



# **Programme Results Report 2023**

## Development Cooperation Programme of Disability Partnership Finland

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

ANAD – Albania National Association of the Deaf

BIH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

CAN – Central Asian Network of Women with Disabilities

CRPD – United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CSO – Civil Society Organizations

DDI – Disability Development Initiative

DDP – Maryknoll Deaf Development Programme

DPF – Disability Partnership Finland (Vammaiskumppanuus)

OPD – Organization of persons with disabilities

ENAD – Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf

ENADB – Ethiopian National Association of the Deafblind

EWDNA – Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association

F – Female

FAD – Finnish Association of the Deaf (Kuurojen Liitto)

FAIDD – Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (Kehitysvammaliitto)

FDUV – Inclusion Finland FDUV

Finnish Federation of Swedish Speaking Hard of Hearing (Svenska hörsselförbundet)

FFVI – Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired (Näkövammaisten liitto)

FLOM – Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission (Kylväjä)

FPD – Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities (Invalidiliitto)

FSN – Finnish-Somalia Network

GBV – Gender Based Violence

Handikos – Association of Paraplegics and Paralyzed Children of Kosovo

HPD-O – Help for Persons with Disabilities Organisation

HRBA – Human Rights Based Approach

IC Lotos – Information Centre for Persons with Disabilities “Lotos”

KAD – Kosovar Association of the Deaf

KAIH – Kenya Association of the Intellectually Handicapped

M – Male

MANAD – Malawi National Association of the Deaf

MFA – Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

PMEL – Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

PSEAH – Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

RBM – Results Based Management

RNUD – Rwanda National Union of the Deaf

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

SEAH – Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Threshold Association – Kynnys ry

VIP – Vilole Images Productions (Women and Girls Disability Rights of Zambia)

ZAPDD – Zanzibar Association of People with Developmental Disabilities

ZNAPD – Zambia National Association of Persons with Physical Disabilities

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## Summary

Disability Partnership Finland's Development Cooperation Programme 2022 – 2025 is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and contributes to its implementation at national level in the Global South and in Finland. In addition to the CRPD, the Programme is strongly founded on the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda, Leave No One Behind, is fundamental to the DPF Programme. Its core is to ensure that the social, economic, and political rights of persons with disabilities are fulfilled. The Programme actively promotes and contributes to the principle of leaving no one behind and reaching first those furthest behind.

The expected impact of the Programme is that civil society is strengthened through vibrant organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD) who contribute to a strong disability movement and promote the realization of the human rights of persons with disabilities in the Global South. This is achieved by work towards the following six outcomes:

**Outcome 1.** Capacity building: Partner organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) are strengthened to work for disability inclusion and rights in local societies

**Outcome 2.** Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Accessibility: Persons with disabilities, especially women, are empowered to participate in societies

**Outcome 3.** Advocacy for Disability Inclusion and Rights: Disability inclusion and rights are promoted in policy making processes and legislation in collaboration between partner organizations and duty-bearers

**Outcome 4.** Disability Inclusive Education: Disability inclusion in all levels of education is strengthened in programme areas

**Outcome 5.** Disability Mainstreaming: Disability mainstreaming in Finnish development cooperation is strengthened

**Outcome 6.** Communications on Disability & Development: Awareness on disability & development is increased among the members of the DPF member organizations and general public in Finland

Year 2023 was the second year of implementation of the programme period 2022–2025. In 2023, the DPF programme was implemented in 10 countries and the Central Asian region including a total of 14 projects. The 16 Southern partners of the DPF member organizations are the main implementing bodies of the programme in the Global South.

## 1. Introduction

This is the Programme Results Report of the development cooperation programme of Disability Partnership Finland (DPF). The report covers the second year of the programme period 2022–2025 funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA). It brings together and presents the results achieved during the year 2023.

Disability Partnership Finland is an organization of persons with disabilities (OPD) that as per 31 December 2023 had six Finnish OPDs (Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Finnish Association of the Deaf, Finnish Association of Persons with Physical Disabilities, Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired, Finnish-Swedish Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability, Threshold Association) as full members committed to promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities and disability and development issues. In addition, the Finnish Federation of Swedish Speaking Hard of Hearing and the Abilis Foundation were associate members.

The main modality for the implementation of the DPF Programme are the projects coordinated by the Finnish member organizations and implemented by partner organizations of persons with disabilities in the Global South. In 2023, in total 14 projects were being implemented in 10 countries and Central Asian region. The regional project was implemented in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The Finnish Association of the Deaf started a project in Rwanda with Rwanda National Union of the Deaf. Rwanda is a new programme country in the DPF programme.

In addition to the projects implemented by programme partners, the DPF was active in developing and implementing disability mainstreaming initiatives with development cooperation NGOs in Finland. The DPF provided support to six Finnish NGOs that have cooperation agreement with the DPF. The disability mainstreaming was established as its own outcome area (5) for the programme 2022-2025.

The year 2023 was the last year of implementation of the “Inclusive Kosovo” project funded by the EU in which DPF and Threshold Association partner with HandiKos – Association of Paraplegics and Paralyzed Children of Kosovo. The project had a 12-month extension until the end of the year 2023.

## 2. The Programme Approach

The United Nations **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** is the normative foundation for all DPF work. The Development Cooperation Programme 2022 – 2025 is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and contributes to its implementation at national level in the Global South and in Finland. Each article of the CRPD is a practical tool for the programme partners in advocating for the human rights of persons with disabilities in both the Global South and North. The DPF development cooperation programme, its expected impact and all outcomes are also directly linked to a specific CRPD article. In addition to implementing disability specific projects, the DPF programme promotes the realization of the CRPD Article 32 by supporting disability inclusion in the work of mainstream Development Cooperation Programme 2022 – 2025 development actors. In this work both Finnish and Southern OPDs play an important role thus making true the slogan of the global disability movement Nothing About Us Without Us.

The Programme is guided by the **Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)**. Human rights standards, principles and goals as laid out in the international human rights system guide the programming and its processes. Human rights principles have been fundamental in defining the guiding principles of the DPF, such as non-discrimination, equality, participation, inclusion, and accountability. The objectives of the Programme are set to promote human rights. The Programme addresses the capacities of both rights-holders and duty-bearers and promotes accountability and dialogue between stakeholders. Participation of persons with disabilities in all decision-making is highlighted and promoted. Localisation, local ownership and meaningful participation are central to the Programme and persons with disabilities design and implement the projects themselves.

In addition, the Programme is strongly founded on the **Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals**. The overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda to **Leave No One Behind** is fundamental to the DPF Programme. Its core is to ensure that the social, economic, and political rights of persons with disabilities are fulfilled. The Programme actively promotes and contributes to the principle of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

The Development Cooperation Programme and the implementation year of 2023 were guided by the **DPF Strategy 2019 – 2023** with the vision of a world where the human rights of persons with disabilities have been realised and where persons with disabilities work to develop their own communities at the local, national and international levels. The DPF Programme brings together development co-operation from member organisations based on the different starting points and needs of different disability groups. The specificity and strategic added value of the programme



work is based on the independent work of each member organisation, where each member organisation co-operates on a long-term and direct basis with its own partner or one representing many different disability groups. The DPF Strategy 2019-2023 is based on the following four values: human rights, shared global responsibility, inclusion of persons with disabilities and trust. DPF started to develop a new strategy 2024-2027 at the end of the year in 2023.

