



“If we get our house in order, the support will come”

PROGRAM EVALUATION

**Growing Stronger
Together
2022—2025**

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Abbreviations

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GST	Growing Stronger Together
OPD	Organisations of People with Disabilities
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PSEAH	Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

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- Laisa Vareti, Director Operations, PDF
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1. Executive summary

1.1 Overview

In 2021, the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)¹ undertook a comprehensive organisational review, developed a five-year organisational strengthening action plan, and initiated the Growing Stronger Together (GST) program. Led by PDF, GST Phase 1 (October 2022 to December 2025) initially supported the institutional development of PDF Secretariat, aiming to model and test an approach to strengthening the capacity of PDF members—namely, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs). Supported by flexible funding and a partnership with CBM Australia and New Zealand, the GST program was adapted to focus on institutional strengthening.

GST has completed a first phase, and CBM Australia has committed to funding a second phase of the program.

1.2 GST evaluation

Commissioned by CBM Australia and guided by an Evaluation Working Group that includes PDF's GST staff, the evaluation of the GST 2022–2025 has three purposes:

- document the program's rationale, approach and activities
- identify outcomes and early signs of impact for PDF, CBM and OPDs
- explore the program's strengths and areas for improvement
- support strategic communication.

The evaluation draws on GST program documents, monitoring data and interviews conducted in October and November 2025 with OPD leaders (13), CBM staff (3) and PDF's GST staff (2). The OPD leaders interviewed represent all impairment groups within PDF membership and organisations across all Pacific regions.

1.3 GST rationale, approach and activities

Since the adoption in 2007 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which outlines the expectations for governments and donor partners to consult OPDs and creates a mandate for OPDs to engage with governments and development partners, there has been a marked increase in requests for OPDs in Pacific Island Countries to lead programs and provide expert guidance. New opportunities have often required OPDs to demonstrate policies, systems and practices that align with the expectations of each development or humanitarian partner. Responding to these expectations can be particularly challenging for OPDs, who are often small or emerging

¹ The Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) is a regional umbrella organisation for persons with disabilities in the Pacific Islands. The PDF advocates for disability rights, strengthens capacity and shapes regional and global frameworks to ensure equity and inclusion. It represents 71 OPDs across 22 Pacific Island countries and territories. See [Pacific Disability Forum website](#).

organisations, largely staffed by volunteers, and led by people with disabilities who have experienced discrimination and barriers to accessing formal education and employment.

GST is a Pacific-designed and Pacific-led program that addresses historical inequities facing organisations led by people with disabilities by supporting OPD leaders in strengthening all aspects of their organisations. The goal of GST—to enhance the capacity of OPDs to advocate for people with disabilities—although not outlined in a design document, is clear across program documents. Further, it was reflected in the evaluation interviews.

The program uses a responsive and relational approach to support OPD leaders and staff in strengthening their organisations. Responding to priorities identified by OPD leaders and staff, and using a relationship-first approach, GST offers a suite of in-person and online sessions, coaching and accompanied activities to strengthen OPDs' strategy, governance, systems and practices, and external relationships and activities.

1.4 Reach and engagement

In GST Phase 1, 33 OPDs completed an organisational self-assessment, identifying strengths and priorities for capacity strengthening. These OPDs are PDF members based in 14 Pacific Island Countries and represent people with disabilities from a range of impairment groups. In 2022–2025, the most frequently delivered GST sessions addressed OPD leadership and board roles, advocacy, budget planning, and reporting and management.

In 2022–2025, GST supported 17 OPDs in developing or reviewing their strategies, 14 in creating or reviewing their constitution, and eight in updating organisational policies. Some OPDs developed or reviewed their strategies, constitutions and policies, whereas others focused on a single aspect.

1.5 Changes in institutional strength

Outcomes: Evaluation interviewees shared consistent examples of changes in the OPDs' institutional capacity. Changes are confirmed in program documents.

Value: OPD, PDF and CBM interviewees consistently shared that changes in OPDs were positive and strengthened the OPDs' internal and external effectiveness.

“We know our roles now. And I think that’s the biggest thing ... for us, it’s about knowing our role ... clear roles, clear lines between operators and governance.” (OPD leader)

Equity: Examples of positive change in institutional capacity were consistent across OPDs that represented various impairment groups. There was less evidence about whether OPD internal practices are changing to address equity and inclusion, or of how people with disabilities in the community are benefiting from OPD activities.

“And another one was about deaf rights to advocate ... and we now have the confidence to lead. So now, good things are happening. We are growing.” (OPD leader)

Sustainability: The changes in OPD institutional capacity were challenged by frequent OPD staff turnover. OPDs will likely need ongoing support to maintain and further strengthen their institutional capacity.

1.6 Contributions to changes in institutional strength

Relevance: Institutional strengthening is consistently recognised as a priority by OPDs and development actors in the Pacific. OPDs, PDF and CBM agree that the holistic approach to capacity strengthening and the relational and responsive approach underpinning activities is effective.

‘It wasn’t ... sitting down and then talking, shooting bullets at us ... No, it didn’t happen that way ... it was more of a talanoa session, or what we call talk story.’ (OPD leader)

Effectiveness: OPD leaders shared multiple examples of GST activities and support that have contributed to positive change in their organisations. The link between GST and changes in OPD institutional strength is supported across data sources.

‘One of the things we learn is how to write reports ... So, what happened? We have three partners comment on our report, and they even ... increased the funds.’ (OPD leader)

Equity: GST activities are inclusive and adapted to support OPDs that represent all impairment groups and allow people with disabilities to participate. Because the GST design and approach is not documented, it is not as clear how GST aims to address equity and inclusion beyond ensuring activities are inclusive and accessible.

Coherence: GST staff support OPDs to access broader PDF resources and regional and global initiatives. It is not clear how GST is aligned to and connected to PDF’s other streams of work. Because of delays, there have been challenges with modelling institutional strengthening in PDF.

Sustainability: Challenges to the sustainability of the design and activities of GST include informal rather than planned integration and learning loops, between the program and PDF and CBM, staff turnover and gaps in documentation of the GST design and the PDF/CBM learning partnership approach.

1.7 Opportunities in GST Phase 2

Design: Document and further develop the GST design.

- Detail how GST is led and guided by people with disabilities.
- Articulate a theory of change.
- Explain how GST builds on the capabilities and resources held by OPDs.
- Outline GST’s approach to advancing equity and inclusion.
- Identify and propose approaches to addressing risks.

- Outline an approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning that integrates feedback loops and strengthens the integration of GST in PDF and CBM.
- Continue to support PDF to model institutional strengthening approaches and practices.

Content and delivery: Develop a practice manual and suite of tools that document the GST's relational and responsive approach to institutional strengthening.

Structural location: Consider and address opportunities to further integrate GST into PDF's broader program of work.

Resourcing: Review resources, particularly GST staff, to determine the level required to sustain and implement the design and approach of GST, and to enable PDF staff with disabilities to lead and deliver the program.

Partnership: Consider documenting the PDF/CBM partnership principles that guide collaboration to deliver GST, including flexible funding and an adaptive programming and learning approach.



2. Evaluation purpose and methodology

Commissioned by CBM Australia, the evaluation of GST aims to document the program's rationale, approach and activities; identify outcomes and early signs of impact for PDF, CBM, and OPDs; and explore strengths and areas for improvement.

The key evaluation questions were:

- How did GST emerge and evolve in Phase 1?
- How well has the project achieved its intended outcomes and contributed to strengthening OPDs in the Pacific?
- How well has the project contributed to sustainable improvements in PDF's organisational capacity, regional leadership and disability rights outcomes in the Pacific?

The evaluation is formative and focuses on identifying outcomes, early signs of impact and lessons to inform future approaches.

2.1 Evaluation approach and data collection

Collaboration-focused and utilisation-focused evaluation approaches informed the design and implementation of the GST evaluation. An Evaluation Working Group, comprising PDF GST and CBM staff, guided the evaluation and provided feedback on evaluation design and deliverables.

Qualitative data collection methods were supplemented by a review of GST activity monitoring data. Data collection included a review of program documents, a focused literature review, three workshops with the Evaluation Working Group, and key informant interviews. Before the interviews, participants received information about the evaluation's purpose and the interview questions. Participants were invited to consent to having their interviews recorded and to the use of their data in the evaluation.

The key informant interview sample included OPD leaders (13), CBM staff (3) and GST staff at PDF (2). The OPD leaders interviewed represent all impairment groups in PDF's membership and organisations across all Pacific regions. More details regarding the key informant interview sample are available in [Appendix 1, Table A.1](#).

2.2 Data analysis

The GST program's theory of change ([see Figure 1](#)) guided the identification of institutional strengthening outcomes and the contributions to those outcomes. An evaluation rubric ([see Appendix A, Tables A.3-A.5](#)) was used to assess the quality and strength of the evidence.

2.3 Limitations

The evaluation data collection was relatively modest, drawing on available program data and documentation, and focused on a purposive sample of OPD, GST PDF and CBM staff. The evaluation did not include perspectives from partners, including government counterparts or all funding partners.

A particular limitation is that people with disabilities were not involved in the design and implementation of the evaluation.

3. Emergence and development of GST

This chapter addresses Evaluation Question 1:

- How did GST emerge and evolve in Phase 1?

It outlines the origins, design and implementation of GST.

