

Project-based Grant Facilities

A Learning Review based a study of grant facilities supported by the Danish Disability Fund



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Executive Summary:

Background to thematic learning review on the use of project based grants and loans

In recent years, Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD) has noticed an increase in the use of **project-based grants (and loan) facilities** in projects funded through the Danish Disability Fund. The grants and loan facilities are seen by applicants as a flexible way to support the organisational development of partners in the Global South and build their capacity to independently manage funds and engage local branches and/or members in locally defined activities based on local needs and demands.

The overall purpose of the Thematic and Learning Review is to deepen the understanding of the role and effect of these funding facilities through an experience-based description and assessment of different types of project-based grants and loan facilities implemented by DPODs member organisations and their partners.

The review is primarily based on three case studies in Uganda (2) and Sierra Leone (1). These case studies cover projects implemented by DHF and DBS in collaboration with their partners. The projects differ greatly in size as do the grant and loan facilities. The report provides an outline the institutional set-up of the three facilities and their key features which show clear differences as well as the similarities in the approach to grantmaking. However, a key commonality in the facilities studied by the review is the use of a **participatory grantmaking** model, where the decision-making authority is delegated to the local partners in the Global South.

The participatory grantmaking is noted to form part of a new trend where the users of the facility are placed at the center of grant-making with the power to decide who and what to fund. As such the approach is an alternative to the traditional top-down funding mechanisms where funding decisions are made by paid professionals or donors, rather than by people directly affected by the decisions.

Overall, the review concludes that the participatory approach to grantmaking (practiced in all three subgrant facilities) constitutes a **best practice model** for stimulating local ownership, local leadership and accountability in a project.

Based on the detailed study of:

- the **engine room** of the grant-making mechanisms (i.e. the machinery behind the grant management and grant-making process),
- the **results** achieved relative to the expected project outcomes, the documentation of results and the sustainability of the results and the facility itself,
- as well as the overall **strategic objectives** of the grant facilities and their role in relation to strengthening the partners in the Global South and promoting ownership and local leadership,

the review has come to understand more about the role and effect of project-based funding facilities as well as their strengths and weakness.

The engine room

As for the engine rooms of the grantmaking machineries studied in Uganda and Sierra Leone we have seen that:

- They are pieced together slightly differently relatively to the purpose and size of the facility.

- The facilities are generally well managed with clear guidelines describing the purpose and priorities of the facility, the grant/loan modalities, the application process, and the terms and conditions for the grants/loans.
- Participatory grant-making require attention to a) the operating procedures for grant/loan management and grant-making, and b) the grant-makers capacity to allocate grants/loans transparently and with a high degree of upwards as well as downwards accountability.
- None of the grantmaking mechanisms are based on detailed written descriptions of the organization and procedures for grant-making. This poses a number of risks, including the risk of insufficient checks and balances in the organizational setup and in the processing of applications, as well as a lack of common references in case of uncertainty or disagreement about procedures. Moreover, the limited descriptions of the set-up and procedures for grant-making leaves a very tenuous basis for the DPOD grant committee to assess the robustness of the project-based funding facility.
- The most effective grant/loan machineries are the ones accompanied by close support, training and feedback mechanisms. Thus, the more thoroughly trained and mentored, the better stewards the grant-managers and grant-makers are of the funds in the grant/loan facility and the better results.

At the level of results, we have seen that:

- The sub-granting facilities allow for flexibility in the planning of project activities and promote a demand driven approach within a project framework, meanwhile contributing to results relevant to the projects.
- The opportunity of having a grant/loan facility contained within a project allows partners to use the facility and the process of grant-making as a praxis-oriented "laboratory" to build capacity and deliver results within organizational development and livelihood.
- There are certain challenges in determining the magnitude of the results of the various grant/loan facilities at the outcome level.
- Not all sub-granting facilities are equally strategic in using capacity building elements to support the results of the grants/loans, but the more integrated the facility is with other project components (e.g. capacity assessments and trainings) the more effective and sustainable the results of the grants/loans.

At the strategic level we have seen that:

- The participatory grantmaking model is strategically contributing to shifting power and promoting agency and local leadership. Contributions which are aligned with the international agenda on localization as well as the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation.
- Participatory grantmaking appears to encourage the partners agency, ownership of activities and results, and local leadership - especially when supported by capacity building interventions, as well as to nurture the sense of accountability and diligence in the management of funds.

- Although not all grant/loan facilities have fully developed checks and balances, and despite some few examples of mismanagement/poor administration of funds both in Uganda and Sierra Leone, there is no indication that the funds managed in the project-based funding facilities are more exposed to abuse - rather the opposite.
- The only major concern is for grant-managers/grant-makers to be cautious that the funding faculty does not end up as a service for a few members, but as a strategic service that benefits the many.

The findings/lessons learned from the review has led to a recommendation to consider actively promoting the use of project-based funding facilities in the Danish Disability fund as a means for nurturing local leadership as well as agency, ownership, and accountability structures in the OPDs in the Global South, while at the same time it is ensured that their capacity – including their strategic capacity – to manage such funding facilities is developed.

1. Background and Introduction

It has become increasingly popular to make use of project-based grants (and loan) facilities in projects funded through the Danish Disability Fund, but little is known about how these decentralized funding facilities are handled and how effective they are in contributing to the achievement of the intended project goals and outcomes.

The overall purpose of the Thematic and Learning Review is to deepen the understanding of the role and effect of the different types of funding facilities used by DPODs member organisations and their partners.

The review report seeks to provide an experience-based description and assessment of the current use of project-based funding facilities, partly as inspiration for Danish disability organizations and others who use or consider making use of project-based grant facilities, and partly as guidance for DPODs advisers and the grants committee members within the Danish Disability Fund.

The review team wishes to express its deepest gratitude to the Danish organizations involved, as well as to the country office and partners in Uganda and Sierra Leone, who have generously organized the country visits and shared their experiences, and to the partners in Ghana and Nepal who have willingly answered the questionnaire. In short, thanks to everyone involved for providing loads of food for thought for this report.

Brief about project-based funding facilities

The purpose of the Danish Disability Fund is to support Danish disability organizations' cooperation with partners in the Global South in order to strengthen how the disability movement is organized, thus contributing to lasting positive changes in living conditions, participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The project-based funding facilities financed through the Danish Disability Fund are often aimed at supporting the organisational development of partners in the Global South and their ability to manage funds and engage local branches and/or members in locally defined activities, including livelihood activities.

In general, the facilities are perceived to allow for flexibility in the planning of project activities and promote a more demand driven approach, which contribute to building the organisational capacity of the partners and their decision-making bodies at headquarter and branch level.

Prototypes of project-based funding facilities

Project-based grant and loan facilities are basically sub-granting schemes made available for local partners to manage within a more defined framework. There are several different types of grant and loan facilities, but the main prototypes identified are:

Trust funds: A trust fund is designed to hold and manage assets on behalf of someone – a grantor - who has put the funds into the trust. The grantor sets the terms for how the fund is held and distributed, and a third party, a trustee, manages the fund and executes its directives, while the beneficiaries (grantees) receive grants from the trust fund with no requirement for repayment.

Revolving (loan) funds: A revolving fund is a fund that remains available to finance activities/operations, because the recipients/loan takers (groups /



organisations / individuals) replenish the fund by repaying money used from the account. Revolving funds are used to support mainly but not exclusively in livelihood /IGA activities.

Seed grants / seed money: Seed grants typically support the early stages of projects or activities that have potential for broader community impact. Thus, seed funding is used to kickstart new or innovative ideas/concepts, small-scale income generation activities, etc. which can be scaled at a later stage. The seed grants are usually relatively small and without repayment requirements. Seed grants can be managed as a Trust Fund.

Note: The grant facilities used by DPODs member organisations are not one-on-one versions of the above prototypes, but customized versions that take account of local needs and possibilities.

2. Scope and overall methodology

The project-based funding facilities have often integrated into projects carried out by the **Danish Association of Persons with Physical Disability (DHF)** and the **Danish Association of the Blind (DAB)**. These two organizations have therefore been asked to select the primary cases for the review.

As for **DHF** the organisation has made a principal decision that a substantial part of its project funds must be managed by the partners themselves¹. Therefore, DHF makes active use of sub-granting in their project collaboration in Latin America (Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala), Uganda and Vietnam. The grant facilities are thus part of DHF's strategic approach to organizational development and cooperation at branch and head office level. In this review, DHF has provided cases from two projects in Uganda.

Social Grants and Loan Schemes form part of **DAB's** projects in many of its 11 partner countries in Africa and Asia. The social grants are aimed at strengthening the partner's membership engagement at branch or sub-branch level and empowering members². In recent years DAB has introduced a loan scheme based on a demand from its partners. The loans are provided to individuals in groups to support individual initiative and livelihood. In this review DAB has provided a case from Sierra Leone.

In addition to the country cases studies, a desk study of two projects, one by **Lev - Inclusion Denmark** and **Inclusion Ghana** (in Ghana)³ and one by **DAB** and **Nepal Association of the Blind** (in Nepal)⁴, has supplied a number of "good practice cases" and contributed to put into perspective some of the findings and experiences gained from the three primary project-based grant/loan facilities.

The country case studies are introduced in section 3.

¹ In DHF's work in Latin America, for example, 60% of all project funds are allocated to partners to facilitate local ownership of interventions.

² Empowerment includes economic empowerment through income generating activities.

³ Promoting Inclusion Ghana Sustainability from District to Organisational Level (2020 – 2023). The project includes a small-scale grant facility (trust fund) for income generating activities.

⁴ Empowerment and inclusion of BPS persons in Nepal (2021 – 2024). The project includes a small-scale grant facility (seed funding) for group-based income generating activities.

The different project-based grant/loan facilities have been assessed at different levels, including at:

The engine room: To describe the grant-making mechanism or machinery behind the grant management and grant-making process.

The results level: To study the implementation of grants/loans, the results relative to the set project outcomes and the documentation of results as well as the sustainability of the results and the facility itself.

The strategic level: To understand the overall strategic objective(s) of the grant facility and its role in relation to strengthening the partners in the Global South and promoting ownership and local leadership.

A cross-cutting point of attention for the review is the assumptions on which the project-based grant facilities are based, and to what extent these assumptions hold true.

The review is based on a combination of desk review, interviews, country cases studies, questionnaires and a reflection process. The review is supported by a working group consisting of DPOD members with experience with and/or interest in making use of project-based grants facilities. The methodology applied in the country cases studies is explorative and based on a thorough reading of key project documents and meetings/interviews with DHF staff at the country office in Kampala (grant manager), partner OPDs in Uganda and Sierra Leone (some of these also grant managers), grantees (i.e. grant/loan recipients), and the grantors of the grants/loans (i.e. members of different vetting committees). All this to understand the selected grant facilities, and to draw significant learning from these.

Findings from the document review, interviews and country cases studies have been triangulated at different levels in the involved organisations and discussed in debriefings (Uganda, Sierra Leone and Denmark). Moreover, the findings have been discussed during joint reflection meetings (one prior to the preparation of the report and two after the draft report).

A detailed description of the methodology can be found in the Inception Note, and the detailed content of country studies is reflected in the programmes of the two country visits (Annex 2 and 3).

3. The two country case studies

The experiences presented in the review are primarily based on the three case studies in Uganda and Sierra Leone.

In Uganda, DHF and its partners are currently implementing two projects containing sub-granting facilities:

1. **The Capacity Building of Emerging DPOs, Phase II (CBED II)** which is a four-year project (2021 – 2025) targeting 8 organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

The project's grant facility is a large multi-partner facility designed to meet the diverse needs of the partner's (and their local clusters) within organizational development, member mobilization and engagement as well as awareness raising and lobbying. The grants from the grant facility are aimed at

supporting local ownership and a “learning by doing” approach to proposal writing, project management and financial accountability. DHF’s Kampala office in Uganda is managing and monitoring the facility.

2. **The Strategic Alliances Project, Phase II (SAAP II)** which is a three-year project (2021 – 2024) implemented by Uganda National Action for Physical Disability (UNAPD) in support of physical accessibility, disability sports and secure livelihoods for persons with disabilities in Uganda.

The project’s grant facility is a small-scale trust fund for grassroots interventions. The aim is to gather, analyze and document best practices within accessibility, sports and livelihoods for persons with disability in order to pave the way for their inclusion into mainstream (governmental, private and civil society) programs. The trust fund is managed by UNAPD with advice and support from DHF’s Kampala office.

In Sierra Leone, DAB and its partner have recently completed a project containing a sub-granting facility:

1. **The Reboot project (Rebooted)**⁵ which is a three-year project (2019 – 2022) aimed at building capacity and consolidating strong democratic practices to enable Sierra Leone Association of the Blind (SLAB) to advocate for members' interests and rights.

Originally, the purpose of the small grant facility was to provide seed grants to groups to support the start-up of small-scale income generating activities (IGAs). Half of the surplus from the group activity should be allocated the group's members, while the other half should be returned to the local branch, thus enhancing livelihood of members as well as the capacity of their local branches. Upon request from members the social grant scheme has been transformed into a revolving loan scheme where members can take a group loan and divide it into individual shares and start individual small-scale IGAs. The loans are interest free and must be paid back in full to the local branch.

4. The three grant/loan facilities

The review has explored the three project-based grant / loan facilities mentioned in the section above. The following is a brief and graphic outline of the institutional set-up of the three facilities and their key features. This section is supported by a more detailed description of the facilities in section 6.

