

COMING TO

VOICE



# INNOVATIVE GRANT FACILITY

Voice is an innovative grant facility promoting inclusion and diversity of discriminated rightsholder groups in Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines. It aims to amplify and connect thus far unheard voices in efforts to leave no one behind and to prioritise those furthest behind first. Voice offers the following grant types:



## Empowerment

Empowerment grants are meant for (informal) groups or organisations to raise awareness, develop transformative leadership, build confidence and skills and work against stigmatisation of marginalised and discriminated rightsholders. Empowerment grants are small grants with a minimum timeframe of 12 and a maximum of 24 months. Informal groups can access funding by partnering with a formal 'host' organisation. Empowerment grants are available from €5,000 up to €25,000 on a rolling basis at the national level while regional empowerment grants go up to €75,000.



## Innovate and Learn

Innovate and Learn grants are groups and organisations to test and scale new approaches with a focus on human-centred innovations that are very context-specific. Innovate and learn grants are available from €5,000 to €200,000 both through a national and/or global call for proposals with a minimum duration of 12 and a maximum duration of 24 months.



## Influencing

Influencing grants are meant for organisations, coalitions and networks to strengthen their lobby and advocacy capacities to amplify the voices of marginalised and discriminated groups. Influencing grants that are country specific are available from €25,000 to €200,000 while a global multi-country call goes up to a maximum of €500,000. Influencing grants have a minimum duration of 18 and a maximum duration of 36 months.



## Sudden Opportunity

Sudden Opportunity grants are about creating flexibility to undertake collective action for solidarity to address specific unanticipated opportunities. This could be influencing policy or dealing with a threat of civic space. Sudden Opportunity grants are available on a rolling basis from €5000 to €200,000 for a minimum duration of six and a maximum duration of twelve months, both at national and global level.

Voice is an initiative by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is executed by a consortium between Oxfam Novib and Hivos.



# RIGHTSHOLDER GROUPS

Voice aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations representing the voices of the most marginalised and discriminated groups in the ten Voice focus countries. Informed by the national context, Voice works with the following rightsholder groups.



People with disabilities



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people



Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence



Age discriminated vulnerable groups notably the young and the elderly



Indigenous people and ethnic minorities

# IMPACT THEMES



Improved access to resources and employment



Space for political participation and citizen engagement



Improved access to social services, health and education

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# THANK YOU

The faces of the people Voice works with continue to replace the faceless images on the Voice banner and website. This is a symbol of the journey they and Voice started in 2016: from a place where they had no or little voice to a space where they came to voice. The title and the report are a homage to all of you who embarked on this journey with us.

# 2018 VOICE - TALKS

2018 WAS A YEAR OF  
**COMING TO VOICE** TO FIND YOUR VOICE.  
IT WAS A YEAR OF DIVERSIFYING  
AND DEEPENING.



## DIVERSIFYING

We **diversified** the grant portfolio, accelerating on all grant types. We also promoted more **diversity** as part of an intersection approach within and among the rightsholders as well as the issues Voice wants to support. We also started to synergise with other Oxfam and Hivos programmes by doing joint Calls for Proposals. It literally was a year where grantees came to Voice.



The Linking and Learning component was instrumental in taking Voice to this level, nationally and globally. Especially the empowerment processes have been remarkable in coming to voice, an essential step before raising your voice. This report is testimony to that.



## DEEPENING

We **deepened** our focus: from grant selection in 2017 to grantee support, monitoring and management in 2018. By doing so Voice has not only **deepened** its own learnings in working with the rightsholders but also encouraged the groups to deepen their understanding of each other, showing that what unites us is bigger than what divides us. It was a year where grantees came to and found their voice.



## 4.165 PROJECT APPLICATIONS

received from 97 Calls for Proposals



## 214 PROJECTS

funded between 2016-2018, involving 725 organisations and/or groups



## 10 NATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

organised to update the context analysis



## 10 COUNTRIES LAUNCHED LINKING AND LEARNING

the heart and soul of Voice



## 2 INCLUSION INNOVATION INDABAS

organised in the Hague and Nairobi



## 1 SUCCESSFUL MID-TERM REVIEW

forming the basis for a potential three-year extension (2021-2024)



## 1 CASE STUDY ON ALBINISM IN MALI IN OECD FLAGSHIP REPORT

on Leave No One Behind

# WHO WE ARE

**"NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US"**

The added value of Voice lies in its demonstrated ability to give practical meaning to the notion **"nothing about us, without us"** by creating and managing an easily accessible grant funding mechanism - MDF Final report

The quote above is one of the conclusions from the Mid-Term Review, commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and executed by Dutch consultancy firm, MDF. It confirms that what Voice has been putting in place since April 2016 is working. Voice brings to life the manifesto of the Sustainable Development Goals to prioritise those furthest behind first as part of the Leave No One Behind agenda. This section demonstrates how we do that through four distinct yet complementary angles.

## NOW-Us! Or NOthing about us Without Us

In 2018, the principle of NOW-Us! has been at the centre of everything we do. For example in the Calls for Proposals for empowerment grants, we allow proposals and reports to be submitted in local languages, by audio or video to accommodate low-literacy levels. Empowerment grants are also for so-called target group-led organisations whereby representatives of the rightsholder groups are in the driver's seat in the staffing

and governance as well as in implementation. The majority of empowerment grants have gone to small emerging groups which have adopted a more intersectional approach for people with multiple vulnerabilities, e.g young LGBTI activists in Laos, women with disabilities in Mali, youth with mental health issues in Kenya, Laos, Tanzania and Nigeria.

The principle of Nothing About Us Without Us came up most strongly in the organisation of the NOW-Us! Awards in partnership with Dutch NGO network Partos-the Spindle. The Awards celebrate inspirational inclusive initiatives from around the world. From over 350 applications, 10 initiatives were invited to participate in the Partos' Innovation Festival in the Netherlands of which 3 won awards in

the form of small Innovate and Learn grants.

NOW-Us! also played out beautifully during the visit of the Voice Advisory Board to Mali in October 2018 coinciding with solidarity week dedicated to People with Disabilities. Voice grantees organised many activities, including a Voice Bazaar, showcasing their work, and making sure that the skills of the Advisory Board members were also put to good use for advancing the local influencing agenda.

During the Indaba (a gathering) in Nairobi, titled Coming to voice, the focus was on people with albinism, elderly or senior citizens and people with mental and intellectual differences. This meant that representatives of these groups were strongly represented and also in the driver's seat particularly in the un-conference sessions. Having elderly

porter women from the market in Jogjakarta (Indonesia) share their own personal stories, negotiating working hours, toilets and work load or hearing voices from women with albinism from Uganda, Mali and Kenya busting the myths on what it is to have albinism, brings a completely different dynamic to any meeting.

## The V-team

Within the Voice global Coordination Team, we have taken our decentralisation approach to the next level by setting up a Communications Hub with Hivos in East Africa. In efforts to advance on amplifying the voices of the grantees, and responding to feedback from the country teams, we now have a Voice Amplifier and Assistant. This is combined with two Regional Roving Grant Officers based in

**NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US AT PLAY DURING THE TRIP OF THE ADVISORY BOARD TO MALI.**



Photos from Inez Hackenberg during the Voice bazaar and visit to grantee Agoratoire.

The three finalists of the NOW-Us! Award pitching their ideas at the Innovation Festival. Photo from Partos the Spindle

Manila and Nairobi, each providing support to the ten focus countries. This means that of 4 of the 10 staff members in the Coordination Team, are based in the global south, changing the dynamics in the team while strengthening local capacity.