According to DPF's theory of change, the expected impact of the Programme can be achieved by the following five paths:

- 1) Capacity-building of partner OPDs
- 2) Empowerment of persons with disabilities
- 3) Disability inclusive policies and legislation
- 4) Disability inclusive development work
- 5) Non-discrimination towards persons with disabilities

The programme approach highlights that in addition to sharing common overall objectives and interests, each disability group has different key areas that are crucial for the fulfilment of the rights of that group. These form the basis for the development cooperation strategies and prioritizations of the member organizations and reflect the diversity of and within different groups of Persons with Disabilities. The added value of the Programme is generated by sharing the expertise of the Finnish OPDs and providing peer support to their sister organizations in the Global South, as well as through partnering in the disability mainstreaming work with other development actors in Finland.



Picture: EWDNA organizes Coffee discussions for its members on various topics e.g. SRHR. EWDNA's staff member Weyenshet Getachew speaking, on the right Aseggedch Bekele, Sign Language interpreter.



### 3. Programme Results of 2023

In total 14 projects were being implemented in the DPF Programme in 10 countries and Central Asian region in 2023. Annex 2 Programme results framework 2022 – 2025 provides detailed reporting on the results achieved at outcome and output level during the past year.

This chapter presents the main results, and the progress achieved in all six programme result areas. This is done against the target levels 2025 established for the programme period. The focus is on the main outcome level results achieved in 2023. The output level results, more detailed information and the indicator values are given in Annex 2.

The expected impact of the DPF Programme 2022-25 is that civil society is strengthened through vibrant organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD) who contribute to a strong disability movement and promote the realization of the human rights of persons with disabilities in the Global South. There are six expected outcomes that contribute to the expected impact of the Programme.

**Outcome 1.** Capacity building: Partner organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) are strengthened to work for disability inclusion and rights in local societies

**Outcome 2.** Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Accessibility: Persons with disabilities, especially women, are empowered to participate in societies

**Outcome 3.** Advocacy for Disability Inclusion and Rights: Disability inclusion and rights are promoted in policy making processes and legislation in collaboration between partner organizations and duty-bearers

**Outcome 4.** Disability Inclusive Education: Disability inclusion in all levels of education is strengthened in programme areas

**Outcome 5.** Disability Mainstreaming: Disability mainstreaming in Finnish development cooperation is strengthened

**Outcome 6.** Communications on Disability & Development: Awareness on disability & development is increased among the members of the DPF member organizations and general public in Finland

The DPF Programme and the results achieved in 2023 have contributed to achieving the following **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**:

<b>SDG 10</b> Reduced Inequalities	<b>SDG 5</b> Gender Equality	<b>SDG 4</b> Quality Education	<b>SDG 11</b> Sustainable Cities and Communities
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The programme has especially contributed to the following SDG targets: 10.2 and 10.3 (Outcome 1 and 3); 5.1 and 5.2 (Outcome 2); 4.5 (Outcome 4) and various targets of the SDG 11 (all Outcomes). Overall, as mentioned earlier, the Programme actively promotes and contributes to the overarching principle of the Agenda 2030: Leave No One Behind.

The Programme and the results achieved in 2023 have also contributed to **the Finnish development policy** and especially the following priority areas and outcomes:

<b>Priority Area 1</b> Rights of women and girls Outcomes 1-3	<b>Priority Area 2</b> Quality Inclusive Education Outcomes 1-3	<b>Priority Area 4</b> Peaceful and democratic societies Outcome 3
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The contribution has been particularly significant to the following outcomes of the priority areas:

- Women and girls of all abilities enjoy the right to live a life free of violence and abuse, and to make decisions concerning their bodies in compliance with CEDAW (Priority Area 1)
- The rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to enjoy life free of violence, stigma and discrimination are protected (Priority Area 1)
- Teachers, schools and education providers have strengthened capacities to improve learning outcomes (Priority Area 2)
- The right to participate in inclusive and quality education for girls, children with disabilities and others in the most vulnerable positions is better realized (Priority Area 2)
- Youth acquire relevant skills for jobs and life (Priority Area 2)
- The enabling environment for and capacity of the civil society and women, youth and persons with disabilities to influence and participate in decision-making has improved (Priority Area 3)

The DPF plays an important role in promoting the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities within the Finnish development cooperation. In 2023, it has actively advocated and supported mainstreaming of disability inclusion in the work of various Finnish development

cooperation actors. Disability mainstreaming has its own outcome area (5) in the DPF programme 2022-2025.

The work and results presented in this report are funded by the Finnish MFA and the principle of attribution is applied in it. However, most partners receive funding also from other sources. In some outcome areas, such as organizational capacity development and advocacy work, it is challenging to establish clear attribution lines between the given support and achieved results. DPF programme funding is also directed to the core functions of the partner OPDs. Therefore, it is more meaningful to demonstrate contribution, rather than attribution to the results achieved especially at outcome level. At output level, it is more justified to talk about attribution in achieving the results (outputs). Although many programme partners receive funding from various sources, the share of the DPF funding is still considerable for the majority.

To conclude, after the second year of implementation and on the halfway of the programme period, the DPF programme has made good progress in order to achieve the expected results and the target levels by the end of the programme period. At the output level, some projects have already reached the targets 2025.

### 3.1 Impact

The expected impact of the DPF development cooperation programme 2022-2025 is that the civil society is strengthened through vibrant organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD). They contribute to a strong disability movement and promote the realization of human rights of persons with disabilities in the Global South. There are six expected outcomes that contribute to the expected impact of the Programme. The outcome level results 2023 are explained and analysed further here below and are included in the results framework.

The first indicator measuring the expected impact emphasize programme countries' and programme partner organizations' (OPDs) formal participation in government mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of the CRPD and other international human rights treaties and related processes, such as Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) etc. Independent mechanisms monitoring the CRPD implementation with civil society participation, particularly that of persons with disabilities and their

organizations, is also the core of the CRPD article 33. Partners work towards ratification, implementation and monitoring of the CRPD in the programme countries and the work on all programme outcomes contributes to the implementation of the CRPD. In 2023, 12 partner organisations (out of 16) in 11 (out of 13) programme countries participate in 19 human rights monitoring mechanisms: 12 CRPD or comparable mechanisms and 7 in CEDAW, UPR and SDGs. Partners IC-Lotos (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and Vilole Images Productions – Women and Girls Disability Rights of Zambia (Zambia) did not participate in any formal government mechanisms.

The second impact indicator measures the role of the partner organisation in the CRPD mechanism. The partner organizations have various possible roles or pathways of participation such as commenting of a draft (state) report, engaging in drafting the report through solicited input and feedback, appointed as expert in coordination mechanisms, member of the advisory/executive board, ensuring information on CRPD monitoring and implementation is disseminated in accessible format and so on. 11 partner organisations (out of 16) in 9 (out of 13) programme countries participated in either state or parallel reporting on CRPD (2 in both, 2 in only state, 7 in only parallel reporting). Partner IC-Lotos (Bosnia-Herzegovina) does not participate in state or parallel reporting on CRPD. Kosovo and Tajikistan have not ratified CRPD and thus, the DPF partners KAD and Ishtirok don't participate in state or parallel reporting on CRPD. In Ethiopia, next reporting on CRPD takes place in 2024. However, some of the partners participated in the preparative actions for the upcoming reporting.