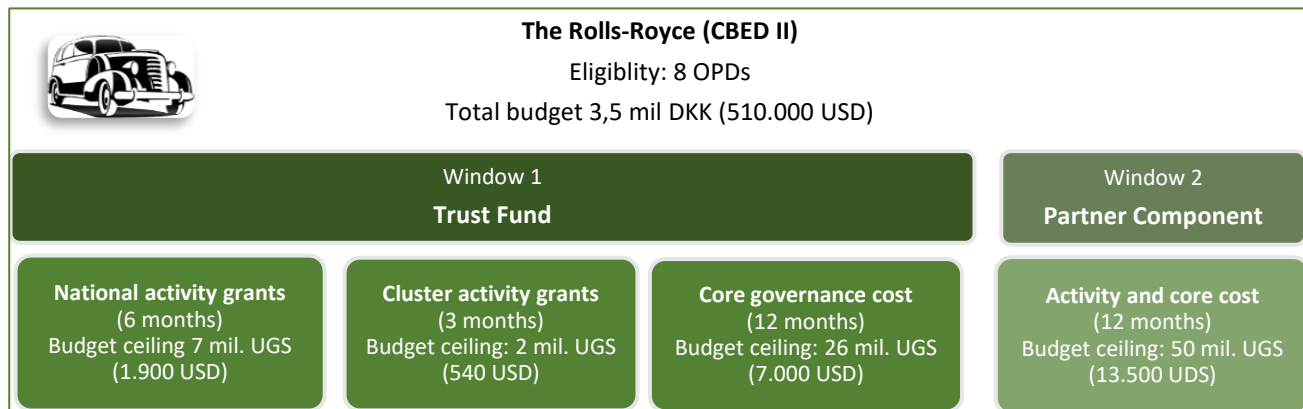
4.1 The Rolls-Royce of grant facilities

The CBED II project⁶ in Uganda includes a large multi-partner, dual-window grant facility with multiple grant modalities. The grant facility serves an "educational / capacity building" purpose, using a practice-oriented approach to building the capacity of the involved OPDs to develop projects, apply for funds and be responsible for project and financial management and reporting.

⁵ The project follows a one-year pilot phase (2018) and is soon to be continued in the SLAB Amplified project (2023 – 2025) which has been granted but not yet implemented.

⁶ The total project budget is 10.890.515 DKK.

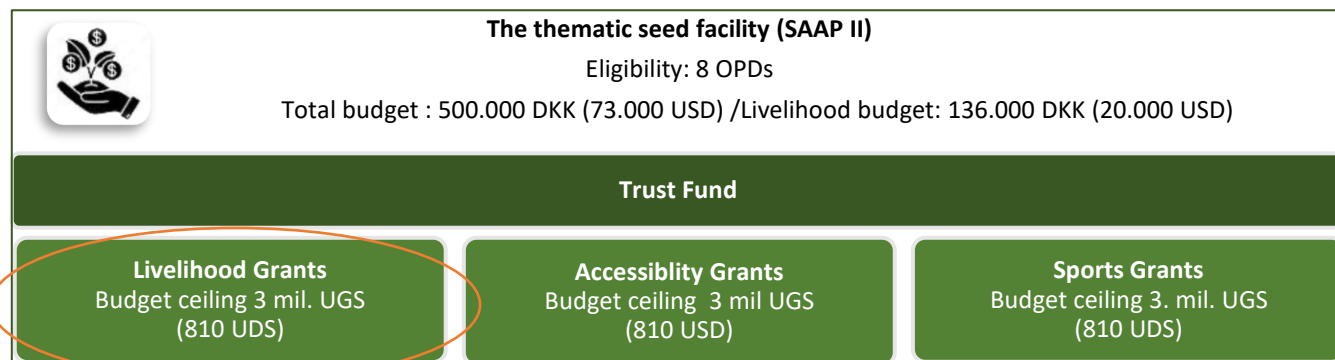
The grant facility is linked strategically (and conditionally) to other project components, including in particular a training and a mentoring component. The size and complexity of the facility makes it the “**Rolls-Royce**” among the grant facilities explored in the review⁷.



4.2 The thematic seed facility

The SAAP-project⁸ in Uganda has a smaller multi-partner grant facility supporting 1) accessibility, 2) sports and 3) livelihoods. The grants are aimed at testing different approaches/methods within the three thematic areas and developing best practices models/cases. Each area is linked to a thematic caucus that acts as a thinktank providing input to UNAPD's and the member OPD's advocacy efforts on inclusion of PwDs.

The thematic focus and the strategic use of grants to test and kick-start inclusion of PwDs makes it a **thematic seed facility**. The review has studied the livelihood modality.




⁷ The Partner Component (window 2) is reserved for the OPDs that have reached a certain competence level, while the Core Governance Cost (window 1) is reserved for other OPDs. Grants from the Partner Component and Core Governance Cost covers activities at HQ level.

⁸ The total project budget is 4.308.696 DKK.

4.3 The single-string facility

In Sierra Leone, **the Reboot project**⁹ includes a small-scale single-partner Loan Scheme. The facility is titled a **single-string loan facility** as it serves only one organization (SLAB) and its local branches. Beyond supporting the start-up of IGAs, the Loan Scheme has as its objective to increase SLAB’s capacity to organize, plan, implement and manage activities at the local level, and to give members the opportunity to manage and report on funds in a responsible, transparent and accountable way.

	The single-string loan facility (Reboot) Eligibility: 1 OPD, 16 branches Total budget for the Social Grants and Loan Scheme: 192.000 DKK (28.000 USD)
	Loan Scheme
	Loans Budget ceiling per group loan: 2.500.000 Le. (120 USD)

4.4 Key features of the three facilities

The following is a matrix comparing key features in the three grant/loan facilities:

Grant Facility:	Rolls Royce	Thematic seed facility	Single-string loan facility
Size / budget:	Total: 510.000 USD Per grant: 540 – 13.500 USD	Total: 73.000 USD Per seed grant: 810 UDS	Total 28.000 USD Per loan: 120 USD
Purpose of grant:	OD (national): to develop organizational capacity, strengthen national activities and improve sustainability of the involved OPDs, OD (local): to develop organizational capacity and strengthen local activities and membership engagement.	IGA: to support members cooperative livelihood activities. OD: to strengthen local activities and membership engagement. Advocacy: to develop, test and document good practice for evidence-based advocacy.	IGA: to improve livelihood of individual members. OD: to strengthen local activities and membership engagement (long-term goal).
Target group	8 national level OPDs and their local clusters ¹¹ .	Members of UNAPD’s Livelihood Caucus (8 national OPDs ¹²) who implement the grants in selected local branches .	SLAB members in 16 chiefdom branches (4 districts).
Components at OPD level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity assessment Trainings Grantmaking National membership activities / advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grantmaking Monitoring (including peer-monitoring and learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring

⁹ The total project budget is 3.799.275 DKK.

¹⁰ An organizational capacity assessment determines which window the involved organizations can apply for, and only those with solid organizational capacity can apply for the Partner component.

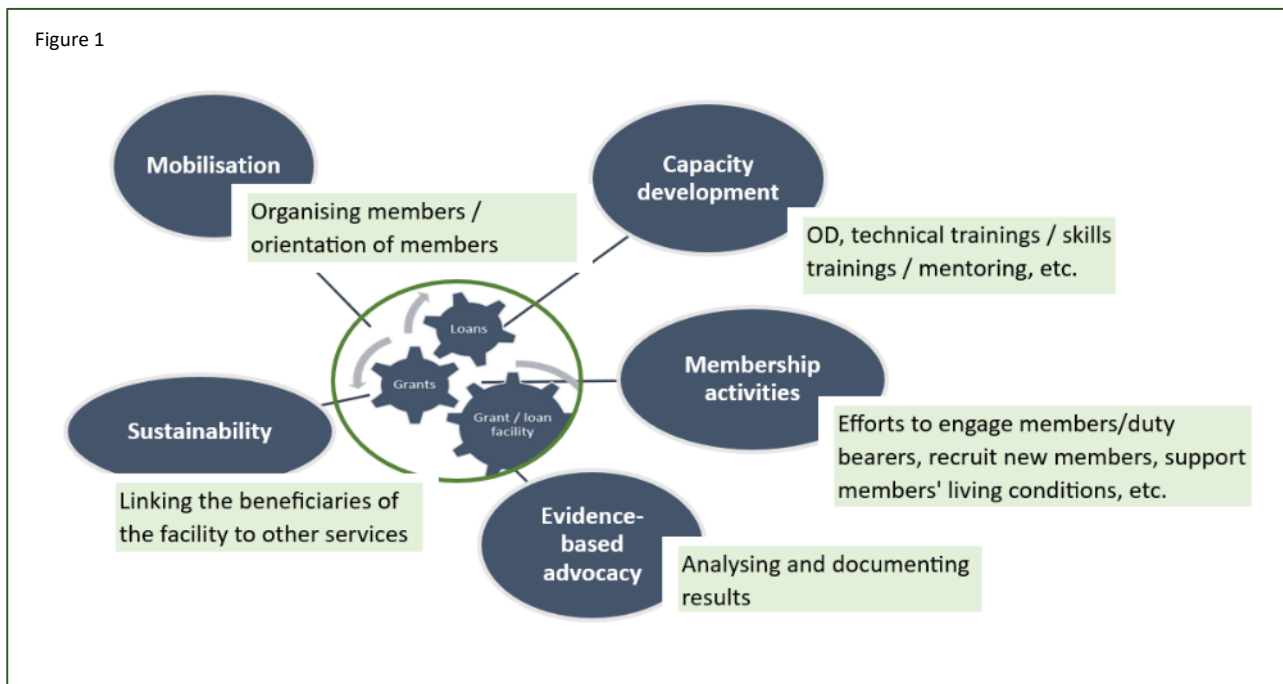
¹¹ These are a generation of newer, smaller and emerging OPDs representing disabilities which are not widely known and recognized in the Ugandan society nor well represented in the Ugandan disability movement. These are organizations representing persons with albinism, arthritis, brain damage, cerebral palsy, sickle cell, spinal injuries as well as disabled persons living with HIV/AIDS.

¹² NUDIPU (umbrella), NUWODU (women’s umbrella), UNAD (deaf), UNAB (blind), UNAC (cerebral palsy), MHU (mental health), UPPID (intellectual disability), ESAU (epilepsy).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Monitoring 		
Components at local / beneficiary level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Local membership activities / advocacy • Mentoring from “mother” OPDs • Monitoring • Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IGA • Best-practice documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantmaking (loans) • IGA • Loan repayment
Grant/loan managers	DHF country office	UNAPD	SLAB (national, district and branch level)
Grantors/grant-makers	Steering committee (SC) consisting of 16 representatives (a board and a staff member) from the involved OPDs.	Vetting committee (VC) consisting of 3 selected Caucus members and a representative from the DHF country office.	16 Project Management Committees (PMC) nominates loan-applications for approval in the Chiefdom Executive Committee. The PMCs consists of 7 persons, including a representative from the District Executive Committee.
Role of the partner OPD(s) – level of control	<p>The OPDs are members of the SC which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decides on strategic directions and guidelines for the Trust Fund, as well as the focus for trainings and joint activities. • Makes decisions about grants. • Continuously adapts the key documents used in grantmaking (application form, vetting format/scoring sheets, reporting formats). <p>Level of control: medium</p>	<p>UNAPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund management (develops/revises guidelines and application formats, manages accountability) • Monitors together with the involved OPDs. • Collects, analyze and documents best practice cases together with the involved OPDs. <p>Level of control: high</p>	<p>SLAB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decides on the terms and conditions for loans. • Manages and monitors the loan fund. <p>The chiefdom branches are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant-makers and governing the repayment scheme together with District Executive Committee. <p>Level of control: high</p>
Role of Danish member org. – level of control	<p>DHF/DHF country office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops guidelines and manages the Trust Fund. • Conducts trainings, monitoring, and provides technical assistance from pre-granting over implementation to follow-up. • Does technical review of applications prior to forwarding these to the SC for decision. <p>Level of control: high</p>	<p>The DHF country office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is represented in the Vetting Committee. • Is consulted on and approves guidelines and changes in guidelines. <p>Level of control: medium</p>	<p>DBS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a model for a grants/loan facility (which is adapted to the partners needs and the context). • Approves the guidelines developed by SLAB. • Provides technical sparring on the application process and was involved in the screening the first round of loan applications. <p>Level of control: low/medium</p>

The above description shows that the three project-based grant/loan facilities are of different sizes and with different institutional structures. Based on the three facilities, however, a **prototype** can be developed that describes the possible project-supporting elements that can be contained in a grant/loan facility (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1



5. Understanding the approach to grantmaking.

There are clear differences as well as the similarities in the approach to grantmaking in the three grant/loan facilities described in the section above. However, a key commonality in all the facilities is the use of a **participatory grantmaking** model, where the decision-making authority is delegated to the local partners in the Global South. An approach that shifts the decision-making power and brings potential added value for the partners and the projects.

5.1 Brief about participatory grantmaking

Participatory grantmaking is characterized by delegating the grantmaking power to the users of the facility. In practice, it means placing the partner OPDs at the center of grant-making by giving them the power to decide who and what to fund.

The participatory grant-making forms part of a new trend where sub-granting is used to empower the users of the grant/loan facility to vet applications and take leadership in deciding what to support¹³.

Participatory grant-making is, as a deliberate and strategic approach, a relatively new approach mainly used by Philanthropic Foundations. It is an alternative to the traditional top-down funding mechanisms where funding decisions are made by paid professionals or donors, rather than by people directly affected by the decisions. In the participatory grant-making the principle of arm's-length between a grantor and a grantee is replaced with direct involvement of the grantees in the grantmaking process whereby they get an opportunity to increase their leadership skills, build relationships with others, and ultimately, deepen their sense of agency to determine how the funds should be prioritized.

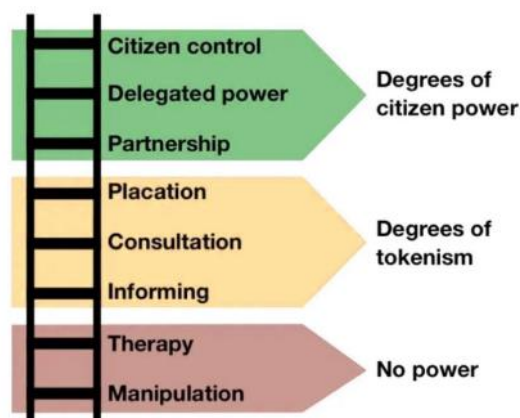
In some cases, the grant-making mechanisms are completely peer-led, meaning that all decisions are made by representatives of the community eligible for support, including determining the guidelines for the grant/loan facility. This is close to being the cases for the Reboot loan facility which has been created at the

¹³ Deciding Together Shifting Power and Resources through Participatory, Grantcraft 2018

request of the Sierra Leonean partner. The partner OPD manages and monitors the loan fund and decides on the terms and conditions for loans (within a framework defined by the Danish partner), while the chiefdom branches are grant-makers and governing the repayment scheme. Other grant-making mechanisms are peer-led when it comes to actual grantmaking, but international partners/donors play a collaborative role in managing the facility. This applies for example to the Rolls Royce facility in Uganda which is managed by the Danish country office. Yet others have a certain proportion of peers involved in granting together with international partners, back donors and/or technical experts. This applies to the Thematic Seed facility in Uganda where representatives from the Danish country office are involved in the Vetting Committees.