However, the Human Resource situation at national level remains challenging, which the Mid-Term Review also confirmed. There is only one fulltime role set aside for Voice nationally for a Programme Officer (or an equivalent title), in addition to 50% for a Finance officer. Luckily in 2019, the role of Finance Officer will become fulltime, thanks to the funds liberated due to certain budget components being VAT exempt. However, other functions such as the part-time roles for Linking and Learning, MEAL and Communications Officers remain harder to resolve, resulting in shifts or high turnover. Some countries, like Indonesia and Philippines through Hivos South East Asia have resolved this creatively by recruiting a fulltime regional Linking, Learning and Communications officer supporting both countries. Oxfam in Niger has

made the decision to change the MEAL and Linking and Learning positions into more junior roles and turning them into fulltime roles by adding some budget from their overhead allocation. We continue to test different models, but for a potential extension will include an average of three fulltime roles per country.

### From visibility to amplification

In the first two years of Voice, the focus of our communications was on creating visibility for Voice itself, especially on its main function of grant-making, such as Calls for Proposals, outreach as well as featuring the projects we fund. This continues to be shared transparently and innovatively through the website, as well as through the networks of MOFA and its Embassies, Oxfam and Hivos.

In 2018, the focus shifted to amplifying the actual influencing work of the grantees and the voices of the ultimate rightsholders. Adapted to the context, we amplify successes,

challenges (including failures) as well as reflection and opinion pieces by grantees and Voice staff members. We also introduced the Voices of Change, that focuses on the changes that grantees are making towards the impact areas. We do this through blogs, articles, (photo) stories, interviews, publications, poems, videos and more recently audios or podcasts. The content is featured online through the website, the monthly newsletter called VoiceMail, as well as the social media platforms that include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and SoundCloud.

2018 has also been used to start developing thematic VoiceMails and joint campaigns. For Labour Day, for example, we launched Inclusive May day, amplifying the work of those grantees that are working on decent employment. The campaign's purpose was to make people think of what inclusive employment stands for testing people's biases.

### CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS AND STEREOTYPES IN THE INCLUSIVE MAY DAY CAMPAIGN.



Photo of Morgan Maze, participant in YAPESDI, empowerment grantee from Indonesia.

A unique opportunity to amplify offered the OECD flagship annual Development Co-operation Report 2018 compiling case studies that highlighted sound practices and key lessons on what it takes to “*leave no one behind.*” As we have mentioned in the grantees’ highlights, AMPA was featured as part of the work to raise awareness on people with albinism in Mali.

### Risky business?

Offering a voice to thus far unheard groups comes with inherent risks. It may disrupt the power structure and status quo especially in restricted civic spaces. In *what is shifting* we already show how this is impacting on each rightsholder group and what some innovative solutions have been. We have also above explained the risks we are running around limited Human Resources at national level and how we (will) continue to address them. A third risk involves potential fraud and mismanagement due to working with new (informal) groups and due to the sheer volume of the grant portfolio. We address this through regular visits, donor reference checks, quality audits, a management information system, and an integrity whistleblower policy (including references to inclusion, safety and non-discrimination).



Women from various women's organisations in the Philippines during the World March for Women 2019. Photo from Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia-Pacific



# WHAT IS SHIFTING

Ending violence against women, during 16 days of activism in Nigeria. Photo by Women & Girls Advancement Resource Centre

*The power has shifted, from the people to a specific group of people within government*

Participant in Community of Stakeholders, Tanzania

Overall, the crackdown on dissenting voices, increase in insecurity, politicisation of ethnic differences and religion, and growing inequality seem to be common denominators and the perfect breeding ground for restrictions in civic space. However upon taking a closer look at the results of the ten Communities of Stakeholders organised to update the context, we can conclude that for some Voice rightsholder groups civic space has opened and for others it has shrunk. Here follows an overview per group.

## People with Disabilities: collective force and new voices emerging

Generally speaking, the space for People with Disabilities in all ten Voice focus countries has opened up -especially for the impact themes related to increased access to social services and productive resources. We have not yet received many applications from Disabled People's Organisations to foster the space for political participation but with Access Nigeria that may change! They run

## CIVIC SPACE, CLOSING RATHER THAN OPENING?

According to the Civicus Monitor, civic space is rated in seven Voice focus countries as obstructed (Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Indonesia and Philippines), three as repressed (Cambodia, Uganda and Tanzania – the latter demoted from obstructed in 2017) and one as completely closed (Laos).

### OBSTRUCTED

INDONESIA  
PHILIPPINES  
KENYA  
MALI  
NIGER  
NIGERIA

### REPRESSED

CAMBODIA  
UGANDA  
TANZANIA

### CLOSED

LAOS

a campaign to promote more inclusive politics and as one of the winners of the NOW-Us! Award will help us lead the way to learn more about civic space in that impact theme. In addition, Voice has supported (small) groups that focus on the more “specialised” disabilities: people with albinism in Mali, Tanzania and Uganda or little people in Mali. There is a growing group of grants supporting the work of people with mental, psycho-social or intellectual disabilities who never experienced civic space to start with.

## Ethnic minorities and indigenous people

Unfortunately, it is a different story altogether for ethnic minorities and indigenous people, both in Africa and Asia. Most of the groups Voice supports are working on land rights which has become a highly politicised issue in the context of corporate land grabbing and the right to self-determination. For example the Ujamaa Community Resource Trust, a global Influencing grantee working on land rights in East Africa had to shift some activities and budget when one of their local partners was not granted permission by local authorities to work with communities on land issues. In the Philippines -where the civil society operating environment is generally in peril due to increasing authoritarianism- we are supporting a lot of work led by indigenous people in the Mindanao and Cordillera regions, leading at times to issuing statements of solidarity.

## LGBTI people

In certain Voice focus countries in Africa and Asia, such as in Uganda, Tanzania and Indonesia, the general space for the LGBTI community has shrunk alarmingly. On a more positive note, in Asia, LGBTI empowerment grantees in Laos and Cambodia, Proud to be Us Laos

and CamASEAN respectively, show more success in finding their voice and mobilising and organising a growing LGBTI community. Plus Voice is supporting more regional LGBTI inclusion projects through Finance Inc from APCOM, an influencing project to advocate for a more inclusive finance sector, including the Asian Development Bank.

## Age-discrimination without response

In most countries the existence of a growing number of elderly or senior citizens without conditions and lack of adequate policies, has been acknowledged. Yet, in line with the 2016 context analysis, necessary action seems somewhat stagnant.

Often youth and elderly are considered as a broad uniform group. In politics, access issues, etcetera. Yet, Voice should focus on those young and elderly in highly discriminatory and excluded situations directly connected to age discrimination. In some countries more detailed insights are needed to identify those groups in particular.

## What about women and girls?

Although there are many interventions supporting wider gender equality efforts and support to women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence at country level, why has no Community of Stakeholders reported yet on real change for women and girls within Voice? It could be that there are high expectations, but we may need to ask more critical questions about power, about the intergenerational divide in the women's movement, how to diversify the movement and actions to include Women with Disabilities and sex workers.

## An overall challenge: the Othering

Within civil society movements, organisations and grantees, just as in society, we find what is referred to as “the othering”. Within Voice, there are examples that organisations of People with Disabilities have challenges to form partnerships with organisations not working with PwDs, or, women with disabilities not being considered in the women's movement. Stronger, more frequent use of religious arguments to disempower and further marginalise LGBTI people, sex workers, women in general, is ‘othering’ as well.

