



**Women Enabled International, Inc.**

*Advocating for the Rights of All Women!*

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## **ENABLING A GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES:**

### **[Global Disabled Women's Rights Advocacy Report](#)**

#### **Conceptual Analysis and Assessment of the Funding Landscape**

**By Stephanie Ortoleva, President & Legal Director, Women Enabled International**

In WEI's mapping report Survey, women with disabilities leaders and organizations worldwide highlighted an urgent need for greater collaboration and funding. Globally there are a few but a growing number of country-based organizations which focus on the rights of women and girls with disabilities, which are composed of and led by women with disabilities ourselves. As the "Enabling a Global Human Rights Movement for Women and Girls with Disabilities" report shows, many of these organizations were established at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, some 57 organizations out of the 90 surveyed were founded after 2000. In many places women with disabilities work in isolation for their rights, or are part of larger disability rights organizations often run by men. In these contexts, many women with disabilities find their issues are marginalized and do not receive sufficient focus, for a wide variety of complex reasons.

Additionally, women's rights organizations rarely include issues concerning women and girls with disabilities in their advocacy agenda and often women with disabilities do not feel welcome in such non-governmental organizations (NGO's), often because activities are not accessible or because some women's rights organizations do not consider issues concerning women with disabilities to be "women's issues," based on a variety of erroneous stereotypes. WEI's research also revealed that the experiences of women and girls with disabilities are frequently overlooked in both state and civil society submissions to United Nations (UN) treaty bodies, to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and to other UN mechanisms.

Despite these realities, fortunately, around the world there are a small but growing number of country-based organizations which focus on the rights of women and girls with disabilities and which are composed of and led by women and girls with disabilities ourselves. In those countries with such organizations, these organizations often struggle from a lack of funding, and as the "Enabling a Global Human Rights Movement for Women and Girls with Disabilities" report discloses, the average budget of a women with disability organization is approximately \$100,850 USD. Furthermore, these organizations also have limited resources on organizational capacity building, fundraising, and fiscal management, as well as minimal access to leadership skills training and technical assistance.

Because women with disabilities often have additional expenses to accommodate their disability, or if they depend on limited and ever-shrinking government benefits, in-country organizations focused on women with disabilities often have no or few paid staff

and depend on volunteers who also have family and work responsibilities other than the goals of the women with disabilities' NGO itself. Moreover, for those women with disabilities who work with larger disability rights organizations which do not support their work on women with disabilities, they may need resources to assist them in their work. Some of these women with disabilities leaders may need support to develop additional leadership skills, public speaking skills, and organizational management skills, especially through peer support and mentoring. And, rarely do women with disabilities' NGOs have funds to pay for travel, domestic or international, to engage with governments and/or international organizations, or to participate in global meetings and conferences.

As the “Enabling a Global Human Rights Movement for Women and Girls with Disabilities” report clearly demonstrates, funding of women with disability rights organizations is severely lacking. The funding gaps cited by disabled women's organizations is further substantiated by several recent studies on global funding for women's rights and disability rights.

**Government Development and Gender Aid:** There is a widening gap in reporting on gender, which has resulted in a “clouded picture of whether donor commitments on gender equality are being met,” according to a recent [report](#) from *Development Initiatives*.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of official development assistance (ODA) coded with a gender marker has declined from its peak in 2009 at 62% to only 50% in 2012, and only 3% of ODA was allocated to projects with a “principal contribution to gender.”

Another recent [report](#) on the anniversary of the UK Global Summit on Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict shows that funding for ending sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) increased from \$93 million in 2013 to \$107 million in 2014, but this increase marked less than a third of the total increase pledged by donors.<sup>2</sup> Despite the rise in funding to address SGBV overall, it continues to be low, and only constituted 0.6% of total humanitarian assistance reported to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s Financial Tracking Service (FTS) in 2013, decreasing slightly to 0.5% in 2014.<sup>3</sup> While this may be underreported to the FTS due to gender mainstreaming efforts,<sup>4</sup> it also shows the need for much better reporting and funding of SGBV for women and girls globally, and especially for women and girls with disabilities, who experience gender-based and sexual violence at two to four times the rate of other women and girls.

