



Strengthening Leadership and Advocacy in Population and Reproductive Health

*Retrospective Evaluation of the MacArthur Foundation's
Fund for Leadership Development*

Final Report

Submitted by:

Institute of International Education

September 2017

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Acronyms

ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activists
CCR	<i>Comissão de Cidadania e Reprodução</i> (Citizenship and Reproduction Commission)
CEBRAP	<i>Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento</i> (Brazilian Social Planning and Analysis Center)
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
ELDP	Emerging Leaders Development Program (Nigeria)
EMRO	Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of the World Health Organization
FLD	Fund for Leadership Development
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HPIF	Health and Population Innovations Fellowship (India)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, September 1994)
IIE	Institute of International Education
IPAS	International Pregnancy Advisory Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PLA	<i>Promotoras Legais Populares</i> (Popular Legal Attorneys)
PRH	Population and Reproductive Health
RAHI	Recovering and Healing from Incest Foundation
SEMILLAS	<i>Sociedad Mexicana pro Derechos de la Mujer</i> (Mexican Society for Women's Rights)
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TARSHI	Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

Foreword

The MacArthur Foundation's Fund for Leadership Development (FLD) was created and launched two and half decades ago, as an initiative of the Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health (PRH) Program. First implemented in Brazil, and later in Mexico, Nigeria and India, the program aimed to promote innovative solutions to the population-related problems facing each country, and to foster new leadership by enhancing opportunities for individuals to make lasting contributions to the PRH field. Although the local circumstances and population issues addressed through the FLD varied widely among and within the four focus countries, its overarching goals remained constant.

Our decision to commission a retrospective evaluation of the FLD at this particular point in time was spurred by renewed interest at the Foundation in "investments in people" as complements to more traditional grants and impact investments. The Foundation is well known in the United States for its MacArthur Fellows Program, which awards no-strings-attached fellowships to exceptionally creative individuals across a limitless range of endeavors. Though different in scope and duration, the FLD program explored a related approach to investing in people, one focused on building a particular field in four distinct national contexts outside of the U.S.

The purpose of this evaluation was to better understand the long-term outcomes of the FLD program, as well as the experiences and trajectories of its grantees. Alumni of the program, PRH experts in each of the four focus countries, and those who administered the program shared not only what they consider to be the program's strengths and challenges, but also insights as to how effectively the various components of the program supported the program's goals. Given the time that had lapsed since the implementation of the FLD program, this evaluation necessarily relied heavily on self-reported data from program participants and their recollections of activities from many years past. As such, the findings of this report have their limitations. We do not wish to attribute the accomplishments of FLD alumni directly and exclusively to the program itself. Nor should we interpret the responses and statements of those surveyed and interviewed to represent the entirety of the FLD grantee population. Rather, the lessons that have emerged offer useful guidance that may inform the design of future investments-in-people endeavors.

We are grateful to the entire IIE team for conducting this comprehensive evaluation and to all of the survey participants and interviewees who devoted their time and valuable perspectives to this effort. We hope others interested in pursuing similar modes of work will find this report informative and the stories of alumni achievement inspiring.

Cecilia Conrad
Managing Director, Fellows, Awards, and Exploratory Philanthropy
MacArthur Foundation

Overview of the Report

This report presents findings from a retrospective evaluation commissioned by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (the Foundation) to the Institute of International Education (IIE) to assess the outcomes of its Fund for Leadership Development (FLD) program, implemented from 1991 to 2013. The report compiles all findings from the evaluation, including comparative and country-specific outcomes and recommendations to consider for future programming. The report explores the extent to which the implementation of the FLD program and the lessons learned from the program can provide guidance for the Foundation's future grantmaking and evaluation investments.

The report has six chapters:

- **Chapter 1** presents summary information about the FLD and complements information that IIE provided earlier in a background paper submitted to the Foundation as part of the retrospective evaluation.
- **Chapter 2** summarizes the design and methodology of the retrospective evaluation. This summary includes the data collection methods (document review, alumni online survey, in-depth interviews, and case studies), data analysis framework, and data collection challenges and limitations.
- **Chapters 3 and 4** present the program outcomes, looking at the extent to which grantees' participation in FLD has led to: personal transformation and professional growth; changes within their organizations and communities; and changes at the national and international levels, including leadership programming, and policy and practice in the population and reproductive health field.
- **Chapter 5** presents key stakeholders' reflections on program implementation, including the activities conducted and services offered during and after the program, and grantees' overall satisfaction with the program.
- **Chapter 6** provides a summary of best practices and lessons learned from FLD, as well as recommendations to the Foundation and other organizations potentially interested in funding similar programs in the future.

Although past evaluations of the FLD have been conducted, this report is unique for three reasons:

- The report presents findings from a retrospective evaluation conducted in all four program countries using the same methodology (quantitative and qualitative methods), offering an opportunity to compare and contrast country experiences. Previous country-specific evaluations did not offer this level of comprehensive analysis.
- The findings presented in this report pertain to the entire duration of the program, from its launch in Brazil in 1991 to its phase-out in Mexico in 2013. Findings of previous country-level evaluations were limited to specific program periods.

- This report sheds light on the long-term effect of FLD on grantees and those in their spheres of influence. Previous evaluations focused mainly on shorter-term and intermediate outcomes, as they were conducted in close succession to program implementation. In some cases, previous evaluations were summaries of program activities and grantees' updates rather than rigorous analyses of their long-term outcomes. For this evaluation, the time elapsed since the last grant has provided a unique opportunity to study the long-term effects of the program in each country.

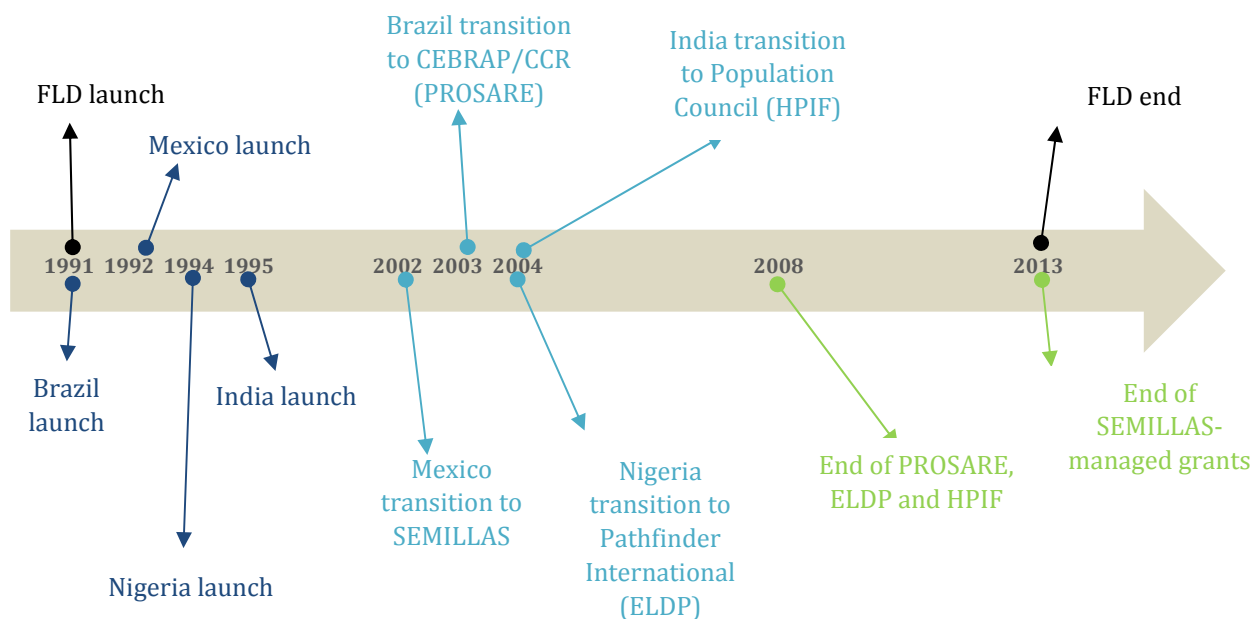
Chapter 1: Introduction

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (the Foundation) implemented the Fund for Leadership Development (FLD) program in four countries: Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, and India. The Foundation implemented the program in two phases: (1) the initial rollout and administration by the Foundation's country offices and (2) the transitional administration by partner organizations. This chapter provides a brief overview of FLD implementation, its grantees, and characteristics of the grants made across phases of the program.