*One of the key forces behind the recent spate of violence and hatred towards LGBTI people is the use of religion to create an atmosphere of negativity, an ‘intolerance movement’. LGBTI community members are forced to hide their sexual orientation*

- Participant in Community of Stakeholders Indonesia

## Adapting to shifting realities

Reality is constantly shifting. Civil society actors, in particular human rights defenders, therefore need to be flexible and try new tactics, adapting organisational and influencing strategies. Seeking answers to questions like: what allies do we need now? How to collaborate better and more safely? Besides individual conversations, the Linking and Learning gatherings offer space for joint reflection. There is also an emerging thinking that the secret to opening space lies in enhanced CSO accountability to the community and to their constituencies. Might the principle of Nothing About Us Without Us be the key solution to opening up space?

# WHO WE FUND

**IN 2018 VOICE SUPPORTED 143 PROJECTS, ACROSS 10 COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND ASIA.**



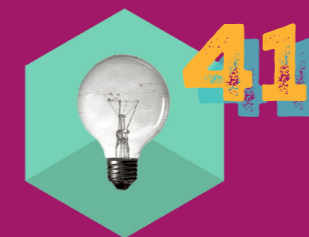
## Empowerment projects

led by small rightsholder groups to raise awareness, invest in their own leadership, and build the necessary (self)-confidence, which they may require to 'Come to voice'. These types of projects were the focus of Voice during 2018 with phenomenal progress.



## Influencing projects

to strengthen lobby and advocacy or rather influencing capacities of organisations to better represent, include, and amplify, the voices of marginalised and discriminated rightsholder groups.



## Innovate and Learn projects

which allow grantees to test, learn from and potentially scale-up new ideas and approaches. This includes organisations who act as the Linking and Learning facilitators or grantees for each country.



## Sudden Opportunity projects

were approved in Kenya, Mali, Philippines and Uganda to promote collective action at country level. A multi-country project was also approved to work with communities of people affected by statelessness in East Africa, a new group for Voice.

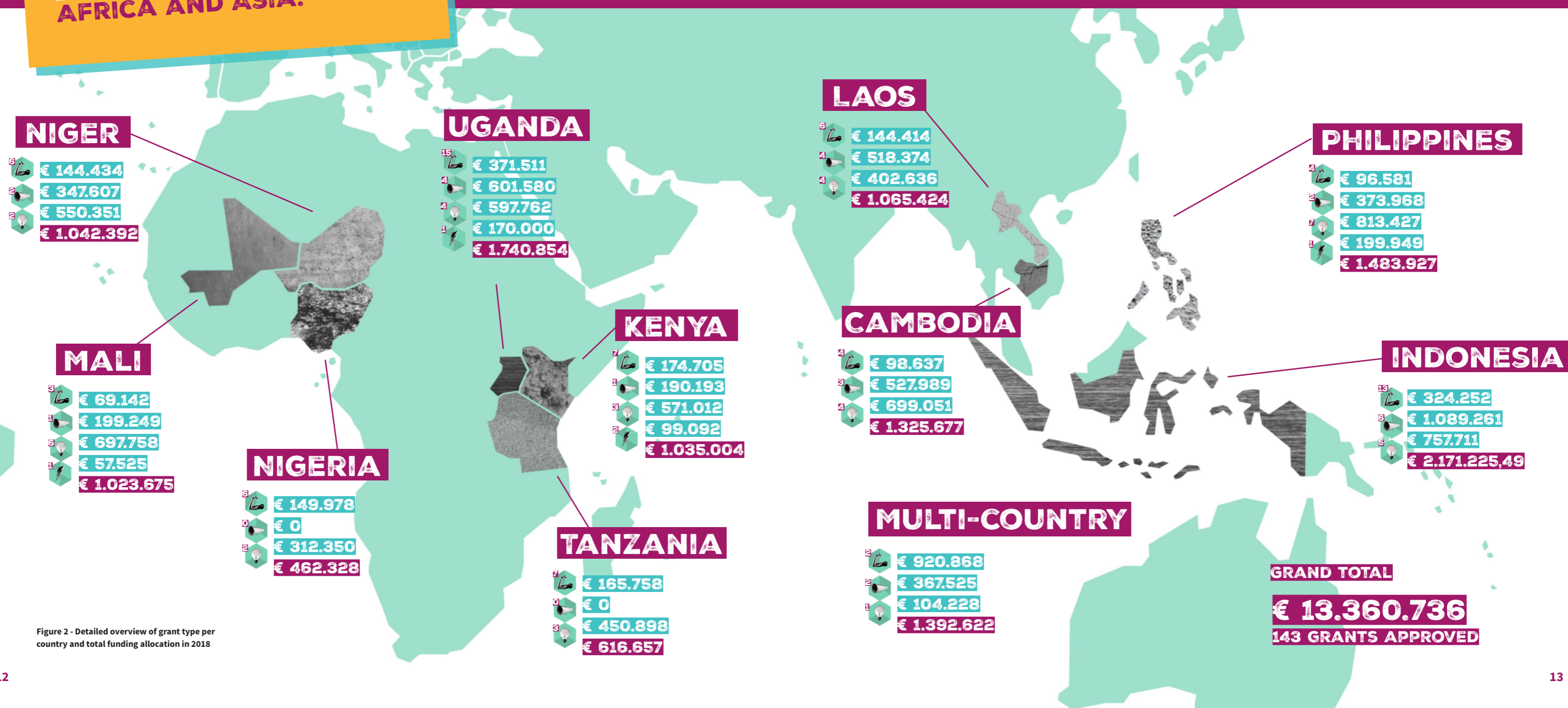


Figure 2 - Detailed overview of grant type per country and total funding allocation in 2018

## WHO WE FUND

# WHERE WE ARE NOW

In 2018 ten national Communities of Stakeholders were organised to help update the context analysis, informing new Calls for Proposals. This helped to identify thus far invisible issues and groups that benefited from one of the four grant types, working towards the three impact areas within Voice. This section illustrates how well we are doing against the initially set targets, including learnings in case of shifts.

### Rightsholder groups

Overall, Voice is meeting our commitments to the distribution of grants by rightsholder groups. We are exceeding our targets to support people with disabilities and women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence. This is firstly because all ten countries focus on these two groups. Secondly, some countries (such as Mali) are focusing on the intersectionality of these groups such as women and girls with disabilities. And thirdly, within these groups we see new voices emerging such as domestic workers (Tanzania, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mali) and the more 'specialised' disabilities, such as little people, people with albinism and people with mental and intellectual disabilities. LGBTI groups and indigenous people/ethnic minorities are hardest hit by shifting civic space and we are exploring new innovative ways of reaching and working with them.

