



**DISABILITY
RIGHTS
FUND**

**DISABILITY
RIGHTS
ADVOCACY
FUND**

BRIDGE STRATEGIC PLAN

(July 2020 - December 2021)

Introduction

Building upon the [Strategic Plan 2017-2020](#), and in light of the rapidly changing global context during the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic recession, the Disability Rights Fund and Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRF/DRAF) are implementing a shorter-term Bridge Strategic Plan to guide the organizations through the 18 months from July 2020 through December 2021.

The pandemic has presented significant challenges for everyone. This is particularly true of persons with disabilities. Too often, governments and broader society have neglected to include persons with disabilities in response planning, public communication, and provision of basic services. DRF/DRAF grantees have been at the forefront of efforts to address this in the countries where we provide grants. From ensuring sign language interpretation during official broadcasts to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the distribution of essential supplies, and more, our grantees have been hard at work while at the same time confronting the impact of COVID-19 in their own lives and on their own organizations, including the challenges of working remotely in contexts where internet access is limited.

The pandemic has also stretched DRF/DRAF organizationally. Staff are dealing with changed work and family contexts, and regular organizational activities – such as meetings and travel for oversight or advocacy – have been moved virtually or are in flux. We have pivoted grantmaking significantly in light of COVID-19. Early on, the Program Team reached out to and worked closely with grantees to adjust nearly all existing grants due to the changed nature of activities mandated by the circumstances – namely, limitations on in-person activities, heightened health and economic risks for persons with disabilities, and new opportunities for advocacy. These adaptations to better serve the community’s needs are ongoing. At the same time, new opportunities have arisen as the urgency of ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities has come into particularly sharp focus.

The Bridge Strategic Plan 2020-2021 provides a road map during this critical and unpredictable period. It is a living document that will incorporate change as needed to enable DRF and DRAF to be responsive and nimble in a complex and ever-changing world. We will use it as a guide to help us prioritize, adapt, and learn, rather than as a rigid strategy that ties our hands in the face of internal and external shifts.

We use 3 strategies to advance disability-inclusive development and rights.

During the pandemic, we're deepening and strengthening work in these strategy areas.



Grantmaking

that is flexible and responsive

- Amend active grants to accommodate shifts in needs as well as new opportunities
- Increase time and ways for organizations to apply for and use funding
- Add pandemic-specific advocacy into grantmaking guidelines



Technical Assistance

to build back better

- Implement a new funding stream to strengthen DPOs, so they are ready to build back better
- Increase use of social media and online tools among grantees for connection and advocacy



Advocacy

to leave no one behind

- Support disability-inclusive responses by global actors
- Expand partnerships to increase resources for the disability movement



More than 80% of grants pivoted



Activated Facebook & WhatsApp groups for each region's grantees



Partnered on Disability Rights Monitor survey and report

2020 examples...

Glossary

AWID - Association for Women's Rights in Development

BLM - Black Lives Matter

CREA - A feminist human rights organization based in New Delhi, India

CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DEI - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

DPO - Disabled persons' organization

DFAT - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DRF/DRAF - Disability Rights Fund/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund

GLAD - Global Action on Disability, a network of donors and civil society committed to disability-inclusive development

GMC - DRF/DRAF's Grantmaking Committee, which is a committee of the boards

IDA-IDDC - International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the International Disability and Development Consortium

Intersectional - The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups

Logframe - Logical Framework, a key piece of DRF/DRAF's monitoring and evaluation.

OMT - Organizational Mapping Tool, a process undertaken as part of the Ford Foundation's BUILD grant received by DRF/DRAF

PSEAH - Preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SOGIESC - Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics

TA - Technical assistance

Washington Group Short Set - A set of questions designed to identify (in a census or survey format) persons with disabilities

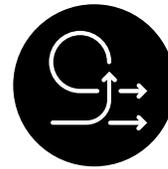
Overarching Commitments

As we continue to implement the three strategies outlined in the [Strategic Plan 2017-2020](#) - grantmaking, advocacy, and technical assistance (TA) -, we remain committed to promoting intersectional human rights, and gender equality in particular, throughout our structure and our work.