Program Rollout

The FLD was a Foundation initiative launched in 1991 in Brazil and later expanded to three other countries representing three world regions: Mexico in 1992 (Central America), Nigeria in 1994 (Sub-Saharan Africa), and India in 1995 (South Asia). In each country, staff of the Foundation's country office administered the program for the first 10 years (on average), and then transitioned to partner organizations in all four countries: *Sociedad Mexicana pro Derechos de la Mujer* (SEMILLAS, Inc.) in Mexico in 2002; *Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento / Comissão de Cidadania e Reprodução* (CEBRAP/CCR) in Brazil in 2003; Pathfinder International in Nigeria in 2004, where the program was known as the Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP); and Population Council in India in 2004, where the program was known as the Health and Population Innovations Fellowship (HPIF). See Figure 1 for the full FLD program timeline.

Figure 1. FLD program timeline



Program Themes

The FLD program model focused on supporting leaders in the field of population and reproductive health (PRH). Although the program launched at a time when some grantmaking efforts were already supporting individuals working in public health more generally, the FLD design was unique

in that it provided broad and flexible support for innovative individuals working on complex PRH issues. In each country, the program made grants to individuals to implement projects that either addressed or added knowledge to challenges in the PRH field.

The grants covered a range of themes, the most notable being reproductive healthcare; gender and sexual violence; environment and sustainable development; Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS); maternal mortality and morbidity; young people's sexual and reproductive health (SRH); Indigenous women's rights; sexual diversity and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LBTQ) rights; and the role of political, religious, and community leaders in the reproductive health field.

In some countries, particularly India, the focus of FLD evolved over time. Following the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, there was a field-wide shift in thinking from demography and population control to SRH and rights. As a result, the program pivoted to focus on developing leaders working in this area.

Individual Grants

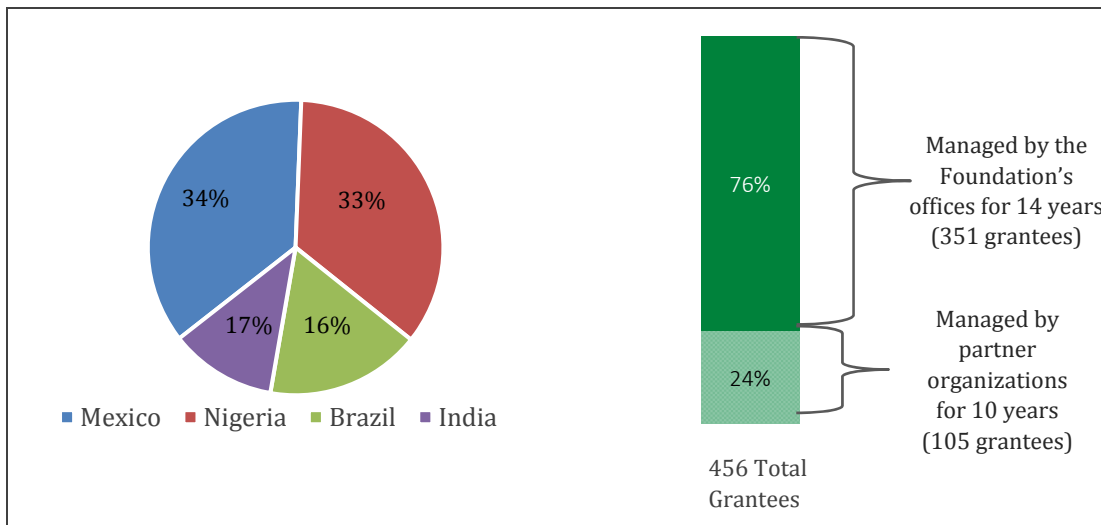
Individual grants supported the personal and professional development of emerging leaders in the PRH field; most grants lasted one to three years. All grantees were selected by a panel of national experts (referred to as national selection committees). Individual grants made by the Foundation varied in size and length; grantees received three annual grants of \$24,000 during the first four to seven years of the program,¹ and one to two annual grants of \$16,000 to \$18,000 during the last two to five years of the program.² Although most individual grants focused on mid-career individuals, over time, the FLD expanded its focus to other populations, including young people and Indigenous women in Mexico, for example.

The FLD provided grants to 456 individuals in four countries, including 75 in Brazil (16 percent), 153 in Mexico (34 percent), 150 in Nigeria (33 percent), and 77 in India (17 percent). The Foundation's country offices managed 351 (76 percent) of these grantees; SEMILLAS administered 59 (13 percent); Pathfinder International administered 29 (6 percent); and Population Council administered 17 (4 percent). See Figure 2 for FLD program numbers.

¹ Such was the case in Brazil between 1991 and 1998; in Mexico between 1992 and 1997; in Nigeria between 1994 and 1998; and in India between 1995 and 1999.

² Such was the case in Brazil between 1998 and 2000; in Mexico between 1998 and 2002; in Nigeria between 1999 and 2004; and in India between 2000 and 2004.

Figure 2. Individual grantees from 1991 to 2013



Grantees of the FLD program came from various regions across the four countries:

- In Brazil, the 75 grantees were spread across 15 states, with most coming from Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and the Federal District State.
- In Mexico, the 154 grantees were spread across 21 states, with the largest share coming from the Federal District, Guerero, Chiapas, Jalisco, and Oaxaca.
- In Nigeria, the 151 grantees came from 31 states, with the largest cohorts coming from the states of Lagos, Oyo, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory.
- In India, the 77 grantees came from 15 states, with Delhi and Maharashtra most highly represented.

During their program, grantees received support from program staff through several key activities that included mentoring, training workshops, annual meetings, evaluations or reviews, and networking sessions. Through the mentoring component, experts in the PRH field were paired with grantees and worked with them to broaden their perspectives and address challenges in the implementation of their projects. Staff aimed training workshops at strengthening grantees' skills in areas of project management. Annual meetings of all grantees allowed them to learn about the projects implemented by their peers and the emerging issues in the field. Both the training workshops and annual meetings provided grantees with the opportunity to participate in networking sessions where they interacted with their peers from various cohorts and with national experts in the PRH field. Finally, external experts conducted evaluations or reviews to monitor grantees' progress in the implementation of their projects.

Institutional Grants

In addition to individual grants, partner organizations in Brazil and Mexico provided funding to organizations as part of the FLD. In Brazil, CEBRAP, the Foundation's partner organization, distributed grants to 47 organizations. In Mexico, SEMILLAS provided grants to 26 organizations. It is important to note that this evaluation does not cover these types of grants.

Conclusion

Over more than two decades, the Foundation and its partner organizations implemented the FLD giving grants primarily to individuals in four countries. Although the program design and framework provided by the Foundation were fundamentally the same across countries, they were adapted according to each country's context, with each country deciding on program themes and activities. The rollout and transition in sequential fashion aimed at feeding lessons learned from previous program implementations into subsequent ones.

Chapter 2: Evaluation Design and Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology of this evaluation: the data collection methods, techniques for data analysis, and limitations of the evaluation. Although country-specific evaluations were conducted during FLD's implementation, this evaluation is the first ever that is retrospective (four years after the last grant was closed). To collect the most accurate data, the Institute of International Education (IIE) used qualitative and quantitative methods and worked with local researchers to ensure that the data collected was representative and nuanced.

Evaluation Team

IIE staff in New York coordinated all data collection and worked closely with four researchers based in Brazil, India, Nigeria, and New York. The New York-based team managed the collection of quantitative data through an online survey. To collect qualitative data, IIE partnered with researchers who were selected based on their experience conducting evaluations in each country, knowledge of qualitative methods, and familiarity with the reproductive health field, and in some cases, with FLD. IIE convened the researcher team to participate in initial document reviews and involved them in all steps of the evaluation process. In addition to their own analysis and country-level findings, all researchers provided substantive feedback on this report to ensure that all findings are contextual and applicable to the countries represented.

