

January 31<sup>st</sup> 2018  
Helsinki, Finland 2018

## **GLOBAL ACTION ON DISABILITY NETWORK MEETING Foundations and Selected Organisations Sub-Group**

### **I. Setting the Scene**

#### **GLAD network: a reminder of vision, mission and goals**

GLAD is a platform that gathers bilateral and multilateral donors as well as the private sector and civil society organisations including organisations of persons with disabilities. In this space, these actors have the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge on disability and development work. The main goal is to ensure development and humanitarian interventions are inclusive of people with disabilities. GLAD invites all its members to realise the human rights of persons with disabilities as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **How are foundations and CSOs different from other stakeholder groups? What are the approaches they can take that are different from others?**

Some civil society organisations, and some foundations, have a very important role within GLAD for the following reasons:

- ✓ They may have hands-on knowledge and experience of disability and development work at the grassroots level. They may work directly with communities to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate interventions. This means that they are aware of the local realities and have direct information regarding needs, challenges, and potential. Such knowledge and experience is highly valuable when planning policies and initiatives at higher levels.
- ✓ Especially DPOs and organisations/foundations working on disability deeply understand disability and have evidence-based information on the reality of persons with disabilities. This makes planning and implementation of inclusive initiatives easier and increases success.

- ✓ They can serve as a bridge and a channel between grassroots level organisations and bilateral and multilateral organisations. They have greater capacity to communicate and work closely with the grassroots as well as with larger donors and can communicate and follow up processes closely on both sides.

Foundations also play a vital role in the network for the following reasons:

- ✓ They have financial capacity to fund initiatives that address disability issues.
- ✓ They often have a broad network in the countries where they work, including access to higher-level officials and other funders, so they can contact and share information with a diversity of actors to promote disability inclusive policies and programmes, and to advance GLAD priority areas.
- ✓ Foundations can take risks and try different approaches. In this way, they can be a source of innovative initiatives and can fund emergent/marginalized sectors that other donors may not be able to fund.
- ✓ Because of their independent nature, foundations may have more leverage with the private sector.

### **How can GLAD add value to the work of foundations and CSOs?**

- ✓ GLAD offers foundations and CSOs the possibility to learn from the work of other entities. It is a platform that enhances cooperation and collaboration for more effective and sustainable interventions across actors.
- ✓ GLAD offers foundations and CSOs the possibility to influence the agenda and priorities of bilateral and multilateral donors, and cooperate with them to increase attention and funding towards inclusive development and humanitarian work. Similarly, donors have the possibility to learn about the reality of persons with disabilities at the grassroots level. This collaboration increases coherence in the policies and programmes of all actors of the field

- ✓ GLAD offers the possibility to foundations to connect and exchange information with bilateral and multilateral donors, and with other organisations that are working in their same regions. These exchanges are beneficial because they offer the possibility to foundations to follow up on their funded initiatives, to get valuable information on social, economic, cultural, and political context, and to connect with local actors that are relevant to foundations work.
- ✓ GLAD also offers the possibility to foundations to get to know some specific disability issues that need to be addressed, and to start setting the basis for funding new initiatives.
- ✓ While the majority of foundations are well aware of the priority areas and strategies of official aid agencies, many of these agencies may not be aware of the work of foundations. Therefore, GLAD is a space where foundations can inform official aid agencies about their work to increase mutual understanding and coherence in development and humanitarian actions.

## **II. Lessons Learnt**

### **Re: mainstream organisations**

1. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals have created the momentum for mainstream organisations to be disability inclusive. They have policies, guidelines and initiatives and are looking for more inclusive activities.
2. Many mainstream organisations have requested expertise to make their projects more inclusive in practice. They have expressed the need to understand disability more widely and to get guidelines and training on good practices when doing disability related work. They are especially interested in learning more about the inclusive approach when working with persons with disabilities living below the poverty line.
3. Many mainstream organisations appreciate networking possibilities with local DPOs to work and collaborate. This collaboration may enhance the exchange of experiences and the possibility to start initiatives together.
4. It is very important to create forums where mainstream organisations and DPOs can share experiences and challenges - to build their mutual capacity.

### **Re: foundations**

1. Getting other grantmakers/foundations interested in persons with disabilities takes a long time and a lot of commitment to discussion/presentation/meetings
2. It's not enough to speak to Foundation staff (though that is important); it is also critical to get buy-in from Foundation leaders. That often requires peer influence - from a peer foundation leader.
3. It is critical to emphasize why disability matters in the context of the work of other grantmakers/foundations, for example why is it important to consider disability in the context of women's rights (e.g. women with disabilities are one in every five women; increasing inclusion of women with disabilities could grow the women's movement; the primary issues that women with disabilities are addressing are the same as other women - violence, SRHR, education access, etc.)
4. It is important to provide practical steps towards greater inclusion, for example, how to make websites and grants processes accessible to persons with disabilities; what networks exist in the disability community to advertise requests for proposals; key contacts who can provide advice or sit on advisory committees or Boards within grantmaking organisations; what terminology to use; etc.