Building on our historical and ongoing cross-movement work, and on lessons learned during COVID and from Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests across the world, we will continue to identify and encourage DPO projects working at the intersections of rights. Within DFAT funding 2020-24, we have specific funding focused on intersectional grants (gender and disability, and Indigenous Peoples and disability in Asia Pacific) and on ensuring women with disabilities are included within the next (virtual or in-person) AWID forum. We will apply this approach in other regions - ensuring that organizations of people with disabilities representing diverse ethnic, indigenous, gender and SOGIESC identities are increasingly included in our grantee cohorts - to promote diversity, equity and inclusion within and beyond the disability movement. We will also look to diversify our own structures, at governance and management levels - see Organizational Development section below.

We will increasingly apply a gender transformative lens to our grantmaking, technical assistance and advocacy work. During the period of this strategy, this will include: 1) working with the Board Program Strategy Task Force to finalize the [Gender Guidelines](#) Implementation Plan including pandemic-related adaptation; 2) taking advantage of virtual training opportunities for the Program Team, including sessions on disability, gender and SOGIESC intersectionality co-facilitated by NUI Galway's

Centre for Disability Law and Policy, and CREA's Disability, Sexuality, and Rights Online Institute; 3) increasing our funding to organizations of women with disabilities and DPOs that are inclusive of SOGIESC diversity; 4) providing resources and other support to strengthen the capacities of all grantees to promote gender-diverse participation and leadership; and 5) pursuing advocacy opportunities to promote intersectionality with women's rights actors in partnership with other funders such as the [Global Resilience Fund](#) and the [Spotlight Initiative](#), and advocates such as [AWID](#) and [Women Enabled International](#).



Grantmaking *that is flexible and responsive*

Given the specific needs of persons with disabilities as they respond to and work to survive the pandemic, our grantmaking over the next 12-18 months will reflect greater flexibility and enable our grantees to use DRF/DRAF funding for a combination of rights advocacy, operating expenses, institutional capacity-building, and movement sustainability. At least in the early stages of the pandemic involving periods of lockdown, advocacy costs - for meetings, collective actions, and other activities - have decreased as travel restrictions continue globally. As part of COVID-19 project changes, unspent funds are being repurposed for other important activities, namely ensuring grantees are able to support organizational - and movement - survival. This has raised issues of access to internet, online tools, and communication technology outside of office, as well as the need for continued payment of organizational expenses to ensure offices and staff are not lost. The disability community is also now facing acute issues, such as lack of food; personal protective equipment (PPE); water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)

services; and more. Cognizant that neither DRF/DRAF nor our grantees are humanitarian actors, we are considering ways we can address these needs, including in advocacy to government and humanitarian actors for more inclusive distributions and services – through, for example, our role on the coordinating group of the Disability Rights Monitor, and in GLAD. We have used monies saved from lack of travel and meetings to develop a specific fund for urgent COVID-19 work, in addition to making our pooled fund grantmaking more flexible. This time provides a diverse set of opportunities to increase the capacity of grantee organizations to sustain themselves during crises. DRF/DRAF are not a general funder or a humanitarian services agency, but we are often the only donor to very grassroots or marginalized groups who have no other support. We believe flexibility in grantee funding will put DRF/DRAF grantees in a stronger place once the crisis is over.

In addition, we will use this period to consider lessons learned during COVID-19, alongside recommendations from our Independent Evaluations and a 2019 grantmaking overhaul assessment, to make changes to our grantmaking processes and templates that improve accessibility, increase simplicity, and enhance workflows including grantee oversight. While keeping in mind the challenges presented by COVID-19, we will also enhance support for grantees in high risk areas such as financial management and safeguarding, through the DPO Strengthening funding stream. DPO Strengthening funds are available either in conjunction with Pooled Fund grants or as standalone grants, and are based on capacity-building needs identified in risk assessments that are part of our pre-award due diligence process for each applicant.