Data Collection Methods

IIE designed a comprehensive evaluation plan to ensure that all necessary data about the FLD was collected from key stakeholders. The evaluation team followed a logical sequence of data collection using both quantitative and qualitative methods.³

Document Review

At the inception of the evaluation, IIE and local researchers conducted a review of more than 60 program documents to gather information about the comparative and country-specific design, rationale, and implementation of the FLD. The document review provided information about previous evaluations and outcomes achieved in each country. IIE prepared a paper summarizing and presenting this information.⁴ The paper informed, to a certain extent, the choice of other data collection methods, notably the FLD alumni survey, in-depth interviews, and case studies.

Alumni Survey

IIE administered a web-based alumni survey over six weeks (from early January to mid-February 2017).⁵ Respondents had the option of completing the survey in English, Portuguese, or Spanish. IIE sent invitations to 355 alumni (78 percent of the total grantee population) for whom updated email contact information was available. Out of these, emails for 40 grantees proved to be outdated or

³ Data collection tools used in the evaluation may be available upon request.

⁴ IIE (September 2016). The design and implementation of the Fund for Leadership Development (FLD) in four countries: A background paper. Submitted to the MacArthur Foundation in November 2016.

⁵ IIE administered the survey using Verint, an online survey platform.

wrong, and therefore, 315 alumni (69 percent) comprised the final survey population. The online survey was completed by 177 grantees,⁶ registering a participation rate of 56 percent.⁷

In-depth Interviews

The evaluation team and local researchers in all four countries conducted in-depth interviews with 77 FLD stakeholders, including 40 alumni, 11 program staff, 18 national experts who played an advisory role in the implementation of the program (“direct experts”), and eight national experts in the PRH field who played no role in FLD (“indirect experts”). Local researchers conducted in-person and remote (phone or Skype) interviews.

Case Studies

The evaluation team prepared eight case studies, two from each country, to describe in more detail the complex stories that emerged from individual interviews.⁸ The team developed the case studies primarily based on two activities: an initial hour-long interview conducted as part of an alumni interview, and a follow-up interview lasting one to two hours to document in more detail the alumnus’ achievements and contributions to society. The team supplemented these interviews by document reviews from both program and online sources

Data Analysis

As part of the research, the evaluation team analyzed the data collected to highlight the extent to which grantees’ participation in the FLD has contributed to outcomes related to their individual leadership development and professional growth, as well as to the reproductive health field in communities, states/countries, and globally. The evaluation team developed analytical tools based on the Kirkpatrick model⁹ of evaluation (Table A). This framework assesses outcomes from the empowerment of the individual as the key agent of change to the projection of this change at the organizational and community as well as national and global levels.

Table A. Kirkpatrick levels of evaluation

Kirkpatrick’s Levels		
Level	Outcome	Sphere of Influence
One	Reaction (Satisfaction)	Individual
Two	Learning	Individual
Three	Application	Organizational/Community
Four	Organizational Results	Organizational/Community
Five (added by IIE)	Societal Outcomes	National/International

With this evaluation framework, the evaluation team analyzed quantitative data from the alumni survey using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software; the data largely consisted of

⁶ This response represents 39 percent of the total FLD grantee population.

⁷ The appendices to this report contain the demographic profiles of survey respondents. The appendices may be available upon request.

⁸ Case studies developed as part of this evaluation may be available upon request.

⁹ Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1959). Techniques for evaluating training programs. *Journal of the American Society of Training Directors*, 13.

descriptive statistics (e.g., means and frequencies) with some inferential statistics (analysis of variance, chi-square tests of independence, two-proportion z-tests, two-sample t-tests).¹⁰ Throughout the report, if significance is not reported, it can be assumed that findings are purely based upon descriptive statistics.

IIE and the local researchers created a joint code tree to facilitate the categorization of themes of qualitative data. The group met to discuss the codes and themes that were emerging from the in-depth interviews. At each Kirkpatrick level of analysis, the team would meet to discuss specific codes related to, for example, leadership, professional growth, self-confidence, and so forth. The researchers would then code their qualitative data based on these themes. IIE compiled all qualitative data and compared the findings across the various countries. The team then integrated this thematic analysis with the quantitative survey data to identify key findings for the report.

Limitations of the Evaluation

In conducting this study, MacArthur and IIE are aware of the limitations in attributing individual and communal changes to the FLD program specifically. Some of these considerations come from an understanding of the program itself and the expected program effect. Other limitations emerged during the evaluation and should be noted in attributing the findings of the report to a broader population.

Program Design. International fellowship and leadership programs at the tertiary level are highly specialized and nuanced interventions. Since the evaluation team focused on the individual trajectories of alumni and did not study a comparison group, the reported outcomes may not be exclusively attributed to the FLD. Many grantees were selected based on their leadership potential, and concurrently to the FLD, they may have pursued other leadership opportunities that influenced them as well. Grantees also self-selected into the program, already demonstrating motivation to promote change. Thus it is plausible that they were already prone to leadership trajectories, though FLD was a contributing factor and catalyst on this path.

Evaluation Methodology. Given the elapsed time between this evaluation and the completion of the first FLD grant in 1994 (23 years), the overall participation in the retrospective evaluation was higher than expected. FLD alumni, staff, and national experts were very willing to spend the time and effort to share their reflections on the program with the evaluation team. Nonetheless, the evaluation did face methodological challenges in its implementation:

- *Sampling:* Although much effort went into updating contact information for all FLD stakeholders, the team invited only those with updated contact information to fill out the alumni survey, thus excluding 100 grantees (22 percent) from the sample. To ensure voluntary participation in the research, the evaluation team selected interview participants from those who consented to being interviewed in the survey, rather than from all grantees in the country, potentially biasing the sample. It is also possible that among national experts, only those who might have had a positive experience of the program have been proposed for engagement by staff, alumni, other experts, and country researchers.
- *Incomplete program information:* Although a background paper prepared in the initial months of the evaluation provided an overview of changes to the design of FLD over time, a fundamental change in the Nigeria program did not surface until much later in the

¹⁰ Report findings that are statistically significant are denoted with a p-value.

evaluation. Grantees managed by the partner organization (Pathfinder International) did not receive any funding; the grant money was instead invested in the capacity-building of the grantees through a series of training sessions. As a result, evaluation questions about the use of grant funding caused confusion and required tactfulness and clarification by the country researcher in Nigeria.

- *Recollection:* With approximately 10 to 24 years having passed since some grantees completed their engagement with FLD, many participants had difficulties recalling specifics about the program and their activities at the time. Some had problems differentiating the FLD and partner organization grants, and experts struggled to remember their roles in the program. In some countries, such as Nigeria, recollection challenges were more significant with experts than they were with grantees. As a result, the report findings are limited to the recollection of the participants of the study, though the team did make attempts to triangulate data by interviewing key stakeholders and comparing program documents.
- *Respondent sample:* Given that all grantee recipients were not able to fill out the alumni survey or participate in interviews, the evaluation team cannot attribute the report findings to all program participants. Although the team did not find significant differences between those who did and did not participate in the evaluation, it is possible that those who did not participate had different reflections on the program. The evaluation team can attribute any findings presented in this report only to those who participated in the study.
- *Self-reported data:* All data collected from grantees in this evaluation was self-reported; the scope of the evaluation did not include independent verification and, therefore, presents a risk of bias. This risk was mitigated to some extent by including interviews with other stakeholders to triangulate the grantee data.

It is important to keep these limitations in mind when reading the findings of the report. Nevertheless, it is also important not to discount the contributing effect of the FLD, and the considerable mark grantees indicated it had on their personal and professional lives. While the fellowship may not have been the sole change maker in these grantees' lives, it nevertheless was a significant contributing factor.

Conclusion

IIE used a mixed-methods approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data from key stakeholders. This allowed the team and its local researchers to learn about the program from various different viewpoints, and provided a more comprehensive reflection on the implementation of FLD in each country. The next two chapters present the outcomes of the FLD program on its grantees, their organizations, communities, and broader society nationally and internationally. The last two chapters focus on reflections on the program implementation, the lessons learned, and recommendations.

Chapter 3: Outcomes for Grantees

As previously noted, IIE used Kirkpatrick’s levels of evaluation as the analytical framework to map change from the individual to the communal. The FLD concluded during different years (2002 in Brazil, 2008 in India and Nigeria, and 2013 in Mexico); as such, it is worth clarifying that the evaluation is concerned with both shorter-term individual outcomes as well as longer-term organizational and community outcomes of the program.

