



ABILIS FOUNDATION STRATEGY THROUGH 2021

- Confirmed by the Board on Dec. 12th, 2014

1. Abilis Foundation, mandate and guiding principles

Abilis Foundation is a Finnish actor supporting Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) in developing countries in their endeavour to actively promote the rights of persons with disabilities and improve their living conditions in their own countries.

Vision

Abilis Foundation pursues a world where people with disabilities

- are aware of their human rights and act for the realization thereof
- are in every way equal to their fellow human beings.

Mission

Abilis Foundation aims at promoting in different ways the own activities, human rights, equal opportunities and independent living of persons with disabilities in developing countries and in Eastern Europe, this through:

- Granting financial support
- Offering informative, educational and advisory activities.

During this strategic period, the Foundation, in addition to its role as a funder, advocate and expert, will focus on assessing the impact and improving the monitoring of its funding activities.

Improving the capacity of the people with disabilities in developing countries to have an impact on their own quality of life is what these are all about. Key elements in this work are:

- Commitment to the promotion and realization of the rights of persons with disabilities
- Supporting the activities of people with disabilities at the grassroots level
- Respecting the diversity of the field
- Supporting the especially vulnerable groups, such as girls and women with disabilities.

Values

In all its proceedings, the Foundation is guided by the **principles of participation and mutual solidarity of the persons with disabilities, transparency, equality and reliability**. Abilis Foundation promotes the global implementation of these values in society and abides by them in all its actions.

1. **Participation and mutual solidarity of the persons with disabilities**

The Foundation aids the participation of persons with disabilities in such a way that the supportive measures strengthen the mutual solidarity between groups of different types of disabilities. Responsibility in all their actions on the part of the people with disabilities is the basis for all this.

2. **Transparency**

The Foundation's activities are characterized by openness and transparency. By proceeding in an informative and interactive way, the Foundation helps create a confidential and constructive atmosphere.

3. **Equality**

The Foundation, guided in its work and actions by fairness and equality, treats all applicants and partners equal.

4. **Reliability**

The Foundation values honesty and supports reliable DPOs who apply the principles of good governance. The Foundation is an organization of experts whose staff and Board members have personal experience of disability as well as expertise in development aid.

2. From human to human – Abilis Foundation as a Development Aid actor

Abilis Foundation's primary mission is to fund projects planned and implemented by people with disabilities in developing countries.

The Foundation grants project funding to DPOs or groups of persons with disabilities in the global South. Its goal is to reach the grassroots level actors who, in spite of their potential, receive no outside support. The Foundation focuses on supporting **the income generating activities of people with disabilities, the living conditions of women with disabilities and any undertakings deemed worthwhile by local DPOs.**

Financial support is granted for projects, the planning, implementation and reporting of which are done by persons with disabilities. In this way, Abilis funding promotes their own activities and social standing. The Foundation offers, both directly and through the partnership programme, guidance and training in drafting the application and in project implementation according to the applicant's needs.

2.1. The rights of persons with disabilities as cornerstone

The rights of persons with disabilities, the respect and promotion thereof, are at the core of all activities of Abilis Foundation. Abilis helps the DPOs in developing countries to give training in and disseminate information about these rights and to cooperate with other actors in order to promote them. The Foundation supports the translation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into local languages, the organization of training for people with disabilities in the contents thereof as well as their implementation locally.

The human rights-based approach is fundamental to Abilis Foundation's activities. Its cornerstones are the participation and empowerment of persons with disabilities, upon which depend the recognition and promotion of the rights and which the Foundation furthers both nationally and internationally.

2.2. Participation of persons with disabilities as a global goal

The active participation of people with disabilities worldwide is the objective of Abilis Foundation. Persons with disabilities are the very core of all of the Foundation's activities, one of which is to encourage them to act responsibly and to improve living conditions in their own communities. Projects they have planned and implemented themselves allow them to participate, gain strength and get empowered. A disability movement consisting of empowered persons is stronger and capable of improving more effectively the living conditions of people with disabilities globally.

2.3. Focusing on boosting the capacity of DPOs

The Foundation grants funding for projects prepared by DPOs in developing countries as specified by the OECD-DAC. Most of the financing activities take place in partner countries. The Foundation is particularly dedicated to helping DPOs in the poorest countries. All DPOs, regardless of the type of disability they represent, qualify for the Foundation's support. Priority is granted to projects implemented by cross-disability groups.

Abilis Foundation is aware of the poor capacity of grassroots level DPOs, often due to inadequate schooling and scarce opportunities for participation of both leadership and members. Through the project funding process with its different phases, the beneficiary organizations gain experience in project planning and implementation.

2.4. Quality through partnership and cooperation

Abilis Foundation has a wide network and cooperates with other actors of the field worldwide as a part of the global disability movement. In addition to the North-South approach, the Foundation



also supports the South-South cooperation. Peer support and experience sharing are the most genuine form of partnership. The Foundation conducts a partnership programme to back up its funding activities and project management. In partner countries, an experienced local actor verifies the viability of projects and makes sure the implementation is up to mark. During this strategic period the Foundation will renovate the partnership programme, making it even more democratic and transparent, and search for alternative approaches to helping local disability groups.

2.5. Making a difference through Disability Diplomacy

Abilis Foundation's initiative on Global Disability Diplomacy on Human Rights promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all development aid work and reinforces the cooperation between other actors in the field, extending it to such non-developing countries where persons with disabilities live in segregation. The Foundation coaches persons with disabilities for international assignments and to act as experts. Finland's official disability policy can be influenced through expertise; that of Abilis is at the disposal of the Finnish Foreign Ministry. DPOs engaged in humanitarian crisis situations can be indirectly helped by means of Disability Diplomacy. During the strategic period in question, the Foundation will develop measures thanks to which humanitarian aid can be directed to persons with disabilities more efficiently than before.

2.6. Assessment of results and impacts as part of quality development

Abilis Foundation takes into consideration in all its activities the essence of Finnish and international development aid policies, adopting the new goals of sustainable development and improving the channelling of aid to where it is needed and where almost none reaches.

In order to guarantee the efficacy and high quality of its funding activity, the Foundation has devised indicators allowing a systematic monitoring of the impact and results of its funding activities, as well as of the sustainability thereof. The Foundation's evaluation system benefits the entire sector of development aid.

2.7. Financial security

Channelling efficiently and smoothly the aid to the neediest of grassroot level groups of persons with disabilities, is the fundamental goal of Abilis Foundation's activities. In order to cope with growing needs, the Foundation is looking for new, ethically sustainable funding sources to complement the state development fund grant and to guarantee a sound financial basis. The objective is to attain a 5 million Euro aid budget annually.

3. Conditions for the success of the strategy

The success of the strategy depends particularly of the following factors:

- Welfare and increasing know-how of the staff. Adequate human resources are indispensable to the Foundation's growth and expertise.
- The Foundation's financial situation is sound, allowing it to focus on high-quality development funding and on enhancing its expertise in terms of disability.
- Goal-oriented and interactive communication both in Finland and worldwide.

4. Looking to the future

Abilis Foundation is an expert actor with a solid know-how in development aid-related funding and project management. As a funder it is flexible, human and capable of identifying needs and changes in the operating environment. In order to support the genuine grassroot level operators better and more efficiently, the Foundation will expand its activities in the years to come. As a responsible organization, Abilis Foundation is prepared to develop its activities on the basis of past experience and to renovate funding processes and procedures.