### Grant types

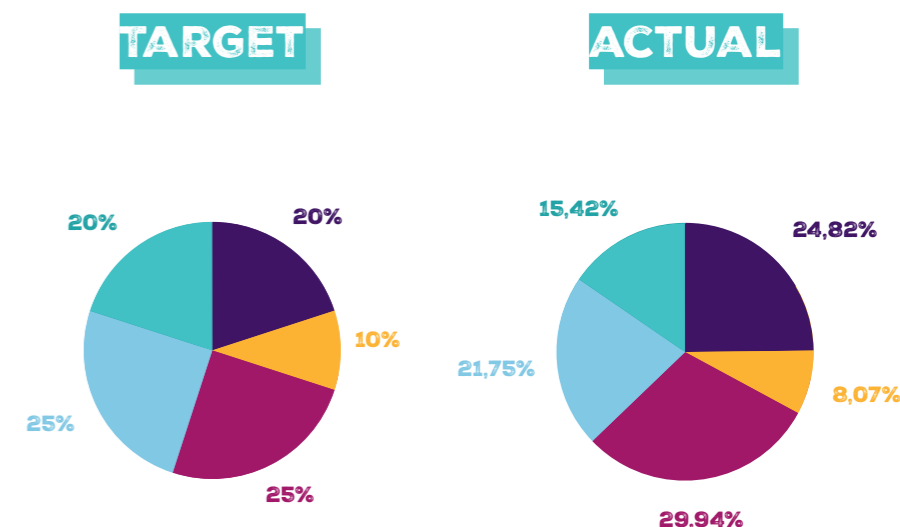
The biggest deviation from the original Voice targets can be seen in the grant type allocation. This is also because the national Linking and Learning facilitators are all funded through an Innovate and Learn grant. In addition Influencing and Innovate and Learn grants tend to generate more interest from larger national organisations, with the capacity to write proposals. We also invested more in empowerment grants, resulting in a significant increase from 14 grants in 2017 to 71 in 2018 (i.e. 13% of all actual funding allocations in 2018). Due to contractual stipulations we cannot contract informal groups directly but do so via a host. Sudden opportunities have also seen an increase albeit still demand special attention in 2019.

### Impact themes

Understandably, many projects focus on increasing access to social services, such as health and education as it is often considered a basic need. Increasing demand and approvals of projects from indigenous people and/or ethnic minorities could potentially lead to a corresponding rise of projects focusing on access to productive resources, as their struggle is typically associated with land rights. In terms of projects around political space and citizen engagement, we notice two interesting trends: first, there are more applications coming from youth-led groups (maybe prepared to take more risks?); and second, that there is an increase in case of (national or local) elections, for example monitoring of elections and/or promotion of inclusion in electoral politics.

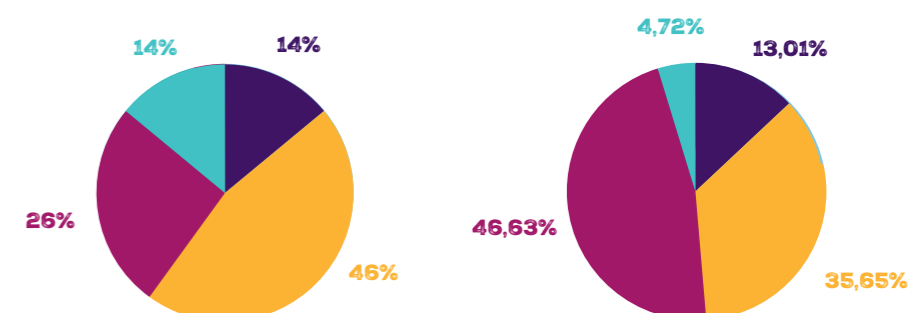
## RIGHTSHOLDER GROUPS

- People with disabilities
- LGBTI people
- Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence
- Age-discriminated vulnerable groups
- Indigenous people & ethnic minorities



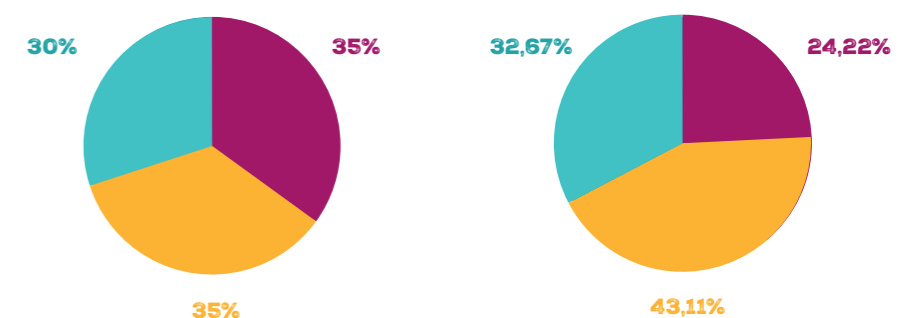
## GRANT TYPES

- Empowerment
- Influencing
- Innovate & Learn
- Sudden Opportunity



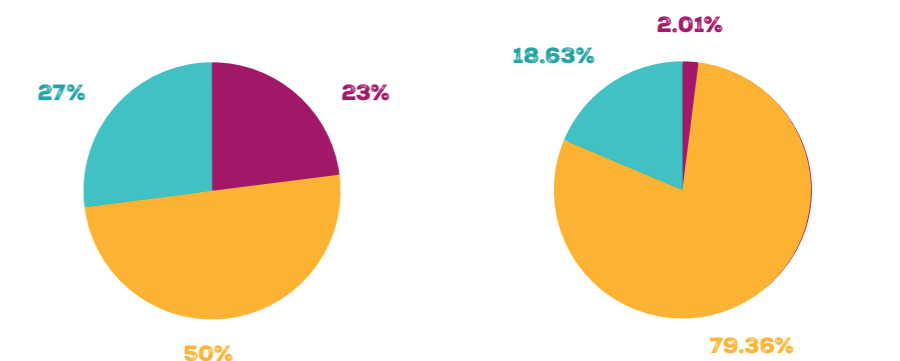
## IMPACT THEMES

- Access to (productive) resources (finance, land and water) and employment
- Access to social services, health and education in particular
- Space for political participation and citizen engagement



## TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS

- Informal organisations
- Formal organisations
- Platforms and networks





# EMPOWERMENT FOR AN EMERGING ORGANISATION

## WHO WE FUND

# GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The Love symbol from Ey and the team of Proud To Be Us Laos at the launch of Queerability. Photo from Proud To Be Us taken at the Luang Prabang Film Festival

## PROUD TO BE US LAOS

Proud to be Us Laos (PTBUL) was a co-implementing partner of MCNV as part of the first global Innovate and Learn Call in 2017. In that project they focused on innovative communication methods, resulting in two shadow plays, one on transgender issues and another one on lesbian issues.

Since that project, a lot has happened for PTBUL. They now have been awarded an empowerment grant to develop their organisation. And there has been a significant wave of recognition for the LGBTI community in Laos, especially from local civil society compared to the last few years when PTBUL was viewed as a one-sided or pro-western advocacy group. As a result, PTBUL has been able to express self-autonomy. For instance in the first Voice Linking and Learning activity focusing on the development of organisational structure, other CSOs were keen to learn about the steps and directions of PTBUL, its goals and mission. Another grantee Gender Development Association promised to tighten the relationship by

including PTBUL in future dialogues on gender.

Within several months of implementation of their own grant, PTBUL has achieved some remarkable “firsts”: the first ever organisational structure (after being unstructured since 2012), the first ever survey of LGBTI Youth in Laos with UNESCO and the Lao Youth Union, contributing to the Human Rights Situation Report, having a training of trainers for Health Sciences University’s lecturers from 9 National Institutes that developed a SOGI-ESC curriculum for advocacy. And finally they supported a documentary called the “Story of Ey aka Queerability” in collaboration with Voice Innovate and Learn grantee the Luang Prabang Film Festival doing a project on inclusive film-making, called Finding a Voice through film.