As far as funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with an \$11 billion annual budget, people with disabilities in general are very often excluded

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<sup>1</sup> DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, TRENDS IN DONOR SPENDING ON GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT 1 (Sept. 22, 2014), available at [http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Gender-briefing\\_development\\_230914.pdf](http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Gender-briefing_development_230914.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Development Initiatives, *One year on from the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict*, <http://devinit.org/#!/post/one-year-on-from-the-global-summit-to-end-sexual-violence-in-conflict-have-pledges-turned-into-commitments> (June 9, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*



from USAID public solicitations, despite stated policies to the contrary, according to a September 2015 [report](#) supported by members of the Disability Working Group at Interaction.<sup>5</sup> Although the presence and placement of language about people with disabilities in solicitations would have a profound and positive impact on whether or not people with disabilities benefit from resulting USAID-funded programs, this rarely occurs. The study found that only 20 percent of USAID solicitations required that people with disabilities be included throughout the project in the primary elements of the solicitation, and nearly half of the solicitations surveyed made no mention of people with disabilities (or only included disabilities in the standard regulatory language).<sup>6</sup> While USAID statements and official policies now promote a commitment to the inclusion of women and people with disabilities, this study shows that practices or actions are more effective than words at ensuring more inclusive bilateral funding since the requirements for inclusion of people with disabilities in USAID funded projects is, in fact, rarely required, despite USAID asserted official policy.

**Funding from Foundations and Private Donors:** Funding through grants from foundations and private donors for the rights of women and girls and for people with disabilities is also perilously low, as revealed in the new 2015 findings of the International Human Rights Funders Group in collaboration with the Foundation Center's Grant Craft program. Foundation funding focused on the human rights of women and girls increased over the past year from 19% to 26% or \$473 million out of \$1.8 billion for all human rights funding.<sup>7</sup> Of this 26%, the largest share at 32% goes to sexual and reproductive rights, followed by 24% for equality rights and freedom from discrimination, 15% for freedom from violence, and 6% each for general human rights and labor rights.<sup>8</sup> Other rights issues for women and girls, such as civic and political rights, health and well-being rights, environmental and resource rights, or social and cultural rights, each garner only 4 to 2% of the total.<sup>9</sup> Regionally, the largest number of grant funding flows to North America at nearly 35%, followed by Sub Saharan Africa, global programs, Latin America and Mexico, and Asia and the Pacific.<sup>10</sup>

Foundation funding for the rights of people with disabilities increased somewhat overall but its share of all human rights private support has fallen from 4% to 3%, or only \$50.8

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<sup>5</sup> Anne Hayes, et al., *Inclusion of Disability in USAID Solicitations for Funding: White Paper 10* (Sept. 2015), available at <http://www.perkins.org/sites/default/files/perkins-school-usaid-study-white-paper.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, at 11 (Graph 2).

<sup>7</sup> Foundation Center & International Human Rights Funders Group, *Advancing Human Rights: The State of Global Foundation Grantmaking 2015 Findings: Populations: Women and Girls*, <http://humanrights.foundationcenter.org/populations/women/> (last visited Mar. 3, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

million out of \$1.8 billion.<sup>11</sup> Of this meager 3%, the largest percentage at 37% is for equality rights and freedom from discrimination, followed by 19% each for general human rights and health and well-being rights, 10% for social and cultural rights, and 6% for access to justice/equality before the law.<sup>12</sup> Freedom from violence only represents 3% of this paltry 3%,<sup>13</sup> even though women and girls with disabilities are 3 to 4 times more likely to suffer from SGBV than other non-disabled women. Even more glaring, sexual and reproductive rights garner only 1% of the 3% of human rights funding for people with disabilities<sup>14</sup> despite obvious needs in this area. Again, North America receives the lion's share of funding for people with disabilities at nearly 30%, followed by Western Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Russia.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, most women with disability rights organizations do not have budgets sufficient for consideration by many of the larger private foundations funding programs serving women and girls. As is often pointed out in a recent [report](#) by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), the average income for women's rights organizations globally is only \$20,000.<sup>16</sup> In fact, large funders such as the Gates, IKEA, or UN Foundations are funding institutions with budgets similar to their own, such as UN agencies like the World Health Organization and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in addition to large international NGO's like Save the Children according to their websites. Many global corporations, from Nestlé to Johnson & Johnson to Exxon Mobil, are funding major programs focused on women's empowerment, but only 0.3% of corporate donations reaches women's rights organizations directly.<sup>17</sup>

To help address these funding gaps, WEI is working to influence foundations, corporations, and other private donors to devote more funding to disabled women's organizations in order to enable disabled women's organizations to better advocate with national governments and international mechanisms. WEI is working to address both the lack of research and data, as well as the lack of ODA for all women and girls, and especially for women and girls with disabilities who represent 18% of the world's female population.

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<sup>11</sup> Foundation Center & International Human Rights Funders Group, *Advancing Human Rights: The State of Global Foundation Grantmaking 2015 Findings: Populations: People with Disabilities*, <http://humanrights.foundationcenter.org/populations/disabled/> (last visited Mar. 3, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> JULIA MILLER, ANGELIKA ARUTYUNOVA, & CINDY CLARK, *NEW ACTORS, NEW MONEY, NEW CONVERSATIONS: A MAPPING OF RECENT INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS 8* (2013), *available at* <http://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/New%20Actors%20Final%20Designed.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*