As part of the 2019 grantmaking overhaul assessment, we are continuing to improve the financial due diligence within our grantmaking. Alongside streamlined and more informative

documents, the program team will receive training and guidance on financial management issues. This is especially important as COVID-19 creates new challenges for DPOs, and will promote the sustainability of grantee organizations as well as their rights advocacy efforts.



Technical Assistance to build back better

We are in the process of hiring a Technical Assistance (TA) Director to increase DRF/DRAF capacity to provide grantees with more frequent, relevant TA opportunities. This Director will adapt our Technical Assistance Strategy during this interim period to reflect the hybridization of support outlined above, including the application of DPO Strengthening funds so that grantees can enhance institutional capacities (such as financial management, administrative capacity building, and PSEAH policy development or trainings) and emerge from this crisis as more sustainable, effective organizations.

We will also better link our Grantee Risk Assessments to DPO Strengthening grants and other TA to track improvements over time. This will expand upon current TA efforts aimed at supporting DPOs to build technical skills to advocate for the achievement of rights and inclusive development, and will be useful in assessing overall grantee health.

To achieve more in this time period, we will continue to enhance partnerships with leading networks, organizations, and experts, including with other donors and partners towards assessing and building grantee capacity, and with the Pacific Disability Forum, the IDA-IDDC BRIDGE CRPD-SDGs Network, and other civil society.



Advocacy to leave no one behind

Advocacy for disability inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making is key to rights advancement as well as to the survival of DPOs and persons with disabilities more broadly, especially at this time. The impact of inequality is being underlined by COVID-19, the global BLM movement, #MeToo and more. Now is the time to draw attention to these issues while challenging philanthropy and development agencies to make significant changes so that more marginalized people are included and have a voice, including via participatory grantmaking and disability-inclusive approaches. DPOs need increased funding so they can meet the urgent need for disability inclusion in pandemic response and recovery.

In light of recommendations from our recent global independent evaluation and the Organizational Mapping Tool (OMT) process completed under the Ford BUILD grant, and in full consideration of pandemic-related uncertainties, DRF/DRAF are focused on the development and execution of an Advocacy Strategy to sharpen the visibility of our work and our message of inclusion.

The TA Director will engage other staff in drafting an Advocacy Strategy and coordinating advocacy efforts during this bridge period, before an Advocacy Director can be hired. Strengthening DRF/DRAF advocacy capacity, including via partnerships with entities that can enhance grantee storytelling, such as the Disability Justice Project, will further empower persons with disabilities to participate fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.

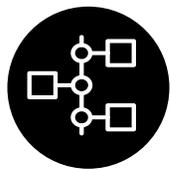


Evaluation and Learning

During COVID-19, we are closely tracking the impact of our grantees in promoting a more inclusive pandemic response and recovery. Through a new 2020-2024 logframe, we are tracking progress towards our outputs, and have integrated a COVID-19 lens, as follows:

- **Output 1:** Legislation, policy and government programs (including those addressing national and global crisis responses, such as COVID-19) undergoing harmonization with the CRPD in target countries through the participation of representative organizations of persons with disabilities (DRF/DRAF grantees)
- **Output 2:** Representative organizations of persons with disabilities (DRF/DRAF grantees) from target countries participating in international and national human rights and SDG monitoring processes (including disability rights monitoring during national and global crisis responses, such as COVID-19)
- **Output 3:** Disability movement in target countries is inclusive, reflecting the diverse voices of persons with disabilities
- **Output 4:** Organizations of persons with disabilities (DRF/DRAF grantees) equipped to advocate on the rights of persons with disabilities (including during national and global crises, such as COVID-19)

For the first 18 months, if not longer, of the 2020-2024 logframe, we are incorporating more modest annual milestones and targets in recognition that advocacy achievements, particularly around legislation, policy and alternative reports, will likely be lower than in previous years. The lag on advocacy achievements due to COVID-19 will also affect outcome and impact level indicators as well. Nonetheless, the anticipated outcome of these outputs is that the rights of persons with disabilities are respected and improved in target countries, in accordance with the CRPD over time. Proxy measurements of impact, to be assessed in 2023-24 via independent evaluation, include the number of target countries using Washington Group on Disability Statistics data collection methods for collecting disaggregated data on persons with disabilities in national censuses and household surveys (including regarding COVID-19 and other crisis response), and the number of target countries including disability (or persons with disabilities) in plans for implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.