This chapter examines changes at the individual level and presents an analysis of the FLD’s outcomes for grantees, including the development of grantees’ leadership skills and the extent to which grantees acquired or strengthened skills to support their professional growth. The chapter also analyzes any changes in grantees’ networks as a result of FLD participation.

Leadership Growth

“I can say it without any hesitation; the ELDP [FLD program in Nigeria] is one of the most remarkable things that has happened to me personally and professionally.” FLD grantee, Nigeria

“For me [FLD] is something that helped me a lot. And still for a long time I didn’t believe it [for being able] to continue fighting against this system, this adequacy that the Indigenous villages need.” FLD grantee, Mexico

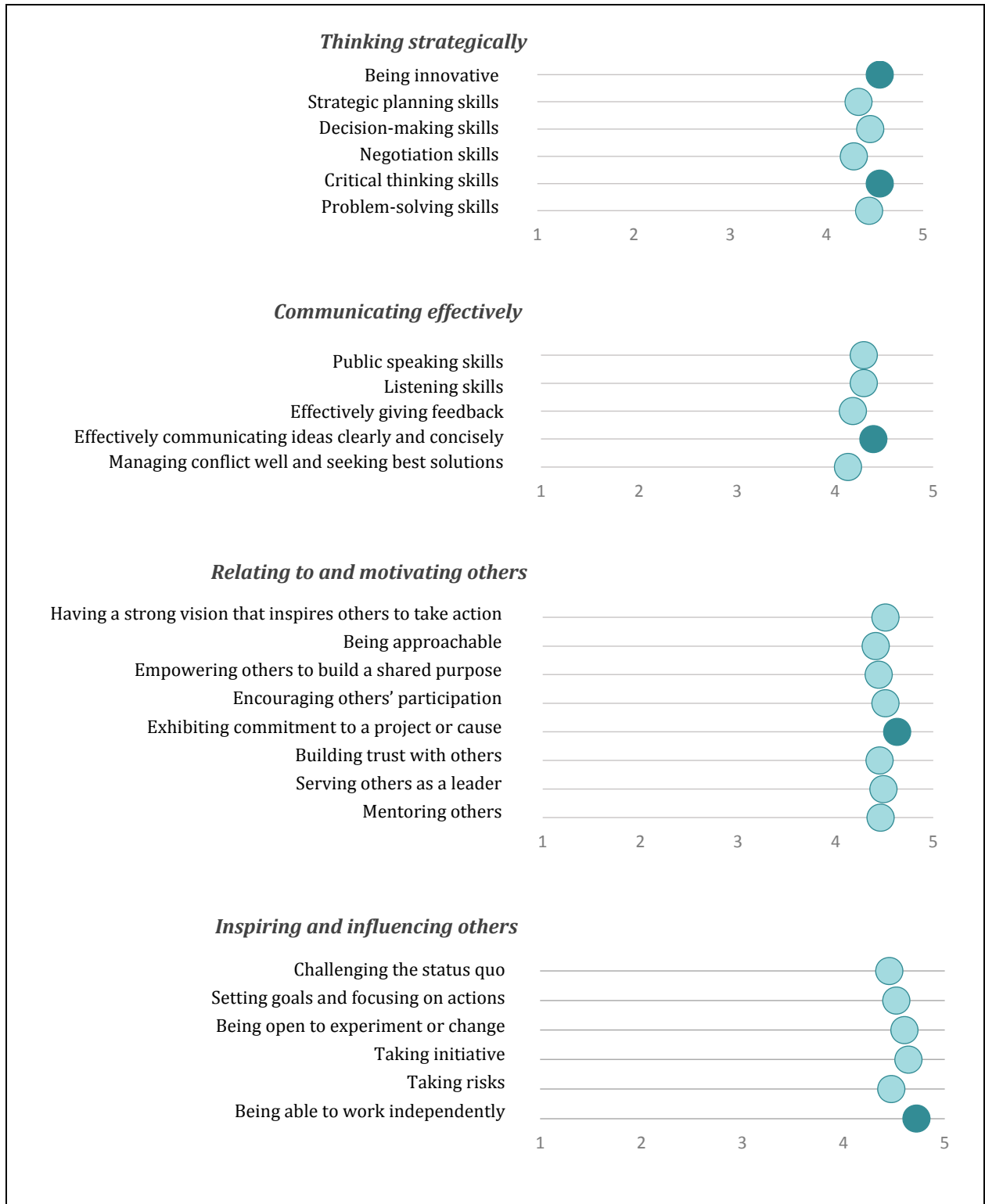
The FLD supported a range of grantees from researchers to medical doctors, filmmakers, advocates, and academics. The evaluation team assessed personal growth in terms of the self-reported transformation observed in individual grantees as a result of their participation in FLD. This assessment included the extent to which grantee alumni have changed or gained leadership skills and the extent to which these changes relate to the PRH field.

IIE assessed changes in leadership skills using its Leadership Development Matrix,¹¹ which is composed of four key competencies: thinking strategically, communicating effectively, relating and motivating others, and driving results. The Matrix breaks down key competencies into skills, which the team assessed using a five-point scale.¹² Figure 3 depicts the average scores, from one to five, on various leadership skills. The dark-shaded circles indicate the highest average score.

¹¹ In consultation with the MacArthur Foundation. For more information about the Matrix, appendices may be available upon request.

¹² On this scale, one is the lowest point and indicates “no change at all,” and five is the highest point, indicating “definitely” a change.

Figure 3. Leadership growth among survey respondents¹³



¹³ Two characteristics related to strategic thinking had the highest average score.

Of various leadership competencies, alumni noted their greatest improvement in their ability to inspire and influence others; this improvement might be explained by grantees being inspired by mentors, PRH experts, and fellow grantees they worked with during and after their FLD participation. The knowledge and experience grantees gained during the FLD was put to use in organizations and communities, and put grantees in positions of influence. On the whole, leadership competencies did not differ by type of grant or alumnus.

All alumni (100 percent) indicated in their survey responses that their participation in the program improved their leadership skills. Among the FLD activities presented earlier,¹⁴ 62 percent of survey respondents indicated that evaluations or reviews were “very useful” for their leadership development; 60 percent had the same opinion of the annual meetings; 59 percent for the training workshops; and 57 percent for networking sessions. Mentoring was seen as being less impactful, as just 46 percent thought it was useful for their leadership development; one-on-one mentoring was more useful than group mentoring.

Self-confidence

Grantees noted an increase in their self-confidence. For example, an FLD grantee (featured in Nigeria case study) lived in a conservative region of northern Nigeria and indicated that as a result of the grant and the training she received during FLD, she gained enough confidence to challenge underage marriages in her community. *“I wanted to open a documentation center, and that was what I asked MacArthur for,”* she remarked, *“instead I ended up being a voice for my community.”*

This confidence increase was particularly significant for Indigenous women and younger grantees in Mexico, who were the target groups for the partner organization grants managed by SEMILLAS. Most had little leadership experience prior to participating in FLD as they came from communities where youth and women were traditionally not part of decision-making and limited in their spaces for leadership.

A Mexican grantee said that prior to participating in FLD, she lacked confidence in herself, but by the end of her grant, *“I felt much more confident, and I am now leading in many areas.”* A grantee who was just 18 years old when he joined the program in 2007 said: *“10 years later, I am now confident and clear about how to manage a project and do quality work.”* Another Mexican grantee (featured in case study) spoke of how her participation gave her the confidence to overcome the fear of violence encountered by those who fight for women’s rights. She reported that she was willing to put herself in danger for the work: *“I remember that everyone said: ‘they are going to kill her.’ ... Many times, they told my husband to [enforce] rules [in] his house otherwise they’re going to kill [me]....”*

Other Indigenous and young Mexican grantees spoke of how the FLD experience gave them the confidence to explore new questions and go beyond what they were *“doing at that time,”* or to engage their peers at the national level and in foreign-based organizations.

Thinking Strategically

At least 50 percent of survey respondents noted an increase in their ability to think strategically; most (70 percent) indicated that they are more innovative, 65 percent indicated that they have

¹⁴ See the last paragraph of Chapter One, Individual Grants.

improved their critical thinking skills, and an equal number of respondents (60 percent) indicated that they have improved their decision-making and problem-solving skills.