3.1 Growth in demand for OPD expertise

Requests to OPDs to provide inclusive development expertise has increased steadily from the early 2000s. Pacific Island Countries governments and development actors, including major funders, UN agencies, multilateral organisations and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), have increasingly sought OPD input to guide their inclusive development approaches. A 2013 PDF review of OPD organisational strengthening opportunities found that:

‘[OPDs] ... in Pacific countries are currently experiencing rapid and significant changes. They are achieving higher levels of recognition than ever before, and their advocacy and rights-awareness work is increasingly contributing to changes in the lives of people with disabilities in their respective countries and in the region.’²

Development actors’ motivations to work directly with organisations led by people with disabilities grew throughout the 2000s, driven by several key factors:

- **Commitment to the CRPD:** Pacific governments and regional bodies are committed to the convention, including Article 4(3), which outlines the rights of people with disabilities to be consulted and actively involved through their representative bodies in decisions that affect them. It also creates a mandate for OPDs to engage with government and development actors.³
- **Donor policy requirements:** Since its first Disability Inclusion Policy in 2008, the Australian Government has required development and humanitarian organisations to demonstrate that people with disabilities participate in and benefit from programs that it funds. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 2024 Disability Equity and Rights Strategy further reinforced the Australian Government’s commitment to inclusive development, centring engagement with OPDs as experts and partners.
- **Research and advocacy:** Disability movement research and advocacy, along with allies, increased awareness of the disproportionate effects of natural disasters on

² Rhodes, D., Macanawai, S., Tawaka, K., & James, R. (2013). *Capacity development for effective & efficient disabled people’s organisations in Pacific Island countries*. Pacific Disability Forum. Available from: [Pacific Disability Forum report \(PDF\)](#)

³ Vereti, L., & Daniels, L. (2024). *Meaningful rights-based engagement with organisations of people with disability*. Nossal Institute for Global Health. Retrieved from [University of Melbourne – Nossal Institute for Global Health](#). Rhodes, D., Macanawai, S., Tawaka, K., & James, R. (2013). *Capacity development for effective & efficient disabled people’s organisations in Pacific Island countries*. Pacific Disability Forum. Available from: [Pacific Disability Forum report \(PDF\)](#)

people with disabilities—highlighting the need for disability-led program design and response.⁴

- **Localisation agenda:** This agenda shifted the design and delivery of development and humanitarian programs to Pacific civil society organisations, including OPDs.⁵

While requests for OPD expertise increased, so too did expectations and associated risks. Studies and reviews by CBM and PDF consistently suggest that funding and collaboration requests often require OPDs to complete organisational assessments to demonstrate adherence to donor systems and policies.⁶ These compliance demands can be challenging for OPDs—many of which are small, grassroots organisations that are often led by volunteers and a few staff who have usually faced barriers to education and employment because of systemic discrimination.⁷ Although donor funding may include capacity strengthening support, these offers are often shaped by donor compliance requirements rather than OPD strategic priorities.

3.2 PDF's approach to OPD institutional strengthening

A commitment to learning has guided PDF's OPD institutional strengthening initiatives and informed the design of the GST initiative. A collaborative research project conducted in 2011–2012 by PDF and the Australia–Pacific Islands Disability Support identified OPD institutional strengthening priorities and preferred approaches.⁸ From 2014, PDF provided capacity strengthening activities to support its OPD membership in developing core organisational policies required by partners' funding of disability-focused and inclusive development programs. PDF membership at the time was small, and institutional strengthening activities were integrated into PDF's broader program of work. Reflection within PDF on these efforts identified further opportunities to support OPD members:

- expand institutional strengthening towards a holistic approach that integrates strategy, systems, policies and practice—supporting OPDs to sharpen their focus, operations and advocacy
- model and test policies and operating procedures within PDF before adapting them for member OPDs.

⁴ Wilson, B. (No date). *Creating a new 'business as usual': Reflections and lessons from the Australian Aid program on engaging with disabled people's organisations in development programming and humanitarian action*. International Disability Alliance. Available from [International Disability Alliance discussion paper \(PDF\)](#)

⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (No date). *DFAT guidance note: Locally-led development*. DFAT. Available from [DFAT Guidance Note \(PDF\)](#)

⁶ See, for example, Vereti, L., & Daniels, L. (2024). *Meaningful rights-based engagement with organisations of people with disability*. Nossal Institute for Global Health. [University of Melbourne – Nossal Institute for Global Health](#); Rhodes, D., Macanawai, S., Tawaka, K., & James, R. (2013). *Capacity development for effective & efficient disabled people's organisations in Pacific Island countries*. Pacific Disability Forum. Available from [Pacific Disability Forum report \(PDF\)](#)

⁷ Vereti, L., & Daniels, L. (2024). *Meaningful rights-based engagement with organisations of people with disability*. Nossal Institute for Global Health. [University of Melbourne – Nossal Institute for Global Health](#)

⁸ Rhodes, D., Macanawai, S., Tawaka, K., & James, R. (2013). *Capacity development for effective & efficient disabled people's organisations in Pacific Island countries*. Pacific Disability Forum. Available from [Pacific Disability Forum report \(PDF\)](#)

These insights about effective approaches to OPD institutional strengthening have been further developed, including through PDF's partnership with CBM. A 2025 case study that documented the value and impact of PDF's partnership with CBM noted that the collaboration has better equipped the PDF Secretariat to support the diverse needs of its member organisations.⁹

3.3 GST funding and partnership

PDF started the GST initiative in 2022 and received flexible funding from CBM Australia and CBM New Zealand for GST 2023–2025. This flexible funding arrangement, enabled by a partnership built over more than 17 years, allowed PDF to lead from the Pacific:

'Our localisation approach—Pasifika made, OPD delivered to feel Pacific and smell Pacific and taste Pacific.' (Setareki Macanawai, CEO of PDF, 2007–2024)

Supported by CBM funds, the partnership enabled PDF to develop and adapt the GST program to reflect emerging learning and priorities. An organisational self-assessment was initially trialled with PDF, and then with OPDs in four Pacific Island Countries in 2022, before being adapted and rolled out to PDF's OPD membership more broadly in 2023. In 2024, in response to PDF's proposal, CBM provided additional funds for GST to integrate and expand the BRIDGE program, an intensive training program for OPDs that was designed to build advocacy capacity and create a 'bridge' between human rights and inclusive development practices. CBM Australia's Pacific Impact Team works with the GST PDF team in a learning-oriented partnership. PDF and CBM teams meet regularly and have ongoing online conversations in which they share reflections on practical approaches and ideas for strengthening GST activities. Using other CBM funding, the CBM team additionally provides OPDs with technical support when GST staff at PDF cannot respond to requests from OPD leaders.

The CBM flexible funding enabled PDF to lead and iteratively develop GST. Other funding streams supported GST and OPD staff roles and funded some capacity strengthening activities with OPDs. Funding from regional government aid and development programs via Australia's DFAT and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) supported a proportion of the two GST staff roles and OPD core operations, and contributed towards some GST capacity strengthening activities.¹⁰

⁹ CBM Effectiveness Team. (2025). *Case study supporting the Pacific Disability Forum to engage in and influence development processes, impacts of Outcome Area 2 of the DFAT-CBM IAG Partnership*. DID4all. Available from [DID4all case study \(PDF\)](#)

¹⁰ The DFAT and MFAT funds identified for OPD core operations are managed by PDF and are disbursed to OPDs. Amounts vary between \$5,000 and \$30,000, depending on the PDF membership status of the OPD. Several members who participated in the GST receive funding and some capacity strengthening support from other sources, including the Disability Rights Fund, DFAT country posts and Australian Government bilateral country programs.

Table 1 GST Partnership Structure and Roles

Actor	Role in GST
PDF	Building and strengthening relationships with OPDs Design and lead GST Training, coaching and responsive technical advice or employing expert consultants Coaching: project management cycle systems and practice Accompaniment: stakeholder dialogue, CRPD shadow reporting, budget advocacy Model change: review and update PDF policies and systems
OPDs	Organisational self-assessment Commitment Mobilise OPD-held resources and networks Update policies and systems and change practices Peer learning and support Feedback to PDF
CBM Australia	Lead partner Flexible funding using CBM funds (approximately 80% of GST budget) Core funding for GST regional coordinator Learning and reflection partner Technical support backup
CBM New Zealand	Contributing partner Flexible funding (approximately 20% of GST budget)
DFAT and MFAT	Core funding for some staff working on GST Core funding for OPDs Some funds for OPD capacity building

3.4 GST emerging program theory of change

GST aims to address historical inequities facing organisations led by people with disabilities by supporting the disability movement to build strong Pacific OPDs through multifaceted, flexible and long-term support. Although the design of GST was not consolidated in a single document, the goals of GST are outlined in annual and quarterly reports to CBM and were reflected in the evaluation interviews.

A strong OPD in the Pacific:

- knows its identity, community, purpose and focus
- has people, governance structures and processes, systems, policies, resources and capabilities that provide the foundation for effective advocacy and strategic action to advance the rights of people with disabilities
- is connected to and contributes to the collective influence of the Pacific Disability Rights Movement
- is a recognised and trusted partner for governments and development actors, including funders.

The introduction to GST for OPDs requires them to complete an organisational self-assessment, and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. This supports OPD board members and staff to identify the initial priorities for

organisational strengthening. The GST approach includes a modelling step in which the organisational self-assessment is implemented in PDF. The intention is to test and adapt operating procedures and policies in PDF before rolling them out to OPDs. Although PDF completed an organisational self-assessment, implementation of operating procedures and policies did not occur until 2024 because of delays in PDF's board review and endorsement.

GST takes a holistic organisational strengthening approach, integrating governance, leadership, strategy and workplan development; staff, finance and project management; and technical and advocacy capacity strengthening. Activities promote awareness and understanding of the CRPD and support OPDs in influencing government commitment to and action on the rights of people with disabilities, including by supporting OPDs to develop shadow country budgets and shadow CRPD reports. Paid and voluntary OPD staff and board members are invited to participate in GST activities. PDF staff and OPD leaders often explain that 'if we get our house in order, then the support will come', reflecting the underlying assumption of the GST theory of change: organisations that have a clear direction, strong governance and transparent policies and systems are more likely to be trusted partners that receive funding and are sought out for advice.

In Phase 1, GST was managed by two PDF staff—the Operations Director and the Coordinator Organisational Development, who had finance management skills. PDF GST staff-led engagement with OPDs included facilitating in-country sessions and meetings, providing responsive and ongoing support via email and online meetings, and organising regional workshops and forums. Consultants were employed by PDF using the GST budget to support OPDs in developing or reviewing the organisation's constitution and strategy, supporting leadership training, developing operating procedures, and reviewing or developing policies.