The third indicator linked to the expected impact measures the capacity building and strengthening of the civil society by counting together the organisations whose capacities have been built by the partner organisation. DPF partners are active in strengthening the capacity of the civil society in the programme countries. 116 OPDs', 131 CSOs/NGOs/other organisations' and 7 UN agencies' capacities were built by all 15 partner organisations in all 12 programme countries in 2023.

### **3.2 Programme Outcome 1. Capacity building: Partner organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) are strengthened to work for disability inclusion and rights in local societies**

The first outcome, capacity building of the partner OPDs, is central in strengthening the civil society of the programme countries. Capacity building is also important as persons with disabilities lack access to education than the population on average in the Programme countries. In the beginning of the partnership, many programme partners have relatively weak capacity and required close and

extensive support to capacity building to participate in local development processes and civil society. The expected outcome 1 is that the partner organizations are strengthened to work for disability inclusion and rights in local societies.

In total 16 programme partners were implementing a project within the DPF Programme. The progress and results in increased capacity of partner organizations in 2023 are presented as measured by the following outcome indicators. 8187 persons with disabilities (64 % women and 36% men) were reached by project activities. 49% of the persons with disabilities participating in project activities were adults, 34% were youth and 17% were children. In 2023, DPF emphasized the participation of the youth and children with disabilities in order to achieve the set target 2025. The programme succeeded in including more children and youth in the activities. In 2023, all 16 partner organisations in all 13 programme countries were working with the following partnerships: 102 public partnerships with ministries, government offices, schools; 92 civil society partnerships and networks with CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, foundations, coalitions and 2 private partnerships with businesses. In the coming two years, DPF will focus on strengthening and increasing the private partnerships. The partner organisations keep increasing the number of their members, 43 614 in total (67% women, 33% men). The representation of women in partner organisations' organisational bodies remains high which is due to the fact that many programme partners are organisations of women with disabilities. The level of the representation of youth still remains low and will need to have a special focus in the coming years.

The capacity of programme partners varies considerably. DPF acknowledges that some of the programme partners are small organizations of persons with disabilities which lack capacity and resources. The capacity of each programme partner was assessed at the beginning of the new programme period 2022-2025 and based on the capacity assessment, a tailored capacity development plan was developed in cooperation between the partner organization and its Northern counterpart. All the capacity development plans were finalized in 2023, and they will be implemented and followed up throughout the current programme period. The following capacity gaps were identified among several partners: fundraising and grant management, functioning of the board, PMEL and RBM, risk management, safeguarding and PSEAH. However, it is important that each partner has their own individual capacity development since their strengths and capacity gaps are also different. DPF will build the capacities in the joint learning sessions and trainings for all partners, and the member organizations support their partner OPD in different platforms. Weak capacity and low level of education of persons with disabilities highlight the need for long-term capacity-building. Supporting also OPDs with weak organizational capacities is a strategic choice

by the DPF Board. All partners are supported in order to increase their basic organizational skills and technical capacity (Output 1.1.).

Support to capacity building was provided through staff trainings, as well as peer support and technical support for the thematic needs and issues raised in the capacity assessment. In addition to the trainings aiming at increasing the skills and knowledge of the staff members, emphasis was put on supporting the development of policies and processes to promote gender equality and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (Output 1.2.). The same applies for promotion of democracy and good governance among the programme partners (Output 1.3.). This is important to ensure accountability and transparency of the partner OPDs towards their members. The capacity of programme partners to represent the interests of their members and to build a strong membership was emphasized by providing trainings on democracy and good governance e.g., anti-corruption, transparency and financial management.

In addition, joint learning and peer support was enhanced between the DPF's member organizations and partner organizations (Output 1.4.). This included increasing collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experiences between the Global South and Global North, as well as South – South cooperation. DPF organized a joint Learning and Experience sharing session with the programme partners on the main results and lessons learnt of the year 2022. In November and December 2023, two joint learning and experience sharing sessions were organized on themes: fundraising and grant management as well as risk management and PSEAH.





Picture: Faith Wairuku, member of KAIH's parents peer support group with her son Benjamin in Nairobi.

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### **3.3 Programme Outcome 2. Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Accessibility: Persons with disabilities, especially women, are empowered to participate in societies**

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The second expected outcome of the Programme highlights the importance of empowerment as a starting point and precondition to the increased participation of persons with different disabilities, especially women with disabilities, in societies. The indicators linked to the Outcome 2 measure the increased self-esteem and self-confidence of the project participants (persons with disabilities) and their participation in community life. The indicators and data collection were proven to be challenging for the partners in the first implementation year. In 2023, DPF provided a data collection questionnaire in order to gather the results and supported the partners in the annual reporting process. The results are significant, and the data is more comparable than during the first year of the programme reporting. 93 % of female and 92 % of male project participants reported that their self-esteem and self-confidence were increased in 12 projects in 12 countries in the DPF programme in 2023. When it comes to the participation in community life, 38 % of women and 44



% of men with disabilities participated in education, 48 % of women and 59 % of men with disabilities were employed or self-employed, 63 % of women and 72 % of men with disabilities participated in other type of community activities. In the remaining two programme years, DPF will put a special emphasis on the promotion of the education for women and men with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities lack knowledge of and access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. In 2023, the programme partners raised awareness and strengthened the knowledge of both persons with disabilities and their family members on disability and disability rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as well as sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH; Output 2.1.).

In addition to different trainings and awareness raising events, peer support was central in empowering persons with disabilities (Output 2.2.). Persons with disabilities not only lack information and skills needed in participation in different spheres of life, but often need to overcome low self-confidence and self-esteem caused by discrimination, isolation and stigma. Some persons also need support in basic life skills to participate and lead more independent lives (Output 2.3.). Life skill trainings were organised on various subjects such as social skills, communication, money management, interpersonal communication, time management, food preparation, SRH, self-esteem and entrepreneurial skill, adaptive ICT, cooperative learning, Braille literacy and mobility, entrepreneurship skills, housekeeping and gardening, self-advocacy.

The surrounding community and environment play an important role in access to participation. It can be challenging due to for example negative attitudes, discriminatory practices or for the simple reason that the barriers to participation remain unidentified and are not addressed. Therefore, awareness related to disability and rights need be raised in the target communities (Output 2.4.). In 2023, 136 of various types of awareness raising events were organised such as deaf week campaigns, disability day celebration, summer schools, marathons, conferences, summits, seminars, workshops, forum theatres, public gatherings, radio programmes and video screenings in communities and institutions.

To ensure inclusive participation, accessibility needs to be ensured. Within this outcome, accessibility is addressed specifically from two perspectives. Firstly, access to communication and information which particularly affects the deaf persons (Output 2.5.) and physical accessibility (Output 2.6.). To ensure the access to information for the persons with different disabilities,

accessible materials such as key organisational and policy documents, educational and informational materials, were produced in sign language, braille and visual format. Physical accessibility was enhanced in Ethiopia and Kenya in 2023, 8 accessibility audits were carried out in universities and schools. One of the most significant results regarding accessibility was the development and publishment of the Accessibility Handbook by the Ethiopian partner DDI and Finnish member organization FPD. The handbook provides accessibility standards and offers recommendations on conducting accessibility audits, particularly in the Ethiopian context. However, it is useful for the Disability Partnership Finland, its member OPDs, and their partners in the Global South. In addition, it can also benefit other Finnish development practitioners, as well as their partners and stakeholders. The Accessibility Handbook is available for all in the following link: [Accessibility Handbook.pdf - Google Drive](#).