Overall, the three grant/loan facilities examined in the learning review are assessed as belonging to the top level of Arnsteins Ladder of citizen participation, which contains different degrees of actual participation and citizen power¹⁴. Yet, the facilities use different models for participatory grant-making and have delegated responsibilities and autonomy differently, including the involvement of peers, but each model involves:

- **A participatory decision-making body, and**
- **Guidelines, application formats, calls for applications and criteria for granting which are influenced by the active involvement of the grantees as grant-makers¹⁵.**



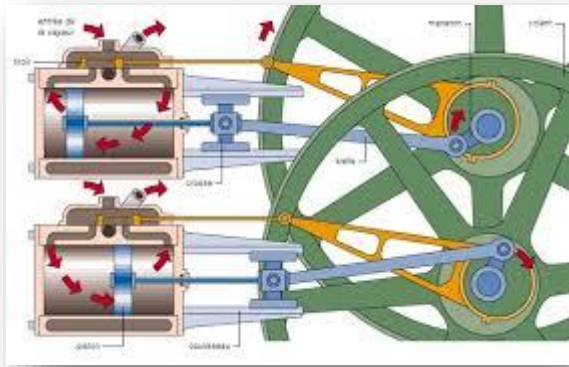
Thus, the participatory grant-making (though not labeled as such in the projects granted by the Disability Fund) turns out to be a key approach applied in the three grant/loan facilities examined by the review.

6. The engine room: Understanding the grantmaking machine

Having concluded that all grant/loan facilities involve participatory grantmaking, we will now take a closer look at the engine room of the grantmaking mechanism – the very machinery behind the grant management and grant-/loan-making process. In order to understand this mechanism, it can be helpful to consider it as a machine.

¹⁴ Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969.

¹⁵ The level of participation in defining the criteria for granting differs. In the Rolls Royce facility, for example, the guidelines have been drafted by the Danish country office while the Steering Committee members take active part in continuously adapting the key documents used by the grant-makers (e.g. the project application form, the vetting format/scoring sheets and reporting formats). In the loan facility the partner OPD has been responsible for rewriting the guidelines to comply with its own request to convert a Grant Scheme into a Loan Scheme.



A **machine** is characterized by being a coherent whole of **individual parts**. A well-functioning machine is a machine where the parts are properly **assembled**, and regularly **applied oil, calibrated and maintained** in order to serve its purpose.

The grantmaking machine consists of different parts, including for example, guidelines describing purpose, priority and the application process; application and reporting forms; a grant/vetting system and procedures with call for proposals, vetting criteria, checks and balances, complaints mechanisms etc. First of all, these individual parts must be

well assembled for the grant facility to function, subsequently the continued functionality depends on the ‘oil’ it gets to operate, for example, preparation of managers and grant-makers, training of grant / loan applicants, introduction of feed-back and monitoring mechanism, etc. Finally, to maintain the functionality of the grant facility, the individual parts must be regularly serviced and calibrated, for example by frequent review and adjustment of guidelines, formats, procedures and practices to keep the grant facility alive and relevant.

As for composition of parts, the machinery of three grant facilities is pieced together slightly differently relatively to the purpose and size of the facility. All three facilities have clear guidelines describing the purpose and priorities of the grant/loan facility, the grant/loan modalities, the application process and the terms and conditions for the grants/loans. The facilities also have calls for proposals¹⁶, and application and reporting forms, but the actual description of the entire machinery is limited. Only the loan facility in Sierra Leone has some description of the loan machinery, including the organizational setup and how/by who the loans are granted and managed (see the box below).

Brief on the organisational setup of SLABs Loan scheme:

“A Project Management Committee (PMC) shall be established in each chiefdom ... The PMCs shall consist of seven members gender balanced mainly selected among the chiefdom executives. A district leader either resident or in close proximity of the chiefdom will be part of the respective PMCs to strengthen the loans selection process at the chiefdom level and ensure loan repayment compliance.

The process starts with an oral expression of interest (EOI) by the potential loan takers through the groups to the PMC, ... The EOI approval process will involve a background check on group members by the PMC or a PMC assigned village/town/branch focal person. This may include interviews with key informants such as BPS non-loan applications, BPS loan applicants themselves, family members and local authorities. The nomination will be based on clear selection criteria including 1) the viability of the activity proposed, and 2) the level of interest and commitment, and family support.

Loans will be disbursed by the PMC at the regular monthly branch meeting. Monitoring and collection of repayment will be managed by a PMC assigned member residing in close proximity of the chiefdom; or a PMC assigned village branch focal person”.

¹⁶ The calls for proposals are not on fixed dates as in the more traditional grantmaking machines but determined for example by the project timeline or availability of funds (the latter applies to the revolving loan scheme).

Given that the engine room makes up the core of the project-based grant/loan facilities funded by the Disability Fund, it is remarkable how poorly they are described. While the strategic relevance of the grant/loan facilities is generally well-argued in the applications to the Disability Fund, it is much less evident from these applications how the grantmaking machineries are pieced together, managed and monitored¹⁷. This observation is confirmed by a representative of DPOD's grant-making structure¹⁸, who states that the sub-granting facilities are often granted in good faith, as the applications to the Disability Fund leave the committee in doubt about the robustness of the organizational setup to manage the grants/loans applied for.

On the ground, however, the country case studies show that the different parts of the grantmaking machineries generally *are* well-assembled and that the different “machines” in fact *are* fairly robust in the management of the grants/loans. This particular finding must be understood in the context of the Danish organizations (DHF/DAB) and their partners' long-term experience with participatory grant-making. Thus, it stands clear that the creation of a well-functioning and robust grant/loan machinery - where the grant-makers perform their roles and responsibilities diligently - is a gradual process which require close and continuous attention.

In Uganda, the operation of the two grant facilities (especially the Rolls-Royce facility) is evidently optimized through means of systematic trainings of grant-makers and grantees (made available as part of the project) as well as thorough feed-back/mentoring and monitoring mechanisms. Based on interviews with the various stakeholders in the grant facility¹⁹, the organizational setup for the grant facility in the CBED-project is described in the case below.

Good-practice case: Inside the machine room of the Rolls Royce

In the Rolls Royce facility, the Steering Committee with representatives from the OPDs involved constitute the grantmaking body. The Steering Committee, assisted by DHF country office, convenes bi-monthly to approve policies, guidelines and formats relevant to the grant facility, and to vet applications and make decisions about grants and joint activities and/or trainings.

Prior to engaging with the grant facility, the Steering Committee members have all completed an orientation on the CBED project and a training course in proposal writing, project and financial management and reporting. To support the grantmaking process, the DHF Kampala office continuously identifies capacity gaps and conducts practice-oriented trainings, for example to strengthen the assessment of project applications, including assessment of the coherence between project objectives, strategies, activities and budget items.

¹⁷ Guidelines and application formats are attached the applications and available to DPODs grant committee, but often these reveals little about the grantmaking machine.

¹⁸ The statement is from an interview with one of the two external grant consultants to the Disability Fund.

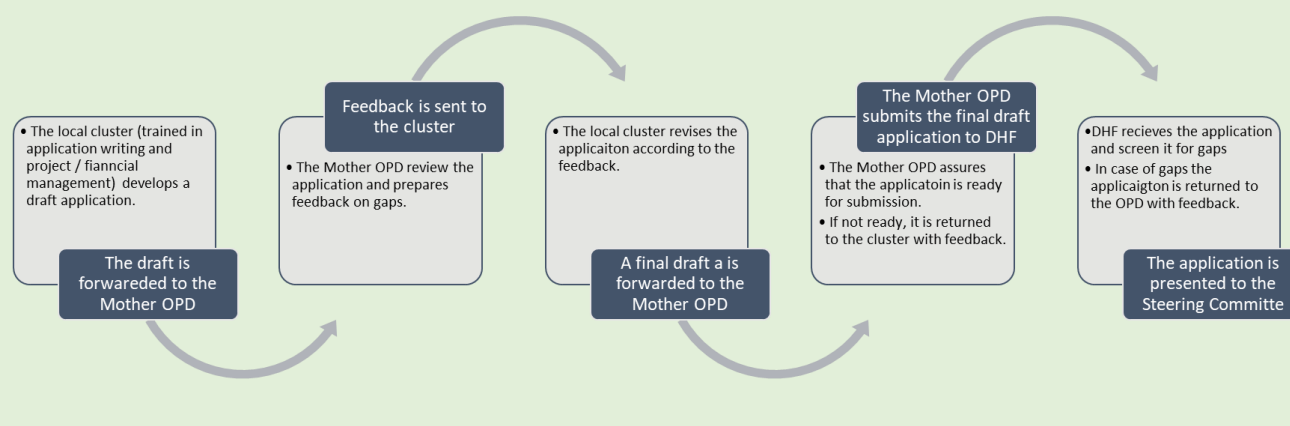
¹⁹ The grantor (DHF) the grant manager (DHF country office), the trustee (the Steering Committee) and the grantees (the OPDs and their local clusters).

The 8 OPDs (national/local) applying for grants undergo a capacity assessment and are trained in proposal writing, project and financial management and reporting. The trainings are practice-oriented and conditional to applying for national or local grants. The training must be completed by four persons from the national OPD if it is a national grant and four persons from the local cluster if it is a local grant. In addition to the trainings the applicants are introduced to the content of the CBED-project to make sure that the activities they plan for are linked to the expected project outcomes.

The trainings are followed by systematic mentoring. The mentoring component is designed as a feedback and monitoring mechanism which supports a) the development of grant applications and b) the implementation of activities. As for the development of grant applications, the OPD applications (national level) are screened and provided technical feedback from DHFs Kampala office before forwarded for vetting in the Steering Committee. After approval, DHF staff is responsible for continued mentoring by monitoring grant implementation.

A similar procedure applies for the applications from the local clusters, but here feedback and monitoring are the responsibility of the mother OPD (see the figure below).

Figure 2: Illustration of training, feedback, and monitoring cycles for cluster-level applications.



The vetting of application is carried out by the Steering Committee members who read the applications and fill in a ranking sheet containing the assessment criteria. If an application achieves a score between 100 and 60 it is granted, but the applicant may be asked to revise specific areas in the application. If the score is below 60 the application is rejected. Only when all formalities are in place will the DHF Kampala office disburse the funds granted.

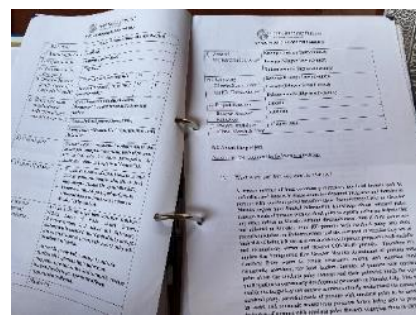
The DHF Kampala office is overall responsible for monitoring the grants, and the recording of results. Monitoring is based on monitoring visits and receipt of regular reports from OPDs and their clusters. All data concerning grants, disbursements and results is aggregated in a comprehensive Excel document.

The grantmaking machine is regularly calibrated by means of assessing the practices in the Steering Committee and updating and adjusting to the different formats, including the application and reporting formats and the ranking sheets used for vetting the applications.

“We call them living documents and we change and amend them every now and then. We consider if the information is relevant or not, or if is something missing. The formats used now are not the ones used in 2019.”

“It is a heavy machinery, but it is worthwhile!”

Quotes from Steering Committee members



6.1 Lessons learned and recommendations in relation to the design of grant / loan machineries.

A project-based grant/loan machinery requires a lot of attention, and it is an advantage if its organisational setup is well thought out and described before the project is implemented, not only to provide the grants committee for the Disability Fund a better basis for assessing the sub-granting component, but also to facilitate the start-up of the grant/loan facility. Yet, again after the initial design, the grant / loan mechanism will require regular calibration (review and adjustments).

The following describes some key lessons learned and provides recommendations which will hopefully inspire the designers and managers of project-based grant/loan facilities as well as DPOD’s advisers:

Standard Operating Procedures

Lesson learned: Only one out of the three grant/loan facilities examined in the review has some written description of the grant/loan mechanism and the procedures for grant-making (i.e. the Loan Scheme in the Rebooted project). The review shows that the grant-making machinery can be well-managed without written procedures, but in order not to lose track of the good practices, and to have a common reference in case of uncertainty or disagreement about procedures, it is appropriate to have a written description of the organizational setup of grantmaking mechanism and the procedures for grant-making.

Recommendation: When designing a grant/loan facility, it is advised not only to consider the terms and conditions (guidelines) for applying for grants/loans, but also the organizational setup and standard operating procedures for grant/loan management and grant-making. Moreover, it is advised that the grantmaking machinery is well-described in the application to the Disability Fund, leaving a strong basis for the DPOD grant committee’s assessment of the grant/loan facility.

The tool presented in Annex 1 will support an overall design/description of the grant mechanism and its standard operating procedures.

Orientation / training of grant-makers and users of the grant/loan facility

Lesson learned: The grant-makers and users of the grant/loan facilities examined by the review are all well-oriented about the project as well as the purpose and guidelines of the grant/loan facility which makes them observant to ensure that the grants/loans are aligned with the larger project. However, experiences from the loan facility in Sierra Leone suggests, orientation alone is not enough. While the district executives, the chiefdom level PMCs and the members of loan groups demonstrate solid knowledge of the Loan Scheme guidelines, not all PMCs are able to implement them, including making an assessment of the viability of the IGA proposed (cf. the selection criteria in the guidelines outlined in the textbox on p. 11-12). In general, the lack of technical training (in application writing as well as business planning) prevents not only the loan-takers from creating IGAs that provide them with sufficient profit to sustain their income, but also the PMCs from assessing the quality of the proposed IGAs.

