

Disability Partnership Finland

Strategy 2024-2027

The basis of our work

Disability Partnership Finland (DPF) is a cooperation organisation of Finnish organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), founded in 1989. DPF's members are national actors that are either disability-specific or cross-disability organisations. They provide expertise and services to their members, and they also engage in advocacy work. DPF operates primarily through its member organisations to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities in developing countries and elsewhere in contexts where the human rights situation of persons with disabilities is particularly poor. DPF facilitates cooperation and provides services to its member organisations on issues related to development cooperation, disability mainstreaming, international advocacy, communications and global citizenship education.

DPF's work is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Its work is based on human rights principles, and it contributes to the implementation of the CRPD and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The local partners of DPF's members are primarily organisations of persons with disabilities or their family members, or national advocacy organisations in which persons with disabilities themselves actively participate and provide their expertise.

DPF's work is owned by its members. This is rooted in a deep understanding of their partner organisations and their needs to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in their own contexts. DPF's secretariat coordinates this work and its reporting, administers its funding, and provides other support functions in cooperation with its member organisations.

Values

1) **Human rights -based approach** – Human rights are indivisible, inalienable, interdependent and interrelated. All of DPF's work is guided by human rights -based approach. We support the weakest, and we promote justice and equality in all our work so that persons with disabilities in developing countries can enjoy equal opportunities.

2) **Sustainable global solidarity** – We are committed to long-term global solidarity to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in a manner that is impactful and sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.

3) **Participatory partnerships** – At the core of DPF's work is that it is done together with persons with disabilities and their organisations to promote the realisation of the rights of persons with

disabilities. The partnerships between persons with disabilities in the Global North and South are strengthened through sharing experiences and expertise as well as peer support. The principle of 'Nothing About Us Without Us' guides all of DPF's work.

4) Good governance, transparency and equal treatment – DPF's work is based on open cooperation among its secretariat, members and partners, in which everyone is treated equally, the principles of good governance are followed, and there are clear and effective ways of working. DPF's member organisations commit to joint rules which are followed by all.

The context in which we work

Changes in global politics, primarily the war in Ukraine, affect Finland's development policy and priorities. The military and humanitarian support for Ukraine is very expensive. At the same time, the impacts of climate change and escalating conflicts are increasing the need for international support elsewhere as well. The effects of climate change are strongly impacting the lives of the poorest persons with disabilities. The promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities has traditionally been an important goal in Finland's development policy. In the current global situation, it is important to make sure that this priority does not disappear.

Finland's austerity measures are impacting different sectors of its society. There have already been cuts to development funding, and further cuts are expected. The critical atmosphere in the Finnish government towards international development is an additional challenge. Furthermore, there are cuts in the funding of civil society organisations working in the health and social service sectors, including DPF's members. These cutbacks are unavoidably reflected in the international work done by DPF's member organisations. The self-funding requirement of 7,5 per cent in Finnish development funding is a limitation to many organisations. International solidarity wanes as domestic operations are decreased.

However, in the current situation, it is important to have a wider perspective. Climate change is a global challenge. Drought, floods and food shortages drive migration. Global challenges highlight the importance of networking and cooperation across borders. The world belongs to all of us, and together we can achieve more.

Vision

Our vision is a world where the human rights of persons with disabilities are realised and where persons with disabilities work to develop their communities at the local, national and international levels.

Mission

DPF promotes the realisation of the human rights of persons with disabilities. It implements development projects and other types of cooperation with local and national organisations and alliances of persons with disabilities in developing countries (which are qualified for ODA) and in countries where the human rights situation of persons with disabilities is particularly poor. DPF does not operate in countries that are experiencing ongoing conflict and have been attacked by an outside actor. Internal conflicts and their potential escalation do not automatically preclude activities in a country, but the risks must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

At the heart of DPF's work is development cooperation which is based on the specific situations and needs of different disability groups. The special nature and strategic value of programmatic work is based on the specific expertise of each member organisation. Through DPF, the member organisations implement long-term cooperation with their partners which may represent a single or multiple disability groups.

Goals

DPF's goal is to promote the rights, status, and equal opportunities of persons with disabilities to participate in and influence their societies and decision-making, strengthen the disability movements in its countries of operation, and promote synergies between partners. In order to achieve DPF's mission, its member organisations implement DPF's Programme in which development cooperation is the main element and priority. Other areas of the Programme are advocacy, disability mainstreaming, communications and global citizenship education. In addition, DPF may implement other types of cooperation, such as projects, campaigns and programmes – when resources allow it.

DPF works primarily in Least Developed Countries and in countries where the status and human rights situation of persons with disabilities are poor. DPF's work is needs-based. Its partner countries must have a disability organisation or a national disability alliance which has at least the potential to become a successful partner. It is possible to expand to a new country if there are pre-existing, strong connections through a member organisation, a Nordic peer organisation or another trusted actor. Due to environmental and logistical reasons, we aim to concentrate our efforts geographically. Consequently, it may be natural to expand to neighbouring countries, if the other criteria above are fulfilled.

DPF is primarily funded by Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' programme support instrument. DPF intends to gradually expand its funding basis. DPF also aims to inspire other Finnish OPDs to work towards improving the status of persons with disabilities in developing countries.