Organizational Development

Especially during the next four years of the Ford BUILD grant, we have an opportunity to focus on building key areas organizationally, as defined in the OMT process. A first priority in this bridging period is increasing our development capacities and the diversification of our funding. DRF/DRAF are together the largest funder for disability rights. With only 2% of human rights funding going to disability rights (and only 1% of women's rights funding going to women with disabilities), there is a significant need to increase the number of donors funding advocacy led by or inclusive of persons with disabilities. In addition, the pandemic underlines the need for additional funding to ensure movement and organizational sustainability, and the opportunity

to increase the visibility of our critical work. Our new Director of Development will partner with the Executive Director in mapping the way forward.

A second priority is continuing to address human resource development, including planning, staff expansion, and staff support. DRF/DRAF have operated for a long time on very narrow margins. Even with a doubling of staff over the last couple of years, key functions such as financial management and grants management are one-person departments. The pandemic has only underlined the challenges inherent in this structure. A formal written human resources plan is being developed as a first step and hiring will occur with risk management in mind and as finances are available.

We will also continue to expand our safeguarding efforts, both internally and among our grantees. We are in the process of rolling out to all current grantees new requirements around preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) and have developed a new Anti-Fraud Policy. As the COVID-19 situation begins to improve, grantee training around PSEAH and financial management will supplement the newly developed policies. At present, we are working with outside consultants to assess financial management training and/or mentoring that can occur virtually for our grantees. Internally, we continue to build upon donor financial reporting as donor needs and requirements shift during the pandemic. Beyond financial reporting, we are continuing to improve documents for grantees and other downstream partners. We are strengthening our internal organizational budgeting process, including supporting individual department managers to manage departmental budgets, assess costs related to the strategic plan, and ensure ongoing value for money.

Moreover, we plan to expand our work in the vital area of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We have an opportunity to do this at Board level as we seek to replace Board members whose terms have come to an end and to meet our Bylaws objectives of 50% persons with disabilities as well as people from regions and countries in which we operate and conduct programs. We are working to expand the number of activists with disabilities on the Grantmaking Committee (GMC) from 4 to 6, as outlined in our governance re-structuring document. And, we are looking at ways, at Board and/or GMC level, to make ties between the US disability justice movement and the global disability rights movement. As we expand our team, we will continue to strategize how to diversify, in particular at the senior management level. One way forward may be to work with a DEI consultant on how to build from our recent organizational statement, “Justice Demands We Live a Different Set of Values”. This could include development of a formal DEI policy and action items including ongoing staff training. Our goal is to continue to ensure we have as diverse an organization at all levels, with the broadest range of diversity possible.

Looking to the future

The Bridge Strategic Plan will guide DRF/DRAF through 2021, by which time it is hoped there will be greater clarity in terms of COVID-19. This plan presents a road map for our efforts to address the numerous challenges presented by the pandemic, particularly for persons with disabilities, and to learn and grow as organizations. In 2021, the boards and personnel of DRF and DRAF will prepare the next three-year strategic plan to take us further into the future.

THEORY OF CHANGE

(July 2020 - December 2021)



Committed to promoting intersectional human rights and gender equality throughout our structure and our work.



SUPPORT TO DPOs

To advance disability-inclusive development and rights



Grantmaking Technical Assistance Advocacy

BUILDING MOVEMENTS

Disability movement strengthened to advocate for rights

- Persons with disabilities equipped with skills and knowledge
- Disability movement broad and diverse
- Disabled persons' organizations engage in other human rights movements

DRIVING THE AGENDA

Persons with disabilities are at decision-making tables

Disabled persons' organizations participate in human rights and development processes at local, national, and global levels

ACHIEVING RIGHTS

Rights of persons with disabilities achieved through systems change

Legislation, policy, government and development programs and budgets in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring **no one is left behind**

Persons with disabilities participate fully in society and enjoy equal rights and opportunities