A strategic approach to training is embodied in the CBED project/Rolls Royce facility in Uganda (cf. the cases presented p. 12 - 14). The review finds very solid evidence that the ongoing training and guidance of the grant-makers has developed their approach to reading, assessing and deciding on project proposals, and enabled them to carry out their roles and responsibilities with competence and diligence. Likewise, the training of grant recipients improves their ability to develop projects and it increases the quality and relevance of applications. Thus, the strategic training component has clearly had a very positive influence on the **efficiency** of the grant facility as well as on the **effectiveness** of the grants. A disadvantage that must be mentioned is the time-consuming nature of the training approach and the large input required from OPDs as well as the DHF country office in terms of ongoing feedback and mentoring.

Recommendation: In order to develop a solid foundation for grantmaking as well as the use of grants/loans, it is advised to plan for strategic / technical training of i) grant-makers (on topics such as governance, vetting, leadership, conflict resolution, consensus building, etc.) in order to develop their skills and shape their mindset in relation to their particular role and responsibility, as well as of ii) grantees (on application writing, project management, skills training etc.) in order to familiarize them with the process of applying for grants/loans and using them wisely. Please note that the content of the trainings must match/support the purpose of the grant/loan facility, and that the size of the training component should be leveled to the size of the facility.

Checks and balances

Lesson Learned: In grant/loan facilities where the grant-makers allocate funds to each other in a participatory manner there is an inherent risk of conflicts of interest between the purpose of the facility and the users' desire to obtain grants/loans. The country case study in Uganda shows that different forms of checks and balances are established to safeguard the legitimacy of the grant making machine. In the Rolls Royce facility, the Steering committee is large and composed of staff as well as board members among the OPDs to prevent abuse of power, while in the Thematic Seed facility the Vetting Committee is small consisting only 3 members but involving also DHF as a partner representative. In both grant facilities DHF has reserved the right to veto decisions that are not in accordance with the guidelines for the grant schemes.

Recommendation: It is crucial to establish the necessary checks and balances to avoid bias and conflict of interest in the grantmaking process. Such checks and balances can be internal, but a deliberate inclusion of external representatives into the grant facility allows for an external expert "eye" on the applications in the vetting process, which contributes not only to strengthening the checks and balances, but probably also the

technical assessment (either by way of an external project technical expertise or expertise on for example livelihoods). In addition, the inclusion of external resource persons potentially contributes to:

- Making the OPDs and their work known to others
- Develop joint ventures with relevant external actors.
- Encourage the mainstreaming of disability in the development work of others.

If including external representatives, it is important to consider whom among the many possible external actors are most relevant in relation to the specific facility, to sign a MoU with them and make sure that the external actors see the mutual benefit from vesting resources in participating in the facility.

The tool in Annex 3 will support the deliberations on and the development of checks and balances.

Good practice case: Mixing grant-makers to ensure checks and balances

In Ghana, Lev – Inclusion Denmark and Inclusion Ghana (IG) have established a Trust Fund Steering Committee responsible for grantmaking to IGAs supporting parent-self-help groups²⁰.

The terms of Reference for the Steering Committee stipulate that the composition of the committee must be:

- 2 representatives from IG National Council
- 1 representative from IG Member Organizations
- 1 external person from Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) with experience in funding IGAs for its members
- 3 staff of IG Secretariat (National Coordinator, Finance Manager & MEL Coordinator)

This composition of the Steering Committee caters for the involvement of IG members in trusted positions, IG staff as well as an external person with knowledge of/experience within the disability sector and IGA, i.e. persons with diverse interests and competences in relation to the Trust Fund.

Credibility of the vetting process

Lesson learned: The vetting process is key in any grantmaking machinery, and the credibility of the process is decisive for the legitimacy and sustainability of the facility as well as the grant-makers. Therefore, it is important that the vetting process is carefully thought out and transparent, including the criteria against which an application is assessed, and which procedure comes into force if an application does not (immediately) meet the criteria. Based on experiences, the managers of the Thematic Seed Facility in Uganda have come to specify two possible outcomes, in case an application does not meet the set criteria, depending on the *degree* of non-fulfilment. Either the application is outright rejected, or it is approved with conditions. The latter gives the applicant the opportunity to revise/adjust the application in certain areas within a given deadline.

In the Rolls Royce facility in Uganda, the grant-makers (who themselves are also beneficiaries of the trust fund) express that they have learned to take the criticism of their peers positively and see the mistakes they make in their applications as a means of learning. However, the participatory grantmaking process has given rise to a request of a neutral third party to aggregate the peer-assessments and communicate these

²⁰ The Steering Committee is associated the Inclusion Ghana Sustainability Project (2020 – 2023) which includes a smaller Trust fund (94,338 DKK/13.500 USD) aimed at supporting viable income generating activities to improve livelihood and sustain the activities of the groups.

anonymously to the applicant to avoid bias (due to preferential treatment or omission of relevant critique) in the assessments.

Recommendation: It is essential to develop clear criteria against which the grant/loan applications are assessed, and to make these criteria known to the applicants. In terms of transparency and equality in the vetting process, it is important to decide how an application that does not meet the criteria is handled (i.e. what it takes to get a second chance versus an outright rejection). Also, it is important to consider how a participatory grant mechanism can ensure that peers avoid feeling pressured to give favorable assessments to applications that do not meet the criteria.

The tool in Annex 1 will support the deliberations on and the development of the vetting process.

Adaptive Requirements

Lesson learned: Adaptive requirements are normally used to make sure that the requirements placed on applicants are proportionate with the size of the grants, i.e. the larger the grant, the greater the demands on the applicant. This is typically reflected in the application format and assessment criteria. In the grant facilities examined by the review, there is little evidence of adaptive requirements. The Rolls Royce Facility in Uganda is designed with an educational/capacity building purpose. The application formats and assessment criteria are consequently seen as instruments for learning and are therefore of a comprehensive nature. In the Loan Facility in Sierra Leone the original application format has shown too complex for the loan applicants (many of whom are illiterate) to fill, and the application process has since been based on interviews with the loan groups, thus not developing their capacity to fill in an application.

Recommendation: Grant facilities designed with a deliberate educational purpose may opt to have requirements which appear disproportionate to the size of the grant, as the aim is to train applicants to design good interventions, make quality applications and be able to apply for different types of funds. In other types of facilities (e.g. facilities supporting livelihood) it is important to balance the requirements with the size of the grant/loan, while also making sure that the applicants are left with some experience that can help them to apply for funding/loans elsewhere when the project ceases.

Grants/loans in groups or to individuals

Lesson learned: Grant- and loan-making can be directed at groups or individuals. Based on the review, a group structure is the only natural choice for grants aimed at strengthening organizational capacity and/or membership activities (non-income-generating), while the choice is more disputed when it comes to grants/loans for generating income. Generally, IGAs aimed at generating income for the benefit of an organization are managed in groups²¹, whereas there is a significant demand to own and operate the IGA individually when it comes to securing the livelihoods of very poor people²².

One of the OPDs engaged in the Thematic Seed Facility in Uganda²³ explains that it has prior experience with group based IGAs for livelihood but is currently opting to allow grants to go to groups that support individual IGAs. The reason is difficulties in obtaining equal commitment to the joint IGA from all group members as well as obtaining a sufficient immediate return from the activity for each member of the group to receive a

²¹ For example, in support of membership activities cf. the case on p. 19.

²² Disclaimer: Please note that the study is not a study of the economics of extreme poverty and effective livelihood interventions. Thus, it has not collected evidence for or analyzed the best way of initiating livelihood support to PWDs.

²³ Epilepsy Support Association Uganda (ESAU).

decent income (the grant scheme is described in the case p. 27-28). A similar decision has been made in Sierra Leone where the Association of the Blind has moved away from providing funding for IGAs in groups²⁴, to providing loans to individuals who are members of a loan-group. The rationale for moving to individual loans is similar to that of Uganda, i.e. difficulties in maintaining a group business and achieving sufficient profits to support the livelihood of the group's members. With the loan scheme, the individual loan-group member can obtain a micro-loan at no interest and with a favorable (long-term) repayment plan. The individual loan allows the members to decide on an income-generating activity of their choice, which they feel they can control and manage themselves, and where the profit remains with the individual.

In both cases (Uganda and Sierra Leone), the individual members are linked to a group and accountable to the grant/loan manager via the group. The following table illustrates the benefits and challenges of engaging in a group structure that were identified in Uganda and Sierra Leone.

Advantages of groups	Challenges of groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group structure is often required when applying for government grants. In Uganda for example it is a requirement to be in a group to be able to apply for local and national disability funds. • A group structure makes it easier to inform and train the members. • A group structure makes it possible to engage local government support staff in capacity building and service delivery. • A group structure holds checks and balances, and when a group decides jointly on an activity (grant or loan-based) it will be easier to hold on to it and not divert the purpose of the funds. • There is a possibility of adding Voluntary Saving and Loans component to a group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be difficult to mobilize members in groups and maintain a group structure due to immobility, long distances between members and the cost of transport. • Disagreements, including disagreements on the individual group member's work efforts and how to make use of the funds (and for loan schemes, disagreements on the instalment plan).

Recommendation: It is **always** advisable to provide grants/loans within a group structure to ensure effective information sharing, training of members and access to additional services (private/public loans and grants), and to establish a structure for checks and balances. The group is also important as a means for PWDs to stand together for solidarity, joint learning and empowerment.

However, depending on the purpose of the grant/loan, it may be appropriate to forward it to individual group members (e.g. within a rotating/revolving scheme). In doing so, it is important to be aware that an individual approach will often have the character of individual service provision, and it may be difficult for the implementing organization to provide grants/loans to all its members, unless it chooses to have grant- loan-making as its primary focus and thus become a "social enterprise" or "bank".

A slightly different perspective on grants/loans in groups versus to individuals

Findings from the cases studies in Uganda and Sierra Leone suggest that it is difficult to engage groups in joint livelihood activities, as these are argued to require consensus on the type of livelihood activity, proximity of

²⁴ In the groups, 50% of the profit should remain with the group members while 50 % should be passed on to the branch to sustain its operation and membership engagement.

members involved in the activity, equal commitment and agreement on members' work effort as well as agreement on use of profit and size reinvestments, and for loans also agreement on the instalment plan.

Furthermore, the group-based livelihood activities have proven difficult to satisfy the immediate needs of all members. Joint initiatives require a long-term perspective and the ability to both generate profit and manage the profit in such a way that the activity becomes profitable for all members.

To put these findings into perspective, the review has come across two examples of joint (group-based) livelihood activities with the dual purpose of generating income for membership activities as well as individual livelihood:

In Ghana, the grants from the Trust Fund managed under the “Inclusion Ghana Sustainability Project” (2020 – 2023) has provided grants to group income-generating activities (IGAs). The benefits of providing grants for group IGAs are mentioned to be²⁵:

1. Group profit is likely to be channeled into supporting group activities as opposed to individual livelihood support.
2. A viable IGA requires a relatively large sum of money. By pooling the money in group activities more members benefit from a grant.

According to the experiences in Ghana, individual IGAs are generally difficult to monitor in terms of implementation and progress, and individual grants are more at risk of being misused or consumed rather than being invested to generate additional income.

Despite the benefits of the group initiatives and the challenges of individual IGAs, members of Inclusion Ghana are biased towards individual IGAs due to increased ownership to the activity and willingness to invest efforts in it to succeed. In the future, Inclusion Ghana is therefore determined to explore effective ways to meeting what is describe as a critical request for individual income-generating activities from its members.

In Nepal, a Social Grant scheme under the project “Empowerment and inclusion of BPS persons in Nepal” (2021-2024) has provided grants to groups of members working together in a vocational enterprise. The overall aim is to support activities which enhance the capacity of branches to include and empower their members through income generation.

According to the mid-term review (April 2023)²⁶ “the group-based approach is conceptualized to enable the BPS persons to work together, complementing each other to complete the business process”. To illustrate this, an example is presented of a group engaged in a bamboo manufacturing business where partially sighted members collect raw materials from the jungle while the blind members prepare the weaving sticks. The division of labor enables the group of entrepreneurs to accomplish a task that would not have been possible for the individual.

The group-based grant structure is described as having unique value. Yet some members, especially those engaged in petty trade (mobile shops), those with capacity and top-up capital to function on their own, and those not living close to the cluster headquarters, prefer to work independently.

Diversion of funds

Lesson learned: The three facilities examined are generally careful to ensure that the grants/loans are used as intended. Contributing factors that reduce the risk of funds being diverted to other purposes appear to be:

²⁵ Cf. LEV Inclusion DK/Inclusion Ghana’s response to questionnaire.

²⁶ Cf. Mid-term review, by Era Shrestha, April 2023.

1. Clear guidelines and thorough orientation stipulating the purpose of the grant/loan facility and how the grant/loan must be managed and reported upon (which is also reflected in the above case).
2. The way the grant/loan is disbursed. In both Uganda and Sierra Leone, the grant-managers only disburse grants/group loans to bank accounts owned by the recipient organization/local branch (not to individuals), and the funds are closely monitored. As for loans, the refund is deposited into the bank account of the Chiefdom branch until disbursed in new loans.
3. The fact that the funds received in custody by the OPD easily acquire the status of "own funds" (i.e. funds that the OPDs have ownership of and of which they require transparency and good financial management). This is supported by the quote below.



“Since it is the Chiefdom’s money - not government or donor money - the members are more diligent in managing their loans”.

Quote by a Chiefdom chairman, Sierra Leone

Although, the review finds comprehensive indication that grants as well as loans are used as intended²⁷, statements from local grantees (e.g. a local cluster) and individual loan-takers suggest that some are exposed to pressure from fellow members, close relatives or extended family to use the funds for other purposes, primarily to meet immediate needs.

“We used the grant according to the application. But we experience very often that members require for transport or other services.”

Quote by cluster representatives CBED-project

Recommendation: It is advised to operate with clear guidelines/rules and make sure to do a thorough dissemination of the applicable rules and procedures, which the grantees/loan takers can rely on if they are exposed to pressure from other members, friends or family. It is also advisable to use organizational bank accounts and never to disburse funds in cash. Finally, it is appropriate to develop resilience of the grantees and loan-takers, and to initiate peer- or group structures which can support them in standing up to pressure and saying no.

The role of the Danish partner

Lesson learned: The roles and responsibilities of the Danish partners varies (cf. the comparison in section 4.4), but typically the Danish organisation plays a key role in introducing the partners to the possibility of engaging in a project-based funding facility through the Danish Disability Fund as well as assisting with the design of the guiding principles for the facility.