The Story of Ey is a short documentary of a transgender woman with disabilities titled “Queerability”. It was shown at the Luang Prabang Film Festival 2018 themed “PAUSE”. The heart of the story is the integration into society of people with

diverse sexualities equipped with the ability to contribute, just like any other individual. The story features a disabled transgender woman, called Ey, living her life as a beautician. Her message to the younger LGBTI community in Lao is that acceptance starts from within. She also encourages the parents of LGBTI children to be more understanding of their children for a happier and more fulfilling life. The documentary complements PTBUL’s work as an organisation to advance their advocacy for the rights of the LGBTI community in Laos.

After releasing Queerability on social media, the story was shared on the Facebook page of the Laos Prime Minister captioned “From Lao Societal Unit –Proud To Be Us Laos.” A number of LGBTI fan pages sent several positive and encouraging messages telling PTBUL to continue paving the way for the younger Lao LGBTI community. A good sign that indeed their empowerment and advocacy strategies are working!



Photo from Samburu Women Trust

## AMBASSADORS OF CHANGE



### SAMBURU WOMEN TRUST KENYA

The Samburu Women Trust (SWT) is an Influencing grantee in northern Kenya, implementing a project called Usawa Dada (meaning our sisters' equity in Swahili) to amplify thus far unheard voices from North Kenyan indigenous women, girls and their allies. SWT was started by women who felt personally motivated to end institutionalised violation of women's and girls' rights among their pastoralist communities. The organisation positions itself as the champion of human rights for women and girls and supporter of victims and survivors of retrogressive cultural practices.

One of the key activities for Usawa Dada is the girls' mentorship and leadership camps that bring together girls from the community for knowledge sharing and learning journeys on issues such as children's rights, education, sexual and reproductive health as well as counsel-

ling for survivors of negative cultural practices. At the end of the learning camp girls who walked in blank and victimised, leave with hope and knowledge. In the process they become ambassadors of change themselves. In addition to the girls Usawa Dada also helps empower other Ambassadors of Change to speak out boldly against harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage, female genital cutting and beading which has continued denying them dignity. The Ambassadors are important stakeholders, ranging from cutters, local authorities, religious leaders and/or women who have escaped or underwent cutting. Below follows an excerpt from one of the Ambassadors.

From stigma to singleton: Salante Lebulkash (pictured above)

*"I reached to a point I could not stand the disrespectful way he was treating me despite being the mother of his children. I moved out and started my own life as a single mother."*

Frowned upon at first by the community, 20 years later Salante is a respected woman, empowering other women by guiding them on entrepreneurship and self-esteem.



AMPA members during the Voice Bazar. Photo taken by Inez Hackenberg.

## COMING TO AND RAISING YOUR VOICE



### ASSOCIATION MALIENNE POUR LA PROTECTION DES ALBINS MALI

*I dream.... of a world where people with different needs will be the leaders of their own lives*

From a poetry slam written by Aminata Traore, President of AMPA

If there is one example of a rightsholder group-led grantee within Voice that has shown empowerment leading to influence par excellence, it is the Association Malienne pour la Protection des Albinos (AMPA). Voice is their first donor and the small empowerment grant has already resulted in a strong work ethic and planning skills. In their own words:

*"We first determine our objectives, then elaborate a calendar of activities with deadlines. We then agree on the internal rules and regulations we have to adhere to after which we identify the needs to be addressed and the*

*tasks to be divided according to the talents and abilities of each one of us, working in a pleasant environment with good moods."*

However, the good mood was shaken to the core, when little Ramata Diarra, a 5-year old albino girl was murdered in May 2018, shortly before the presidential elections took place in Mali. She was killed due to the local belief that the body parts of people with albinism bring potential powers to political leaders -also a problem elsewhere in Africa. AMPA was able to mobilise the (albino) community as well as local authorities to offer support to the grief-stricken family. Through the Voice Linking and Learning component, AMPA mobilised all local grantees to demand justice from the Minister of Human Rights during a personal meeting.

AMPA is becoming known for its creative ways to raise awareness on the issue of

albinism in Mali. In October 2018, during Mali's solidarity month they organised the Ms and Mr Albino Contest to bring to life the hashtag #beautybeyondtheskin which drew a huge crowd, including from the Advisory Board of Voice. All of this has had an empowering impact on the members of AMPA but especially its leader, Aminata Traore. Co-written by Voice, Aminata wrote a case study on AMPA for the 2018 flagship OECD Development Co-operation Report titled Leave No One Behind, published in December 2018. And during the last Inclusion Innovation Indaba, Aminata and Djouma from AMPA co-led the discussions on busting the myths around albinism. And thanks to the collaboration between AMPA and Agoratoire another empowerment grantee that focuses on creativity, Aminata became a poetry Slammer herself!