OPEN SOCIETY  
FOUNDATIONS

DISABILITY  
RIGHTS  
FUND

DISABILITY  
RIGHTS  
ADVOCACY  
FUND



Development Aid for People with Disabilities

5. There must be a safe space for “ignorant” questions. Many people are afraid to address disability because they do not know how to or have fears about offending others or not being “expert” enough.
6. Most grantmakers/foundations still think about disability from a medical / service perspective. Drawing clear links to a rights-based perspective is still needed. Why/how is disability a rights issue?
7. Supporting leaders with disabilities to speak to foundation leaders or grantmakers can be persuasive.
8. Finding a champion or champions within the foundation who will lead the work is vital.

\*See [here](#) an example of a guide DRF helped produce for women’s rights funders.

\*See [here](#) an example of a guide DRF produced for other donors looking to integrate a disability-rights perspective in the era of the CRPD.

### III. Key Fora

The following are examples of fora that foundations/CSOs might use to support mainstreaming or resourcing of disability-inclusive work and to share experiences and knowledge re: disability with other actors. These fora are for mainstream organisations; they do not have a specific focus on disability, though, in some, there are disability working groups. So far, GLAD is the only forum (outside of COSP and the CSF) that is fully focused on the roles of donors and other development actors vis-a-vis disability.

**Foundation Fora** of Interest (note that some are open to Foundations *only* and are not open to CSO participation):

#### [Human Rights Funders Network](#)

**HRFN** (formerly known as the International Human Rights Funders Group–IHRFG) was founded in 1994 by a small group of human rights grantmakers who wanted to share their strategies and what they were learning, discuss field-wide trends, and collaborate. Since those early days, their community has grown into a global network of approximately 1,500 individual grantmakers and philanthropists committed to advancing human rights through effective philanthropy. Their membership includes staff, consultants and trustees of private, corporate and public foundations, community giving programs, women’s funds, and philanthropic advocacy and support organisations based in over 60 countries across the globe.

#### [ARIADNE](#)

**Ariadne** is a European peer-to-peer network of more than 600 funders and philanthropists who support social change and human rights. Ariadne helps those using private resources for public good achieve more together than they can alone by linking them to other funders and providing practical tools of support.

*\*Note that HRFN/ARIADNE jointly host a Disability Rights Working Group:*

The working group seeks to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, increase funding for and mainstream disability rights into the broader philanthropic community, and promote implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

### [International Education Funders Group](#)

**IEFG** is an affinity network of over 90 foundations and donor-advised funds that support basic education in the Global South, from early childhood up to secondary, and adult literacy (excluding tertiary). Much of their work contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.

### [European Foundation Centre Disability Thematic Network](#)

**EFC DTN** is an open forum for philanthropic organisations to exchange, learn and connect about any issue related to disability with an eye to mainstreaming disability within their work and programmes.

### [EDGE](#)

**EDGE** Funders Alliance organizes within philanthropy to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the interconnected nature of the social, economic and ecological crises threatening their common future. EDGE works to increase resources for communities and movements creating systemic change alternatives for a transition to a society that supports justice, equity and the well-being of the planet.

### [African Philanthropy Forum](#)

**APF** is a strong and vibrant community of givers who through their strategic investments, partnerships, and influence, foster inclusive and sustainable development on the African Continent.

### **CSO Fora** of interest:

#### [Conference of States Parties to the CRPD](#) and Civil Society Forum

Article 40 of the Convention stipulates that “The States Parties shall meet regularly in a Conference of States Parties in order to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the present Convention.” Since 2008, ten sessions of the Conference of States Parties have been held at United Nations Headquarters, New York.

The 11th session is scheduled to take place at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 12 to 14 June 2018. The session will expect to feature among other agenda items an election of 9 members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Civil Society Forum is a one-day pre-COSP meeting of civil society actors. It is designed by a Steering Committee made up of volunteers from civil society.

### [Opportunity Collaboration](#)

**OC** annually convenes 400 global leaders building sustainable solutions to poverty. They engage social entrepreneurs, innovative nonprofit executives, grant-makers, impact investors, corporate & academic field-leaders, and aligned media working around the world to solve common challenges and spark new opportunities. Predicated on the powerful idea that out of fragmentation can come collaboration, from diversity can come unity, and from cross-fertilization can come innovation: the power of collaboration does not presume a single outcome. Rather, it draws its power from the conviction that people of good will forge their own solutions, directions and alliances, and uncover new ways to combine and leverage resources.

### [InterAction](#)

**InterAction** is an alliance organisation in Washington, D.C. of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). Their 180-plus members work around the world. What unites them is *“a commitment to working with the world’s poor and vulnerable, and a belief that we can make the world a more peaceful, just and prosperous place – together”*. InterAction serves as a convener, thought leader and voice of their community. They mobilize their members to think and act collectively.

\* InterAction has a Disability Working Group:

The Disability Working Group promotes inclusion of people with disabilities as a human rights issue and a critical component of effective development.

### [ZERO project](#)

The Zero Project, an initiative of the [Essl Foundation](#), focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities globally. It provides a platform where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face, are shared. Its sole objective is to assist in creating a world without barriers.