Based on the experiences extracted from the three main facilities, it stands clear that the Danish organisation also has a role in contributing to designing and establishing a solid organisational structure for grant/loan-making.

²⁷ This indication is based on interviews with a number of local clusters/grantees under the CBED-project and documented best-practice in the SAAP-project in Uganda, as well as testimonies that the revolving loan capital in Sierra Leone remains relatively stable.

In Uganda, DHF has opted to establish a country office due to its multiple partnerships and large involvement, including large-scale grant mechanisms. The active presence of DHF has evidently played an important role in developing the skills and mindset of the grant-makers and equipped them to manage their roles and responsibilities. Also, it is a principle for DHF to be "inside the engine room" of the grant facilities to be able to detect challenges and irregularities, and the Danish partner reserves the right *not* to accept applications that do not meet the set standard or the purpose of the project²⁸. To that end, DHF has made a great effort to create trust with the partners as well as a solid basis, not only for accountability and transparency, but also local leadership.

Recommendation: It may not be possible for the Danish partner organization to have a support function readily available to support the partners management of the project-based grant facility. However, experience shows that close collaboration between partners and technical support by the Danish partner contributes to designing and building a well-founded grant structure based on competence, accountability, and transparency, and last but not least contribute to facilitate local leadership.

7. The Results level: Understanding the achievements

With some insight into the grantmaking machinery, we'll now take a closer look at the results achieved based on the grants/loan schemes, the documentation of results and the sustainability of results.

A grant/loan facility caters for some flexibility and demand driven approach, but as an integral part of a project, the results of the grant/loan facility are expected to be linked to the project's outputs and outcomes. On an overall note, there seems to be a solid understanding of the link between the project and the grant/loan facility in the three cases studied by the review, and it is evident that grants/loans provided through the facilities in Uganda and Sierra Leone, are granted with great attention to the fact that they form part of a larger project. This is expressed most clearly by the Ugandan partners in their attention to ensure that the grants serve the purpose of the project.

*"We are the ones deciding who gets the grants based on an understanding of the project. Sometimes members have their own objectives or needs which cannot be catered for within the project. In phase I, for example, we could not cater for livelihood activities."*²⁹

*"The vetting committee assess if the grant 'is speaking' to the project".*³⁰

The three grant/loan facilities all manage to accommodate demand-driven activities within the framework of the individual project, and the review finds indication that the activities deliver results that contribute to fulfil the higher-level project objectives, including the development of organisational capacity, economic empowerment and/or the establishment of an evidence base for advocacy for improved livelihoods or rights of persons with disabilities.

²⁸ The principled decision is based on a previous experience where grants were granted on a rotating basis and not on the basis of the quality of the applications.

²⁹ Quote from Steering Committee member in the CBED-project.

³⁰ Quote from staff in UNAPD.

Hence, the sub-granting facilities are either “capacity builders” with a praxis-oriented approach to developing organizational and leadership capacity, or more “rights-based” with a poverty-oriented approach to creating a livelihood foundation that enables individuals to thrive and become active citizens (including active members of their organizations).

When examining the CBED-project (the one with the Rolls Royce facility) the review finds evidence of results in terms of capacity development at different levels:

1. Cluster level: The involved clusters demonstrate capacity to apply, implement and report on a grant, which enables them to subsequently apply for local disability funds. The level of local activities has increased, and a number of new clusters have been formally registered and opened bank accounts, thus creating a solid legal foundation for an active local cluster.
2. OPD level: The OPDs demonstrate capacity to apply, implement and report on a grant. Additionally, the OPDs demonstrate enhanced capacity to mentor and monitor their local clusters, thereby increasing their visibility and relevance, as well as improving the cooperation between the national and the local level in the OPDs.
3. Grant-making level: The Steering Committee demonstrates capacity to act as grant-makers as well as improved leadership skills. Moreover, members of the committee mentioned that they themselves have become better at applying for grants after exercising the role of grant-makers.

Based on the case study in Sierra Leone, it is evident that the loan scheme serves a purpose of economic empowerment in a local context where people in general lack basic access to money and where persons with disabilities are perceived as a liability rather than an asset for their family / local community³¹. In this situation, the access to loans for livelihood activities yields the immediate result that members gain dignity and status as individuals contributing to family and community, and as paying members of their organization.



In the table below, the partner in Sierra Leone identifies the key benefits of the loan scheme³², which point to some of the results achieved. The challenges are mainly of an operational nature but impacting the scale and sustainability of the results.

Thus, there is indication of results contributing to the expected outcomes of the projects. This said, it is not equally easy to establish the magnitude of the results of the different sub-granting facilities beyond the number of grant/loans provided and the number of membership or income-generating activities implemented.

³¹ A similar situation is depicted in the Mid-Term Report for LEV's project in Ghana where a small-scale trust fund for IGAs to support the economic empowerment of members. The report reads *“Most of the mothers/caregivers in the Parents Self-help Groups do not have any economic sources to earn incomes, and so they feel being further burdened when asked to pay membership dues or other contributions to support core activities of the groups”*.

³² The benefits and challenges are identified at the briefing workshop with SLAB staff and board representatives.

Benefits and challenges form participatory loan-making (Sierra Leone)	
Benefits	Challenges
<p>Economic empowerment: Access to money minimizes street begging and enables blind and partly sighted to take care of basic needs.</p> <p>Social empowerment: Personal dignity is restored and the mindset of blind and partly sighted is positively impacted.</p> <p>Recognition: Blind and partly sighted are recognized by others and involved in decision-making in the families and in communities.</p> <p>Formalization: All chiefdom branches have bank accounts, and some have been trained in basic financial management and bookkeeping.</p> <p>*33</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the loan scheme is limited, and the members who are not provided loans are dissatisfied and some refuse to pay dues. • The size of the individual loan is small and not sufficient to make an investment that makes the business competitive and generate a profit that enables further investment. • The illiteracy rate among members is high and they have limited access to trainings. • The leadership of the (chiefdom) branches are not always accountable to their members or to the national organization.

The review acknowledges that it may be difficult and demanding to monitor and document the results of multiple grants/loan, especially the results of a revolving loan scheme cf. the quote by DAB.

Grants are more transparent and manageable - a group receives a grant, uses it and reports on results - while it can be difficult to monitor results and keep tracing the money in a revolving loan fund.

Project officer, DAB

Only the Rolls Royce Facility in Uganda has developed systematic records of results against project indicators. This systematic recording of results proves for example that 22 local clusters have currently been able to access funding outside the Trust Fund (mainly from the National Disability Grant and the Special Disability Grant, but also various donations from for example Lion's Club, Coca Cola or Foundations and Lottery clubs)³⁴. This rather significant achievement is attributed to the CBED-project:

"Now I know how to write an application and have learned about accountability, collecting receipts, and how to register members. We also learned how to lobby for other funds, and we have managed to receive grants from the National Disability Grant for two sub-clusters."

Quote from Cluster Representative, CBED-project

Without a systematic recording of results, it is difficult to determine the actual scale and effect of the grant/loan facility, and the results will typically have an anecdotal nature and not be suitable for e.g. evidence-based advocacy.

³³ It was also mentioned that SLAB has gained more, and more dedicated members, and that the payment of dues has increased and improved the stability of the organization. The review did not assess member registers and organizational finances to confirm these benefits.

³⁴ This result is recorded against the following indicator for project outcome 2: *20 clusters have run a project on their own (i.e. not funded by the project) during the project period.*

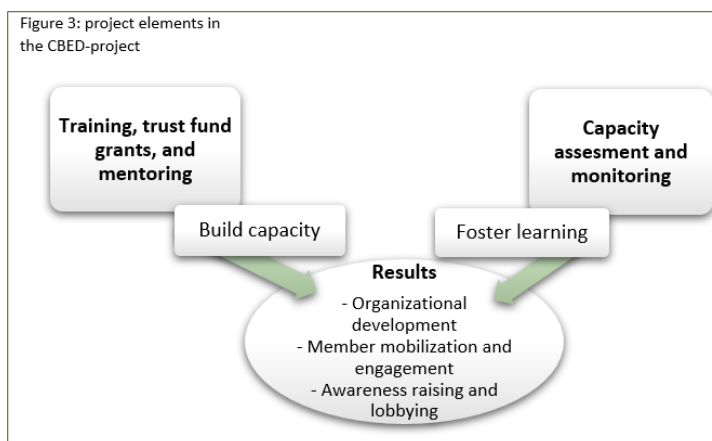
7.1 Lessons learned and recommendations in relation to achieving results.

The following describes some key lessons learned and provides recommendations which will hopefully inspire the designers and managers of project-based grant/loan facilities as well as DPOD's advisers:

Achieving results relative to the expected project outcomes and using the project to optimize results:

Lesson learned: In the Rolls Royce facility in Uganda, information about the project is systematically disseminated from the DHF country office to the involved OPDs and their clusters, who then design their activities according to the three CBED areas of results: 1) organizational development, 2) member mobilization and engagement, and 3) awareness raising and lobbying. The individual grants are consequently aligned with one of the outcome areas, and the review confirms that the results of the grants in fact are contributing to the projects expected outcomes.

In addition, there is solid indication that participatory grant-making combined with a deliberate and strategic use of capacity building and learning, as we have seen practiced in the Rolls Royce facility, adds significant value not only to the grant-making process, but also optimizes the results achieved in the project. In the CBED-project, the project elements of trainings, trust fund grants and mentoring walk strategically together to build capacity, while the elements of capacity assessment and monitoring are learning tools helping to improve on the approaches and practices applied (see figure 3). Thus, the review finds that a combination of a sub-granting facility and tailored capacity building and learning contributes to increase the scale, impact and sustainability of the results.



Recommendation: The designers of project-based grant/loan facilities are advised to include relevant capacity building elements supporting the administrative and leadership capacity of grant managers and grant-makers, as well as the capacity of the grantees to utilize the grant/loan wisely and thereby achieve good and sustainable results.

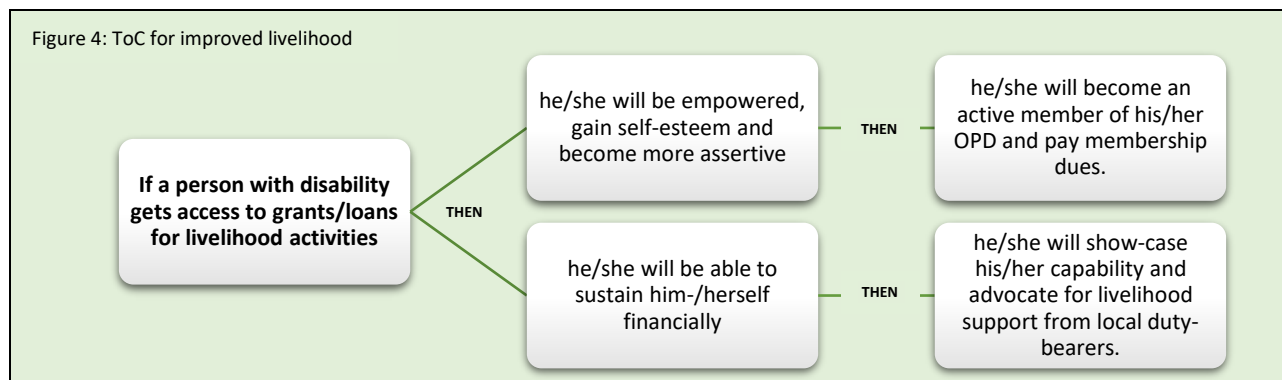
Documentation of results

Lesson learned: In all three study cases, the grant/loan facility forms part of the project theory of change (a ToC) with underlying assumptions as in the following example (figure 4)³⁵.

The review finds that there is a tendency to document results in the form of **success stories/best practice stories**. This has been the case in both the Thematic Seed Facility in Uganda and the Loan Facility in Sierra Leone. The success stories are inspirational and good for communication, but often it is not sufficiently clear if these stories are incidental or common stories of change, and it is consequently difficult to establish the scale of the actual change. When asked about the commonality of the success stories, the Livelihood Caucus in Uganda, mentioned as an example that the members who get access to livelihood grants and succeed in improving their income commonly gain self-esteem and become more assertive. In some cases, this leads to

³⁵ The ToC is illustrative and reflecting the SAAP-project in Uganda and the SPLA Rebooted and Amplified projects in Sierra Leone.

members taking on leadership roles and advocating for improved opportunities for livelihood activities for persons with disabilities. In other cases, members start paying membership dues, while there are also examples of members leaving their organizations because they have achieved independence and feel no need to be part of an organization.



In Sierra Leone, the end-term evaluation of the Rebooted project points to a situation where the ones benefitting from the Loan Scheme improve their livelihood and increase their involvement in the local clusters while those who have not yet benefitted from the grant and loan scheme are displeased with SLAB leadership at both chiefdom and District levels. A situation which is described as potentially undermining the membership drive and gains attained by the project³⁶.

In the country study in Sierra Leone, the loan takers gave plenty testimonies of how the access to loans has helped them improve their livelihood and gain recognition in their family and community while being involved in small-scale business. As such, the documented success stories are confirmed, but due to the immediate nature of success-stories the long-term financial side of the story is not captured, i.e. that the loan capital is small and likely to be fully or partly exhausted after repayment of the loan, and that the livelihood activity – as well as the social recognition – risk being short-term and dependent on a continued uptake of loans.

In general, the success stories are not suited for monitoring the effect of livelihood actives. The stories are only capturing the situation of a few selected persons and they do not look beyond the immediate benefit of a grant/loan. Thus, the stories appear to have the one-sided purpose of substantiating the original assumptions, and do not document how many of those receiving a livelihood grant/loan actually improve their livelihood (short- and long-term); how many take up leadership and advocacy roles in their organizations; how many are able to re-invest after repaying their loan; how many begin and continue paying membership dues; etc.

Recommendation: The larger or the more strategic the grant facility, the more important it is to “prove” the ToC in order not to reproduce assumptions which do not hold true and not to idealize or overemphasize the results. It means testing the underlying assumptions and documenting results, beyond success stories. This will contribute to establish evidence which can be used for learning and advocacy purposes, and it will instill confidence in the effect of sub-granting facility and the work of the OPD.

³⁶ Page 22 in the endline evaluation report, August 2022.