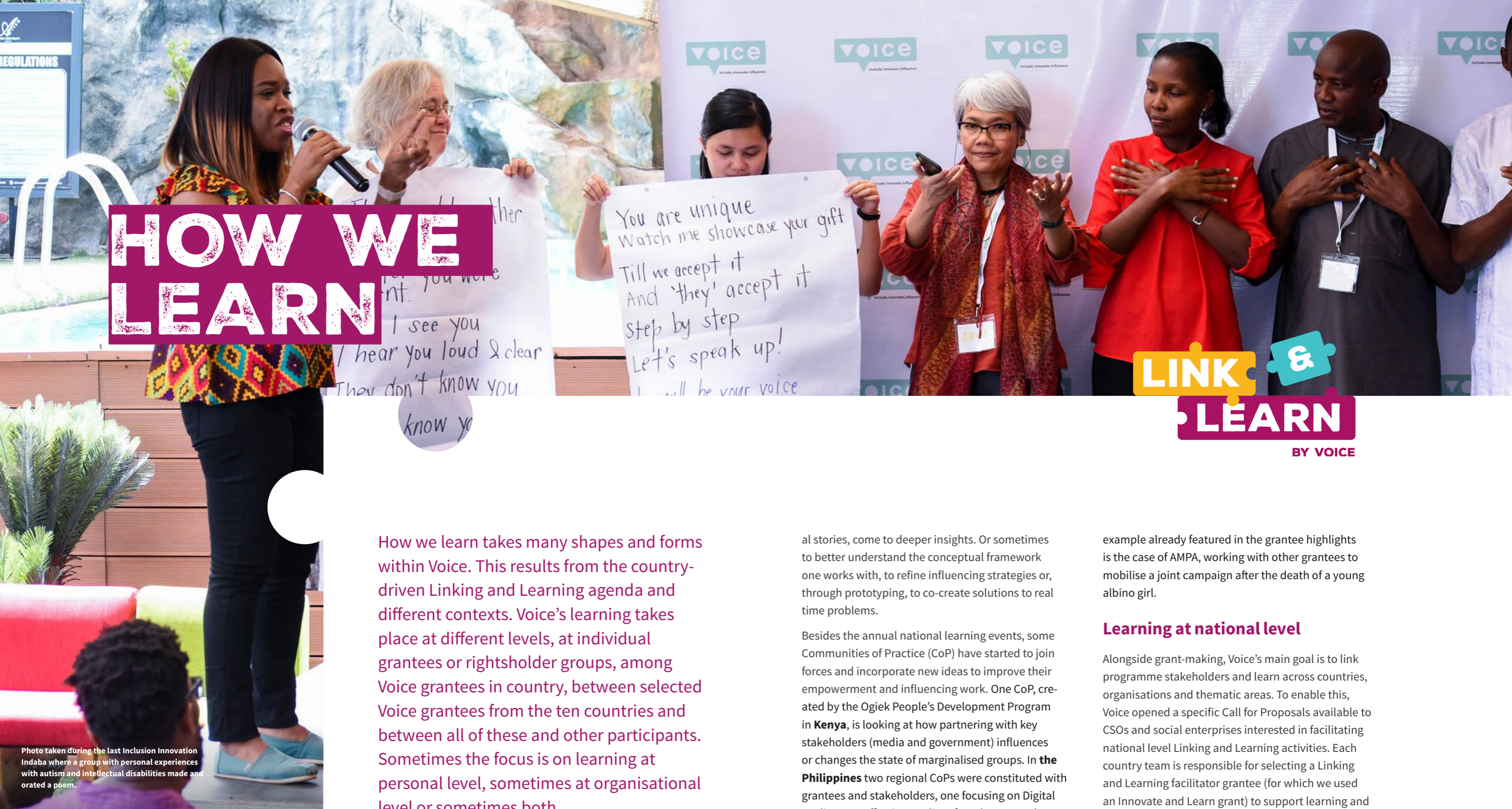


Photo taken during the last Inclusion Innovation Indaba where a group with personal experiences with autism and intellectual disabilities made and orated a poem.

How we learn takes many shapes and forms within Voice. This results from the country-driven Linking and Learning agenda and different contexts. Voice's learning takes place at different levels, at individual grantees or rightsholder groups, among Voice grantees in country, between selected Voice grantees from the ten countries and between all of these and other participants. Sometimes the focus is on learning at personal level, sometimes at organisational level or sometimes both.

Learning starts through sharing of the work we do and challenges encountered. And even more, how they were overcome. Especially the national learning events are an opportunity to dive deeper into some issues the grantees want to learn more about or from each other. Creative ways are used to deepen listening and focus the reflection to go beyond lessons learned and to make sense of situations and together, based on personal and organisation-

al stories, come to deeper insights. Or sometimes to better understand the conceptual framework one works with, to refine influencing strategies or, through prototyping, to co-create solutions to real time problems.

Besides the annual national learning events, some Communities of Practice (CoP) have started to join forces and incorporate new ideas to improve their empowerment and influencing work. One CoP, created by the Ogiek People's Development Program in **Kenya**, is looking at how partnering with key stakeholders (media and government) influences or changes the state of marginalised groups. In **the Philippines** two regional CoPs were constituted with grantees and stakeholders, one focusing on Digital Media as an effective medium for advocacy, and another on stakeholder engagement and the capacity to document and share knowledge. Another type of CoP is the Voice Linking and Learning (L&L) community, meeting online monthly.

Through Linking and Learning, grantees know more about each other's interventions, skills and networks. This supports new, sometimes unanticipated, collaboration between grantees and other stakeholders. An

example already featured in the grantee highlights is the case of AMPA, working with other grantees to mobilise a joint campaign after the death of a young albino girl.

### Learning at national level

Alongside grant-making, Voice's main goal is to link programme stakeholders and learn across countries, organisations and thematic areas. To enable this, Voice opened a specific Call for Proposals available to CSOs and social enterprises interested in facilitating national level Linking and Learning activities. Each country team is responsible for selecting a Linking and Learning facilitator grantee (for which we used an Innovate and Learn grant) to support learning and the creation of learning loops. Amongst those organisations that responded to the Linking & Learning Calls for Proposals were social enterprises, media groups, and others specialised in facilitating learning. As a result, we are extending our Linking and Learning team with amazing partners covering specialities like participatory video making, behavioural science, youth engagement, co-creating and co-working and a lot of storytelling capacity

## Coming to voice: more powerful than expressing voice?

*COMING TO VOICE – A process of development and maturation in people, especially those who are marginalised – can be actively supported through a number of processes and practices such as personalisation, participation, accompaniment and facilitation*

Learning Volume, Positive Vibes global  
Innovate and Learn grantee

The story of Positive Vibes -an early Innovate and Learn grantee – presents some interesting insights into Coming to voice, beautifully presented as learning volumes.

Following the first Indaba in January 2018, a lot of learning has taken place at individual and organisational level, leading to changes in the work of Voice grantees, in Voice Linking and Learning facilitation and the priority setting in the ten countries.

## Internal learning on empowerment

The learning has also influenced the way proposals are reviewed by Voice, as we better value those elements that strengthen empowerment processes and enhance ownership and inclusion. Similarly, it enhanced our understanding of coming to voice, the difficult and often painful route to self-acceptance, the enormous diversity in people and life stories, the facts we cannot assume to know. A word surfacing often as a key factor to inclusion, acceptance and authenticity is empathy. A word that has gathered so much meaning. Other ones are trust and humility.

## Learning at global level - Inclusion Innovation Indabas

This report includes two Inclusion Innovation Indabas (a Zulu word for gathering). Even though the second one was held in early 2019, it complements the theme of this report on empowerment and coming to voice.

### First Indaba - Learning from Innovation

As already mentioned, the first one was held in January 2018 to mark the closure of the first Innovate & Learn multi-country projects. It was organised in the form of an “unconference”: a semi-structured series of workshops aiming to create an open space where grantees and other Voice stakeholders could freely exchange experiences, lessons learned, successes and challenges. Ten different testimonials from a sample of grantees and other indaba participants shaped an overall positive impression of the event and a re-assurance that it fulfilled its objectives.

*Inclusivity is not something natural because it is not MY lived experience. This mentality poses a challenge in the attitude of people without disability towards People with Disabilities*

Voice grantee, quoted during the first annual learning indaba



PHOTO FROM LINKING AND LEARNING EVENT ORGANISED BY THIS LIFE CAMBODIA, LINKING AND LEARNING FACILITATOR IN CAMBODIA.

## Second Indaba - Coming to voice

*Learning has shown the value of diversification in our approaches and responses, to be able to engage with Voice target groups on sensitive issues within the context*

MDF Final report

As we focused the year 2018 on empowerment grants, the second Voice Indaba was an incredible opportunity to bring some of these empowerment voices together. Persons with albinism, elderly (or senior citizens) and persons with a psychosocial or intellectual condition -groups both Hivos and Oxfam had few collaborations with- and Voice Linking and Learning facilitators from ten countries joined to share experiences and learn about their own empowerment and processes of coming to voice. What are key barriers to crack? What are things that help us most?

## Some challenges - exploring solutions

Diversifying the use of methodologies, is in some countries in initial stages. It needs courage to step out of our comfort zone and open up to a less hierarchical and protocol heavy way of interacting and for instance, to engage in creative expression and deep listening.

Over time this could become a clear and tangible result of the Linking and Learning process: the diversity and the quality of the sharing and learning processes facilitated.

To capture more of the unplanned learning, events and conversations are documented through video graphing, recording interviews, promoting and sharing blogs and other forms of documentation like using a narrator and feeding back quotes and learning mentioned to participants for endorsement or completion.

An area for improvement is the involvement of grantees in the preparatory process and the decision making on the Linking and Learning programming. In some countries this happens much more than in others for a variety of reasons.

The stories and experiences are incredible and many. And that is our biggest, yet inspiring Linking and Learning challenge for the coming years: to document, share and build on the rich learning taking place at so many levels within Voice.

# WHERE WE GOT TO

## LINKING & LEARNING OUTCOMES - RESULTS 2018

In the next two sections we highlight the key results against our outcome areas related to Linking and Learning and Capacity Strengthening. It is important to note that while the targets are cumulative, covering 2016-2021, the results are for 2018 only.

