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Funding models for EDF National Council Members

Document for learning and discussion

Purpose of this document

To present and overview of the range of different funding situations and mechanisms of EDF national councils, to provide inspiration and learning for others. This report can also serve to strengthen EDF members advocacy towards public authorities for funding.

Questions for the Board

- Are there funding opportunities which are missing or do you have clarifying points to add?
- What more should EDF do to promote and enhance the financial sustainability and strength of the disability movement in Europe?

Background

Organisations of persons with disabilities are underfunded at all levels, many struggle to survive. The opportunities presented by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities to ratify, implement and monitor the CRPD require increased strength, unity and capacity of the disability movement at the local regional, national and international level. The CRPD ensures that the rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed in all policy fields at the national level and in international cooperation.

Article 4.3 of the CRPD makes the obligation of states parties clear:

4.3 In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

This is a huge opportunity for organisations of persons with disabilities. EDF National councils serve to act as a united and diverse voice on the CRPD at the national level. To be diverse and fully accountable to their membership, as well as to fulfil our



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responsibilities under the CRPD, resources are needed. The level of resourcing of National council members of EDF is very varied, in its level, its source, and its sustainability. The UN CRPD EXPERT Committee has on several occasions called on States Parties, in their concluding observations to several recommendations released by the UN CRPD Committee to State Parties on the necessity “*to take measures to set up a structured dialogue with **an independent budget line and sufficient funding**.....for meaningful consultation with and the participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations*”. This recognises the close relationship between Article 4.30, and the need for adequate resourcing of DPOs.

This paper presents an overview of the current situation for EDF national council members in Europe and at the EU level.

Policy background

In addition to the CRPD obligations listed above there are other policy tools to use and adopt to advocate for better public support to the disability movement.

EDF’s Resolution on “[the future of financial sustainability of civil participation of the movement of persons with disabilities in Europe](#)” adopted on its Annual Conference in Zagreb, May 2014, which requests of the EU states:

- Ensure that funding mechanisms such as national civil society participation programmes, lottery funds for good causes, corporate and private contributions, are preserved and expanded for social inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- Ensure that the existing funding mechanisms are not used for fiscal consolidation of general State budgets;
- Funding to representative organisation of persons with disabilities should not hinder their autonomy, and their inclusion in all related decision-making processes as per UN CRPD and disability movement’s motto “Nothing About Us Without Us”;
- fund advocacy activities of representative organisations of persons with disabilities in order to ensure that sound policies can be implemented based on acceptance of the disability movement;
- Support national, regional and local organisations of persons with disabilities representing and providing them with their services in the community;
- Secure adequate funding for and encourage national, regional and local organisations of persons with disabilities to be formed and fulfil their mission



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of connecting, promoting and representing the interests of persons with disabilities.

Current resourcing situation in Europe- trends and good practices

This information was collected from EDF national councils in 2016, and can be complimented and expanded during the Board discussion. National councils that gave input included: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Greece, Germany, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the Netherlands. The European level has also been included. Thanks to Dovile Juodkaitė from the Lithuanian National Council for raising this issue and helping to analyse the responses.

The income sources of national councils include:

1. State budget/ public subsidies

This is the most common form of support. The percentage can be from 0% to 95 or 100% of the overall budget. Eg in the case of the Czech national council this is 40% of the budget, in Austria and at the European level for EDF it is around 80% of the funding, and in the Netherlands 95%.

Lithuanian disability forum received 5-10% of the budget from the National program on the integration of persons with disabilities (funding is based on annual project basis, and funding comes only in March).

In certain cases, considered very positive practice this financing is annual and predictable covering the core running costs of the work of the national umbrella body- national council member of EDF. (Belgium, Romania are examples)

The Swedish parliament decides on the financing allocated to a range of Swedish DPOs. Annual public funding is guaranteed through legal acts and parliamentary decisions in some cases (Cyprus, Romania). In the Netherlands funding framework is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. Every other three/four years, the framework is evaluated and redefined, then the The ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports prepares a new proposal and the Minister sends this to our parliament for approval. Th rough this system, there are three umbrella organisations that receive funding: The National Patients Organisation, The Platform for Persons with Psychosocial Problems, and Ieder(in). Also, many member organisations of these umbrella organisations and some other kinds of organisations receive funding. Every year, Ieder'in makes a workplan, which we submit to the Ministry for budget approval.