### **3.4 Programme Outcome 3. Advocacy for Disability Inclusion and Rights: Disability inclusion and rights are promoted in policy making processes and legislation in collaboration between partner organizations and duty-bearers**

The third expected outcome, advocacy, aims that the disability inclusion and rights are promoted in collaboration between partner organisations and duty-bearers. The DPF Programme seeks to change discriminatory laws and policies, ensure the implementation of CRPD compliant legislation and strengthen disability inclusion in the programme countries. Advocacy work was conducted in national, regional and local level by the programme partners. In 2023, a total of 90 national, local and regional consultations were carried out to promote disability inclusion and rights by 14 partner organisations in 11 programme countries. Changes in legislation and policies take time. The Programme, because of a successful and long-term advocacy work, achieved 17 new or revised strategies, laws, policies, acts or bills to improve the status of persons with disabilities were established in 6 programme countries. Also negative progress took place in Ethiopia; the final draft of the National Disability Act was refused by the Ministry of Justice and returned to the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs without clear comments. The preparation of the law must start again.

Advocacy work and collaboration with the duty-bearers is crucial to achieve the outcome. Partner OPDs are actively looking for new opportunities and strategies to increase the awareness and knowledge of duty-bearers on disability rights, inclusion and accessibility (Output 3.1.). In total, 2576 duty-bearers (caregivers and parents, teachers, health workers, other public and private service providers, CSO and media representatives, officials, administrators, commissioners, ministers, community and traditional leaders, political party leaders etc) were reached to raise their

awareness on disability inclusion and rights. In addition, partner organizations often have knowledge and skills of the accessibility linked to a particular type of impairment. Thus, they are considered experts in their field of work within their respective countries. Therefore, cooperation with OPDs is an asset in the development of inclusive policies and to ensure the accessibility.

In 2023, 10 partner organizations (out of 16) had an advocacy strategy in place. This is good progress towards the target 2025 but DPF needs to ensure the partner OPDs receive the necessary support in order to conduct strategic advocacy work towards the duty-bearers. DPF will also enhance and encourage the joint advocacy efforts of the programme partners in the same country. This also contributes to the programme's expected impact of stronger disability movement.

### **3.5 Programme Outcome 4. Disability Inclusive Education: Disability inclusion in all levels of education is strengthened in programme areas**

The programme's fourth expected outcome is that disability inclusion in all levels of education is strengthened in programme areas. Access to inclusive quality education and equal learning opportunities is one of the most critical areas in enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in their societies. Low levels of education, non-accessibility to learning opportunities and non-accessible learning materials have multiple and long-lasting impacts on persons with disabilities and their lives. Therefore, it is important to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to lifelong learning opportunities.

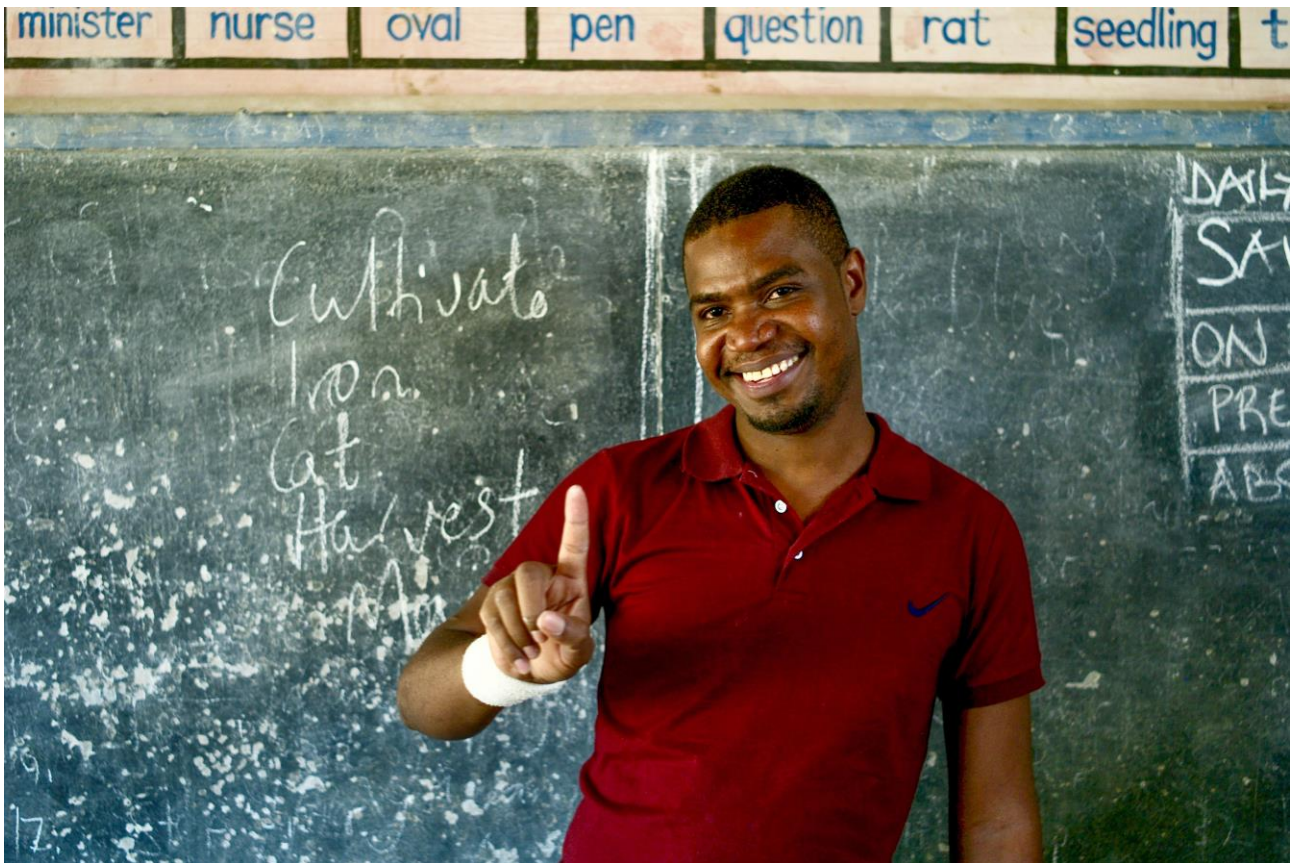
Education of children, youth and adults with disabilities is diverse within the Programme. Access to formal and non-formal education is improved through awareness raising and support to caretakers, communities, schools and education authorities in their capacity related to inclusive education. Several training opportunities for teachers and teacher-students are provided, and access to information and education in braille and sign language are widely promoted in the related projects.

In 2026, 94 educational institutions from primary to university level and vocational schools in 6 projects in 5 programme countries were reached to strengthen their capacity to provide quality inclusive education for the students with disabilities. 92 educational institutions reported that positive changes in disability inclusion took place in their institutions. The positive changes were such as changes in attitudes at the primary schools e.g. the school communities were working to fulfil the needs of students with disabilities, educational opportunities for students with visual and other types of disability, schools with special needs education units with SNE teachers managing

the units and providing specialized support for general teachers as well as students with disabilities.