In addition, alumni who received large grants were more likely to note a significant improvement in their ability to think strategically than those receiving smaller grants ($p < .05$). Program history revealed that those who received larger grants implemented their projects over longer periods of time (two to three years on average). Therefore, their strategic thinking improvement might be the result of having time to plan, ability to test new ideas and solve problems, and gain greater access to group activities than those whose grant size was lower and shorter.

In Brazil, a grantee (featured in case study) reported how the training helped build her sense of flexibility when implementing programs: *"I had a major problem with my proposal, which turned out to be undoable. So, I had to learn how to work out solutions. And that experience was useful in other occasions of my professional life."* In Mexico, following project management training, young and female grantees reported having gained the ability to envision and design a realistic project, implement and manage a project, and be meticulous in their financial accounting.

Understanding Context

Grantees reported improved perspectives on personal success, reproductive health, and gender issues and a better understanding of reproductive health in the social justice field. For example, a Brazilian grantee stated: *"The grant allowed me to invest in my own cultural capital and cultivation, something that was not part of my family background, [which was] very much geared toward working hard and making money."* A Nigerian grantee (featured in case study) who was a lawyer at the time of the grant mentioned that participation in FLD helped him expand his understanding of law, particularly the significance of context in the social justice field. He noted that *"no matter how beautifully written a document is, no matter where it is written and by who[m], you need the relevant local context."*

In Mexico, an Indigenous grantee stated that the FLD *"helped me concentrate directly [on] maternal health ... it centered me in the work of sexual health ... it also helped me see it from a broader context."* Another grantee (featured in case study) mentioned that FLD participation allowed her to understand that to create impact at the community level, one has to *"understand the social, problematic, and all of the context, [as well as] all of the aspects [of the issues] faced by this population."*

Communicating Effectively

On average, half of the survey respondents reported improvements in their communication skills. More than half (56 percent) of survey respondents indicated that they have improved their public speaking skills, and an equal percentage reported improvements in their ability to communicate ideas clearly and concisely. Respondents credited the group sessions organized by FLD to train and connect grantees with each other and with other program stakeholders (e.g., mentors, trainers). Lower numbers of respondents reported improvements in their effectiveness in giving feedback (45 percent), and in their ability to manage conflict and seek the best solutions (42 percent).

A Brazilian grantee stated: *"The grant allowed me to learn more quickly how to present myself, to occupy a certain place in the dialogue, and to reflect upon my professional intervention. From this point of view of personal impact, [the grant] was really effective."*

In Mexico, Indigenous grantees who faced language difficulties were able to improve their Spanish fluency to meet the reporting standards; this improvement enabled them to better access knowledge and communicate with a broader range of people. A Mexican grantee stated that as a result of engagement with an FLD mentor, *“I learned stronger communications skills; how to make a stronger argument.”*

A Brazilian grantee mentioned that some of the people she met in the program became her role models: *“The seminars promoted by the Foundation ... all these things ended up being an integral part of my personal training, of the way I expressed myself.”* Another Brazilian grantee reported that *“it was an opportunity that allowed me to evolve from a certain level of relationships to another level, much more open, where I met other people and had the material support to acquire other languages, other modes of expression.”*

Taking Initiative

More than two-thirds of survey respondents (72 percent) reported that they are able to take initiative and an even larger number (78 percent) reported being able to work independently as a result of their participation in the FLD program. Many grantees have been able to take initiative and set examples.

An expert from India who has worked with grantees spoke of them as people who were *“bold, respected for shaping thinking, speaking their minds, expanding in new horizons, leading organizations and groups of people, had become strong advocates, and continued to stay associated with the field/issue; ... many of the fellows are troublemakers ... they are great at speaking their minds ... [and] creating waves and don’t cower before power dynamics.”*

An Indian grantee (featured in case study) who now holds a senior position within the World Health Organization (WHO) stated: *“In my work on research capacity strengthening and running a fellowship, I bring in experiences from my FLD Fellowship.... The experience changed me, the way I think and look at issues.”* In another pioneering example, an Indian grantee focused her FLD-funded project on incest and sexual abuse, an initiative that significantly contributed to building the PRH field in India.

A Mexican grantee (featured in case study) shared how his FLD experience helped him take initiative. As a male, his relationship with his mentor helped him work as a feminist at a time when it was not yet recognized as an acceptable position for men within Mexico: *“To work with the feminist movement as a man was not well-seen by sectors in Mexico ... my mentor helped connect me with the feminist movement in the [United States], which [increased] acceptability in Mexico.”*

Some grantees reported that FLD’s unique approach to leadership development had a considerable effect on their career: by supporting what other donors would not, FLD provided groundbreaking opportunities for those willing to take initiative. The FLD opened the door for those who felt that they had innovative ideas but were not taken seriously or felt ignored. A Nigerian grantee who wanted to conduct research and implement advocacy to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality in the state most affected by this situation stated: *“Before [participating in] FLD, I took my project everywhere. I went to [other donor organizations] and all of them said that they would not fund me, they pushed me to FLD because they said my needs are small and FLD is the best type of grant for my work.”*

Understanding and Relating to Others

On average, more than 60 percent of survey respondents reported improvements in their ability to understand and relate to others; 64 percent indicated that as a result of FLD, they are greatly able to build trust with others; and 66 percent reported being able to encourage others' participation. In addition, 59 percent responded that they are approachable, and 62 percent are now able to empower others to build a shared purpose.

In Brazil, grantees implemented their projects through community immersion, participatory approaches, local campaigner empowerment, and by establishing new groups of community activists; this method has led, according to interviewees, to greater visibility of social groups, and an increased sensitivity to marginalized and discriminated populations and groups. According to an FLD staff member, *"There were grantees working with diverse groups of youths; one grantee working on environmental issues dealt directly with garbage collectors. ... Often grantees were involved in community service ... This was also true for grantees with an academic background."*

After participating in FLD, an Afro-Brazilian grantee started making films on the experience of black communities; this project helped him better relate to those who were working on issues of black identity, and to the African continent: *"[FLD] was fundamental in my training, in leading me toward the type of cinema I am doing today... [It played a role] in my relationships with black American filmmakers and my relationship with Africa."*

In Nigeria, a grantee who implemented his FLD project in the Yakurr community of the Cross River State went on to conduct both doctoral and postdoctoral research and sensitization sessions in that community. As a result of this continuous research and commitment to improving reproductive health among the Yakurr, he received the Yakurr Traditional Rulers' Council Award.

Leadership Commitment

Many survey respondents (73 percent) reported that as a result of FLD participation, they are exhibiting a sustained commitment to a project or cause. Grantees also reported an increase in their sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable people and women; they attribute this increase to FLD's focus on women and minority groups in each country. Prior to the FLD, 95 percent of survey respondents reported that their work benefited an underserved group; 97 percent of those who currently work reported that their work benefits these groups. The benefits to marginalized and underserved groups has greatly increased as a result of FLD: prior to the program, 41 percent of respondents reported that "a lot" of their work benefitted these groups; 74 percent reported the same currently. This speaks to the emphasis that FLD grantees are placing on their work with vulnerable populations.

In Brazil, a grantee modified his research methodology to address the ethical challenges posed by the participation of religious minorities. He noted: *"I realized that we would deal with stereotypes and that this would perhaps accentuate prejudices and opportunities of discrimination, which is the subject of my project. So, I felt that there was a great ethical risk and that I would have to reconsider my methodological tools."*

Another Brazilian grantee reported that although she was already involved in a dialogue with the black women's movement in her state, FLD helped her recognize the challenges faced by other black women in the country. This broader understanding of the field helped her strengthen the organization she cofounded in 1984, the Brazilian Association of Popular Video (*Associação*

Brasileira de Vídeo Popular). Prior to its closing in 2006, this organization supported independent film producers and distributors focusing on popular education, sexuality, gender, health, ethnic and racial issues, environment, and workers.

In Nigeria, a grantee focused on the needs of the deaf community and their learning challenges in secondary school. *“Not everyone was willing to work with physically challenged people, but I picked interest in it and focused on it. FLD gave me the grant and the training and helped me through the process.”* In another example in Nigeria, an alumnus returned to his alma mater and worked to change the focus of its law clinic from litigation to working on women’s empowerment and social justice; this focus has remained to date.