### OUR TARGETS



### OUR RESULTS 2018

Marginalised groups, CSO's and other key stakeholders developing and implementing innovative and effective strategies to reach, empower and strengthen influencing capacities of marginalised and discriminated groups

1

59% of organisations / informal groups / networks report the use and effects of new insights and innovative approaches

70% of all grantees reported to having A Linking and Learning infrastructure in place that visibly contributes to the insights, understanding and innovation capacity of grantees and other stakeholders of the programme

2

69% of Voice grantees participated in 16 Linking and Learning kick-off gatherings, 6 learning events, 4 communities of practice among grantees started, 30 facilitated encounters between grantees and between them and other stakeholders, 10 capacity and skills building workshops, and/or online and offline consultations. This is mainly due to the great work of the Linking and Learning Facilitators.

From a target of 20, Voice has been able to report 41, that is double plus 1 of new ideas & approaches that have been prototyped, tested and evaluated, ready for scale, to be shared and potentially adopted by relevant stakeholders

3

*Voice has been successful in offering the space and freedom to apply and test many different approaches, even though they have not all been equally successful*

MDF Final report



Photo from Indigenous Women Rising, knowledge exchange organised in the Philippines.

On this page we have highlighted the most commonly mentioned elements of a Linking and Learning infrastructure that visibly [and effectively] contributes to the insights, understanding and innovation capacity of grantees and other stakeholders

### Digital Learning Platforms: Using mobile applications to connect and generate learning from different Voice grantees' campaigning efforts

Indonesian Linking and Learning Facilitator Engage Media set up a mobile-based chat group which is attended only by Voice grantees that participate in national learning events, whereas mailing lists include people from the organisations. In Uganda, the Linking and Learning facilitators have learnt and appreciated the importance of embracing and taking advantage of communication and information technology during the implementation of this project. Through the Voice grantees' digital platform, the work and interventions of grantees are appreciated more by the online community and the world at large since the platform has provided an opportunity for people to view information on each grantee and progress being made;

### Emphasising on inter-personal relationships and community creation

As Y-Goal, the Linking and Learning facilitator in the **Philippines** has reported, there are a lot of things that can be learned from informal engagements, over dinner or something recreational like karaoke. Grantees tend to be more honest and open during these times. The challenge here is for the L&L facilitators to (1) try more to informally engage with the grantees, say over lunch or snacks break, (2) put a system of reporting feedback from informal sessions, and (3) find a way to harness and document this information.

### Peer to peer learning

Across all ten Voice focus countries, 13 different face-to-face learning events have taken place, in the shape of kick-off Linking and Learning workshops, learning bootcamps, capacity-strengthening workshops, learning needs assessments, prototyping workshops, stakeholder engagement meetings.

In **Kenya** and **Tanzania**, the Linking and Learning facilitators noted that there is an element of exclusion experienced by some of the grantee groups. While efforts have been made to ensure inclusivity, sensitivity, and participation across all grantee groups in **Kenya** and **Tanzania**, the LGBTI groups in particular still face some elements of ostracisation by other grantees.

# WHERE WE GOT TO

## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OUTCOMES - RESULTS 2018

By the end of 2018, Voice has provided support through grants, capacity strengthening and Linking and Learning activities to **725** CSOs, international NGOs, networks and/or community-based groups. **97%** of those organisations and groups have indicated that they have strengthened their capacity to influence social actors through lobby, advocacy, campaigning, community engagement, and capacity strengthening activities.

### Outcome 1

Empowering (Informal) groups are empowered through facilitated safe spaces, enhanced confidence and skills



Safe space creation and peer support amongst marginalised and discriminated groups have been the two main areas of focus for empowerment interventions amongst all projects in the 2018 Voice grants portfolio.

Similarly to the 2017 finding, also in 2018 empowering informal groups through capacity strengthening strategies is not only limited to empowerment grants, but also for influencing projects.

The need for groups to facilitate safe spaces to convene and network with other community members and support each other to better comprehend the context and situation towards their own community better is most prevalent amongst LGBTI youth and people with disabilities in **Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Mali** and **Tanzania**.

In several countries, such as in **Mali, Laos, Philippines** and **Kenya**, empowerment projects have aimed at creating spaces for informal groups to safely work on their change agendas.

We highlight two examples:

- In the provinces of Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Sur and Masbate in the **Philippines**, ten LGBTI persons were able to unite and craft a manifesto urging the local (Bicolano) congress person to help pass the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Equality Bill. The reading of the manifesto by the leaders of the Bicol Regional LGBTI Network was covered by the ABS CBN regional network and was aired in their morning programme “Marhay na aga Kapamilya” on August 27, 2018.
- Working towards a safe space for women with disabilities to mentor them and build their leadership skills has been generating positive results in **Nigeria**: The ‘Think-Able project’, implemented by Step to the Top Leadership Centre helped to empower women with disabilities to make a difference in their communities.

Empowerment grants have particularly enabled rightsholders group-led associations to support each other, (re) connect and work towards addressing similar issues. The most commonly noted capacity components that informal groups have valued, are as follows:

- Strengthening informal groups’ capacity to network
- Creating an enabling environment for groups and key stakeholders
- Acquiring new facilitation and presentation skills, as well as technical project development skills
- Strengthening financial administration and management skills.
- Creating safe spaces in obstructed contexts

### Outcome 2

The capacity of organisations, informal groups and networks has strengthened to build alliances and networks with a variety of

stakeholders, to amplify the voice of marginalised and discriminated groups.



Inputs collected through our milestone reporting mechanism, and surveys conducted through Monitoring and Learning visits, highlighted the following capacity strengthening components:

- Increased ability to formulate joint concrete influencing targets and objectives of change
- Strengthened project cycle management skills
- Strengthened flexibility and adaptability within the operating context
- Increased ability to identify and maximise the use of opportunities and recognise threats, as a consequence of having improved access to information

Testimonies from 40 outcome harvesters representing 20 grantees through 35 validated and substantiated outcomes, underscored strong linkages between empowerment of organisations and groups through capacity strengthening processes and purposeful alliance building. 40% of the total outcome portfolio highlighted the relevance of empowerment processes (safe space creation, learning new skills, strengthening organisational capacity) to the realised change.

Thus far, our milestone and empowerment reporting mechanisms indicated that almost 100% of organisations across all types, utilised the Voice Linking and Learning system (regular meetings and calls) to identify potential allies and launch joint campaigning activities.

