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Opening Plenary Break-Out Group: Emerging Rights

Tuesday, July 17, 2012

11:00 am-11:40 am

***Please note that these notes have not been reviewed
by the speakers or organizers of this session***

Session Organizer:

- IHRFG and Foundation Center

Panelists:

- Catherine Chen, Humanity United
- Diana Samarasan, Disability Rights Fund

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This session provided an opportunity to delve into the research and their implications as they relate to disability rights and anti-trafficking work. The discussion also opened the space for questions regarding disability rights campaigns and anti-trafficking campaigns, strategies, challenges, and trajectories.

Question: Are you surprised by the distribution of disability rights funding?

Answer from Diana, DRF: No. When one looks at DR funding though, you might think it's a lot of money but its important to keep in mind that about 80% of the 1 billion people living with disability live in the developing world while there is only one recipient country in the developing world receiving funds. Most funding is in organizations in the US or Europe, not to developing world where majority live. So it is important to parse and understand the data and understand that you cannot get the overall picture without more detail. I also noted that the distribution mirrors general distribution patterns in grant making overall. It also mirrors what's going on in field of DR. It is an emerging right: people are fighting for recognition as rights holders, for dignity and voice and life and survival and might not necessarily fit into the more specific categories.

Question: How will these findings influence your work?

Answer from Diana: I want us to parse the date further and explain in more detail the rights that are addressed by our grantmaking so it doesn't come out as unspecified, but as specific as possible.

Question: What have been your biggest challenges?

Answer from Diana: Recognition that this is a rights arena, that DR are human rights, that rights people are fighting for are civic, political, cultural rights. We struggle to explain ourselves in the broader HR agenda and get people to understand that people with disability are part of humanity. And still, there is not a focus or recognition amongst most HR grantmakers on people with disabilities. If you look at the top funders, only five are giving multiple grants. In the rest of the list, they give only a few grants each. Most of those grants are going to efforts in global north.

Question: Could you share one or two strategies?

Answer from Diana: Diana stresses the importance of listening to the voice of beneficiaries. DRF works on integrating people with disabilities into the process. They embrace the popular slogan “nothing about us without us” into their structure so that majority of those in governance and in advisory and staff of disability rights fund are themselves disabled. It was critical especially starting up because few funders had any idea of what was going on. It was so critical to have people at table who knew and who were credible connectors to areas we were funding.

Question: You said a significant certain percentage is used within US, so is there a lack of information about what is going internationally?

Answer from Diana: Says no global map of DR movements exists, but if you go to DRF website and look at the grantee list you can get a sense of what is going.

Question: How do you account for grants that may include additional advocacy component? How to you categorize those?

Answer from IHRFG: If it was in conjugation with another structural component, IHRFG included in DR. IHRFG uses a broader definition.

Question: How many of groups of funders are led by disabled people?

Answer from Diana: DRF only make grants to people founded and run by people with disabilities, with some few exceptions for especially marginalized groups

Answer from ILRFG: we would need more intense research or more direct communication with granters.

Question: The data suggests that there may be important difference in strategy in developing countries where there is not an understanding of what constitutes human rights and how disability rights fits into that. Don't we need a special thinking in those places where the conversation needs to be initiated rather than rights claimed?

Answer from Diana: Conversation needs to be initiated everywhere. Everywhere that DRF looked there were existing groups but the data is not out there in the general public realm. That's a lot of what DRF does: tell the larger society that groups ARE out there.

Answer from audience member: Its good to distinguish between a nations' GDP and their ability to access resources from their ability to articulate rights. Another nations poverty level is not indicative of their ability to intelligently articulate rights. The problem is more about the funders than about the fundees. It is important not to confuse wealth with intelligence.

Question: Is there a pattern in where funding is the most active? For example cognitive vs physical disabilities?

Answer from Diana: Generally physical disabilities are at top of hierarchy so intellectual or psychosocial are at the bottom. DRF maps those distinctions.

FUNDINZG for ending HT; Catherine

Question: After looking at the data, is there anything that surprises you?

Answer from Catherine, HU: First, gave the simplest explanation of trafficking: forced fraud or coercion for the purpose of exploitation. Amongst the pleasant surprises was that there were much more organizations that are funding anti-trafficking issues. Now it is important to think about how to partner with organizations. A great deal of dollars are going to organizations based in US. That is because when you look at field writ large a great deal of leadership comes from US and UK. The feeling in the field is that countries will look to the US and the UK and follow suit. Also observed that the top 25 groups represent diverse a set of angles and priorities.

Question: What is your reaction to google funding?

Answer from Catherine: It is exciting because there are not enough donors in this space. There is a lot we can do to collaborate with nontraditional donors like tech companies.

Question: How can you integrate this data into your work?

Answer from Catherine: Because of how you conceive HT, it generally includes migration so it would be more effective to include court order approaches. That's one thing to see. That means to identify which are the countries of origin and which are the destination countries that different funds could go to each and both together could support a larger collaborative effort

Question: What are your biggest challenges?

Answer from Catherine: One is the age-old discussion about economic and political rights versus social and cultural rights. For example, in Nepal the government wants to attack the problem by limiting migration for women. We must engage the criminal nature of trafficking while promoting the freedom to choose of those affected. Preventing someone from migrating is not the same as preventing someone from being trafficked. Those tugs and pulls are difficult. Also, this field has not identified what the best or most effective approaches are so when one comes into the field expecting to know what is the best approach, that isn't there. If you are new actor it is a hard place to map.

Question: What funding strategies have been successful?

*Answer from Catherine :*Coalition building. The world is pretty fractured around economic/political versus social/cultural rights so HU's approach has been to fund people that sit on opposite sides of that spectrum and try to get them to identify commonalities. It is a way to bring strength and cohesion to the field. HU wants to see groups funding with new groups.

Question: Since we all live in one of the destination countries, news tells us of anti-trafficking on this end. How do you address anti-trafficking at the origin end? Also, we think of it being from one country to another but it's also region to another region?

Answer from Catherine: The standard approach is from a traditional development approach. First, education around what trafficking is, microfinance, and better access to health care. The really strong focus is on education of what it is and how to prevent it. More and more people are coming up with more creative solutions like decentralization of migration so traffickers are not accumulating so much debt going through a major city.

Question from Diana, DRF: I was thinking of interlinking of our two issues. For example, many of the vendors on the street are disabled and many were trafficked. Do you capture that in your groups? What are the populations that are trafficked?

Answer from Catherine: Trafficking is so regionalized and localized, so we do not track that though we definitely notice trends in certain areas.