An emerging GST program theory of change is presented in [Figure 1](#), and an overview of GST components and delivery channels is available in [Appendix B, Table B.1](#)

3.5 Delivery approach and channels

The implementation and practice of GST emphasise a relationship-first approach. When GST staff visit OPDs, they make time to strengthen relationships with OPD staff, build trust, discuss sensitive topics and create a safe environment that supports learning. Time is taken to ground the GST engagement in talanoa or storytelling, inviting OPD leaders and staff to share and reflect on organisational strengths and challenges. GST staff prepare meals for OPD staff and work in ways that best suit them, for example, facilitating sessions after business hours when OPD volunteers and staff have finished their paid working day. GST staff shared that the investment in building trust allowed OPD leaders and staff to disclose and discuss sensitive topics, for example, conflicts between individuals in governance and leadership roles, or to strengthen their understanding of financial management practices. This relational dimension of the GST work further highlights the importance of the Pacific-led approach and is likely an enabler of OPD institutional strengthening outcomes.

Building on PDF's earlier experience with capacity strengthening initiatives, GST employs multiple channels to provide ongoing, adaptive and inclusive support. Activities are guided by priorities identified by OPD board and staff, both via the initial organisational self-assessment and through topics that emerge during in-person and online sessions. The emphasis on responsiveness to OPD priorities allows GST to respond to the diversity of OPDs across the Pacific. The diversity includes some organisations that are established

and have funding and staff; others that are re-establishing after a period of dormancy; and others that have been recently recognised and registered with their government, are building their profile as advocates and are seeking funding to develop their organisation.

Depending on the preferred approach, GST support activities can be ongoing and include:

- in-person training and workshops
- coaching to practise and gain confidence in a skill, for example, finance, or to influence inclusive budgeting or submit a CRPD shadow report
- accompanying OPD leaders to meetings with partners and government representatives
- online and responsive help desk functions for OPDs.

Accommodations provided to support people with all impairments to access and participate in GST activities included translators, sign interpreters and closed captions when delivered online. PDF staff delivering GST spoke several Pacific languages, enabling content delivery in local languages. Feedback from the OPD participants in GST in the evaluation interviews indicated that GST staff used language they understood and broke concepts into smaller parts.

‘[GST staff] ... broke [it] down [to] our level, so it was really easy to understand and grasp all that information.’ (OPD leader)

GST staff often delivered activities in OPD offices, sticking flip charts to walls so OPD staff could continue referring to the key messages following the GST sessions.

‘We will do it on the butcher paper ... and we leave it behind for them to use it.’(PDF staff)

The GST design that emerges from program documents and evaluation data aligns with the Pacific-focused practice literature on effective approaches to institutional capacity strengthening. The available literature is limited, and the sources identified in a focused review for the evaluation that specifically address the institutional capacity strengthening of OPDs in Pacific Island Countries are written by PDF, CBM staff and the Nossal Institute, which has also worked with and partnered with PDF and CBM. However, the recommendations on approaches, activities and delivery channels are consistent and are broadly reflected in the GST’s design. A Phase 2 design process may be an opportunity to review the GST’s design, drawing on relevant literature and approaches to institutional capacity strengthening. [Figure 1](#) provides a pictorial summary of the emerging program theory of change.

Figure 1: GST Emerging program theory of change



The Goal: Thriving OPD's

People with disability assert and enjoy their rights; governments have inclusive policy and practice; the Pacific Disability Rights Movement is inclusive and strong.

Outcome: **Growing OPD's**

- Strong identity
- Strong leaders
- Trusted & strong advocates for disability rights, inclusion and equity
- Responding to priorities and needs of people with disability
- Stronger collective influence with the Disability Rights Movement
- Developing partnerships
- Funding

Outcome: **Strengthening OPD's**

- Deeper knowledge
- More confident
- Shared vision and workplan
- Strengthened policies, systems & practices
- Recognised externally
- Deeper understanding of priorities and needs of people with disability
- Stronger connections with the Disability Rights Movement

Pathways

- ❖ Organisational self-assessment
- ❖ Responsive training and coaching in person and online
- ❖ Accompaniment,
- ❖ Peer learning
- ❖ Ongoing support

Approaches

- ❖ Pacific-led
- ❖ Relationship building
- ❖ Wholistic organisational and Movement strengthening
- ❖ Reflection and adaption

Resources

- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Strategic & technical staff
- ❖ Flexible funding

Why we are investing in organisational strengthening:

'We're building OPDs ...to help strong leaders have a strong movement; if we have strong leaders [we have] a strong voice that can [effectively] influence' (PDF staff member)

What is the value of GST:

'Our localisation approach - Pasifika made, OPD delivered to feel pacific and smell pacific and taste pacific.' - **Setareki Macanawai**

How do we think GST will strengthen OPDs:

'If we build our house, if we get our house in order, then the support will come [to OPDs].' (OPD leader)

4. GST reach and engagement 2022–2025

This chapter addresses Evaluation Question 1:

- How did GST emerge and evolve in Phase 1?

Using GST monitoring data, this chapter outlines the program’s reach to OPDs in Pacific Island Countries and summarises program activities.

4.1 GST implementation and activities

In 2022–2025, GST reached 33 OPDs across 14 Pacific Island Countries by supporting the completion of an organisational self-assessment and a SWOT analysis. GST support was prioritised for PDF members in Pacific Island Countries rather than all PDF members. PDF members in Australia and New Zealand were not involved in GST, because DFAT and MFAT funds have to be used to support programs in partner countries. PDF’s OPD members in New Caledonia were also not reached by the GST and will be invited to participate in Phase 2.

Of the 33 OPDs reached by GST in 2022–2025, 29 were PDF members and four were not yet full members. GST has reached all impairment groups who are members of PDF.

Table 2 Regions and countries reached by GST 2022–2025

Pacific region	Countries
Micronesia	Federated States of Micronesia Kiribati Marshall Islands Nauru
Melanesia	Fiji Palau Papua New Guinea Solomon Islands Vanuatu
Polynesia	Cook Islands Niue Samoa Tonga Tuvalu

In 2022, five OPDs completed an organisational self-assessment as part of GST testing before the program was rolled out to the remaining 28 OPDs between 2022 and 2025.

Table 3 OPD organisational assessments by year

Year	OPD organisational assessment
2022	5
2023	10
2024	16
2025	2
Total	33

4.2 GST program visits to OPD countries

GST staff visited all 33 OPDs at least once in their home country to support OPD leadership and staff in institutional strengthening priorities, provide coaching on systems development and support partner and stakeholder dialogues. Some countries and OPDs hosted two or three GST visits. The schedule of visits to OPDs to provide in-person capacity strengthening reflects requests from OPDs for support from GST and the readiness of all OPDs in a country to work together. Some OPDs receiving funding from other programs requested support from GST to strengthen organisational capacity to address program and donor expectations.

In some cases, GST made multiple visits to countries when staff who had participated in GST training resigned or passed away. In one OPD, two OPD leaders passed away in consecutive years during their engagement with GST.

Help desk or support provided online or by email was not documented by monitoring activities.

Table 4 Number of in-person support days provided by GST to OPDs per country

Country (number of OPDs)	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Nauru (1)	0	0	7	10	17
Fiji (5)	0	0	12	6	18
Vanuatu (1)	3	6	6	0	15
Kiribati (3)	6	0	0	8	14
Tuvalu (1)	0	6	8	10	24
Samoa (4)	0	10	0	0	10
Federated States of Micronesia (5)	0	0	9	0	9
PNG (3)	0	0	8	0	8
Solomons Islands (3)	8	0	0	0	8
Palau (1)	0	0	6	0	6
Tonga (3)	6	0	0	0	6
Cook Islands (1)	0	0	5	0	5
Niue (1)	0	0	5	0	5
Marshall Islands (1)	0	0	4	0	4
Total	23	22	70	34	149

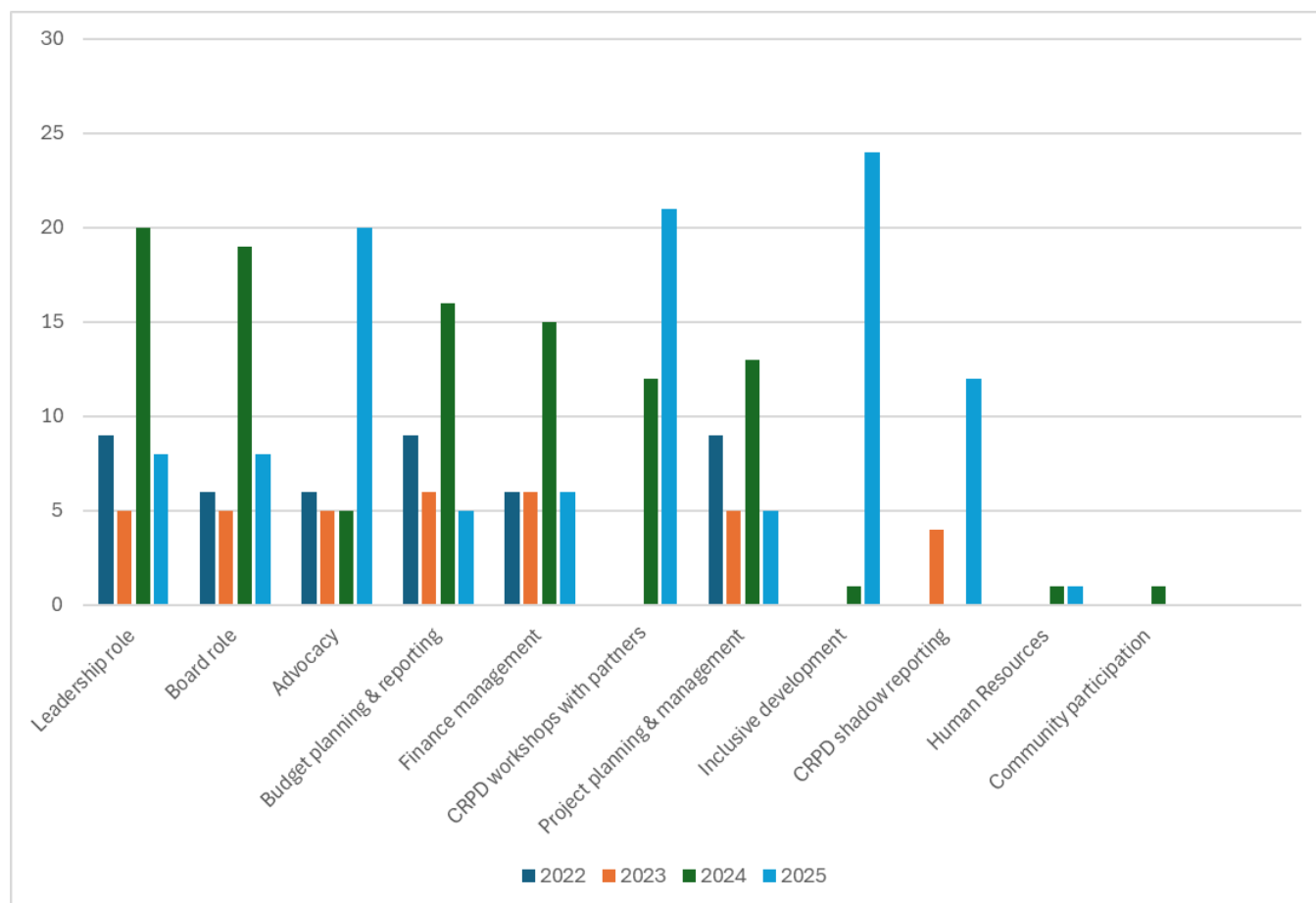
4.3 GST capability strengthening sessions and participants

The most popular GST sessions were leadership, board role, advocacy, budget planning and reporting, and finance management. GST capability strengthening sessions were facilitated by PDF's GST staff and began in 2022, following the completion of organisational self-assessments by an initial group of five OPDs. The busiest year for the delivery of GST capability strengthening sessions was 2025.

