aspects of their grantmaking model and other support increasingly fit for purpose.

Agree

Over the years, the grant types available to OPDs has expanded to include more number and types of grants (technical assistance, mid-level, national, special opportunity, or strategic partnerships). As noted above, in the first year of the 2024-2029 strategic plan, DRF will shift its grantmaking model to movement building, which describes the organization's future efforts that promote the strengthening of the disability movement. This would include collaborate across disability organizations, promoting diversity so that all people with disability are represented, leadership building to ensure new leaders are supported, and working collaboratively to achieve common goals. This new model will be co-created through a participatory approach that engages DRF partners and encompasses and aligns all areas of our work. The aims of the new model will focus on fit for purpose funding models that provide more flexible funding for core support and consider principle-based application and reporting practices.

Recommendation 4: As DRF reviews their new Technical Assistance strategy, they should make sure that the strategy clarifies the expectations for TA, including the objectives, purposes, expected results, and modalities for accessing TA. They should also ensure that the approach to TA is consistent with the expected results. Once the strategy is adopted, it should create regular spaces for its socialization among staff and grantees. It should also focus on the priorities identified so far in the draft TA Strategy 2.0.

Agree

In 2022, DRF held an extensive consultations with grantees on DRF's first [Technical Assistance Strategy](#). More than 70 OPDs responded to an online survey and an addition 80 OPDs were represented in four regional focus group discussion. Through this consultation process, grantees noted their highest need was for additional grants to support their advocacy. In addition, grantees noted the benefits of peer exchange and learning as well as grantee convenings and requested more opportunities for such exchanges. In This is a significant shift from the past, when grantee partners mainly sought external consultants to contribute to strengthening their work.

Since then, DRF has conceptualized an entire pillar of its 2024-2029 strategic plan to deepen our TA model so that OPDs are driving change and solutions through peer and collective learning. DRF will begin to co-create with grantee partners its evolution to peer-based learning opportunities and further our efforts to enable peer-to-peer sharing of expertise and experience.

Recommendation 5: To address the shortage of disability inclusion Technical Assistance providers, in the short term, DRF should keep building a roster of TA providers to be identified among their grantees. In the long term, DRF together with their grantees and their long-standing funders may consider developing strategic partnerships with a wider range of actors to collectively strengthen national capacity on disability inclusion.

Partially agree

Since the development of the DRF Technical Assistance strategy, the organization has kept a roster of TA providers for grantees, many of whom were focused on human rights advocacy in general. Since 2021, the roster has increasingly included actors from within the disability movement that provide specific support on disability rights advocacy. DRF will continue to build this roster and co-create the list with OPDs. It is the organization's aim to have a roster comprised mostly of OPDs.

To support the disability movement efforts to increase their capacity, DRF has developed another pillar of its 2024-2029 strategic plan: to open space to advocate for disability inclusion and participation. The opening of space will likely include brokering strategic partnerships between disability movements and other movements. This in turn will require DRF advocating to funders for new and more funding for disability movement actors as well as resourcing disability movement actors and other social justice stakeholders to address ableism and strengthen cultures of accessibility and inclusion. DRF, on its own, is not able to counter ableism and foster expertise on disability inclusion across various actors. Instead, action and change are needed by actors within and outside of the disability movement. Organizations of persons with disabilities and community partners must work in solidarity with other movements and relevant stakeholders themselves to drive the process in a self-reinforcing positive cycle of peer and collective learning, strategic partnerships, and advocacy.

Recommendation 6: To invigorate the momentum in the diversification of the disability movement, DRF can accompany their support for awareness-raising with support for further capacity building on diversity and intersectionality of OPD leaders down to the grassroots level.

Agree

As noted above, DRF has developed a pillar of its 2024-2029 strategic plan to open space to advocate for disability inclusion and participation. This will require DRF to work with grantees to co-create a model of support to resource leaders of marginalized OPDs to address ableism and strengthen cultures of accessibility and inclusion.

In addition, DRF understand there are core forms of support that can be leveraged by DRF to contribute to strengthening disability movements, but our principles mean we also understand participation is the foundation of stronger disability movements. In practice, this means we acknowledge capacity strengthening and diversification of the movement is due in large part to the will and leadership of disability activists themselves. For example, at the 2023 Pacific Islands Countries grantee convening, grantees noted their “[home grown movement for inclusion](#)” and learned from a trailblazing grantee, Disability Pride Hub. As DRF seeks to support OPDs to unleash their power and celebrate diversity, we will work in partnership with OPD leaders.

Recommendation 7: Diversification of the disability movement could be enhanced by greater cross-movement collaboration with hard-to-reach and excluded groups, such as rural populations, SOGIESC identifying groups, young people with disabilities as self-advocates, and other marginalized disability types.

Agree

In response to the shifting needs and changes within the disability movement, DRF has also evolved our work over the past 15 years to better enable us to support OPDs interest in bringing greater diversity into the movement. For example, through the [DRAF/DRF Gender Guidelines](#) or [Technical Assistance Strategy](#), DRF has shaped internal strategies into external commitments to our grantees. As a result, a number of

milestones outlined in our Gender Guidelines have been exceeded. We will continue to focus on the plurality within the movement, particularly through the co-creation of DRF's new model by inviting grantees that represent groups or focus on issues aligned with cross-cutting priorities outlined in the new 2024-2029 strategic plan. For more on the cross-cutting themes, see the DRF response to recommendation 8 below.

Recommendation 8: To extend cross-movement collaboration between the disability movement and other social justice movements, DRF can invest in advocating for mainstreaming disability further in spaces that are not yet inclusive, for example within women's rights movements and in climate change forums.

Agree

In the nearly 15-years of DRF's existence, the organization has made significant progress in raising the capacity of grantee partners and national and regional disability movements. However, concepts and practices of disability inclusion continue to lag in international development as well as mainstream rights and social justice movements. To counter this, DRF will focus on seven new cross-cutting priorities: 1) standing in solidarity with First Nations peoples; 2) promoting Gender Equality; 3) demanding Climate Justice; 4) working to address racial discrimination; 5) advancing the rights of people with disability with diverse SOGIESC; 6) promoting the rights and participation of young people; and 7) tackling poverty and inequality. Additionally, DRF will develop a specific donor advocacy strategy and re-organize its program team to supports these new areas of focus.

DRF Commitment

The staff and Board of DRF are fully committed to our vision and to the OPDs and activists that continually advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. We value peer learning, participation and premise that learning from achievements and misses are a powerful means of transformation. Additionally, we will continue to be open and responsive to adapt to new opportunities, improve our practices, and respond to the needs of our grantees.

We commit to adjusting, as possible in accordance to our responses above, the processes that OPDs, national governments, and other stakeholders raised through this evaluation. To hold ourselves accountable to the OPDs and activists that participated in this evaluation, relevant DRF staff will conduct a regular reflection process on the uptake of recommendations and will inform relevant partners of progress in these areas as requested.