Insufficient knowledge and understanding of different disabilities continue to remain a significant challenge in different levels of the education system, especially among the teachers. In addition, national education policies need to be either revised or reinforced to provide quality inclusive education for all. The DPF programme partners cooperate closely with duty-bearers in this regard. Capacities of teachers to provide disability inclusive quality education is strengthened (Output 4.1.), and inclusive education methods and materials are developed (Output 4.2.) in the Programme. In 2023, 347 teachers, teacher-education students, educational experts, school management staff, SNE teachers, home room teachers, teachers' association members and supervisors (82% women and 18% men) received capacity building training to provide disability inclusive quality education. Disability inclusive or special needs learning materials e.g. web sign language dictionary, Braille paper, slate and stylus, assistive aids, digital records, manuals, textbooks, spectacles, easy-to-read materials, were provided in 15 educational institutions. Strengthening disability inclusion in the education sector also requires wider coordination with health and social sectors, and provision of assistive devices to support persons with disabilities to attend education and learn.

Involving parents and communities play an important role in ensuring that children with disabilities can have access to education, attend school and are not excluded from the learning opportunities (Output 4.3.). In 2023, 633 caretakers (61% women, 39% men) and 56 educational institutions were reached to raise their awareness and knowledge about the right to education and inclusive education for students with disabilities.



Picture: Lee Khwalala, teacher of the Malawi Sign Language course organized by MANAD in Blantyre.

### **3.6 Programme Outcome 5. Disability Mainstreaming: Disability mainstreaming in Finnish development cooperation is strengthened**

Under this outcome DPF aims to build the capacity and knowledge of the Finnish development actors in mainstreaming disability and the rights of persons with disabilities in their development cooperation activities. Training, collaboration and networking with development organizations and other actors form the core of the activities. The outcome 1, strengthening the disability mainstreaming of Finnish development cooperation, plays a pivotal role in making development inclusive and ensuring that persons with disabilities and their organizations are able to participate in and benefit from the mainstream development cooperation. The expected outcome is that disability mainstreaming by Finnish development actors is strengthened.

Despite DPF having provided disability inclusion expertise and support to various Finnish development actors for over ten years, disability inclusion and mainstreaming work were for the first time defined as its own outcome under outcome 5 in the ongoing programme 2022 – 2025. This workstream builds upon the disability mainstreaming work done under the previous



programmes from 2012 onwards. This area of work consists of existing partnerships with Finnish development organizations as well as of some more impromptu collaborations emerging from needs by other partners. The mainstreaming work aims to utilise the DPF member organizations' expertise and experience in the area of disability and development cooperation to the fullest extent possible.

Most of the current mainstreaming partners are the same as during the previous programme period and indeed, collaboration with many of the partners has been ongoing for a number of years. In 2023, DPF had collaboration with nine Finnish mainstream development organisations. DPF provided tailored support, organised trainings, mentoring and seminars, continued to provide support and expertise in the project reporting and project planning processes from the perspective of disability inclusion and facilitated a peer learning group meeting four times a year. In the course of the year 2023 eight trainings, including also one three-part webinar series, were conducted in the Global South and Finland following the requests and needs identified by the partner organisations. The themes and focus of the trainings were based on the needs identified the organisations and projects in question and the contents of the trainings were built in a tailor-made manner to address the specific needs of the project or organisations as well as their specific context or working environments. The trainings in 2023 were organised both in person as well as online. DPF continued to employ in its trainings the so-called co-trainer model which has been developed during previous programme periods. In this model the DPF advisor responsible for the disability inclusion cooperation works in close collaboration in the planning and facilitating the trainings with a trainer who has personal experience of disability. DPF has received very positive feedback on this training method and is intending to continue using this model in the future trainings and collaborations. The co-trainer model was used for instance in the trainings that took place as part of the collaboration with ADRA Finland. Likewise, each episode of the three-part webinar series on inclusive education for the Finnish Embassy in Myanmar included trainers with disabilities. DPF also encouraged its partner organizations to collaborate and include local OPDs and persons with disabilities in their project activities in order to advance the meaningful participation and role of persons with disabilities in development cooperation. Some of the main results that have taken place in 2023 in the mainstreaming work and collaboration with Finnish development actors include deepening understanding and skills on inclusive education, strengthening the focus on including persons with disabilities in different stages of development projects and programmes, and furthering understanding and knowledge on questions related to accessibility. In 2023, the DPF has also participated in numerous events and co-organized five events and seminars.

The first indicator linked to the outcome 5 measures the number and names of Southern OPDs engaged meaningfully in development cooperation work of the mainstream CSOs. According to the data collected from the partnering mainstream organisations, 67 Southern OPDs have been engaged in development cooperation work of the mainstream development organisations during the reporting period. The DPF theory of change's underlying assumption is that Finnish actors are committed to promoting disability mainstreaming in practice and that development actors and donors are willing to engage the Southern OPDs and respond to the possible capacity gaps that they may have. The data collected shows that the number of OPDs involved and engaged in their projects and work has increased by 24% from 2022 (54 OPDs) to 2023 (67 OPDs). This indicates the continued interest and will to collaborate and include OPDs in their work. Likewise, the number of trainings conducted has risen.

There have been some challenges with data collection on the second indicator under this outcome, positive changes related to disability mainstreaming in the Finnish development cooperation organisations and their Southern partners. Indeed, the data on this indicator was collected for the first time only this year through interviews with Finnish collaborating partners. The partner organisations have identified within their organisations positive changes in attitudes, behaviour, skills and human resources practices. For instance, according to self-evaluation by the organisation, attitudes and behaviour in Finnish-Somalia Network (FSN) have progressed and in general awareness on disability inclusion has grown which is shown in the behaviour and attitudes of the organisations' staff and project teams. As an example, the FSN started a new project in 2023 where one of the project's partner organisations in Somalia is a local OPD. In addition, following a joint training on disability inclusion which was organised for all FSN's projects in July 2023, the project team has reported that other FSN projects that have no disability inclusion components have taken action to improve accessibility in their projects. FSN also started to make plans to apply for new projects with disability components in 2024 application period. Similarly, UFF Finland has estimated that organisation's attitudes, approach, skills and behaviour in relation to disability inclusion have evolved, especially following the joint training trip the project coordinator took to Mozambique with the DPF in September 2023. With FLOM, advisory support on disability inclusion has been provided to all FLOM projects in 2023. According to FLOM, many staff members in their partner organisations have found the support valuable, and positive feedback has been received on the suitability of the support. Positive changes can be also found to have taken place in the project's human resources procedures. For instance, in the recruitment process of another FLOM project in Mongolia with focus on supporting OPDs, the principles of positive discrimination were exercised which resulted in hiring a project manager with personal experience



on disability.

As every year, an annual survey was conducted both with the contract organizations as well as with the members of the peer learning group. There have been some challenges with data collection and as a consequence the response rates have not been sufficient to make conclusive deductions. Although the response rates were not comprehensive, the partner organizations rated DPF's support as good (50%) and excellent (50%). The peer learning group members rated their satisfaction with the group's work also mainly as good (25%) or excellent (50%).