In total, 500 women and 419 men participated in the GST capability strengthening sessions. This reflects the total number of participants for all sessions, not the number of people reached by GST, because it includes people who attended multiple sessions. Participants included OPD leaders and staff, as well as people from national governments who attended CRPD training delivered by GST staff in 2024 and 2025.

Participants with a disability who attended the GST sessions could choose one or more functional difficulties during data collection. This means that participants may have been counted more than once in the attendance data for a single session. A range of functional difficulties was represented among participants; people with difficulty seeing were the largest group.

Figure 2 GST institutional strengthening session topics



The [alternate text version](#) is presented in [Appendix C, Table C.1](#)

Table 5 Institutional strengthening participants by gender and disability

Participants	2023–2024*	2025	Total
Female	373	127	500
Male	284	135	419
Total	657	262	919
People without disability	243	86	329

Table 6 Functional difficulties reported by participants in GST sessions

Functional difficulties reported by participants in GST sessions**	2023–2024*	2025	Total
Seeing	179	91	270
Walking	146	83	229
Hearing	50	59	109
Communication	27	69	96
Self-care	32	23	55
Remembering	18	35	53

* Reporting years for this data reflect reporting requirements for DFAT and MFAT funding.

** In the data collection, participants were able to choose all functional difficulties that were relevant to them. This means that the participant data indicate which functional difficulties were reported among participants but do not reflect how many people with disabilities attended GST sessions.

4.4 OPD strategies, systems and policies developed

In GST Phase 1, the development of OPD strategies, operating procedures and policies was supported by external consultants.

One consultant was employed to develop a template or an example standard operating procedure that OPDs could review and adjust to reflect their needs. The standard operating procedure has been drafted and shared with OPDs but has not yet been endorsed by OPDs.

A second consultant supported OPDs in developing or reviewing organisational strategies, constitutions and policies. In GST Phase 1, 17 OPDs developed or reviewed their organisational strategy, and 14 created or updated their organisational constitution. Eight updated or drafted finance; child protection; prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH); reasonable accommodation; and code of conduct policies, and seven updated or drafted human resources policies. Some OPDs developed or reviewed their strategies, constitutions and policies, whereas others focused on a single aspect.

Table 7 Organisational system, template or policy developed

System, template or policy developed	Number of OPDs supported
Standard operating procedures*	33
Strategy	17
Constitution	14
Finance management system	8
Budget example	8
Annual workplan	4
Policies reviewed or developed by OPDs	
Finance	8
Child protection	8
PSEAH	8
Reasonable accommodation	8
Code of conduct	8
Human resources	7

* By the end of GST Phase 1, all OPDs participating in GST had access to a draft standard operating procedure.

5. Institutional strengthening outcomes

This chapter addresses Evaluation Question 2:

- How well has the project achieved its intended outcomes and contributed to strengthening the capacity of OPDs in the Pacific?

This chapter outlines evidence for changes in institutional strength, focusing on OPDs and pointing to changes in PDF and CBM.

5.1 OPD leaders and staff feel more confident and motivated

OPD leaders representing all impairment groups shared in evaluation interviews that they, their colleagues and their community felt more confident. OPD leaders associated feelings of increased confidence with new or deeper knowledge of the CRPD, the rights of people with disabilities, and the accountabilities of duty holders, particularly governments.

‘And another one was about deaf rights to advocate ... we now have the confidence to lead. So now, good things are happening. We are growing. We understand about our rights, how to advocate ... we were encouraged not to wait, but we should take the learnings and go out and start implementing, if we wait and wait and wait, nothing will happen.’ (OPD leader)

‘We were really struggling along the way ... until we had some training ... PDF, always come and help us in training and ... CRPD and help us to ... really, know, where are we going, yeah, how to ... advocate.’ (OPD leader)

Women and girls, OPD leaders suggested, felt more confident to speak up and participate in activities they may not have previously attended.

‘One thing that women and girls with disability are lacking. So, over the last three years, we are able to speak up ... they start to come out and do things that are out of their comfort zone.’ (OPD leader)

‘So, the women are being encouraged to ... participate, yeah, not within the [OPD] but within the community ... to ... the country as a whole. So, women with disabilities are being empowered as well.’ (OPD leader)

OPD leaders explained that increased knowledge and confidence motivated OPD staff to continue and expand their advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities.

‘So, with these trainings ... [they] raised the awareness, yes. And then people ... saw that they could organise.’ (OPD leader)

‘It also empowered me ... So, if somebody tells me, you can’t do it, I’m like, yes, I can do it.’ (OPD leader)

Practical experience of implementing advocacy strategies generated excitement and energy to keep working to advance the rights of people with disabilities.

‘I could see the empowerment, yeah, of the staff ... it empowers us to send another budget, another submission to the government.’ (OPD leader)

An OPD interviewee pointed out that internalised ableism can mean that people with disabilities are more likely to believe information and feel empowered (seek external validation) when information about their rights is shared by people who are from outside their community and who do not have a disability.

‘Most of the time, we tend not to believe what we are, you know, what somebody is capable of within, because we don’t think we are capable of it.’ (OPD leader)

CBM and PDF interviewees noted that increased requests from OPDs for specific technical inputs demonstrate OPD leaders’ greater confidence in directing support to their organisational priorities and agendas. Previously, OPDs may have requested support by writing a report; more recently, PDF’s GST and CBM staff have observed that OPD staff request feedback on a draft report or coaching on developing an advocacy or influencing strategy.

5.2 “Now we are well organised”: OPD roles, strategy, policies and systems are becoming clearer, and practices are changing

Compared with three years ago, OPDs are more effective organisations, as demonstrated by shared agreement on roles, processes and strategy. Changes in OPD internal capabilities were observed by OPD, PDF and CBM interviewees and have been documented in program reports and monitoring data. Interview participants shared that the effectiveness of OPDs had previously been challenged by disagreements over board and staff roles, resulting in a lack of clarity about organisational focus and staff members’ abilities to plan and implement activities.

‘In the past, before ... they come, we used to have a confusion between the board members, yeah, and the office members ... So, as soon as the program come, you told them ... our issue, they come, they explain things. Yeah. See, this is your role, your board members, your role, your officer. That makes things very easy.’ (OPD leader)

‘We needed to know what our role was, yeah, what my role was, what our board’s role was, what we supposed to do as an organisation, how we [were] supposed to lead, how we supposed to keep our finances in order as well as keep our house in order.’ (OPD leader)

‘The first round of assessment, there was a lot of argument with the staff and the board, lots of argument understanding the roles. Now going back, you know, things started to get clearer in terms of the separation of the rules and the processes, some things they have stopped doing.’ (PDF GST staff)

OPD board members and leadership now have more knowledge of roles and agreement about specific and shared responsibilities. Practice changes include OPD boards taking on a strategic role, handing management tasks to OPD staff and clarifying expectations of office managers. OPD paid staff feel more confident to perform their role without interference from board members in day-to-day activities.

‘Most important thing that happened is now we are well organised.’ (OPD leader)

‘We ... know our roles now. And I think that’s the biggest thing ... for us, because for us, it’s about knowing our role, yeah ... clear roles, clear lines ... between operators and governance. And that’s exactly what’s happened to us since the assessment of Growing Stronger Together.’ (OPD leader)

‘Our new ... board ... I would say ... we had no idea [about the] money that was in our organisation to run ... to pay people. We had no idea about where the policies were, and that there were policies that look like they’ve never seen the daylight ... but ... that one opportunity to actually make us look at our organisation, strip the whole thing back again, you know, unpack it.’ (OPD leader)

As outlined in the chapter on reach and engagement, 14 OPDs have reviewed or developed their organisation’s constitution, and 17 have reviewed or developed an organisational strategy. In addition, GST staff provided support to eight OPDs to develop finance management systems and to review or develop finance, child protection, PSEAH and reasonable accommodation policies, as well as a code of conduct. These OPDs requested that GST support them in developing policies and systems, and worked with a consultant paid by GST to outline and draft documents.

OPD leaders reported greater knowledge of their financial management responsibilities and that their organisations had implemented new systems for monitoring and reporting. PDF’s GST staff shared that they had observed changes in OPD financial practices. The translation of systems into practice was observed through a review of OPD financial records, with the agreement of OPD leadership.

‘We have a finance system that we...developed [in] ...the last two years. And this is the support from ... our two donors, the Disability Rights Fund, and from the [Pacific] Disability Forum to ... the finance policy and procedures ... including ... how to maintain and sustain ... the financial management and to how to keep recordings of all expenses.’ [OPD leader]

OPD leaders reported that they had strengthened their capacity to collect disaggregated data using the Washington Group questions and were using the data in advocacy to governments. One OPD collected data from people in regional and remote areas about their unmet needs for assistive devices, and another collected data in schools from young people to build a more detailed understanding of the prevalence and types of impairments among young people.

OPDs have also strengthened their external program of work. OPD leaders identified that they had increased advocacy knowledge and skills. Several OPD leaders identified practical experience and new skills in CRPD shadow reporting and budget submissions. Positive responses from government counterparts and the CRPD committee to OPD advocacy motivate OPD leaders to continue and increase their advocacy.