Voice defines an alliance or a coalition as a combined action, or a denotation

for a group between citizens, civil society organisations, change-makers within governments, and private sector parties who are willing to develop innovative solutions to their persistent problems. In 2018, grantees have joined forces with other stakeholders, such as:

- Multi-stakeholder platforms (CSOs, women’s rights organisations and community-based groups, private sector, government agencies, knowledge holders (e.g. indigenous researchers, artists). An example here is grantee Caroline for Kibera in Kenya.
- Financial Institutions allying with CSOs to increase financial support towards marginalised groups

### Outcome 3

Informal groups, organisations and networks have reported being able to influence by using a diverse set of advocacy tools



Examples of influencing tools, methods and approaches grantees are using:

- Performing arts (theatre, slamming) and advocacy games
- Traditional lobbying: A good 25% of realised outcomes in the sphere of policy and behavioural change of influencing grantees has indicated the use of traditional lobbying activities (courtesy calls, inviting key stakeholders to grantee events and attending) to help realise the change.
- Carrying out policy assessments on disability, ethnicity, and gender.
- Developing policy advocacy tool/manual for disability rights activists
- Organising Inclusion trainings for authorities and service providers

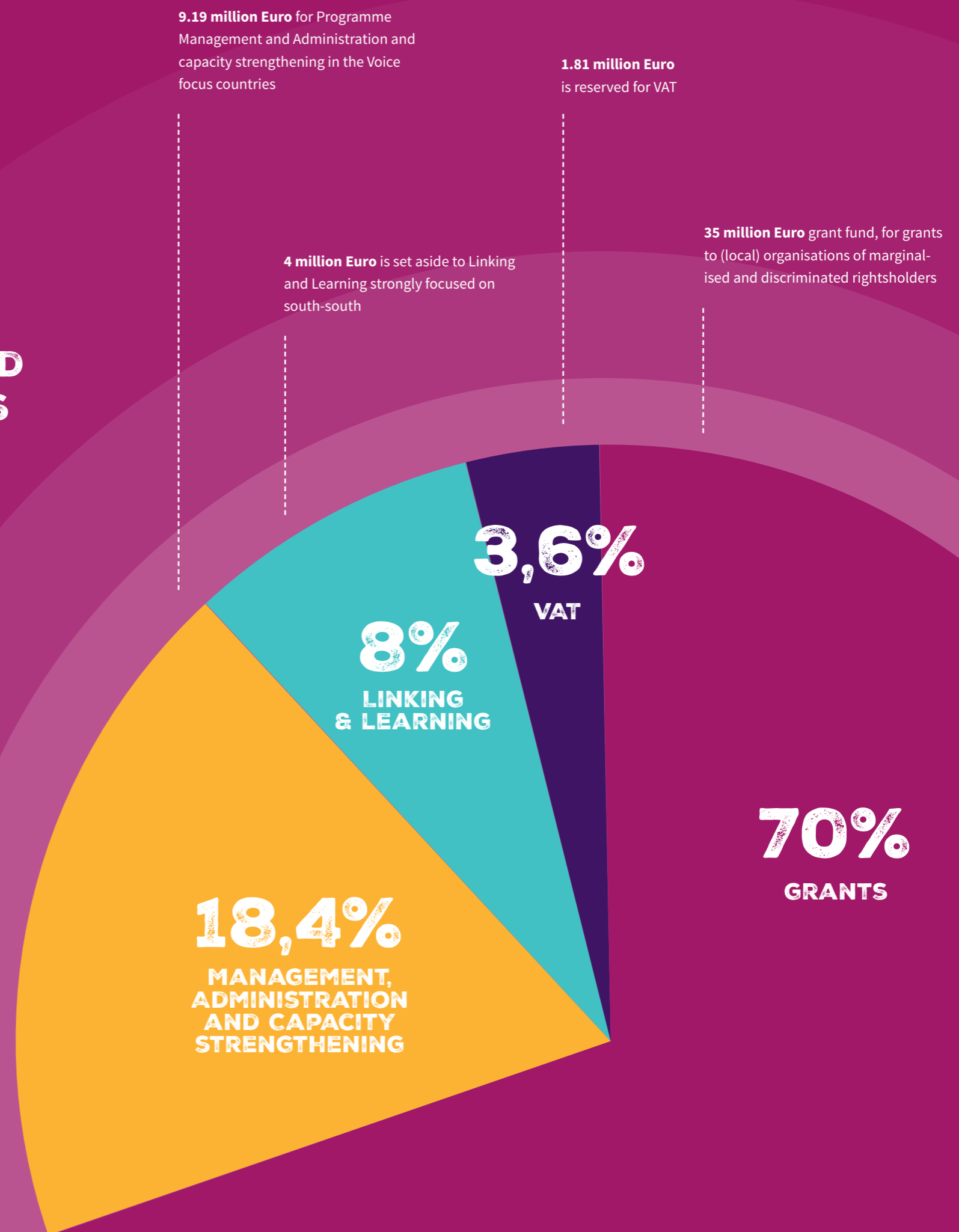
# HOW WE SPENT

**VOICE IS A FIVE-YEAR FUND (2016-2021) TOTTALLING 50 MILLION EURO, THUS FAR FUNDED EXCLUSIVELY BY THE NETHERLANDS MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.**

**OVERALL THE TOTAL BUDGET IS BROKEN DOWN IN THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:**

Voice is a so-called public service contract which has strict requirements for implementation of the grant facility and the Programme management and Linking and Learning component. The nature of the contract means that Voice is subject to 21% VAT on the Programme and Linking and Learning. In the budget and financial report 2018, VAT allocations and expenditures have been provided.

In early 2019 a 0% VAT rate on expenses in Africa and Asia was approved which has resulted in a changed VAT and (total) budget for the entire project lifespan (2016-2021). Thus, there is more budget allocation for other programme areas.





## HOW WE SPENT

# FINANCIAL REPORT 2018

The data and numbers on this page are a summary from the unqualified audit report 2018, which is available on the website and on request.

## OVERALL EXPENDITURE IN 2018

	2017	2018	Cumulative 2016-2018
Grant Commitments	€9.909.361	€13.360.737	€23.270.098
Programme Management and Administration	€1.595.202	€2.183.369	€3.778.571
Linking and Learning	€476.634	€485.644	€962.278
VAT	€435.086	€458.508	€893.594
<b>Total 2018</b>	<b>€12.416.283</b>	<b>€16.488.258</b>	<b>€28.904.541</b>

## FINANCIAL REPORT JANUARY - DECEMBER 2018

	Operational Budget 2018	Expenses 2018	Variance Budget versus Actuals	% spent (budget depletion)
<b>A. Management and administration</b>				
Context, gender and actor analyses	€14.106	€11.127	-€2.979	79%
Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting	€1.327.667	€790.250	-€537.418	60%
Administration (including of the subsidy facility)	€1.034.658	€846.528	-€188.130	82%
Advisory board	€8.851	€10.469	€1.618	118%
<b>B. Linking and Learning process</b>				
Linking and Learning process and activities	€912.916	€485.644	-€427.272	53%
<b>C. Communication and promotion of the fund</b>				
Outreach, publications, website and translation	€87.891	€39.351	-€48.540	45%
Sub-total Management and Administration, Communication and Promotion of the Fund	€2.473.173	€1.697.725	-€775.448	69%
Sub-total Linking and Learning process	€912.916	€485.644	-€427.272	53%
Totals per year	€3.386.089	€2.183.369	-€1.202.720	64%
VAT / 21%	€711.079	€458.508	-€252.571	64%
<b>Total overall</b>	<b>€4.097.167</b>	<b>€2.641.877</b>	<b>-€1.455.291</b>	<b>64%</b>

**Notes:** Small discrepancies in overview are caused by rounding differences. In early 2019 a 0% VAT rate was approved for all costs outside of the Netherlands. This means that more funds are available for Voice.

## MONETARY COMMITMENTS PER GRANT TYPE

	2017	2018	Revised budget 2016 - 2021
Empowerment	€338.719	€1.740.364	€5.750.000
Influencing	€7.741.410	€4.769.091	€14.900.000
Innovate and learn	€1.817.272	€6.220.485	€12.100.000
Sudden Opportunity	€11.958	€630.796	€2.250.000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>€9.909.361</b>	<b>€13.360.737</b>	<b>€35.000.000</b>



## Colophon

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