The underlying assumptions can be tested by the means of “[learning questions](#)” and results can be documented according to specific indicators developed to support monitoring (see the case below demonstrating a good-practice example of the use of indicators).

Good-practice case: Indicators measuring the effect of grants for IGAs

In Ghana, the Inclusion Ghana Sustainability Project (2020 – 2023)³⁷ includes a smaller Trust fund (94,338 DKK/13.500 USD) aimed at supporting viable IGAs to improve livelihood and sustain activities of the parent self-help groups.

The project proposal to the Disability Fund is supported by a detailed Results/MEL Framework, which contains some useful indicators* and target definitions to systematically monitor the expected outcomes of the grants provided by the Trust Fund.

Outcome	Indicators	Targets	Data collection methods
Parent Self Help Group (PSHG) members are engaging in resource mobilization to support their livelihoods and sustain activities of PSHGs.	% of IGAs, funded by IG, that have resulted in increased income to beneficiaries	At least 70% of IGAs are profitable, resulting in increased income to support livelihoods and PSHG activities	Review M&E reports to establish the proportion of IGAs that have yielded profits
	% of IGAs, funded by IG, that have potential of being sustained based on proportion of profit reinvested in the IGA	At least 50% of IGAs have potential of sustainability, with min. 30% of earned profit reinvested in the IGA	Review M&E reports to establish proportion of profitable IGAs for which min. 30% of profits are reinvested
	% of beneficiaries of IGAs, funded by IG, regularly paying agreed PSHG contributions (including membership dues) to help sustain activities of PSHGs	80% of beneficiaries of IGAs that are making profits regularly pay all agreed PSHG contributions including membership dues	Review records / talk to PSHG leaders to establish the proportion of IGA beneficiaries regularly paying agreed contributions and dues

*An additional indicator could be: # of PSHG accessing support for IGAs from external funding modalities following the project grant for IGA.

The Trust Fund has provided seed-capital to the startup of a total of 8 group IGAs. Progress towards the targets have been tracked through regular project monitoring as well as through two monitoring visits by the Trust Fund Steering Committee and as part of the external endline evaluation. Inclusion Ghana’s monitoring of the 8 IGAs (ultimo 2022) suggests that:

- 75% of the IGAs (6 out of 8) resulted in small extra incomes to the PSHGs.
- 75% of the IGAs invested all (100%) the net income in a phase 2 IGA.
- IG District Councils confirm the receipt of membership dues, but no due transfer has yet been made to the national office.

The external evaluation confirms a high level of interest in and ownership of the group IGAs due to the care givers / parents’ general priority of income enhancement. However, none of the IGA startups are yet making a real profit, and the initial project should, according to the evaluator, be regarded an incubation and learning phase³⁸.

³⁷ The project is implemented by Lev – Inclusion Denmark and Inclusion Ghana.

³⁸ From the End Line Report, by David Korboe, March 2023. The reasons that the IGAs are not yielding profit are: “Most of the PSHG members had no prior experience of investing in a group enterprise prior to the introduction of the initiative. Typically, they undertook some cursory appraisals of the prospective micro-businesses or based their choice on familiarity. However, this kind of analysis requires a higher level of expertise than most are familiar with”. Moreover, the IGAs are not market-driven, and most groups “have not taken advantage of the guidance available at their districts’ Business Advisory Centres” (p. 17 – 18 in the evaluation report).

Sustainability of results

Lesson learned: By virtue of being a project-based grant/loan facility, the facility will be linked directly to a defined project period. Hence, the sustainability of results will require at least one of the following three scenarios:

- a) That the results can be maintained without any further grants/loans
- b) That the results will be supported by new grants/loans from other actors
- c) That the results will be supported by a well-maintained revolving scheme which continues beyond the project (see the case below).

In the three cases examined, a strategy for sustainability will entail different scenarios. In the Rolls Royce Facility, the continued mobilization and engagement of members will require that the partner OPDs are able to use their newly gained capacity to cultivate an ecosystem of external grant facilities to support national and local activities and thus maintain their activity level (scenario b). While sustainability in the case of the small-scale Loan Facility in Sierra Leone will require that the individual loan-takers are supported by sufficient business training, market analysis, etc. to maintain his/her business (scenario a), and that the capital investment in the revolving loan scheme remain relatively stable and potentially is reinforced by additional external funds in order to be able to increase the loan amount and/or include additional members (scenario b/c).

Recommendation: The managers of project-based grant/loan facilities are advised to develop sustainability strategies as part of the project to support the sustainability of results.

If the sustainability of results requires more than a one-off project grant/loan, a strategy should be developed for how to enable the grantee access to additional external funding, including building capacity to apply for funds and cultivating an ecosystem of external grant/loan facilities (grant-makers) willing to provide support for the work of the OPDs and their grassroots structures/members. Such strategy is likely to contain elements of evidence-based advocacy. Consequently, it is recommended to establish solid proof of the results gained within the project, in order to effectively convince/lobby others to continue supporting OPDs/PWDs.

In cases of a revolving loan scheme, the funds remaining in the scheme should be settled by the end of project and formally transferred to the partner in the Global South, who will then be responsible for managing and monitoring the loan scheme. To boost the effect of a revolving scheme elements from scenario b can be considered.

Good-practice case: Livestock for Livelihoods

In Gomba District, in Central Uganda, the Epilepsy Support Association Uganda (ESAU) has been awarded a grant³⁹ for improving livelihoods amongst its members. The grant was used to start a revolving piggery scheme. So far, a total of 84 piglets have been distributed among the 300 members in the district.

EASU's members are organized in support groups of 6 persons. The intention of the revolving piggery scheme is to provide each group member with a piglet as a basis for increased income for the family. In order to make the rotating scheme sustainable ESAU has applied the following guidelines:

³⁹ The grant was awarded in 2019 by Uganda National Action on Physical Disability (UNAPD) through the SAAP-project financed by the Danish disability Fund.

- Members are told that the piglets are to be considered a loan. This means that the individual member does not own the pig until he/she has passed on an offspring to the next group member. If the pig dies, before a piglet is passed on, the member has to replace it.

A member explains; *“The association made us sign some documentation to the effect that the piglet was not our property before we hand over the offspring to the next beneficiary. This contract helped a lot as it made me and my family much more responsible for our piglet. We ensured the piglets security and knew that if the piglet got lost, we would have to pay back the piglet”⁴⁰.*

- The members decide on the breed of the piglet (white European pigs or black African pigs) based on a training on piggery management by the local government veterinary department. Members are also given a basic financial management training and a booklet for keeping records of income and expenditures.

A member explains; *“Through the teaching we got on piggery rearing before the piglets were given to us, I learnt a lot about piggery rearing. This training by the veterinary officer enabled us to better manage our project. I was aware about the best food to give the piglet, the hygiene, and the diseases that the piglets faced”.*

- For a member to be part of the piggery scheme, it must join a support group and pay a 10,000 UGX (equivalent to 2,6 USD) to the group to cover cost of monitoring at the time of the birth of piglets to ensure that the offspring is catered for and passed on.
- To avoid favoritism, the rotation plan is based on a raffle draw which determines the order in which piglets will be received.

Cost benefit

Lesson learned: If the grant/loan machinery is well-functioning and contributing to create relevant results to the OPD and its members, the benefits are likely to exceed the costs associated with the facility. However, it is hard to ignore that there are several costs associated with establishing and maintaining a grant/loan facility. This includes, but is not limited to, the cost of training grant-makers and grantees, convening meetings and monitoring the grants and the grant-making machinery.

Recommendation: Designers and managers of sub-granting facilities are advised to allocate sufficient resources to strategically support the management and the intended effects of the grant/loan facility, while considering how to keep the costs of running the facility to a minimum, for example by strategically encouraging voluntarism and in-kind contributions, or by minimizing cost of transport for meetings and trainings and delegating the monitoring responsibility (in full or partly) to actors close to the grantees.

8. The strategic level: Understanding the strategic purpose

The final section will focus on the strategic objectives of the grant/loan facilities and their role in relation to strengthening the partners in the Global South and promoting ownership and local leadership.

As described in section 5 all sub-granting facilities are based on a **participatory grantmaking** model, where the decision-making authority is delegated to the local partners in the Global South. I.e. an approach that shifts the decision-making power and brings potential added value for the partners and the projects.

⁴⁰ The quotes in the case story are from ESAU’s Success Story Booklet, 2022.

The strategic purpose and relevance of the three sub-granting facilities is found to be well-reflected in the applications to the Disability Fund and is clearly expressed in the grant-maker's narrative about the grantmaking facilities, which all serve a higher purpose than providing funds for activities (cf. the section on results).

The review finds solid evidence that the participatory grant-making – at a strategic level - contributes to creating a strong sense of local ownership, leadership and accountability in the partner organizations in the Global South.

Agency and ownership:

The meetings with the managers of the sub-granting facilities at different organisational levels in both Uganda and Sierra Leone provide very solid indication that the grant and loan facilities allow national OPDs and their local structures to nurture and drive their own change agenda within the strategic framework of the project. An opportunity that encourages the sense of **agency** as well as **ownership**, not only of the sub-granting facility itself, but also of the grants/loans awarded, as is evident from the quotes below:



“We do it for ourselves, not for DHF DK, and we qualify as a team”.

“When it is our own initiative, we put all our energy into the activity, if it was initiated by others, we would not be committed the same way.”⁴¹

Local Leadership:

On top of agency and ownership, the transfer of funds into a sub-granting facility calls for the partners to be actively involved in management and decision-making regarding the distribution of funds. This inspires and nudges **local leadership**.

The review thus provides solid evidence that the participatory grant-making shapes the local leadership capacity of the partners as managers of the facilities processing applications and grants/loans, as decision-makers taking the lead in deciding what to support and in implementing the granted activities (cf. the results referred to) in section 7 and in figure 5).

⁴¹ The first quote is from a Steering Committee member and the second quote from a cluster-representative in the CBED-project, Uganda.

Accountability and diligence:

The delegation of leadership and decision-making power, seems to be followed by increased levels of **accountability** and **diligence** in the management of funds. Although not all grant/loan facilities have fully developed checks and balances, and even though there are some few examples of mismanagement/poor administration of funds both in Uganda and Sierra Leone, there is **no** indication that the funds managed in the project-based funding facilities are more exposed to abuse - rather the opposite.

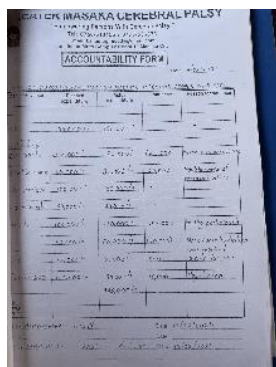


The review has had no controlling function, but the interviews with the grant/loan managers leave an impression of a careful management of funds, while both grant-markers and grantees actively reflect on their responsibilities in relation to the allocation and use of funds. The issue of accountability and diligence is illustrated by the quotes from a Steering Committee member in the Rolls Royce Facility in Uganda and member of a Chiefdom Project Management Committee in Sierra Leone:

“When we are in the Steering Committee, we leave our organizational interests behind. We set standards. If an application does not reach the standard, we will not award the grant. We don’t just hand out grants unless it is going to be of good use.”⁴²

“Since it is the Chiefdom’s money - not government or donor money - the members are more careful in managing their loans.”⁴³

Somewhat polemical, one might ask whether the funds allocated in a project-based granting facility are maybe better managed and utilized than regular project funds – which are not regarded as “own funds” but as “donor money”?



Alignment with the international agenda:

It is noted that the trend of project-based funding facilities in the Danish Disability Fund plays well with the international agenda on localization, which focuses on ownership and local leadership. In Danida’s How-To Note on Danish Support for Civil Society it is stated that *“Partnerships should be mutually binding and in line*

⁴² Quotes from Steering Committee members in the CBED-project, Uganda.

⁴³ Quote from a Chairman of the project management committee in a chiefdom in Bo district, Sierra Leone.

with the localization agenda and should therefore support local leadership. This means focusing on different dimensions of local leadership, including ownership for South partners, coordination, capacity development and financial transfers to local partners”⁴⁴ and in the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation” it reads: “Strong, locally based civil societies can make demands, promote change, and think innovatively. They create tomorrow’s leaders and develop communities of practice”⁴⁵.

The strategic achievements in terms of promoting agency, ownership, local leadership and accountability among the partners in the Global South – based on the transfer of funds and the delegation of responsibilities – are visible in all the three grant/loan facilities, but most prominent in the Rolls Royce Facility⁴⁶. Thus, when identifying the benefits of the grant facility, the Steering Committee members in Uganda⁴⁷ points in the direction of more powerful and independent OPDs with management skills and structures that support their operations and objectives (cf. table below).

Challenges and benefits from participatory grant-making (Uganda)	
Benefits	Challenges
<p>Agency: Partner organizations have a direct say on interventions that affect them and decide which issues to prioritize and what approaches are best suited to address these issues.</p> <p>Ownership: It promotes ownership of decisions as well as of the initiatives receiving funding.</p> <p>Leadership: The participatory process empowers and develops leadership skills which are critical to creating visibility and building a disability movement that is effective in achieving rights.</p> <p>Respectful dialogue: It strengthen dialogue skills and the ability to listen to and respect the voices and perspectives of others when reaching a conclusion.</p> <p>Teamwork: It promotes a spirit of teamwork among the grant-makers which helps build linkages across organizations and strengthening collaboration and mutual learning.</p>	<p>Time and money: The participation in a decision-making body is time consuming for staff as well as volunteers and costly due to the logistics involved in bringing people together.</p> <p>Conflict of interest: There is the risk that conflict of interest undermines the integrity of the vetting process and causes personal grievances among the grant-makers.</p> <p>Competition: If not carefully addressed, there is a risk that the competition for limited resources undermines the cohesion of the project and the organizations involved.</p> <p>Sustainability: how to go beyond one-off grants and build an ecosystem of grantors willing to provide flexible and long-term support for the work of OPDs and their grassroots structures?</p>

The majority of the identified challenges points to some of the obstacles in managing a grant facility, which have been addressed as part of the machine room in section 6, while the issue of sustainability of results has been addressed under results in section 7. Yet, the issue of sustainability needs also to be addressed at a strategic level.

Strategic services versus service delivery:

As previously mentioned, the project-based grant/loan facilities form part of a project ToC and here it is a pervasive and central assumption that the grant/loan facility - directly or indirectly - contributes to the sustainability of the partner organization and its member engagement.