The pace of change varied across OPDs at various stages of their journeys or development. A few OPD leaders reported that the support provided by GST enabled a quick, significant change in their organisations, which could be sustained and further developed locally. For other OPDs, steps towards change were incremental and required sustained support, using in-person and online coaching activities. PDF’s GST staff explained that they often used coaching to support OPD staff in strengthening their finance monitoring and reporting skills.

Changes in OPD internal and external capabilities were valued by OPDs that represented all impairment groups. It was not clear from the available data whether OPDs were identifying and addressing opportunities to strengthen equity and inclusion in their organisations and external activities, including advocacy. This highlights an opportunity to document and reflect on how GST supports changes in OPD practices, including to advance equity and inclusion.

The benefits of clearer roles, policies and systems will likely be sustained for some time, but the effects might dilute without ongoing investment by OPDs and supporters. In addition, GST program reports have noted that some OPDs continue to lack fully operational boards and governance procedures. Interest in and motivation for advocacy may also decline if responses from government and partners are not encouraging and if OPDs feel that progress towards policy and practice change is stalled. Board and staff turnover, because of staff leaving for other opportunities or when leaders pass away, will continue to challenge the sustainability of institutional strengthening. OPD succession planning is among the mitigation strategies that could be considered to manage the risks of turnover among board members and OPD staff.

5.3 Some OPDs have been recognised for the first time; others are prioritising advocacy efforts

Some OPDs had registered with governments for the first time, or re-registered after a period during which the OPD had been dormant. OPD leaders understood official recognition from government ministries as a gateway to communication and potential influence on policies, programs and budget allocation. Smaller OPDs or those earlier in their development journey identified the importance of being recognised by partners as an independent organisation that represented the priorities and experiences of people with particular impairments. One OPD leader explained that their organisation was now receiving direct communications rather than information via other organisations. They explained that this was an indication of recognition of their OPD as an independent advocate.

‘[W]e just got registered this year ... I can [now] talk to the government and other stakeholders and other partners ... Registration is very important. If you don’t have it, maybe someone won’t recognise you.’ (OPD leader)

‘The last three years, we [were] not ... recognised from the government, but now, we have a lot of key stakeholders that we work with to support us in our work.’ (OPD leader)

‘Before, three years ago, people ... go direct to other [OPDs]. But now, after the advocacy, they understand and they recognise that all the communication should go through the Deaf Association ... open communication is good for us, because if we don’t talk, people will not know our issues and not understand us.’ (OPD leader)

Several OPDs had received an increased number of requests to join government committees or provide technical advice. In some cases, OPD leaders were prioritising where and how to engage and invest resources in advocacy.

‘We are now so busy with different ... partners and stakeholders, private sectors, they want us to, you know, [to] audit their buildings. And we told them, it’s not free now ... we ended up going to a lot of these government meetings, sitting at the table, because [the] biggest thing in our strategic plan was to have a seat at the table or to be heard.’ (OPD leader)

‘Probably about three or four years [ago] ... we had no visibility. So, when I was asked if I would attend a meeting, and I turned up, and one of the things they said to me, one of the head[s] of ministry said to me, oh, I didn’t know the [umbrella OPD] was still going ... So, we realised that our visibility was absent from many things ... we thought it was really good to be all on those things, but actually ... it wasn’t. We needed to be a little bit more thinking around about what it is we wanted with each ministry as a board or the advisory on the board ... So now ... [we are] a bit particular about which one [we sit on] ... I’ve managed to hand it all over to different board members to attend ... So, we’ve actually managed to sit on committees that are much more targeted towards things that we need to make sure that the obligations by our government is being met through, particularly the CRPD, yep, rather than bits and pieces here and there, we’ve decided we’re going for the main, the main things.’ (OPD leader)

OPDs across Pacific Island Countries are engaging with national governments and the private sector, providing advice and input on a range of issues, including:

- budget allocation
- inclusive primary, high school and post-secondary education
- accessible and inclusive employment
- social protection policies and implementation
- assistive devices programs
- accessible and inclusive access to health care
- accessible transport
- building accessibility audits
- access to identity documents
- access to interpreters.

At least one OPD had prepared submissions to national government enquiries on legislative change, for example, a national mental health act. With intensive support from PDF’s GST staff, two OPDs had prepared and submitted CRPD country shadow reports and were accompanied to Geneva to present to the CRPD country committees. The preparation of a CRPD shadow report is a significant project for an OPD; it involves an assessment of disability inclusion in national legislation, policies, programs and budget allocations.

Some interviewees pointed out that OPDs were advocating in spaces beyond those focused explicitly on disability, including disaster risk reduction. OPDs were also making

submissions to reviews of other international treaties or conventions, for example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Positive changes in OPD relationships with external partners and in advocacy activities was identified in interviews with OPD leaders from organisations across Pacific Island Countries, that represented different impairment groups and that were at various stages of development, as well as in reflections shared by PDF and CBM staff. The changes in the capacity of OPD leaders and staff to plan and implement advocacy are likely to persist and further strengthen, particularly if they receive positive feedback on their work, including successes, and are supported to further enhance their influencing strategy and tactics.

5.4 OPDs have increased knowledge of community members' priorities and are encouraging women and young people with disabilities to participate and lead

OPD leaders shared that they were engaging with and learning about community priorities and challenges. OPD leaders discussed consulting with communities and learning more about the experiences of people with disabilities living outside major towns.

'We consulted our members on our strategic plan, what we want to see in the next five or ... six years. So, we consulted them, and at the same time, we identif[ied] the different challenges, the big challenges that, yeah, our members are facing in the community.' (OPD leader)

'For the first time, I saw the faces of these ladies ... It was, it was something that was humbling for me ... It was just seeing those faces that were rejected, being told, no, you can be an important part of the [community]. I saw that confidence ... in the eyes of those persons with psychosocial disability. For the first time, this program addressed them and said, I see you.' (OPD leader)

Interviewees shared that OPDs were supporting underrepresented groups, including women and younger and older people, to participate and lead. Several interviewees noted that more OPDs had been established, which had increased the diversity of impairment groups being represented.

'We make sure everybody is being included ... not leaving any [person out] ... we make sure that everyone is included with our national convening.' (OPD leader)

'[There's] more diversity in the movement ... way more OPDs exist now.' (CBM staff)

'So, there's more breadth of who ... the voices [are] in the region. I think many OPDs would, especially the larger ones, would be able to nominate multiple people to attend meetings.' (CBM staff)

A few interviewees noted that some groups, such as people who have psychosocial disabilities, women and young people, continue to experience barriers to involvement and OPD leadership. Barriers identified by interviewees included

- attitudes and practices that were not supportive of women leaders
- discriminatory attitudes by other development actors towards people with psychosocial disabilities

- the lack of OPDs representing particular impairment groups, and
- the lack of programs or pathways that addressed barriers and supported all groups to be vocal and lead OPDs.

OPDs reported that as people learned about their OPD, membership increased. In addition, this allowed the OPD to extend awareness about the rights of people with disabilities established by the CRPD.

‘As soon as blind people who are not members, as soon as they heard about this, the OPD, they started coming ... into our office to be registered.’ (OPD leader)

If resources are available to support OPDs, OPDs will likely continue to broaden and deepen engagement with the community and with all impairment groups. However, it was not clear from the interviews whether and how a more diverse membership and leadership representing underrepresented groups were influencing OPDs; strategic priorities and activities. A more purposeful focus in GST support for OPDs on understanding the layered experiences, priorities and barriers experienced by all groups of people with disabilities and by people of all genders may also contribute to strengthening OPD strategies and practices to advance equity and inclusion.

5.5 More OPDs are managing funds independently, and some have secured new funding

OPDs, mostly those earlier in their journeys, were starting to receive funding directly from PDF or other donors rather than through an umbrella OPD that acted as a fiscal sponsor.

‘So, in June [2025], we start to receive our own funding.’ (OPD leader)

‘Because ... things were in order, we started receiving funding ... before I joined it, our office ... could not even cater for office manager salary, staff salary to run most of the time. There was a time when [for] about three, four months, they did not get any funding, or did not get any income, but they came to work.’ (OPD leader)

Previously, OPDs mainly accessed disability-focused funding; some OPDs have diversified their funding to broader humanitarian and development programs sources, including bilateral programs. Quite a few OPDs are now accessing funds directly from Australian and New Zealand high commission posts.

‘Some of them [OPDs] are starting to apply for funding outside PDF ... now they have a number of funding [opportunities] outside [PDF].’ (PDF GST staff member)

‘It was really good ... because ... we can now apply for funding ... and we’re able to show [policies and systems], I mean, our latest funding is for our ... deaf members. We’ve managed to get funding for them through the Australian High [Commission] ... So not only that, but yeah, other avenues as well, other funders have actually opened up.’ (OPD leader)

At least two OPDs had accessed significantly more funding, employed more staff, rented offices in new locations outside main cities, and expanded advocacy and activities with communities.

‘So, because they’ve seen our covenants, our due diligence, you know, everything’s in place, so they decided to give us last year, [more funding].’ (OPD leader)

OPD leaders shared that GST support directly contributed to new or increased funding. In one case, GST assurances that OPD policies and systems were compliant with funder requirements supported a successful funding proposal.

5.6 OPDs and PDF have stronger connections at country and regional levels; CBM has more insight into opportunities and challenges for OPDs across the Pacific

Through GST, OPDs have had more opportunities to collaborate at the national and regional levels. GST has facilitated connections between OPDs by bringing OPD leaders together from across the Pacific to participate in the BRIDGE program and in regional GST forums that provide opportunities to share institutional strengthening successes and challenges, and to reflect on learning about effective approaches. GST has facilitated peer-to-peer learning, in which OPDs with expertise in representing and working with people with a particular impairment provide support and guidance to an OPD in another country. The value of these relationships is demonstrated by the increase in requests from OPDs to PDF and CBM to support connections across the Pacific, including trips to observe and learn from OPD programs in other countries.

GST is a vehicle for OPDs and PDF to strengthen or form new relationships with Pacific Island Country government and ministry staff through counterpart meetings conducted as part of GST staff country visits. As a result of GST staff meetings with government counterparts, PDF has received requests for technical assistance.

