Feedback Report

2019 - 2020

Disability Rights Advocacy Fund / Disability Rights Fund

Executive Summary

This feedback report provides a summary of responses to the DRAF/DRF annual survey about grantee confidence in their knowledge and skills regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Grantees from 17 countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific who received funding from DRAF/DRF between 2018 Round 2 (June 2018) and 2019 Round 1 (June 2019) received the survey. Grantees were asked to rate any increase in confidence about their knowledge and skills over the course of a year.

In the survey, we also asked what led to any increase in confidence and what grantees are doing with their newfound or strengthened skills and knowledge. Grantees often “pay it forward” in sharing what they have learned with other disabled persons organizations (DPOs).

Since our founding in 2008, DRAF/DRF has been working to ensure that the voices of those who are among the most marginalized within the disability community are heard. This year’s survey included the highest number of responses from marginalized groups since the survey’s inception in 2011. Indeed, all groups in DRF’s definition of “marginalized” were represented in this year’s survey responses.

What we learned from the marginalized groups replying to the survey was that, in general, confidence in their CRPD knowledge has increased. However, organizations of persons with intellectual disabilities say that it’s a challenge to learn about the CRPD when many of their members are struggling to comprehend basic rules of society.

In comparing the responses of DPOs representing non-marginalized groups and those representing marginalized groups, what is interesting is that those representing non-marginalized groups indicated increased awareness of the need to include marginalized groups but also said they do not know how to do this, while those representing marginalized groups said that they feel they have not been invited to join the larger DPO community.

Overall Survey responses tell a narrative of a disability rights movement that is growing stronger and more inclusive as knowledge regarding the CRPD and the SDGs and skills in rights advocacy and increased participation in human rights monitoring processes are expanding. Marginalized populations also appear to be growing more confident and making their voices heard.

Introduction   
  
The purpose of the DRF/DRAF annual Grantee Survey is to understand the effectiveness of DRAF/DRF contributions towards increased knowledge and skills among grantees relative to realizing the rights of persons with disabilities.

What does the survey measure?

The survey asks grantees to think about any change in the following areas over the course of one year:

1. confidence in CRPD knowledge
2. skills in rights advocacy
3. skills for human rights monitoring
4. confidence in building partnerships with other organizations (movement building)
5. experiences of support from DRAF/DRF staff
6. confidence in SDGs knowledge
7. confidence in risk management

# Here is what grantees had to say about these areas:

1) Organization’s confidence in CRPD Knowledge

Key Points

* Many grantees emphasized that knowledge of the CRPD was the essential first step before they could begin their advocacy efforts.
* Grantees noted that working on other treaties helped them better understand the utility of the CPRD.
* Some respondents say that their entire organization has an understanding of the CRPD while others noted that a single individual within the organization received training.
* Those that tended to rate themselves as “Very Confident” often had an opportunity to apply their CRPD knowledge at national level.

Grantees responded that increased confidence in their CRPD knowledge has helped them to:

* Train their colleagues and members
* Increase understanding of the CPRD among journalists and the media
* Use the CRPD in their advocacy to create change in laws, ordinances, and policies
* Monitor CRPD implementation and participate in human rights processes
* Spread knowledge of the CRPD to villages and small provinces
* Consult as CRPD experts to civil society organizations and government institutions

# 2) Organization’s Skills in Rights Advocacy

Key Points

* Almost all organizations that said they were “very confident” indicated that they had the opportunity to test their advocacy skills.
* Some DPOs felt they lacked “*techniques and well-researched*” data to carry out advocacy.

Grantees responded that their increased skills in rights advocacy have enabled them to:

* Develop their own advocacy strategies
* Petition parliamentarians and media
* Present a bill for the amendment of the Malawi Copyright Act
* Prepare a shadow report
* Speak out on their rights (Marginalized populations such as Deaf persons and persons with psychosocial disabilities)
* Influence at the national and grassroots level on policy and legislation reforms, serving on government forums
* Women with disabilities confidently able to advocate for their SRHR

# 3) Organization’s Skills to participate in Human Rights Monitoring Processes

# Key points

* Some grantees who had a huge jump in their confidence over one year noted the opportunity to engage with various types of monitoring processes.
* Conversely, grantees who answered “little confidence/no confidence/do not know” pointed to their lack of skills to participate on the basis that they have not had the opportunity to do so.

Grantees reported that they:

* Chaired the National Disability Forum on developing the alternative report for the CRPD Committee
* Participated in the follow-up to the commitments made at GDS18
* Drafted the Shadow Report for the CPRD Committee on Article 6
* Participated in a coalition working on the UPR report
* Submitted a shadow report on the Sustainable Development Goals and an alternative report to the CRPD Committee

# 4) Organization’s Skills in Movement Building

Key points

* Due to the increase of survey respondents from marginalized groups, we were able to compare the responses between those in marginalized groups and those not in marginalized groups.