⁴⁴ Danida’s How-To Note pp. 5

⁴⁵ “The World We Share: Denmark’s Strategy for Development Cooperation”, 2021 pp. 41.

⁴⁶ The reason why agency, ownership, local leadership and accountability appear most clearly in the Rolls Royce facility in Uganda is quite likely linked to the facility’s OD modality, which is different from the economic empowerment modality in the other two facilities.

⁴⁷ The challenges and benefits is based on the input by the Steering Committee of the CBED-project in Uganda with inspiration from literature on participatory grant-making, in particular the [DECIDING TOGETHER – shifting power and resources through participatory grantmaking](#), GrantCraft 2018

To ensure that this actually happens, it is necessary not only to develop a very solid strategy, but also to continuously test if the assumptions hold true. This is particularly crucial for grants/loans for livelihood activities.

Based on the review findings, there seems to be a very distinct request among the members of the partner OPDs and from the partners themselves for livelihood activities (project-based grants or loans for IGAs) to combat poverty and promote dignity among PWD. Some IGAs have been successful in generating income and demonstrating the potential of PWDs to do business and contribute to family and society. Yet, if the success is not linked strategically to a) capacity building tailored for the grantees, and b) advocacy (lobby) among other actors to increase the scope and reach of the grants/loans, the funding facility tends to become service delivery rather than a strategic service.

When deciding on the strategic use of a project-based grant/loan facility it is important to consider the dilemma between responding to an immediate need among members (only serving a few members) and the more strategic long-term move where the project-based funding facility becomes a model for replication (thus serving many members).

A perspective on the dilemma of grants/loans being a service versus a strategic service

The recent Endline Evaluation of Inclusion Denmark and Inclusion Ghana's project as well as the midterm review of DABs project in Nepal points to some of the potential strategic dilemmas which may turn partner organisations in the direction of becoming service providers (grant-managers or banks) rather than serving their original purpose as organizations of PWD.

In Ghana, the endline evaluation writes that *"the IGAs are not yet turning a profit in real terms and, thus, are not yet serving their intended function as social enterprises. A significant underlying reason is that the IGAs have not been market-driven in their conception."* Based on the rationale that economic motives are a major reason for parents and caregivers to enroll in the associations, the evaluator recommends to *"invest greater energy in reflecting on and improving the IGA component"*.

In Nepal, mid-term review concludes that the *"IGA support has provided access to economic opportunities which have enabled them [the 60 grantees] to earn income and fulfil some of their economic needs, create savings, and also contribute to their branches. This has helped build the member's confidence and self-worth. These results have been instrumental in demonstrating the potential of BPS to live an independent and productive life and hence change people's perception towards BPS persons (who they are and what they are capable of)." Also, the mid-term review finds that the model, with small-scale seed funding, result in regular income which is valuable to those who never had an income before, and useful for minor personal expenses, or to supplement major expenses. However, in most cases the income "is not substantial enough to sustain a livelihood. So, it is viable for only those who do not have to rely solely on this source for livelihood (have other sources or others family member's support). There is an increased demand for economic opportunities that can sustain a livelihood. Given this, there is a rationale and need for upscaling this model."*

9. Conclusion

The learning review has studied three very different project-based grant/loan facilities in Uganda and Sierra Leone in order to document how these are handled and how effective they are in contributing to the achievement of the intended project goals and outcomes.

On an overall note, **the participatory approach to grant-making practiced in all three sub-granting facilities is considered constituting a best practice model for stimulating local ownership, local leadership and accountability within a project.**

The following is the key findings relative to the three levels defined for the review.

The machine room:

The grantmaking machineries of the three grant/loan facilities are pieced together slightly differently relatively to the purpose and size of the facility. All three facilities are generally well managed with clear guidelines describing the purpose and priorities of the facility, the grant/loan modalities, the application process and the terms and conditions for the grants/loans.

Participatory grant-making is noted to require attention to the operating procedures for grant/loan management and grant-making, and to the grant-makers capacity to allocate grants/loans transparently and with a high degree of upwards as well as downwards accountability, so as not to erode the legitimacy of the grant/loan facility or partner organisation itself. Despite a satisfactory management of the three sub-granting facilities, the individual guidelines show that none of the grantmaking mechanisms are based on a detailed written description of the organization and procedures for grant-making. In this situation, there is a risk of insufficient checks and balances in the organizational setup and that applications are not treated equally and with care. There is also no common reference in case of uncertainty or disagreement about procedures, and there is also very little basis for the DPOD grant committee to assess the robustness of the project-based funding facility.

Based on the review, it stands clear, that the most effective grant/loan machineries are the ones accompanied by close support, training and feedback mechanisms. Thus, the more thoroughly trained and mentored, the better stewards the grant-managers and grant-makers are of the funds in the grant/loan facility and the better results.

Result level:

The sub-granting facilities allow for flexibility in the planning of project activities and promote a demand driven approach within a project framework, meanwhile contributing to results relevant to the projects. In the case of the three sub-granting facilities the results of the grants/loans are contributing to a) organisational capacity development of the partners - from headquarters to local branches, and b) financial empowerment of members. This said, there are certain challenges in determining the magnitude of the results of the various grant/loan facilities at the outcome level.

The fact that the grant/loan facility is contained within a project allows partners to add capacity-building elements and use the sub-granting facility as a praxis-oriented "laboratory" where the process of grant-making and implementing the grant potentially is used to build capacity and deliver effective results within organizational capacity development and livelihood.

Unfortunately, not all sub-granting facilities are equally strategic in using capacity building to support the outcome of the grants/loans, but the review shows that the more integrated the facility is with other project

components (e.g. capacity assessments and trainings) the more effective the grants/loans that are granted, including when it comes to ensuring the sustainability of results in the form of the capacity to seek additional grants/loans from external grant/loan facilities or the ability to maintain a livelihood activity.

Strategic level

The review finds solid indication that the participatory grantmaking model, where the decision-making authority is delegated to the OPDs in the Global South, is strategically contributing to shifting power and promoting agency and local leadership, which is aligned with the international agenda on localization as well as the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation.

Based on the cases examined in Uganda and Sierra Leone, participatory grantmaking appears to encourage agency, ownership of activities and results, and local leadership - especially when supported by capacity building interventions. Also, there is genuine indication that the participatory grantmaking nurtures the sense of accountability and diligence in the management of funds. Although not all grant/loan facilities have fully developed checks and balances, and despite some few examples of mismanagement/poor administration of funds both in Uganda and Sierra Leone, there is no indication that the funds managed in the project-based funding facilities are more exposed to abuse - rather the opposite.

The only major concern, as for the strategic purpose of the project-based funding facilities, is to be cautious that the funding facility does not end up as a service for a few members, but as a strategic service that benefits the many.

On a final note, it is worth for DPOD to consider if it will actively promote the use of project-based funding facilities in the Danish Disability fund as a means for nurturing local leadership as well as agency, ownership, and accountability structures in the OPDs in the Global South, and at the same time ensure that their capacity – including their strategic capacity – to manage such funding facilities are developed.

Annex 1: Tool for designing a grantmaking machinery.

TOOL: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE DESIGN OF A GRANTMAKING MACHINERY

PURPOSE

- What is the purpose of the grant / loan facility?
- Who will manage the facility and how will the grant-making take place? If for example using a participatory grant-making approach, consider the purpose for choosing the approach (e.g. to empower peers/constituents, leadership development, capacity building, building/strengthening a movement, etc.)?
- What are the success criteria for grantmaking?

GRANTMAKING PRIORITY-SETTING & STRATEGY

- Who decides the grantmaking priorities and/or overall strategy for the grant / loan facility?
- How to make sure that the grant / loan facility is sufficiently linked to the project of which it is part?

TYPES OF GRANTS / LOANS

- What kinds of grants (or loans) will be provided? (e.g. activity grants, capacity-development grants, revolving loans etc.)
- Are there different criteria or processes for each? (e.g. will you use adaptive requirements relative to the size of the grant)

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Who is eligible (individuals and/or organizations)?
- Open or close calls? If closed calls, who decides who will be invited?
- How often (rolling or fixed deadlines)?
- What are the terms and conditions for applying (e.g. deadline for applications, and formal criteria such as legal registration of applicant organizations, bank account, use of specific application / budget forms, etc.)
- Can applicants get assistance in applying? If so, what kind and by whom?

INITIAL SCREENING/DUE DILIGENCE

- Who does the initial screening of the proposal/due diligence to ensure eligibility?
- What are the eligibility criteria?
- What happens if the eligibility criteria are not met?

GRANTMAKING

- Who comprises the decision-making body and what percentage of the body's members are peers? Does the decision-making body for example have designated slots for external resource persons (e.g. technical specialists, community leaders, etc.)?
- How are the members of the decision-making body selected?
- How often does the decision-making body convene?
- How is the vetting of application taking place: who does the vetting, what are the assessment criteria, and how is the credibility of the vetting ensured?
- What is the decision-making process (are there for example states to this: assessment, recommendation for decision, decision)? And what happens if an application does not meet the criteria.
- How do final decisions get made (e.g., consensus, voting, etc.)?
- Do you have a conflict-of-interest policy or process, and how will you establish checks and balances, and avoid bias (preferential treatment) in the vetting process?
- What happens if there is disagreement in the decision-making body? How is this resolved (e.g., consensus, voting, etc.)?
- Do you have a complaint mechanism which can investigate possible errors in procedures in connection with the refusal of applications.

- Will members of the decision-making body be compensated for their time, and if so, which expenses are covered?

REPORTING

- Do you have reporting requirements and how do you document results?
- Will you do a formal evaluation of the grantmaking process and its results?

Annex 2: Inception Note

1. Overall objective and background to the assignment

It has become increasingly popular to make use of project-based (decentralized) grants (and loan) facilities in projects funded through the Danish disability Fund. At the same time little is known about how the project-based funds are handled in practice nor how effective a mechanism it is for reaching project goals.

The overall purpose of the assignment is consequently to deepen the understanding of the role and effect of the different types of decentralized grants facilities applied by DPODs member organisations.

The specific objectives are formulated as follows:

- Examine the experience with the use of project-based grants in order to share experience across the Disability Fund, engage in a joint learning process and develop an evidence-base to help guide future project-based grants.
- Identify do's and don't's as well as examples of good practice.
- Develop minimum criteria / good advice / guidelines regarding the use of project-based grants.

The thematic review will seek to provide experience-based professional input on project-based grants/loan facilities for the advice that DPOD provides to their members as well as for the assessment made by the grants committee. Also, the review will seek to contribute learning to the Danish disability organizations that use or consider making use of decentralized grant facilities.

Brief about the grant's facilities

In the Disability Fund, project-based funding facilities have in particular been used by the **Danish Association of Persons with Physical disability (DHF)** and the **Danish Association of the Blind (DAB)**. These two organisations are the main organisations providing cases for the review.

Brief about DHF: DHF has decided in principle that a substantial part of its project funds must be managed by the partners themselves. Therefore, DHF makes active use of sub-granting in their project collaboration in Latin America (Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala), Uganda and Vietnam. The grant facilities are part of DHF's strategic approach to organizational development and cooperation at branch and head office level.

Brief about DAB: DAB makes use of 'Social Grants' and 'Loans' in many of its 11 partner countries in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. The social grants are aimed at empowering members and strengthen partner's membership engagement at branch or sub-branch level. In recent years DAB has introduced a loan scheme based on a demand from partners. The loans are provided to individuals to support individual initiative and livelihood.

The work of the two organisations is further elaborated in section 3 and annex 1 and 2.

The review is designed to assess different levels in the decentralized grants facilities:

The strategic level (purpose): The overall strategic objective(s) of the grant facility and its role in relation to strengthening the partners in the Global South, promoting ownership and local leadership.

The results level (substance): Grants implementation; beneficiaries; results of activities relative to the set project outcomes; documentation of results and the sustainability of the facility and/or its results.

The administrative level (form): Guidelines, grants distribution and allocation mechanisms, and grants management.

A cross-cutting point of attention is the assumptions on which the project-based grant facilities are based, and to what extent these assumptions hold true.

2. Scope and overall methodology

The thematic review will be based on a combination of desk review, interviews (including online interviews/surveys), country cases studies and a reflection process. The review is supported by a working group consisting of DPOD members with experience with and/or interest in making use of project-based grants facilities.

Uganda and Sierra Leone are selected as case study countries:

In Uganda, DHF and its 8 partner OPDs have considerable experience⁴⁸ making use of project-based grants in the two phases of “CBSD” well as in the “CBED I and II”. The current project, CBED II, is described in Annex 1.

The 8 partners are all emerging small organizations, and the grant facility is a multi-partner facility designed to meet the partner’s (and their local clusters) diverse needs within organizational development, member mobilization and engagement as well as awareness raising and lobbying.

Parts of the grants are provided on a Trust Fund basis, with a central trustee (steering committee) granting the funds based on guidelines, application formats and raking notes. The grants from the Trust Fund cover smaller-scale national and local activities in support of trainings and livelihood or one or more project outcomes⁴⁹. Recently (in CBED II) a grant for partner core governance costs has been added to the Trust Fund. In addition to the Trust Fund, the more experienced partners can access a partnership component with grants that allow them to plan and prioritize their organizational development with a more long-term perspective (up to 12 months).

DHF’s country office in Uganda plays a central role in screening the applications and managing and monitoring the grant facility.

Grants constitutes a relatively large share of the CBED activity budgets. In CBED I, a total of 2,3 mil. DKK or 58% of the activity budget was allocated to grants⁵⁰. In the current CBED II, a total of 3,5 mil. DKK or 56% of the activity budget is allocated to grants⁵¹.

**DHF also supports a grants facility implemented by UNAPD (SAAP I and II supporting livelihood, advocacy and sports) in Uganda. This facility will be included in the review but not be a central part of the country cases study.*

In Sierra Leone, DAB and Sierra Leone’s Association for The Blind (SLAB) have experience with the use of project-based grants (since 2018) and loans (since 2021) in the “SLAB Rebooted” project. This will be continued in the upcoming “SLAB Amplified” project. The project-grant/loans are aimed at empowering members and with a longer-term goal of strengthening membership activities and structures in seven districts (16 chiefdoms) in Sierra Leone with varying capacity. The Social Grant and Loan Scheme in the current project, SLAB Amplified, is described in Annex 2.