‘Indirectly, the GST project has helped us [PDF] to strengthen the partnership with our government focal point and to hold one-to-one meetings with government, donors and partners on the ground.’ (PDF GST staff member)

‘GST has helped PDF to gain confidence of government and donors and partners on the ground because we are able to use the opportunity while on the ground to run multiple activities, assess, train the OPDs and meet government, donors and partners at as well and have a constructive meaningful engagement with them.’ (PDF GST staff member)

‘Through the GST engagement, PDF has received technical assistance request and disability inclusion advisory request from government and partners on the ground.’ (PDF GST staff member)

As noted in the chapter on reach and engagement, in 2024, GST staff at PDF facilitated six sessions on the CRPD, which involved participants from a government counterpart. CBM staff shared that these sessions were a valuable opportunity to bring together government, OPD and PDF staff to identify and discuss priorities for disability inclusion at the national and subnational levels.

For CBM, GST provides opportunities to strengthen country and regional relationships and to continue building insight into national policy, funding partner opportunities and programs, as well as NGO partner disability inclusion and disability-focused activities. Although CBM has been working with OPDs in Pacific Island Countries for many years, GST provides connections with OPDs across Pacific Island Countries, including umbrella

organisations and those representing people from different impairment groups. CBM connects directly with OPDs when responding to technical support requests and at regional training and forums. At regional forums and in exchanges with PDF's GST staff—as part of the learning orientation to the partnership—CBM learns about the broad themes and patterns in disability inclusion and disability-focused programs and practices across countries and at the regional level.

The GST program provides opportunities to build and update knowledge and to connect and align work at country and regional levels. OPDs, PDF and CBM, and, likely, governments benefit from these connections. This component of GST might be particularly dependent on whether and how connecting with government counterparts and OPD partners in the country is integrated into the GST design and supported by PDF and CBM. Meeting with government representatives and forming connections and a shared commitment to work together is a different type of activity from designing and facilitating institutional strengthening and requires communication, relationship and influencing capabilities. The development of a GST design to support GST Phase 2 is an opportunity to identify GST change pathways; define outcomes for OPDs, PDF and CBM; and map the resources needed to help them.



Nelly Caleb, National Coordinator of the Vanuatu Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (VDPA)

5.7 Summary: institutional strengthening outcomes

Table 7 summarises the evidence of institutional strengthening outcomes against the evaluation rubric. The rubric is included in [Appendix A, Table A.2](#)

Table 8 Summary of evidence of institutional strengthening outcomes

Rubric standard	Description	Rubric standard/ strength of evidence	Summary
Outcome	Evidence of OPD and PDF institutional strengthening outcomes.	Thriving: strong, sustained evidence across sources.	Evaluation interviewees shared consistent examples of changes in OPDs' institutional strength. Changes were confirmed in program documents.
Value	OPDs, PDF and CBM value changes in institutional strength.	Thriving: strong, sustained evidence across sources.	OPD, PDF and CBM interviewees consistently shared that changes in OPDs were positive and had strengthened the OPDs' internal and external effectiveness.
Equity	All OPDs representing all impairment groups had been strengthened; all groups of people with disability and all genders were likely to experience a benefit either directly or via their OPD.	Growing: consistent evidence in multiple sources.	Examples of positive change in institutional strength were consistent across OPDs that represented different impairment groups. There was less evidence of whether OPD internal practices were changing to address equity and inclusion or how people with disabilities in the community were benefiting from OPD activities.
Sustainability	The outcomes were likely to be sustained and to provide an enduring resource that supports growth and adaptation.	Early shoots: initial signs in limited data.	The sustainability of the changes in OPD institutional strength was challenged by frequent OPD staff turnover. It is likely that OPDs will need ongoing support to maintain and further strengthen their institutional capacity.

6. Contributions to change in institutional strength

In this chapter, Evaluation Question 3 is addressed:

- How well has the program achieved its intended outcomes and contributed to strengthening the capacity of OPDs in the Pacific?

This chapter outlines the themes in the evaluation data that point to contributions from the GST program and to other factors that support change in the institutional strength of OPDs, PDF and CBM.

6.1 “You have to get your house in order, but you ... have to know how to build the house”: GST is supporting OPDs to strengthen their organisations holistically

All OPD leaders valued GST’s holistic approach to institutional strengthening, noting that GST provided an opportunity to review all aspects of the organisation and to prioritise next steps. OPD leaders identified clear links between topics covered in GST capacity building and new or strengthened OPD policies, practices, connections and new or increased funding.

‘You have to get your house in order, but you ... have to know how to build the house.’ (OPD leader)

‘We share our issues, give them our challenges. They come with solutions.’ (OPD leader)

‘If we need the support ... related to our OPD development ... we can communicate with PDF staff and ask for their assistance. We need the training on ... this and this and this, the financials, finance system, or the capacity building on ... governance, training or leadership.’ (OPD leader)

‘So, for example, like with the board roles, yeah, they were like chain of command. So, we followed that, like, we followed that in real life ... we took those lessons in capacity building, and we followed it like it was, like we are breathing air ... And that helped us all know what our roles were, yeah, where our restrictions were ... and what we should be doing and what we should not be doing. That was the most important lesson ... what we should not be doing.’ (OPD leader)

OPD leaders valued that GST was led by Pacific colleagues and indicated that GST responded to and addressed the priorities identified by OPD leaders and staff. Reflections shared by OPD leaders suggest that one reason for the effectiveness of GST is that it is led by a Pacific-based organisation and people from the Pacific, and is external to individual OPDs. This strengthened the cultural alignment of the design of activities and signalled an intent to invest in Pacific leadership. For some, the external perspectives brought by GST were the trigger for honest reflection and significant change, or for increased activities, or they encouraged leaders, including women who had previously experienced barriers.

‘With all the questioning from PDF staff, we realised that the whole thing was about us. It’s actually about us. Looking at our organisation.’ (OPD leader)

‘When it came from outside and saying, hey, you need to respect each other’s view, it was like, we ... hear that. We know we go through the same thing, but we don’t believe it. So, yeah, hearing from the ... person from outside was like, hey, this is where we are ... going.’ (OPD leader)

Interviewees indicated that they appreciated that GST support was available via multiple channels, both in-person and online. PDF’s GST staff responsiveness to OPD requests for support was valued, as was their commitment and patience in working through a set of issues and in providing ongoing rather than time-bound support.

‘It’s that one-to-one ... it’s not someone who’s thousands of kilometres away, yeah, in a regional [office] sitting there telling us that this is what we have to do ... or just send[ing] us [a memorandum of understanding] and a [terms of reference] ... I think the personal ... the sitting there and talking to us like it made us important ... I mean, it made us say ... she’s telling us that this is ... what needs to happen.’ (OPD leader)

‘They always work with us ... one-to-one ... we had so many ... Zoom meetings. They are always having Zoom meetings with us whenever we made an appointment. [It was] OK for them to take one, one or a couple of hours ... you know, extra sessions.’ (OPD leader)

Several OPDs linked changes in their OPD policies, systems and practices to increased or new funding.

‘One of the things we learn [is] how to write reports, yeah ... PDF staff taught us how ... to prepare [a] good report ... So, what happened? We have three partners [who] commented on our report, and they even ... increase[d] the funds.’ (OPD leader)

The design principles (Pacific-led, guided by OPD priorities, flexible and adaptive, and holistic institutional strengthening) can be detected in program documents and are explained by PDF and CBM staff. The absence of a GST design, a monitoring, evaluation and learning plan, and data collection is a sustainability risk and could be addressed in Phase 2.

GST was valued by all OPDs representing all impairment groups. Although OPD leaders indicated that GST had supported women and girls in participating and leading, GST’s approach to advancing equity and inclusion could be more purposefully addressed in a design document developed as part of Phase 2.

6.2 “It was more of a talanoa session”: GST’s relationship-first and responsive approach creates a foundation for dialogue, learning and OPD-led action

All interviewees shared that the GST approach to prioritising relationships with OPD staff provided the foundation for the trust required to discuss sometimes sensitive topics, to plan next steps and to maintain openness with GST staff who reviewed records to assess whether practices, usually financial management, had changed. The relationship-first approach was also often mentioned in connection with OPD leaders, who shared that they and staff were feeling more confident and motivated.

The OPD organisational environment also supports institutional strengthening. The leadership and willingness of OPD staff and the board to reflect on organisational strengths and challenges were identified by GST staff at PDF as key supporting factors.

‘From the OPD side, one, it was their responsiveness and two, their trust in us ... a lot of things [were] based on trust, because we had to talk about the good, the bad, the ugly ... open, honest conversation, and that trust that we could drill down to the tiny details of the ugly.’ (PDF GST staff member)

OPDs had existing capabilities, and their own resources and country and regional relationships, which created an enabling environment for institutional strengthening. OPD leaders and staff members had capabilities, prior employment experience, life experience and networks. Additionally, OPD leaders, through their paid employment, bring knowledge of government structures and policies, as well as the country’s bilateral funding environment. Other resources held by OPDs include relationships with government counterparts committed to disability inclusion and, more broadly, with Pacific Island Countries that are signatories to the CRPD. OPDs also have independent connections with regional development partners and donors that are pursuing disability-inclusive policies and practices. In addition, some OPDs serve as technical advisers and funded partners in bilateral programs that prioritise or integrate disability inclusion. These individual and organisational capabilities, connections and partnerships are resources that could be recognised as foundational social capital in a GST Phase 2 design.

The talanoa, or storytelling, approach used by GST staff to open and facilitate dialogue about OPD priorities and challenges is a culturally familiar way to share experiences and reflections, allow turn-taking and ensure everyone is heard and involved in decision-making. Using the talanoa or facilitated dialogue approach can also reinforce a strengths-based approach that surfaces, values and builds on resources and capabilities held by OPD leaders and staff. This contrasts with a trainer-led approach, in which a trainer delivers a program and content to participants. In interviews for the evaluation, OPD leaders were consistently positive about the talanoa approach used by PDF’s GST staff. They appreciated that concepts were illustrated with examples from the Pacific region to support connection and translation into local contexts.