In India, a medical doctor who was working with HIV-positive patients saw the high levels of stigma and discrimination they were facing, and she decided to increase knowledge and sensitivity of health professionals to the issue. Two years after completing her grant, she registered an organization and started a clinic where she performs HIV testing, pre- and post-test counseling, medical care, and sensitizes medical professionals from different hospitals and in the communities. *“The Fellowship helped me think of new ideas and [made me] feel that anybody can do [realize their goals]. It was the best thing that happened to me.”* Currently, this organization has grown and works on broader health and nutrition issues through research, practice, and advocacy.

Professional Growth

The evaluation team assessed the program’s effect on grantees’ professional growth in terms of changes in their career and learning paths; commitment to the PRH field; awards and recognitions received during and after the program; and leadership development opportunities after participating in FLD.

Examples of career changes presented below were self-reported by alumni or those acquainted with the program. These outcomes cannot be viewed in isolation and solely in the context of the FLD, as the evaluation instruments were designed to identify the contribution of the program solely. Some changes, including promotions, awards and recognitions may have occurred for some grantees without participation in the FLD. Also, younger grantees who received FLD grants in the early stages of their career (0-5 years) may have had more opportunity for accomplishment outside the FLD.

Career Trajectories

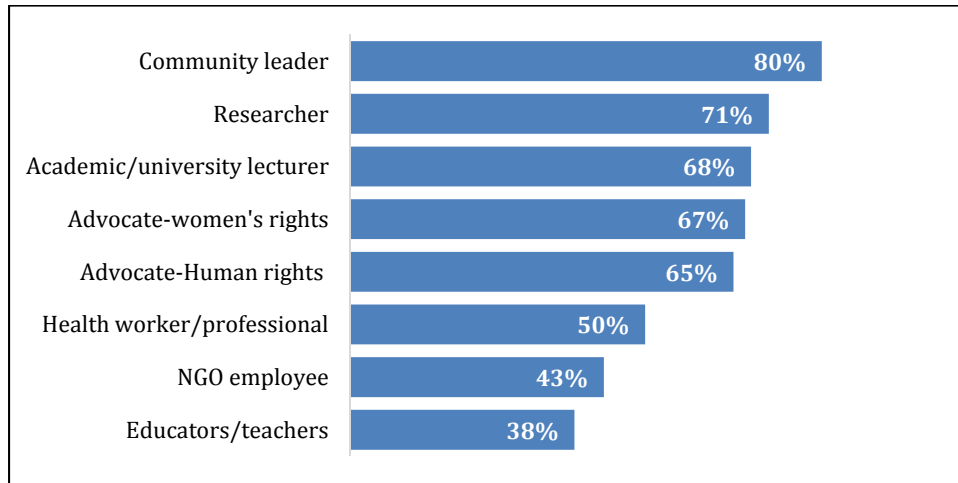
“[FLD] opened up career paths for grantees that often led to important positions, where they could have a positive impact in the sense of promoting a more progressive agenda in the field of PRH.” FLD adviser, Brazil

“FLD has shaped my life in a way and thrust me toward a certain direction, one I am still on till today. ... I feel I have only just started even after twenty years.” FLD grantee, Nigeria

Prior to receiving the grant, most FLD survey respondents (87 percent) were employed and held various positions in nonprofit organizations, research centers, the health sector, and academia.

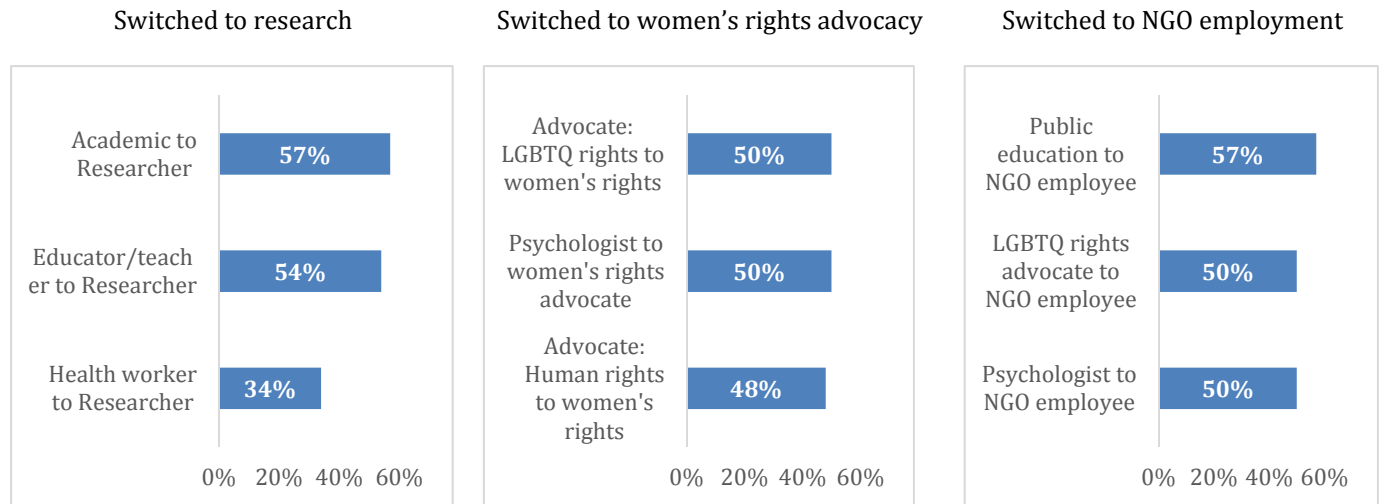
Currently, 70 percent of alumni respondents report that they are employed.¹⁵ In general, alumni respondents continue to work in similar fields of work as prior to FLD. This is particularly true for journalists, lawyers, academics, community leaders, and researchers. Figure 4 presents the extent to which alumni respondents have remained in the same area of work.

Figure 4. Alumni who stayed in the same area of work after FLD



There were a number of alumni respondents who changed their areas of work or expanded their tasks to include new areas of work. Figure 5 presents the extent to which respondents changed their areas of work to research, women’s rights advocacy and NGO employment, the top three new areas of work among all respondents.

Figure 5. Alumni who changed areas of work after FLD



*50% of researchers switched to academic/university lecturer positions

¹⁵ Several factors explain the low number of grantees who reported being employed: some are retired, and many conduct activities they did not define as employment, including a number who reported a mere affiliation with organizations.

FLD's effect on individual grantees' professional growth was most evident in participants' responses. Most of the 40 grantees who were interviewed attributed their level of success to the boost from the FLD program, and some mentioned that the program "catapulted" their career. A program staff member from the Health and Population Innovations Fellowship (HPIF) in India gave the example of a grantee who "had limited English and Hindi language skills" at the time of her selection; however, the selection committee recognized the importance of her project, which aimed at conducting research on the reproductive health of migrants. "She had very scattered thinking [and] had trouble with analytical thinking. Through the capacity-building of HPIF and with our help, she got into Tulane University where she [earned] a Ph.D. and won an award. We call her our 'Nobel Prize' winner."

Professional Focus

In some cases, the FLD grant helped recipients focus on a particular aspect of learning or professional development and demonstrate leadership in these areas. An Afro-Brazilian activist reported the impact of the financial award: "The grant allowed me to take time and dedicate myself to things that I thought were important in the social and political struggle. ... This provided me with the opportunity to become more established in this field, from the point of view of being a person who can contribute even more to it."

In other cases, the grant came at a time of career transitions and gave grantees the resources to continue on a new path. In India, for example, FLD supported a grantee leaving a full-time clinician position to become an activist on SRH issues. The program supported another grantee when she left a position with the United Nations (UN) to strengthen her own organization and work on issues she was more passionate about (the role of communications/media in young people's reproductive health). FLD supported an Indian medical doctor who wanted to go beyond the call of duty (treating HIV/AIDS patients) to launch an organization that addresses stigma and discrimination against these patients. For another Brazilian grantee, participating in FLD changed the course of his doctoral research by forcing him to think about new questions: "So, it was this journey that led me to change even my research perspective and the reflection I was doing for my doctoral dissertation. This was very marked."

Key Resources

A large majority (90 percent) of respondents reported that receiving funding for their project was "very useful." FLD helped grantees find the time and resources to work on building their understanding, knowledge, and professional capacities, or to acquire the means and space they otherwise would not have in their organizations. In Mexico, many grantees at the mid-career level said they felt limited by their organizations' resources or limited visions, so the grant provided them with resources to secure some autonomy and expand and establish themselves. According to one grantee, no one in her organization supported her idea because "as a young woman, no one had confidence in my abilities." Younger grantees were able to gain their first experiences, build new skills, and establish professional track records; for many, the program was their first professional development experience.