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In the case of the EU the public funding to DPOs is managed by DG EMPL who, based on a competitive call for proposals selected 6 organisations to be considered for a three year partnership, for core grants. Each year another competitive call for proposals is issued for these organisations who already have a framework partnership agreement. Each organisation contributed 20% co-financing. (this is the same across all civil society support grants)

2. State mandated functions

In the case of Denmark, DPOD is responsible for the provision/management of parking cards and also the Disability Card. National lotteries (funding a range of civil society organisations, or with designated funding for DPOs)

This is also a relatively common source of DPO funding. EDF members in a range of countries are funded through lotteries, (Denmark, Slovenia, Croatia) but the basis of the funding is different in each case. In the case of Spain, a DPO-ONCE, is both the Association of the Blind and the owner of the lottery. Estonian DPOs are also receiving funding from special Fund- Estonian Fund for People with Disabilities, that is administered by the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People. The funding is organised on a project based approach, but in a relatively stable way, that each year consolidated activities and needs of all our members are put together within the joint application for Gambling Taxation Board.

In the case of Croatia, the **Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (SOIH)** receive funding through a competitive call for proposals, competing with other CSOs. Other disability related funding through the lottery in Croatia includes public funding through ministries of personal assistance and teaching assistance. Therefore the lottery funding is used to provide support to persons with disabilities in a range of ways. However, the funding to SOIH for advocacy is decreasing alarmingly, reducing their ability to carry out their work.

3. Trades Union funding

This is not common, but NCDP in Greece reports this.

4. Project based funding

This is a very common form of funding and represents the only significant income for some National councils. In the case of Slovakia, there are only two projects approved practically yearly. One supports the internet journal (about 8000 Eur per year) and the other to support membership in EDF and advocacy in the field of legislation (about 10.000 Eur per year). This does not allow for staffing throughout the year.



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5. Membership fees

Many National councils receive membership fees and this is part of their funding mix. For EDF is constitutes an important source of co-financing for the EU grant (about 33% of our co financing requirement). In many cases due to the reality of the poorly resourced disability movement, membership fees paid to national councils are at a symbolic level.

6. Participation fund for DPOs

This is a new means of DPOs financing emerging in the Disability Equality Law adopted in Germany in 2016. It does not constitute a running cost grant, but the participation funds are based on projects proposed by the ministry. Decisions on the allocation of funds are taken in collaboration with DPOs.

7. Subsidies for employment of persons with disabilities

This is reported as a source of income for the Swedish Disability Forum and the Austrian Disability Forum.

8. Funding from Political Parties

In 2017 SUSTENTO the Latvian national council will receive funding from a combination of the main political parties.

9. Staff seconded from members

In the case of the EDFs French national council member, one of their members seconds staff part-time who contribute the work of CFHE. This secondment is combined with state subsidies and membership fees to constitute the resource base.

Specific additional support to DPOs reported:

The Belgian government support the presence of the Belgian Disability Forum at the annual conference of states parties.

Issues and Trends

- Some national councils receive no public funding whatsoever and rely on ad hoc projects and various grants or membership, which is often a nominal ammount(eg, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Hungary, Italy). This means they are not in a position to have a secretariat and rely on voluntary work of their members to support the umbrellla DPO functioning
- Most EDF members are concerned about increasing pressure on their budgets and cuts related to overall changes in government priorities, austerity, etc. In



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Croatia in 2016 lottery funding to DPOs resulted in 30% budget decreases, staff layoffs and deep uncertainty.

Good practices

- The financing in Slovenia and Macedonia have adopted **legal Acts** that define the legal definition of the Organization of persons with disabilities and grant the right of financing the core activities necessary for advocacy of the UNCRPD. The financing of the DPO umbrella body in Romania was also included in the law. The new Disability Equality law in Germany included a participation fund for DPOs. While this does not include core funds the decisions on financing participation will be made in collaboration with DPOs.
- Some organisations are managing to **mix and combine their sources of financing**- Such as NCDP in Greece- with small public subsidy combined with project funding including ESF- however, they are not satisfied that this constitutes a sustainable reliable financing basis. The Swedish disability forum also has a wide range of income streams including public funding, membership fees, consultancy services, project funding and state subsidies supporting employment of persons with disabilities . DPOD also reports four sources of income: from surplus from the national lottery (managed by the Parliament), public service (parking card and mobility card) and for administration of overseas development funds for DPOs to work in the global south.
- In addition, in the case of Sweden, the public agency on participation funds DPOs for their work on standardisation, a situation which is quite unique and allows meaningful participation of representative organisations of persons with disabilities on equal footing with other stakeholders in such a complex and increasingly important domain.