‘We’re able to express things ... in the Pacific, when we talk ... A lot of things don’t happen in a formal setting.’ (OPD leader)

‘It wasn’t this, you know ... sitting down and then talking, shooting bullets at us ... No, it didn’t happen that way ... it was more of a talanoa session, or what we call ... talk story, just sitting down and hearing, and they made the ... content of the sessions so ... simple, yeah. And they also gave ... examples [from] Fiji ... you know ... our sister country. So, when they do that, we are able to take these examples and tailor it ... [to] how we’re going to apply it here in [our] context ... that is one of the ways that it made it work.’ (OPD leader)

OPD leaders also noted that PDF’s GST staff responded to the OPD-identified priorities. Similarly, PDF’s GST staff shared that they often adapted and re-prioritised GST activities while facilitating in-person sessions with OPD leaders and staff. CBM staff shared that among the strengths of the GST approach was that it is not a checklist in which topics are delivered to all OPDs, reflecting a set program, but it is guided by and adapted to OPD priorities as they emerge.

The accessibility of GST content was consistently highlighted by OPDs: it was delivered in local languages in some countries, interpretation was provided and concepts were broken down and explained in language that participants understood.

‘Like, having patience to work through with us ... you know, like giving us time and space. OK, you know, think about it ... Options, you know, practical options that work with us.’ (OPD leader)

‘I need a lot of support from them. And they’ve been good, yeah, they’ve been patient with me. Sometimes I don’t reply ... because I’m back home, I’m just trying to find an answer for ... what they want.’ (OPD leader)

‘But, like, working with us, yeah, I think ... that [also gave us] strength in knowing, OK, we can do it. We have got somebody backing us ... We don’t come as donors, but as you know, part of [our OPD] family, right? Yeah. So, you know that willingness to work together and saying it is our organisation, rather than [being] on the other side.’ (OPD leader)

Coaching—in which GST staff worked alongside OPD leaders and staff using the ‘I do, We do, You Do’ coaching model—was identified by many interviewees as a practical approach to developing their own and other OPD staff members’ capabilities over time and through supported practice. OPD leaders identified that GST staff provided coaching support to strengthen financial practices, data collection, project reporting and budget submissions. Accompaniment was recognised as valuable, particularly for establishing and enhancing partner, donor and government counterpart relationships and for preparing CRPD shadow reporting.

A few interviewees highlighted the value of peer-to-peer connections and learning, and an OPD leader said that GST sessions were particularly powerful when delivered by people with disabilities. Further, peer-to-peer learning builds a safe and comfortable environment that is conducive to sharing challenges and strengthens accountability for contributing to the foundations of collective influence.

OPD board and staff turnover and, very sadly, OPD leaders and staff passing away have consequences for the sustainability of changes in OPD policies, systems and practices, particularly when the organisation is small and does not have centralised or electronic records. A PDF staff interviewee suggested that PDF could hold backup copies of key OPD documents to safeguard against the loss of institutional development.

6.3 PDF’s leadership of GST links OPDs to broader resources and potentially strengthens the disability rights movement; weak links between GST and other PDF programs are a sustainability risk

Reflections from PDF and CBM staff suggest that the PDF secretariat’s experience and regional role position it to lead and implement GST effectively. PDF:

- has deep knowledge of OPDs, their resources and challenges, and national political and legislative environments that create opportunities and barriers for people with disabilities

- has staff that use their expert knowledge and experience to design and deliver institutional strengthening and coaching that are inclusive and accessible to all people with disabilities
- can connect OPDs to expertise, learning and resources in other OPDs, in the disability rights movement, regionally and globally and to other programs and Pacific regional platforms and initiatives.

PDF's GST staff shared that they tapped into broader PDF resources to respond to OPD requests. Examples shared included PDF staff, such as gender and accessibility auditing staff, as well as PDF leadership, joining GST country visits to provide technical input or strategic guidance. GST staff also connected OPDs to opportunities for capacity strengthening and learning, including peer learning and the disability rights movement in Asia and globally. In addition, through the partnership with CBM, GST staff can refer OPD requests for support to CBM, providing access to a broader suite of support.

'GST was able to bring in PDF's accessibility team to work with them.' (CBM staff member)

'Because there's a lot of ... requests, and some places you've been to a couple of times ... so sometimes we piggyback on other projects, if we're able to, if we go as a support person to that project that might try and use the afternoon to do some of our GST work. Sometimes we refer the request from the OPDs to other relevant staff.' (PDF staff member)

The PDF Secretariat's regional role means that it can both support individual OPDs in advocating for disability inclusion at the country level and facilitate links between OPDs to strengthen their collective influence. An OPD leader reflected that when OPDs become stronger, the movement benefits.

'They have a shared vision around what this can deliver ... for individual OPDs ... ticking all their boxes, it will spill over to the regional level, to PDF. [We] will benefit out of that ... together as an entity, as a movement, yeah, when our house is in order [it] puts us in a very good ... spot.' (OPD leader)

As outlined, GST is connecting OPDs across the Pacific and to regional and global opportunities. However, the proposition that strengthening OPDs will strengthen the disability rights movement (including an explanation of the change pathways between stronger organisations and a stronger movement) has not yet been fully developed. An evaluation participant identified that among the challenges in making the conceptual link between stronger OPDs and greater collective influence may be that PDF and its OPD members do not have a shared understanding of the Pacific disability rights movement or its goals.

While GST can draw on broader PDF resources, the program does not appear to be strongly connected to or aligned with other PDF streams of work. Evaluation participants, for example, indicated that the responsive and relational practice approach to supporting OPDs is particular to GST. This perspective was reflected in interviews with PDF and CBM staff, and was echoed by some OPD leaders. While GST PDF staff coordinate with PDF more broadly, a more integrated approach might be demonstrated by a PDF membership support strategy, regular feedback and learning loops between GST and the broader PDF Secretariat and board, and a shared approach to planning institutional strengthening across programs.

Reliance on two key staff members to lead and deliver GST is a further risk, particularly given that one of the staff members recently resigned. In Phase 1, GST was led and implemented by two PDF staff members who worked with 33 OPDs across 14 Pacific Island Countries. In the next iteration of the GST, PDF has plans to reach out to OPDs in New Caledonia, expanding GST's engagement with OPDs. It may be challenging for two staff members to maintain and further develop relationships with so many OPDs. Given the existing staff resourcing, it may also be challenging to maintain a relational and responsive approach, which OPD leaders valued and suggested enables their organisations to identify priorities and pursue change. Further, if the current staffing resources and way GST is managed in PDF are maintained, the scope of work, particularly the potential travel schedule, may pose a barrier for PDF staff with disabilities. With two staff, it may not be possible to sustain engagement with so many OPDs across so many countries and to strengthen and expand GST's contributions to changes in OPD institutional capacity.

As noted in the chapter on GST emergence and development, policies and systems were initially trialled in PDF to test and adapt resources, and to model institutional strengthening, before rolling these out to OPDs. The first step—testing and adapting policies and systems—occurred as planned. The implementation of systems and policies was not modelled in the PDF secretariat because of delays in the PDF board review and endorsement. Possibly reflecting some misalignment between OPD and PDF institutional strengthening, a few OPD leaders shared concerns in evaluation interviews regarding PDF. Interviewees identified opportunities to strengthen PDF systems including more efficient finance systems and communications and increasing transparency about the source of external funds that PDF manages and disburses to OPDs. This feedback points to additional opportunities to model institutional practices in PDF and to strengthen further the alignment of PDF practices with the institutional strengthening messages shared in GST regarding partnership management and development.

6.4 The GST adaptive and responsive approach is enabled by flexible funding and a learning-oriented partnership between PDF and CBM

Flexible funding enabled PDF to iteratively develop GST, test approaches and expand GST in response to learning and emerging priorities. The learning and adaptive approach allowed PDF to shift from the original focus on PDF to OPD institutional strengthening; to trial the organisational assessment with a few OPDs in 2022; and to expand GST activities and its budget to integrate CRPD BRIDGE training and to allow OPDs to be accompanied to prepare CRPD shadow reports and to travel to Geneva to present to a CRPD country committee.

'The other [enabler] is the, I think, the flexible funding from CBM, you know, that allowed us to expand on the scope of GST.' (PDF staff member)

'So, in the first design of the GST, the CRPD training, then the CRPD [shadow] reporting was not part of it ... But then midway through it, [we] were able to identify that's a need ... And then ... increased in funding to enable that, but also the provision of our time, the Pacific team, to support technical support.' (CBM staff member)

As part of the partnership, CBM provided backup technical support when PDF staff could not respond to OPD requests, and was available to PDF staff as a 'critical friend' and learning partner. CBM staff time to provide technical support to OPDs was not specifically

funded and was provided 'in-kind' to support GST. CBM and PDF have a memorandum of understanding for an overall partnership. The rationale for the GST's flexible funding and the CBM's 'critical friend/learning partner role' is not explicitly documented. The learning approach is valued by CBM and PDF's GST staff and has supported the GST adaptive approach in responding to priorities and opportunities that have emerged during the implementation period. The learning approach is informal, with support, reflection and learning shared between PDF and CBM staff who manage GST, rather than it being a planned exchange between the organisations. The learning approach that supports adaptive responses has meant that GST remains relevant and responsive to OPD and disability movement priorities as they emerge. The informality of the learning approach may make it more challenging to sustain if, for example, there are staff changes, either in PDF or CBM.

'It's just because we have the relationship. It's just like we keep up-to-date in, like, we actually put time into the relationship, rather than just relying on either reporting or no reporting.' (CBM staff member)

'It's being a donor, a technical backup resource and ... being [a] separate pair of eyes and ears in terms of [a] reflection board for the team ... and also at the same time, to continue to provide [support to] enable the project to grow.' (CBM staff member)

6.5 Summary: contributions to institutional strengthening outcomes

Table 8 summarises the evidence of contributions to institutional strengthening outcomes against the evaluation rubric. The rubric is included in [Appendix B, Table B.1](#)

Table 9 Summary of evidence of contributions to institutional strengthening

Rubric standard	Description	Rubric criteria/ strength of evidence	Summary
Relevance	GST addresses an identified priority and the program design and delivery is valued by participants and partners.	Thriving: strong, sustained evidence across sources.	Institutional strengthening was consistently recognised as a priority by OPDs and development actors in the Pacific. OPDs, PDF and CBM agreed that the wholistic approach to institutional strengthening and the relational and responsive approach to activities was effective.