Other resources provided by the FLD grant were very useful as well: 59 percent of respondents indicated that attending training workshops/seminars was "very useful" for their professional development. Grantees developed professional skills that had a lasting effect on their professional trajectory; grantees reported that trainings on proposal development continue to help them create "high-quality proposals" in their professional life. Others credited these training sessions to their

current knowledge on how to engage with foundations/donor organizations and manage grants, which in turn helps them improve the quality of their projects and increase the success rate of the proposals they submit.

Professional Visibility and Promotion

More than a third (43 percent) of respondents indicated that they are currently a resource person on PRH issues in their organization, and 50 percent indicated that their input on PRH issues is sought by their peers and decision-makers. Grantees receiving larger grants in funding and length were more likely to report being a resource person on PRH issues within their organization than others ($p < .05$). This reality might be explained by the fact that these grantees had more time and resources to build their organizational leadership skills than those who received smaller and shorter grants. Another potential explanation is that because grantees who received larger and longer grants were from the earlier cohorts, they have had more time (15–23 years) to establish organizational leadership than those who received shorter and smaller grants and who completed their grants 3 to 14 years ago.

Many participants credited the FLD with increasing the visibility of individual grantees. The boost in personal prestige was felt not only locally but also nationally and internationally.¹⁶ According to a program adviser in India, FLD added *“credibility and stature to the grantees. It had cascading impacts and the grantees were taken more seriously; FLD gave the legitimacy, ‘the stamp,’ and gave them access to spaces and opportunities. They became voices that counted because they were associated with the MacArthur Fellowship. They were then considered to have an important perspective.”*

An FLD adviser in Brazil stated: *“FLD really contributed, among other things, to promoting people’s visibility, because... it was a prestigious program.”* In the same vein, a Brazilian grantee stated that the prestige of being a MacArthur grantee was fundamental in getting him hired as a professor at the prestigious University of São Paulo Medical School, which has a leading PRH program in the country. He stated that *“receiving the [FLD] grant put [him] ahead of the competition.”*

Many grantees credited FLD for boosting their promotion prospects: 38 percent of survey respondents who are currently employed work in the same organization where they were employed prior to FLD participation; more than half (51 percent) of these alumni have been promoted since completing the FLD.

Such was the case of a Nigerian grantee who was a lecturer at the Center for Development Studies at the University of Jos in northern Nigeria. He reported that his career moved rapidly from a research fellow at the time he got the grant to a full research professor. Immediately after completing his grant year, he became the head of the Department of International Relations and Development Studies. He currently is a visiting professor and head of research at the Nordic Africa Institute in Sweden.

Other grantees reported that participation in the FLD improved their academic or professional stature; for instance, four of the ten interviewed grantees in Nigeria now hold the title of professor, which they attributed to FLD participation. One grantee noted that *“we never even knew the possibilities were there till we entered this program. ... It is not a question of whether we would have*

¹⁶ These findings are further elaborated in two sections: Outcomes at the National Level and Outcomes at the International Level.

been where we are today without the program; before FLD, we did not even know possibilities like this existed.”

Awards and Recognition

Apart from changes in their careers, the evaluation assessed FLD’s outcomes on grantees’ professional growth through awards and recognitions they received during and after FLD. Since participating in the program, 40 percent of respondents have received an award or recognition. These awards have been community-based, national, and international. Survey respondents also mentioned recognition for their technical expertise in the form of appointments to select national government and international committees:¹⁷

- In Brazil, grantees received awards and prizes from organizations such as the WHO and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) for contributions to the reproductive health field; prizes for filmmaking;¹⁸ fellowships from the Ford Foundation, Ashoka, the Bernardo Valim Foundation, and PAHO; and other groundbreaking recognitions, such as the first National Prize on Human Rights.
- In Mexico, grantees were recipients of the Ludovic Tradioux Human Rights Award from the European Union, the Washington Office on Latin America Human Rights Award, and the Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award.
- In Nigeria, grantees were recipients of the Chevening scholarships and scholarships from Harvard University.
- In India, grantees received the Ashoka Fellowship, the Gates-Packard Fellowship, the Soros Fellowship, and the Times of India Social Impact Award. Many serve in national and state-level government and technical committees in the health sector. In April 2015, one grantee was listed among the world’s 100 most influential people by *Time* magazine. As a result of FLD participation, an Indian grantee developed a sanitary pad that was adapted further and is being sold via an eco-company based in Pondicherry; the pad has been used globally by an international UN organization, and the grantee was recognized for this product.

Commitment to the PRH Field

“Most grantees I know have remained working in the same field [PRH]. I myself never left!” FLD grantee, Brazil

IIE also assessed FLD’s outcomes on grantees’ professional growth by the extent to which grantees have remained in the PRH field. More than three out of four (85 percent) survey respondents believe that their program experience affected their commitment to the population and reproductive health field. Responses did not differ by grantee home country, type of program, age,

¹⁷ A comprehensive list of awards, prizes, and recognitions received by grantees during and after FLD may be available upon request.

¹⁸ A grantee won an award for making a film based on a letter written by a Brazilian to his friend abroad explaining the major issues faced by various social groups in the country.

the total length of grant, or grant size, demonstrating that the program, on the whole, furthered the leadership development of individuals working in the field.

The FLD was designed to attract those already interested in PRH and looking for opportunities to expand their influence in the field. The evaluation provides evidence that it has indeed strengthened grantees' commitment: the proportion of survey respondents whose work relates to the PRH field has remained high (77 percent before FLD, and 78 percent after), and data indicates that 25 percent of those who did not work in the field before FLD are currently working or pursuing study in PRH. In Nigeria in particular, all FLD and Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP) grantees who were interviewed stated that they have remained working in the field.

Interviews with grantees revealed the extent of this commitment to PRH:

- A grantee extended his work on reducing maternal mortality and morbidity to sanitation and politics by successfully pushing for the formation of a House committee on non-governmental organization (NGO) matters at the Kano State House of Assembly. This committee is responsible for handling civil society groups and policy dialogue processes and has been in the forefront of advancing legislation on safe motherhood in the state.
- For some Nigerian grantees, this commitment to the field translated into a larger involvement in health reform. According to an interviewed expert, *"many of the people that are currently working with us in the health reform sector of the country are FLD grantees; we also worked with many of them to push the Child's Rights Act through Parliament and to pass the National Health Care Act. We know them, they are familiar faces around here."*
- In Mexico, a grantee expanded his work in toxicology to affect more people, including marginalized communities. The grantee mentioned that as a result of FLD participation, he is interested in starting an NGO that looks at the impact of pollution on people, and how to communicate or raise awareness on the issue.
- In India, a grantee who used his grant funding to support a multidisciplinary resource center on reproductive health indicated during the interview that she had remained in the field, working on unsafe abortion with organizations such as Johns Hopkins University, the International Pregnancy Advisory Services (IPAS), and the WHO.

Grantees and experts also reported examples of how the FLD opened doors to funding for other PRH-related opportunities where grantees could excel as leaders in the field:

- In Nigeria, an organization working on elections and good governance contracted a grantee-launched organization to conduct activities that would add value to the women's work and the reproductive health portfolio of the client organization. The same grantee was asked in 2010 to write a paper about women and agriculture in which she made the case that most of the farmers in rural Nigeria were women, and therefore, norms must be challenged that forbid women from owning farms in some parts of the country.
- In Brazil, a grantee received a grant from the Ministry of Health to conduct research on homophobia: *"I participated in another bidding contest by the Ministry of Health to work on a project analyzing homophobia... in religious groups. I have substantial collective research of the Ministry of Health in this regard."* In another case, a grantee (featured in case study) in

Brazil received funding from the Secretary on Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice to replicate the model of access to healthcare she created with the FLD grant funds. The grantee implemented the model, named *Promotoras Legais Populares* (PLA - Popular Legal Attorneys), in collaboration with organizations of the black social movement in eight Brazilian states, integrating reproductive health with themes related to racial inequality.