### **3.7 Programme Outcome 6. Communications on Disability & Development: Awareness on disability & development is increased among the members of the DPF member organizations and general public in Finland**

The main target group for awareness raising about disability and development themes are Finnish persons with disabilities. This target group is not well reached by mainstream development communications efforts. The comparative advantage for the Disability Partnership Finland is that its member organizations can reach the target group directly with appropriate means and can provide accessible information understanding adaptation of material and accessible information to the needs of visually impaired, deaf people and persons with intellectual disabilities. The aim is to strengthen solidarity between Finnish persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities in the Global South in order for the DPF member organizations to have a mandate to continue development cooperation.

DPF also sought to reach the general public through social media and participation in the annual World Village Festival. The goal is to increase awareness on disability and development issues as well as DPF's programme work and to strengthen the commitment of Finnish people to development aid.

The DPF Secretariat does not have a full-time communications professional. For the programme period 2022–2025 the DPF Board decided to budget for buying communications services. With this budget, DPF has been able to reach a larger public and disseminate information on disability and development themes and the programme results especially on social media and DPF's website. However, the member organizations have more resources and expertise in communications, and their work mainly contributes to Outcome 6 results. Their communications work largely

concentrates on the individual projects while the DPF Secretariat shares information and communicates about the programme.

In 2023, the number of followers in DPF's and its member organizations' social media continued to increase significantly. The target 2025 of all social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, X) had been reached already in the first year of the new programme period. DPF and the member organizations have altogether 17 188 followers in X, 13 835 followers in Instagram and 35 666 followers in Facebook. The social media, especially Instagram and Facebook, are good platforms to reach a wider public and share programme and project results. In addition, DPF member organizations reached 37 406 members and 5220 persons of wider public reached through printed membership magazines in Finland.

The expected result of the Outcome area 6 is that the awareness on disability and development is increased among the members of DPF member organizations and general public in Finland. DPF is conducting a survey on the types of changes in awareness on disability & development. In 2023, 80,6% of respondents feel a sense of solidarity with persons with disabilities in developing countries and only 9,3% of respondents have a wide knowledge of the situation of the persons with disabilities. The percentages have decreased from the baseline. However, 94,9% of respondents agree that the Finnish disability organizations should help persons with disabilities in other countries. Compared to the baseline 2022, there is a stronger commitment and will to help persons with disabilities which confirms the mandate of DPF and its member organizations to continue the development cooperation.

#### 4. Main Lessons Learnt in the Programme in 2023

This chapter presents the main lessons learnt identified during the year 2023.

First, there is a clear and ongoing need to enforce and strengthen risk management and safeguarding, particularly Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. DPF has in use a Risk Management Matrix for the project and programme level. All the programme partners are actively using the Risk Management Matrix in their projects. The important lesson learnt in 2023 is that risk management requires continuous learning and follow-up. In the work for PSEAH, DPF with its programme partners need to ensure the compliance of PSEAH policies and Code of Conduct, and that all the stakeholders including rightsholders, duty-bearers and project staff at all levels are encouraged to and responsible for reporting any wrongdoing.

DPF continues to further explore and promote different platforms and processes to promote mutual learning and sharing of experience as well as sharing of information and knowledge. It is particularly important to find ways to increasingly involve partners in the peer learning processes together with member organizations. Threshold Association organized a joint workshop week for its project partners in Zambia in 2023. The results and feedback from the participants were outstanding, the opportunity to share learnings and experience as well as the peer support was highly valued by all the partners. DPF will continue to promote the South-to-South learning and provide platform for the programme partners to gather to learn. The joint learning and experience sharing sessions continue to take place regularly. In 2023, three sessions were organized by DPF on Main Results and Lessons Learnt from the programme year 2022, Risk Management and PSEAH as well as Fundraising and Grant Management.

Thirdly, it is important to highlight that several partnerships with the current partner OPDs are going to end by the end of the programme period in 2025. The partners need support to facilitate a sustainable exit and to implement the project exit plans. DPF will need to strengthen the partners' capacities in fundraising and proposal writing as well as networking and approaching potential donors.

#### 4.1. Programme contribution to strengthening the civil society

The DPF Programme has a strong focus on strengthening the civil society. The expected impact of the programme is that the civil society is strengthened through vibrant organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD) who contribute to strong disability movement and promote the realization of human rights of people with disabilities. The expected outcomes directly contribute to and are central in strengthening the civil society, its space and the operating conditions of civil society organizations. This is especially evident for Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 5.

The capacity building of partner OPDs (Outcome 1) is directly linked to strengthening the civil society in the countries the DPF operates in. Capacity building of the OPDs contributes not only to stronger and able organisations but also to a stronger civil society where the OPDs actively work for disability inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities. The capacity building of partner organizations and especially their local branches, brings about transformative change in the grassroots level.

Secondly, the Programme contributes to the strengthening of the voice and inclusiveness of the civil society more broadly. This is done through empowerment of persons with disabilities, especially by empowering women with disabilities (Outcome 2). The empowerment of persons with different disabilities contributes to more inclusive and diverse civil society. By acquiring knowledge, new skills and information related to human rights for example, persons with disabilities start increasingly to participate in different spheres of life. With support from their families, many start engaging actively and advocate for human rights in their communities and societies. As many of the partner OPDs are membership-based organizations with local branches, they can represent a large number of persons with disabilities with wide geographical representation.

Thirdly, advocacy for disability inclusion and human rights (Outcome 3) also contributes to strengthening of the civil society. Under the outcome 3, the Programme raises awareness, knowledge and skills of the duty-bearers related to disability rights, inclusion, and accessibility. Partner OPDs collaborate closely with duty-bearers from different levels and promote disability inclusion and rights in policy making processes and legislation.

Finally, the disability mainstreaming work of DPF (Outcome 5) plays a significant role in contributing to a more diverse, inclusive, and strong civil society in Finland and in the Global South. In 2023, DPF collaborated with 9 Finnish development NGOs and other actors in order to increase their knowledge and skills related to disability & development issues and disability mainstreaming. Cooperation with Southern OPDs is one of the key principles of the disability mainstreaming work,

enforcing networking between OPDs and mainstream organizations in order to ensure that the development cooperation is disability inclusive. Additionally, it provides opportunities for OPDs to build their capacity and engage with development projects and arenas priorly closed to them.

## **4.2 Sustainability, Ownership, Localization and Accountability of the Programme**

The sustainability of the Programme results and impact builds strongly on the Human Rights Based Approach to development. Targeting both rights-holders and duty-bearers is important, as well as contributing to the empowerment and increased capacity of different actors.

The ownership of the Programme lies in the rights-holders and duty-bearers, DPF member and partner OPDs, and their expertise and networks. This is critical for the effectiveness of the Programme. People with disabilities and their organizations are the ones who plan, implement, and monitor the projects. Promoting local ownership and meaningful participation during the planning and implementation of the programme has been essential. This way, the Programme draws on the local knowledge, experiences, and skills, and builds on the existing local structures, partnerships, as well as other resources. This together with the programme strategies aim at achieving greater sustainability of the results.