Rubric standard	Description	Rubric criteria/ strength of evidence	Summary
Coherence	GST design and activities complement PDF and other relevant programs, initiatives and platforms.	Growing: consistent evidence in multiple sources.	GST staff had supported OPDs to access broader PDF resources and regional and global initiatives. It was not clear how GST was aligned and connected to PDF's other streams of work, and the delays in PDF's own institutional journey has created challenges for modelling systems and policy change.
Effectiveness	Activities individually and as a combined offer are likely to contribute to GST goals.	Thriving: strong, sustained evidence across sources.	OPD leaders shared multiple examples of GST activities and support facilitating positive change in their organisations. The link between GST and changes in OPD institutional strength is supported across data sources.

Rubric standard	Description	Rubric criteria/ strength of evidence	Summary
Equity	The design and activities are purposefully designed to address and advance equity.	Early shoots: initial signs in limited data.	GST activities were inclusive and adapted to support OPDs that represented all impairment groups and to allow people with disability to participate. Because the GST design and approach has not been fully documented, it was not clear how GST aimed to address equity and inclusion beyond ensuring activities are inclusive and accessible.
Sustainability	The program's design and activities can likely be sustained within available resources.	Early shoots: initial signs in limited data.	Challenges to the sustainability of GST's design and activities included informal rather than planned links and learning loops, between the program and PDF and CBM; staff turnover; and gaps in the documentation of GST's design and the PDF/CBM learning partnership approach.

7. Lessons learned and opportunities

This chapter addresses Evaluation Question 4:

- What lessons can be drawn from the program to inform future organisational strengthening and disability inclusion initiatives in the Pacific?

Key lessons and opportunities to build on the strengths of the GST program, along with ways to address its gaps, are outlined.

7.1 Design: building on learning from Phase 1, document the GST design

OPD leaders valued the holistic support from GST and identified that GST contributes to positive change in the internal and external capabilities of their organisation.

The aligned GST components—Pacific-led, holistic institutional strengthening, guided by OPD priorities, relational and responsive delivery, flexible funding, and a partnership-oriented and learning-oriented approach—together contribute to an effective and cohesive program.

Opportunities

Document the GST design, reflecting and building on the learning from Phase 1, and consider how it aligns with relevant institutional strengthening approaches.

- Consider how GST advances the principle of ‘Nothing About Us Without Us’ by articulating how people with disabilities lead and guide the GST program.
- Working with OPDs, develop a theory of change that includes anticipated change pathways and contributions to change in OPDs, PDF’s regional role and the disability rights movement’s collective influence.
- Outline GST’s role in addressing equity and inclusion.
- Consider how GST activities are designed to build on OPDs’ existing and potential capabilities.
- Identify GST program risks and mitigations, including identifying challenges to the sustainability of institutional strengthening changes in OPDs and to the program and partnership overall.

Integrate and resource a monitoring, evaluation and learning approach that supports GST’s reflective and adaptive approach during implementation and enables GST and PDF to share evidence and learning on effective approaches to OPD institutional strengthening. In addition, integrate learning loops between GST, PDF, CBM and OPDs.

Support the PDF secretariat in its own institutional strengthening, including modelling the change process and providing opportunities to test systems and policies.

7.2 Content and delivery: develop a practice manual and suite of tools documenting the GST relational and responsive approach

OPD leaders' feedback suggests that the GST relational and responsive practice, including a talanoa approach, helps OPD leaders and staff feel comfortable sharing challenges and creates an inclusive environment that adapts to emerging priorities and participants' learning styles.

Opportunities

Document the GST's talanoa and relational and responsive approach, along with the activities used to address each of the institutional strengthening components. Work with colleagues to introduce and develop the GST talanoa and relational and responsive approach to support further integration of GST in PDF.

7.3 Structural location: strengthen the links and integration of GST within PDF

PDF's leadership of GST provides access to broader resources and connections, and a potential pathway to link OPD institutional strengthening to building the disability movement's collective influence.

Opportunities

Consider options for further integrating GST and aligning the OPD institutional strengthening activities into PDF's broader program of work. This could include transitioning GST from a distinct program to a PDF way of working, or to a program managed by a PDF department, for example, membership services. If GST becomes a way of working in PDF, consider how to maintain and strengthen its design and delivery, and its leadership, to sustain the program's coherence and effectiveness.

7.4 Resourcing: review staff resources considering the scope and ambition of GST

In Phase 1, GST was led and implemented by two PDF staff, reached 33 OPDs and supported changes in confidence, policies, systems and practices, as well as increased funding and opportunities for some OPDs.

Opportunities

Consider the options for GST staff resources, particularly those needed in Phase 2 to strengthen and expand GST's contribution to changes in OPD institutional capacity. Identify and address potential barriers to people with disabilities working as GST leadership and implementation staff.

7.5 The PDF/CBM partnership: maintain flexible funding and strengthen the learning approach

Flexible funding and a learning orientation within the PDF/CBM partnership enabled GST to respond to opportunities and priorities that emerged during implementation.

Opportunities

Consider documenting the PDF/CBM partnership principles that guide collaboration to deliver GST, including flexible funding and an adaptive programming and learning approach.



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Appendices

A. Evaluation sample and rubrics

Table A.1 Evaluation key informant interview sample

GST partner	Women	Men	Women with disability	Men with disability	Total
OPD leaders	6	7	5	7	13
PDF GST staff	2	0	0	0	2
CBM staff	2	1	0	0	3
Total					18

Table A.2 Rubric used to assess evidence for changes in institutional strength

Rubric criteria	Description
Outcome	Evidence of OPD and PDF institutional strengthening outcomes
Value	OPDs, PDF and CBM value changes in institutional strength
Equity	All OPDs that represent all impairment groups are strengthened; all groups of people with disability and all genders are likely to experience a benefit, either directly or via their OPD
Sustainability	The outcomes are likely to be sustained and to provide an enduring resource that supports growth and adaptation

Table A.3 Criteria used to assess the strength of evidence for changes in institutional strength

Evidence standard	Description
Still a seed	No evidence in any data source
Early shoots	Initial signs in limited data
Growing	Consistent evidence in multiple sources
Thriving	Strong, sustained evidence across sources

Table A.4 Rubric used to assess evidence for contributions to institutional strength

Rubric criteria	Description
Relevance	GST addresses an identified priority and the program design and delivery is valued by participants and partners
Coherence	GST design and activities complement PDF and other relevant programs, initiative and platforms
Effectiveness	Activities, individually and as a combined offer, are likely to contribute to GST goals
Equity	The design and activities are purposefully designed to address and advance equity
Sustainability	The program design and activities can likely be sustained within available resources

Table A.5 Criteria used to assess the strength of evidence of contributions to institutional strength

Evidence Standard	Description
Still a seed	No evidence in any data source
Early shoots	Initial signs in limited data
Growing	Consistent evidence in multiple sources
Thriving	Strong, sustained evidence across sources

B. GST components and activities

Table B.1 GST components and delivery channels

GST Component	Description	Activity and Channel	Activity Lead	Participants
Organisational assessment as well as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis	Assessment of organisational policies, systems and project management (e.g. governance, compliance, finance, human resources, monitoring and reporting) OPD priorities for institutional strengthening are identified through self-assessment and SWOT analysis.	Self-assessment	OPD leaders	OPD board, leaders and staff
Board role and OPD governance	Strengthens knowledge of board role and capability of board members. Often will include review of policies and project and finance management systems.	In-person sessions that prioritise relationship building and are adapted to address priorities identified in the organisational assessment, as well as those that emerge Peer-to-peer support	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff
Leadership role and development	Strengthens understanding of OPD leadership role. Can include leadership succession planning, finance management, advocacy strategy development, inclusive approaches and partnership development.	As above	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff
Organisation constitution development or review	GST provides access to expertise to support OPDs to review or develop their purpose, governance framework, and	Online consultation and support	Expert consultant	–

GST Component	Description	Activity and Channel	Activity Lead	Participants
	operations and procedures.			
Organisation strategy development or review	Supports OPDs to identify or review priorities and opportunities, and to strengthen planning. Supports OPDs to strengthen their identity.	Online consultation and support	Expert consultant	OPD board, leaders and staff
Policy and systems development or review	Review or development of organisational policies and systems. Can include support to develop a range of policies and systems, or a prioritised selection.	Online consultation and support	Expert consultant	OPD board, leaders and staff
Policy and systems practice strengthening	Support to strengthen capacity to apply policies and use systems (e.g. project management, finance systems, budget development, tracking and reporting).	In-person sessions adapted to OPD priorities, online coaching and help desk support	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff
Project management	For example, proposal development, community leadership and participation, monitoring and evaluation, budget planning and monitoring, implementation planning and reporting.	As above	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff
OPD stakeholder dialogues	Provides hands-on capability strengthening support to OPDs by demonstrating engagement, brokering partnerships and providing opportunities for OPD representatives to ask questions and learn through the process.	Meetings with government counterparts, and existing and potential funding partners	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff
CRPD shadow reporting	Support and coaching to develop country shadow reporting or	In-person sessions, online	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff

GST Component	Description	Activity and Channel	Activity Lead	Participants
	accompaniment to Geneva to participate in meetings with CRPD country committees.	coaching and accompaniment		
Inclusive or CRPD-compliant budget submissions	Support to analyse government budgets and coaching to develop inclusive budget submissions.	In-person sessions and online coaching	PDF GST staff	OPD board, leaders and staff

C Alternative text

Alternative text: Figure 2 GST institutional strengthening session topics

Table C. 1 Alternative Text for Figure 2 GST institutional strengthening session topics

Table C.1 provides the underlying data for Figure 2 and is included as an accessible text alternative.

Topics covered	2022	2023	2024	2025
Leadership role	9	5	20	8
Board/governance role	6	5	19	8
Advocacy planning and implementation	6	5	5	20
Budget planning, monitoring, reporting	9	6	16	5
Finance	9	6	15	6
CRPD workshops with partners	0		12	21
Project planning, proposal, M&E and reporting	9	5	13	5
Inclusive development	0	0	1	24
CRPD shadow reporting	0	4	0	12
Human resources	0		1	1
Community participation	0		1	0

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