Grants are provided in a Social Grants scheme which is supporting the start-up of income generating activities. The intention has been to support group activities, but in practice most income-generating activities are carried out by individual group members, who keep half of the profit themselves, while the other half is returned to the local branch. The loan scheme assists loan takers to initiate different types of entrepreneurships. The formal loan taker is a group of blind and partially sighted (BPS) persons with membership of SLAB. In the group, the loan will typically be distributed to trusted individual group members⁵². The loans are granted without interest, and the entire loan is to be repaid by the group within 6 months to a revolving fund.

⁴⁸ Since 2014.

⁴⁹ In the 2023 guidelines for activity grants (national level) it is written as a guiding principle that the initiative supports training and livelihood which is the focus area for CBED II, while the guiding principle for assessing the Trust Fund at cluster level is to support local clusters/structures to implement of one or more project outcomes.

⁵⁰ The Trust Fund (for local and national activities) took up 13% and the Partner Component 45%

⁵¹ Trust Fund (including core cost) and the Partner Component both take up 28% of the activity budget

⁵² The Loan Scheme has so far assisted approx. 320 blind and partially sighted in Sierra Leone.

Before the grant/loan is awarded, group members are *offered* (not required to take a) basic training in business and financial management. The end-evaluation of “SLAB Rebooted” (2019 – 2022) finds that the Social Grants have had positive impact not only on the livelihood of members but also on the membership mobilization and activities in the branches.

The Social Grant and Loan Scheme is managed by SLAB. The 16 chiefdoms and section branches apply for funds (max USD 600 or 900 per year?) to support selected IGAs. According to the most recent project application⁵³, 8 chiefdoms (in Bo and Bombali district) are considered having the potential to maintain their activity level without additional support as a result of the SLAB Rebooted project. These chiefdoms have consequently been phased out, and 8 new chiefdoms are being introduced to the project.

The Social Grants and Loan scheme constitutes a smaller share of the activity budget in the current SLAB Amplified project (2023 – 2025). A total of 242.190 DKK or 16% of the activity budget is allocated to grants and loans. From this budget social grants make up 30% and loans 70%.

Prior to the country visits a mapping will be conducted of former and current grants/loans provided to (sub-sections) in the two countries. The mapping will as a minimum consist of; 1. Type of facility, 2. Category and type of activities supported, 3. Grant/loan size, 4. Year/date, 5. Location of grant/loan recipient, and 6. # of beneficiaries and relevant characteristics. The mapping is conducted in collaboration with DBS and DHF and will inform the activity planning and the proposed schedule for country visits.

Moreover, a mapping will be conducted by the involved organisations, of types of grant / loan facilities used in other partner countries and type of interventions supported by these.

The review team for the country study consist of the Danish consultant, a representative from DPOD (in at least one country), and representatives from DHF (country office) and DBS (local partners).

3. Deliverables and expected outcomes

A **draft and a final thematic review report** containing an examination of experience with the use of decentralized grant facilities, a mapping of successful/promising approaches and methodologies (good/promising practice), identification of "do's and don'ts" and challenges in terms of managing and maintaining project-based funding facilities, and recommendations for minimum criteria, guidelines and new approaches for the use and management of project-based grants.

Presentation and discussion of findings in different meetings, including **de-briefing meetings in the two case study countries**, a subsequent **de-briefing meeting** in Denmark for relevant stakeholders in Denmark, an **online validation workshop** for receiving reflections and inputs to the final draft review report, and lastly a **meeting for disseminating findings and learnings** to a broader audience.

4. Activity plan and work schedule

The timeframe for the thematic review is 35 days distributed and structured as follows:

Phase 1: Data collection in Denmark - understanding the approach and scope

⁵³ The project application refers to findings of the Midterm Evaluation Report, but these findings are not reflected in the endline report.

Five projects granted by the “Disability Fund” have been selected for a **document review**. Relevant project documents will be assessed for their description of the decentralized funding facility. The projects include:

- **SLAB Rebooted (2019 – 2022), between DAB and SLAB, Sierra Leone**
- SLAB Amplified (2023 – 2025), between DAB and SLAB, Sierra Leone
- Capacity Building of Emerging OPDs I (2019 – 2020)
- **Capacity Building of Emerging DPOs II (2021 – 2025), between DHF and 8 partners, Uganda**
- Strategic Alliances project Phase II (2021 - 2024), between DHF and UNAPD, Uganda

A desk study will be conducted of relevant project documents to inform the country cases studies. Documents include project applications, reports and evaluations, and guidelines, formats etc. describing the mechanisms used to manage the grant/loan facility.

Reports and evaluations will be screened for reflections on / documentation of results and lessons learned in relation to the decentralized grant/loan facilities.

Preliminary interviews are conducted with DHF/DAB staff assigned country/project responsibility for Sierra Leone and Uganda to explore the approach to the decentralized grant/loan facilities and the scope and management of these in the two countries. The interview will also explore experiences with project-based grant facilities in other countries, to understand other how the organisations work with other types of grant’s modalities.

Moreover, interviews will be conducted with DPOD staff responsible for Uganda and Sierra Leone and representatives from the grant system (grant consultants) to explore issues of relevance to their role of providing advice on / assessing decentralized grant facilities.

Timeframe: 8 days ultimo December – medio January.

Phase 2: Field visits

Preparation involves detailed planning and development of tools to be used with stakeholders in Uganda and Sierra Leone. Prior to the visit in Sierra Leone a national consultant may potentially be hired to support data collection, including a pre-study of one or two chiefdom clusters which are not visited during the country study⁵⁴.

Country case study (2 countries): The case studies will be focusing on the three levels defined for the review (strategy, results and administration), and to a large extent be based on semi-structured interviews with different actors in the two countries, including representatives of the partner organisation’s leadership/management, grants/loan managers, grants/loans recipients (local groups and local clusters) and other key informants (e.g. family members to individuals receiving grants or loans etc.).

The interviews will be conducted as individual interviews, focus group interviews and key informant interviews depending on the target group for the interview.

In Uganda, meetings/workshops and semi-structured interviews will be held with DFH’s country office staff, Steering Committee members (grants managers), representatives of the 8 partner OPDs, and representatives of local clusters receiving grants (in at least two districts).

⁵⁴ A national consultant is not deemed necessary in Uganda due to the existence of a significant data material from CBED I and II.

The aim is to examine the grant mechanism and the managers experiences with administrating the grant facility as well as the applicants' experiences applying for and implementing project grants. Focus will be on the results achieved based on grants in CBED I and the current management of grants under the CBED II.

Key focus areas for the case study in Uganda:

At the strategic level: to assess the extent to which the multi-partner grants facility serves its overall purpose among the involved OPD's and their local clusters, and how sustainability (of the facility and its results) is contained within the project-structure.

At the results level: to assess the extent to which the grants are able to deliver results within of OD, membership empowerment, awareness raising and disability rights work (including service delivery by other actors) relative to expected outcomes / targets of the project.

At the management level: to understand the grants mechanism (the role and responsibility of the Steering Committee relative to DHF country office), and to assess the efficiency/legitimacy/transparency and accountability of the Steering Committee in the process of vetting and approving/disapproving grants. In addition, to assess the manageability of a large grant's facility (both in terms of budget and number of grants). Finally, also to assess the OPD/cluster's ability to apply for and manage funds from the grant's facilities based on the capacity building provided by the project.

Additional material needed: Rules of Procedures for the grant mechanism, examples of grants proposals (Partnership Component, Trust Fund, Core Cost), examples of ranking sheets.

In Sierra Leone, meetings and interviews will be held with SLAB national secretariat in Freetown (grant / loan manager), chiefdom branches (grant/loan holders) in Bo, SLAB member groups (grants/loans recipients) in Bo, and relatives to grants/loan recipients and potentially relevant local authorities.

The aim is to examine the grant and loan mechanisms and the managers experiences with administrating the grant and loans facility as well as the applicants' experiences applying for and implementing project grants and loans. Focus will be on the results achieved based on grants and loans in SLAB Rebooted project and the administration of grants and loans under the current SLAB Amplified project.

Key focus areas for the case study in Sierra Leone:

At the strategic level: to assess the extent to which the Social Grants and Loan Scheme serve their overall purpose of supporting the implementation of small-scale projects that enhance the livelihood and capacities of members *and* the capacity of branches in the targeted chiefdoms. Additionally, to assess how and to what extent the grants and loan facility is strategically linked to skills development (including financial skills and project management skills), advocacy and organizational development, and to understand how and to what extent sustainability (of the grant/loan facility and its results) is contained within the project-structure.

At the results level: to assess the extent to which the grants and loans are able to deliver results relative to expected outcomes / targets of the project, including economic empowerment of members (outcome 3) and strengthened organizational structures and increased capacity to mobilize and engage members (outcome 1). Moreover, to assess the results and viability of the IGA/entrepreneurship business supported by grants/loans.

At the management level: to understand the grant/loan mechanism (i.e. how the grant/loans are distributed to the chiefdom branches and the role and responsibility of the Project Management Committee in assessing/nominating grants/loans applications and the role of the National Secretariat and DAB in approving the grants/loans), and to assess the efficiency, legitimacy, transparency and accountability of the mechanism established, including the ability of the revolving fund to collect and redistribute loan. Finally, also to assess the local group's ability to apply for and manage funds from the Social Grans and Loan Scheme grant's facilities based on the capacity building provided by the project.

Additional material needed: Updated Social Grant and Loan Scheme Guidelines (for SLAB Amplified), and the good practices and success stories collected for the 48 Social Grants distributed during the SLAB Rebooted project. A list of the 8 chiefdom branches phased out in the Rebooted project.

Timeframe: 15 days during the period of ultimo January – primo March. Each case study visit is expected to last about 6 days each (plus travel time). In Sierra Leone the visit will be conducted ultimo February / primo March.

Phase 3: Additional data collection and reflection in Denmark

A concluding debriefing with DHF and DAB will be conducted following the field visits.

An online survey/questionnaire with South partners managing decentralized funding facilities in other countries may be conducted to provide additional data of relevance to the review. This includes Lev's partner in Ghana as an example of a third Danish member organisations making use of a funding facility with a partner, as well as possibly other DHF offices eg. in Vietnam and/or Latinamerica, and other DAB partners.

Following the data collection, all data will be systematised, analysed and subsequently discussed at a **reflection meeting** with DHF, DAB other working group members, DPOD, grant consultants and representatives from the grant committee.

Timeframe: 3 days, ultimo March.

Phase 4: Report writing and reflection/validation

A **draft report** will be prepared according to ToR and include key findings and recommendations. Key stakeholders, including DHF, DAB, LEV and relevant South partners will be invited to give feed-back on the findings and recommendations, and their comments will be contained in the final report. The reflection will be split into two:

An online **reflection workshop with south partners** focusing on highlights in *participatory – project based – grantmaking; including an introduction to participatory grant making (forming part of a larger trend) and different grant making models (cf. purpose and scale); examples of project components supporting support the grant making model (training, monitoring etc.); discussion on how to monitor (the management of the facilities as well as the results). The workshop will aspire to make use of breakout rooms.*

A **presentation of findings** for Danish organisations and the DPOD grants system. The presentation will be 45 minutes focusing on key findings followed by a plenary debate. Following the debate there will be a “cafe meeting” where the participants will be able to rotate between thematic stations to discuss thematic issues (e.g. livelihood/capacity development or issues related to the grant system) and ask questions to DHF and DBS as well as DH (Gitte) and the consultant.

Timeframe: 8 days, five days for the draft report, one day for validation workshop and two days for preparing the final report ultimo May – primo June.

Phase 5: Presentation of results / dissemination of learning

Following the final report key results and learnings from the thematic review will be presented to an audience beyond the working group and the partners involved in the review.

Timeframe: 1 day.

Annex 3: Schedule for country visits (January – March 2023)

Country visit Uganda

- Day 1: Briefing with DHF country office staff. Reflection workshop with the 16 persons in the Steering Committee. The workshop focused on identifying a) lesson learned from managing the CBED grant facility and b) benefits and challenges associated with the grant facility. Steering Committee members also discussed and agreed on advice to others considering initiating a grant facility.
- Day 2: Focus group discussion with “local voices”, 8 representatives of clusters receiving grants from the CBED Trust Fund, focusing on the Trust Fund management training, the process of application writing and how the clusters have made use of the grants.
Semi structured interview with SIA (mother organization), which is the recipient of national activity grants from the Trust Fund and core funding, focusing on the experiences of applying for grants and making use of grants as well as the effect on the organization in terms of organizational development, member mobilization and engagement as well as awareness raising and lobbying.
- Day 3-4: Field visit Masaka. In Masaka the team had an interview with MADIPHA (mother organization) and 5 clusters, including KADIPHA, SAU cluster, BUDIPHA, UNAC Greater Masaka, SIA Masaka cluster, focusing on the experiences of applying for grants and making use of grants as well as the effect on the organization in terms of organizational development, member mobilization and engagement as well as awareness raising and lobbying.
- Day 5: Visit to UNAPD, Kampala. Semi-structured interview with UNAPD focusing on their experiences with managing the Trust Fund under the SAAP-project.
Focus group interview with representatives of UNAPD’s Livelihood Caucus, including Mental Helth Uganda, ESAU and UPPED, focusing on their experiences in vetting proposals and granting grants, and documenting results.
- Day 6: Debriefing with DHF country office and CBED Steering Committee.

Country visit Sierra Leone

- Day 1: Briefing meeting with Sierra Leone Association of the Blind (SLAB). Reflection workshop with the 9 persons representing SLAB national board and staff. The workshop focused on a) the results achieved and the lesson learned from managing the Rebooted loan scheme and b) benefits and challenges associated with the loan facility.
- Day 3 – 5 Field visit in Bo district. In Bo the team had an interview with the District Executive Committee, 5 project management committees and 5 groups of beneficiaries of the loan scheme (Gbo. Selenga, Valunia. Bumpeh and Kakua). The visit focused on a) the DEC and the PMC’s the experiences managing the loan scheme and the benefits and challenges for SLAB, and b) the loan-takers use of funds and their benefit in terms of improve livelihood.
- Day 6 Debriefing with representatives of SLAB’s national board and staff.