The programme has a strong emphasis in the localization and supports solely locally led initiatives implemented by persons with disabilities and their organizations. “Nothing About Us Without Us” is the guiding principle in the planning and implementation of the Programme. The Programme has been designed in collaboration together with the Finnish OPDs and the OPDs in the programme countries. The projects are entirely implemented by the local OPDs. The DPF programme strongly supports and focuses on strengthening the capacities of the local actors and civil societies. The capacity-building of the partner OPDs is one of the programme’s outcome areas.

The Programme promotes equal participation and inclusion of all. One important focus is to empower persons with disabilities and especially women and girls with disabilities. Learning new skills, being able to communicate and participate in the community and society are positive changes in the lives of persons with different disabilities. These are also highly sustainable results; the experience proves that most persons continue to participate in the programme or start being active in other spheres of life.

Under the outcome 1, DPF has supported the organizational capacity of the partner OPDs which is fundamental in strengthening the overall sustainability of the results. The long-term support to the organizational management and basic skills is necessary for them to participate in the civil society and advocate for the disability rights and inclusion in societies. Investing in increased capacity of

the partner OPDs to advocate and meaningfully engage with key duty-bearers and other CSOs contributes to the socially sustainable results.

In addition, the long-term collaboration with partner organizations, local authorities, and national governments contributes to technical and institutional sustainability. The DPF Programme builds constructive relationships with the authorities at national, regional and local levels. The ownership of the duty-bearers is essential to achieve institutionally and socially sustainable results. The systematic approach to increase the awareness, sensitize and train duty-bearers on the human rights of persons with disabilities is central in the programme. Close collaboration with duty-bearers serves as an opportunity to increase their capacity to fulfil their formal obligations. When capacity has been enhanced as a collaborative effort and in equal partnership, the results also tend to be more sustainable. The increased knowledge and skills will lead to improved implementation of disability inclusive legislation and the CRPD, and the gradual takeover of the programme activities by the government authorities.

Financial sustainability is a widely acknowledged challenge to the DPF Programme and its partners. It has also been a widely monitored aspect of the organizational capacity of the partner OPDs. DPF is putting a special emphasis in strengthening partners' capacities in resource mobilization and the partner organizations are starting to have increased capacity in resource mobilization and are putting stronger effort to finding new donors. However, partners are still likely to depend on external donors in the years to come and not very likely to access significant domestic funding. For many the major challenge still is to find ways to ensure the core funding of the organisation. The DPF will continue to focus on supporting its partners to enhance their funding and enlarging its own donor-base.





Picture: Mehret Mitiku (on the left), Bezawit Shimelles and Solyana Getu, newly graduated architects who participated in the accessibility training organized by DDI in Addis Ababa.

## 5. Results Based Management and quality assurance within the Programme

The Programme is led by **the Board of the DPF**. Six member organizations were represented in the board and seven board meetings took place in 2023.

**The DPF Secretariat** coordinates, monitors and is responsible for the quality assurance at the programme level. The staff comprised of four permanent staff members: Executive Director, Finance Advisor and two Programme Advisors.

**The Steering Group** is the programme development team, and it held 12 meetings in 2023. In addition, the Steering Group members participated in three joint sessions with the programme partners. The project coordinators of the member organizations are members of the Steering Group. The informal group (including Abilis foundation) for sharing of information and experience, as well as developments in Ethiopia met once in 2023.



**The Programme Results framework** is the main tool for the Results Based Management (RBM) of the Programme. The DPF programme results framework for 2022 – 2025 was built with the aim to strengthen the programmatic approach and the RBM within both programme and project levels. The project results frameworks were built by using the programme level results framework. The project level results contributed directly to the programme results framework, and the programme partners are clearly working towards jointly identified expected results at impact, outcome and output levels.

At programme level the most important points for RBM included the half-year review on programme implementation to the Board and the annual reporting. Member organizations, the Board and the Steering Group participated in analyzing the programme effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

## 5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress and results under the six programme outcomes are monitored and assessed throughout the Programme, together with monitoring the project level results and outputs. The DPF secretariat is responsible for developing the monitoring processes and tools in collaboration with the Steering Group, as well as the overall development of the programme level monitoring. All projects have project level results framework which are directly linked and contribute to the programme level results framework.

Project reports were received at quarterly basis from the partner organizations, while annual reports compiled the whole year of project implementation and provided more in-depth analysis on results, effectiveness, challenges and lessons learnt, as well as changes in the operating context and risk mitigation. The project output and outcome level results were aggregated to programme level for data analysis during the annual reporting process by the Secretariat.

Some programme partners face challenges in collecting and disaggregating the data. The programme has put a specialized emphasis in strengthening the capacity of the partners in planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning. The focus on the capacity-building and support for partners have worked well and there has been a clear improvement regarding the data collection and aggregation by the partners. There has been improvement in the reporting of gender disaggregated data from projects as well as collecting age disaggregated data of the programme beneficiaries. Data disaggregation according to sex, disability and age Development Cooperation Programme 2022 – 2025 is systematically done. DPF will continue to strengthen the partners'

capacities in PMEL and support them in all challenges related to data collection, monitoring and reporting.

DPF is constantly assessing the monitoring tools and processes developing them further when needed. The formats for annual reporting were revised and updated for the programme 2022-2025. Furthermore, to support the Results Based Management, a template for project annual work plan was developed for the planning of projects for this new programme period which is now in use in all projects. DPF renewed the partner capacity assessment and capacity development plan templates, and all the partners have finalized the capacity assessment in 2023. Based on the capacity assessment, the partners together with the Finnish member organizations made the capacity development plans which are implemented and followed up throughout the current programme period.

The Programme includes a budget line for planning, monitoring and evaluation reserved for developing the quality of the operations. Funds can be applied for project appraisals, feasibility studies, baselines, facilitated self-evaluations or external evaluations. Evaluations and self-assessments are an important quality tool of the Programme and partners are strongly recommended to assess their work regularly including an external evaluation once in the four-year project cycle.

An external evaluation of the projects “Empowerment of women with disabilities in Central Asian countries” and “Towards Inclusive Vocational Training in Zanzibar” were conducted in 2023. In the project in Central Asia, the key recommendations included expanding the funding base and enhancing the international network; ensuring the future generation of leaders with disabilities using the summer schools’ concept; seeking collaboration with research institutes and academia and strengthening the systems of data collection and information management. The most important finding was that the summer school or “school of independent living” activity has been very successful in empowering persons, especially women with disabilities and the possibility to share the successful concept internationally could be explored. The project evaluation in Zanzibar recommended that more advocacy and awareness campaigns are needed to change employers’ negative attitudes towards persons with intellectual disabilities. ZAPDD, in collaboration with the relevant government authorities, should encourage the youth who have attended and completed the training through the project to join the available vocational training centers for further training. It was also strongly suggested that the project trainees would be provided with a small capital to start their businesses with close supervision by their parents/caregivers and ZAPDD. The most important lessons learnt were that sustainable results are achieved when the parents and

caregivers are well-informed and involved in the implementation of the project, and the project contributed to combating stigma against persons with intellectual disabilities in the community.