Grantees responded that their increased confidence was a result of:

* More joint advocacy campaigns
* Increased awareness of marginalized populations
* Partnerships with media
* Different disability groups working together on a single CRPD article such as education or employment

# 5) Contribution of DRF/DRAF support to the effectiveness of Grantees’ work

The following key strategies/actions by DRAF/DRF were reported to have contributed to grantee effectiveness:

* Exposure to international instruments on human rights
* Site visits and discussions on project activities
* Guidance on objectives and outcomes to support project success
* Shared information on best practices based on information from other partners or projects
* Technical assistance

# 6) Knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals

Key points

* Some Grantees noted that while knowledgeable about the SDGS, they had not used the SDGs as an advocacy tool.
* Organizations of the marginalized such as those with intellectual disabilities said that they tend to be left behind on the SDGs work due to “budgetary” limitations to provide reasonable accommodations.
* Goals that grantees noted their work addresses include: Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 16.

Grantees said that their increased confidence was a result of:

* Opportunities to engage with other civil society organizations
* Introduction to SDGs by DRAF/DRF program team during grant application
* Participation in national and global levels of SDGs implementation

# 7) Confidence in Risk Management

Most grantees pointed to various steps in mitigating financial mismanagement such as public audits, requiring two signatures for bank transfers, and codes of conduct, as well as finance, anti-corruption, and whistle-blower policies. Of the respondents, 89% felt very strong or strong regarding their ability to reduce financial mismanagement.

With regards to PSEAH, the level of confidence was only 74% feeling very confident or confident which indicates that this is an area that grantees can improve on.

DRAF/DRF will continue to work with all grantees on financial management and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harrassment.

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# What grantees are doing with new knowledge and skills gained through DRF/DRAF funding

Overall, grantees are using new knowledge and skills to:

* Strengthen research skills and support data collection at the national level
* Advocate for policy and legislative reforms at local, provincial, national, and global levels
* Train other DPOs on the CRPD, the SDGs, and advocacy
* Increase their collaborations with other civil society
* Elevate their disability rights work from the local level to the global level
* Connect with new stakeholders including donor mission offices
* Serve as an expert to other DPOs as well as woman-led civil society organizations and government officials
* Raise awareness of marginalized groups such as little persons, children with disabilities
* Educate on the right to vote for an upcoming presidential election
* Provide alternative reports to UN monitoring mechanisms

From Bangladesh, which was one of DRAF/DRAF’s first seven target countries, one Grantee’s response was the sum of our mission - “we have learned to raise our voices.”

*What* i*mportant changes have Grantees seen in their country’s realization of the rights of persons with disabilities?*

Grantees from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Island countries said that in their countries, there have been the following changes:

* Government budgetary allotment for raising awareness on rights of persons with disabilities
* Recognition by government of DeafBlindness as a disability
* More inclusion of marginalized groups in development and disability work
* Establishment of a national action plan on disability
* People with disabilities received their citizenship and identity cards
* A more unified DPO movement
* Little persons are being included in poverty reduction programs
* Signing of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act
* Voting rights for marginalized communities are being realized
* Persons with intellectual disabilities are becoming viewed as valuable members of society
* Job opportunities within the government for persons with disabilities

# Recommendations Moving Forward

Grantees noted that in the future, there is a need for greater focus on:

* Increasing opportunities for marginalized groups to engage in advocacy campaigns and not just small activities
* Increasing budgets for reasonable accommodations in advocacy activities
* Distributing easy-read versions of the CRPD and the SDGs widely and not only for those with intellectual disabilities, but for those with low literacy or low understanding of legal terms
* Encouraging marginalized populations to do the inviting not just waiting to be invited
* Encouraging local and provincial organizations to find opportunities to engage with the broader movement
* Encouraging disability-specific organizations to work more with cross-disability organizations

# Conclusion

Grantees continue to report an increase in confidence in their CRPD knowledge, their rights advocacy skills, participating in human rights monitoring, movement building, and SDGs knowledge – particularly when they have had a chance to apply these skills and knowledge.

The DRAF/DRF team appreciates all the feedback from the survey. We also want to remind grantees of our “[Report Fraud and Abuse mechanism](https://disabilityrightsfund.org/about/report-fraud-abuse/)” where individuals can report instances of misuse of resources, safeguarding, and other abuses relating to our work.

Grantees have repeatedly shown their passion and resoluteness to continue this work despite the challenges. We applaud your work.