The DPF Secretariat conducted a monitoring visit in two projects in Ethiopia and the Project Coordinators of member organizations conducted regular monitoring visits to their related programme countries during the implementation year. Threshold Association organized a joint visit and training week for all its project partners (EWDNA, IC Lotos, Ishtirok, Ravenstvo, Shyrak, VIP) in Zambia. The DPF Executive Director and Petri Puhakka, MFA's Ambassador for International Disability Issues participated in the joint visit. In addition to the monitoring visits, follow-up on the projects took place and communication has been constant and regular, virtual meetings and training sessions were organized.

## 5.2 Risk management

The DPF Risk Management System: Policy and Guidance document describes the risk management system and is composed of two main parts: policy and guidance for putting policy into practice. It defines the purpose, scope, principles, approach, key actors as well as the process of risk management within the Programme. Within the new DPF risk management system, risks are categorized to the following four categories: strategic risks, operative risks, financial risks, and security & safety risks. As part of the risk management system, DPF has a Risk Management Matrix for the programme and project level.

All the partners updated the project level Risk Management Matrix regularly at least twice a year. The Risk Management Matrix is an important tool for the risk management. The Project Coordinators guided the partners in assessing the risks and defining the mitigation actions at project level. The Programme Risk Management Matrix was updated twice in 2023, during the annual reporting and annual planning processes.

As part of the risk management system of the DPF, an Internal Audit Group monitors, guides, and assess the risk management of the programme on all levels and thus strengthens risk management in the programme. The Internal Audit Group meeting took place once in 2023.

In addition, DPF has zero tolerance for corruption and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the programme and all its work. Special measures were taken to ensure the Do No Harm principle and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The focus was to ensure PSEAH is systematically and adequately addressed in all policies and practises by every organisation engaged in the Programme. DPF organised a joint Learning and Experience Sharing

session on risk management and PSEAH for the Steering group, Board and programme partners. DPF has a PSEAH policy and a Code of Conduct in place and continues to support the partner organizations to develop their PSEAH policies (Outcome 1). A crucial part of PSEAH is a functional and confidential mechanism to report any incident or suspicion and to address them accordingly. DPF has proven to have a functional mechanism in place and reports all the incidents to the major donor MFA Finland.

In Ethiopia, the political instability and the adverse effects of the conflict taking place in Tigray region continued and the conflict escalated in Amhara region in 2023. The fightings and tensions are still active in Amhara region. There is one project implemented by DPF's partner HPDO in Amhara region. No significant effect on the areas and activities DPF operates with occurred. However, due to the safety and security reasons, the communications mission in Ethiopia in December 2023 could not be conducted in the project locations in Amhara region. DPF together its programme partner HPDO as well as other Ethiopian programme partners, EWDNA and Inclusive Ethiopia (former DDI) continue to monitor the situation closely and to share information regularly. The implementation of project activities will be adjusted if needed by ensuring the safety of all the project participants including the project staff, rightsholders and duty-bearers.

The risk level regarding the sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment has been changed from medium risk to high level risk as of 8.8.2024. The persons face increased risk of sexual violence. The capacity to identify SEAH related risks and capacity to address these varies among the partners. Implementation of related legislation, policies and protective measures is limited and varies from country to country in the programme. DPF is well aware of the situation and the likelihood of the risk. Several actions are identified and implemented in order to prevent and mitigate the risk. The need to strengthen the PSEAH related work was identified already in 2020 and continue during the programme period 22-25. The Programme 2022 -2025 includes systematic work on capacity building related to prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in North and South. This includes staff trainings, trainings and awareness-raising to rights holders and relevant stakeholders in SEAH issues. The PSEAH has been added to the format assessing partner organizational capacities. Systematic review of partners' skills and experiences related to PSEAH should be done. PSEAH related risks and vulnerabilities are systematically assessed during the planning and implementation of projects. The DPF PSEAH Policy is shared with all the staff involved in the programme implementation. The DPF Code of Conduct is signed by all DPF programme staff and visitors to project. Support to drafting of CoC for Southern partners will be provided. DPF is also ensuring that it has effective and accessible reporting mechanisms and channels in place.

The updated DPF Risk Management Matrix can be found in annex 2.

## 6. Finances

Year 2022 was the first year of the four-year financial period 2022–2025. In 2023, the programme-based support from the MFA to the DPF was 1 800 000 €.

Moreover, the DPF Secretariat had 133 732 € of withdrawn transferring funds from year 2022. In total there was 2 217 647 € of MFA funds available for 2023. The finance report (Annex 5) contains the detailed breakdown of the Programme finances in 2023.

**The total expenditure** of the development cooperation programme of the DPF in 2023 was 1 956 738 €. Of these expenses 1 804 076 € were funded by the MFA support and the remaining 152 662 € by self-financing, which is 7,8 per cent of the total costs.

Unused support at the end of 2023 totalled 390 961 €. Of this, 256 776 € was unused and to be transferred to 2024 for the project work; 134 184,24 € was at the shared planning and evaluation funds, 80 587 € at the Secretariat.

Administration costs totalled about 5,81 per cent of total programme costs. In the Programme, administration costs are only incurred at the Secretariat. Annually, a part of the Secretariat's personnel, office and operating expenses are registered and reported as programme administration costs. In 2023, these expenses included:

- allocation of the Secretariat employees' salaries including social security contributions based on working time records;
- other personnel costs such as employee health service, meal and exercise vouchers, and professional guidance;
- office rent, maintenance, electricity, cleaning and lounge service;
- procurements, office supplies and property insurance;
- operational expenses such as ICT, printing and copying, meetings, bookkeeping, audits, and banking expenses.

The support channelled to member organizations and through them to the Southern partners is considered in its entirety as project costs that can originate either in Finland or in the programme countries in the Global South. Part of these costs are budgeted and reported as operation and maintenance costs, which can amount to a maximum of 7 per cent of the costs of a project. For the operation and maintenance costs, a flat rate model without a need to categorize the costs in detail

is being used. In the member organizations' operations in Finland, these costs include ICT and banking costs as well as the personnel costs of their finance departments as allocated to work related to the DPF.

The operation and maintenance costs of the partner organizations include rent, water, electricity, cleaning, office maintenance, phone, mail, banking, printing, and stationery. Additionally, insurances and car maintenance costs can be allocated as operation and maintenance costs. If the flat rate model is not used and operation and maintenance costs are categorized, they can amount to the maximum of 10 per cent of annual project costs.

The exact **self-financing share** of the DPF programme in 2023 **was 7,8 per cent**. Based on the joint agreement, each member organization is responsible to cover the self-financing share of their project portfolio (total self-funding in 2023 was 152661,71 €) and the self-financing share of the planning and evaluation funds that they used during the year (0 €). The self-financing share of the DPF Secretariat was 27001,83 €.

#### **Explanations to the budgetary deviations over 15 %:**

ALB3011, CAM3012, KOS3013, RWA3015:

Everyone has the same reason, namely that they are transferring allocated funds between their projects and lack an external expert adviser/trainer to work on the project.

FIN4099:

The project received funds transferred from their project BIH4020, which remained unused throughout the year.

TAN2003:

The project received additional funds to conduct a video interview, which they were unable to complete in 2023.

SECRETARIAT:

Secretariat is spending more than we budgeted because it had leftover funds from the previous year, 2022. Additionally, inflation has consumed a larger portion of the budget than anticipated, due to increased costs for premises and communication.

Helsinki 28.8.2024

Kaisa Alanne  
Chairperson of the Board

Mari Tuohimaa  
Executive Director