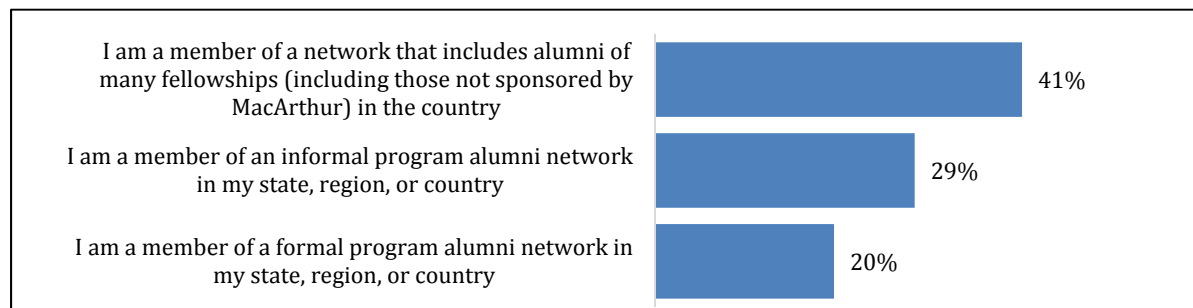
Networks and collaborations

During annual meetings, group sessions to increase grantees' networks played an important role in initiating long-lasting connections. Participation in FLD helped grantees break up or reduce their isolation vis-à-vis their peers, and exposed them to further networking opportunities:

- In Brazil, the grant allowed a resident of the remote Goiás state to attend group sessions. Information she obtained by interacting with other grantees and PRH experts at these group sessions helped her later gain admission to Harvard University and to return to Brazil to complete a Ph.D. at Unicamp, one of the most prestigious universities in the country.
- In Mexico, interviewed grantees shared that being part of FLD expanded their connections to a range of networks beyond FLD, nationally and globally.
- The program helped an Indian grantee gain more exposure to other organizations working on HIV/AIDS in the country, increase her understanding of social issues, develop her research skills, and get to visit HIV/AIDS centers in the United States.

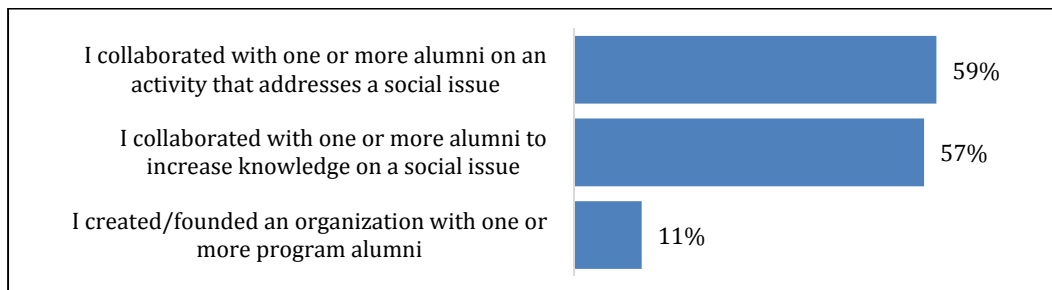
FLD program staff also played a role in strengthening grantee connections. In India, stakeholders reported that the Foundation's office helped to facilitate connections and other collaborative learning activities. Although the MacArthur Foundation did not support or facilitate a formal alumni network, connections among grantees have continued. Since completing their grant, 82 percent of alumni respondents have had contact with other program alumni. Of these alumni, almost two-thirds (63 percent) reported communicating with each other at least a couple of times a year. Female alumni respondents were significantly more likely to maintain contact with other alumni in comparison to their male counterparts. Communication typically takes place via email (62 percent), phone (38 percent), Facebook (32 percent), and at conferences (32 percent). ELDP alumni (Nigeria) created a Yahoo group (listserv) and have been using it to share employment opportunities and other professional updates. Figure 6 presents the type of networks alumni have been participating in since FLD.

Figure 6. Alumni network



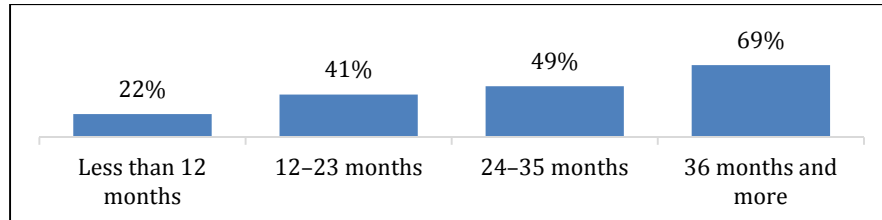
Nearly half of the alumni respondents (48 percent) indicated that they have collaborated on work with other FLD program alumni. A large portion have collaborated on activities to either address a social issue or to increase knowledge (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Alumni collaborations by type



In general, alumni receiving longer grants were more likely to indicate collaborating with other alumni ($p < .05$, see Figure 8). This result might be explained by the fact that during their program participation, these alumni had more time to engage and initiate collaborations with their peers. However, it is important to note that longer grants were more prevalent in the first three to five years of FLD; in this case, it may be that recipients have had more time to collaborate than their counterparts who received shorter grants more recently.

Figure 8. Alumni collaborations by grant length



Examples of joint collaborations among FLD alumni in Brazil and Mexico show the sustainable nature of alumni networks:

- In Mexico, three grantees collaborated to advocate for the government to ban a toxic substance, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), based on evidence found through FLD-funded research. In addition, a female Indigenous grantee mentioned that some of her peers developed networks on different aspects of their work and selected leaders on thematic areas such as politics, community and land rights, and Indigenous women's rights. These four networks are still operational and work closely to support women and reproductive and sexual health in Indigenous communities.
- In Brazil, grantees mentioned instances where they have maintained connections with other alumni, particularly through national campaigns: grantees collaborated in the *Centro de*

Estudos das Relações de Trabalho e Desigualdades (CEERT) campaigns.¹⁹ Others have maintained collaborations as a result of other professional engagements: a grantee mentioned collaboration with a peer who became his supervisor at the Ford Foundation: “I worked with [a grantee] when she was the coordinator of projects at Ford. So, she was basically my boss...”

- Another Brazilian grantee mentioned that collaborations occur among FLD grantees through larger national networks or events. He said: “[A grantee] is coming to this colloquium on masculinity in April (2017) and he will be participating in the discussion about sexuality; in fact, we continue doing things together. [Another grantee] will be participating in the discussion on gender, sexuality, and psychology too—social psychology, which is at the root of her discussion. There was also the collaboration [of my organization] with SOS Corpo here in Recife, with [a grantee] who was part of SOS Corpo being a former MacArthur scholar.”

Conclusion

This section provides many examples to support the influence that FLD has had on grantees’ personal development and career trajectories. Potential outcomes, however, go beyond grantees’ individual transformations; the next chapter sheds light on the influence of grantees’ FLD-funded projects not only at the community and organizational levels, but also nationally and internationally.

¹⁹ CEERT (*Centro de Estudos das Relações de Trabalho e Desigualdades*), or Center for Studies on Labor Relations and Inequalities, is a Brazilian organization working for racial equality for the Afro-Brazilian community. For more information about this organization visit: <http://www.ceert.org.br/>.

Chapter 4: Outcomes beyond the Grantee

The FLD program gave grants to individuals with the aim of enabling them to become key agents of change. The program provided training and capacity-building sessions in areas such as proposal development, grant management, fundraising, donor engagement, and organizational leadership. Beyond its contribution to grantees' personal and professional growth, the FLD strengthened the organizations grantees were affiliated with during and after their participation, including organizations that were created with FLD funding or by FLD alumni.

It is worth noting that changes that grantees brought to their organizations, communities and countries may be resulting from various factors, among which is the participation in the FLD. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the FLD contributed to these changes.

Organizational Outcomes

This section explores the extent to which FLD participation affected grantees' organizational affiliation and leadership, and their ability to launch and manage new organizations on a sustainable basis.

Organizations Where Alumni Work

More than a third of respondents (38 percent) are working in the same organization where they were employed prior to FLD. Of these alumni:

- 51 percent have been promoted since completing the program
- 63 percent provide capacity-building services
- 51 percent are involved in research management
- 34 percent focus on fundraising
- 24 percent hold positions that focus on grant management

Grantees who did not remain in the same organization often forged their own path; 40 percent of surveyed alumni created new organizations and 87 percent of these organizations focus on the PRH field. Grantees launched new organizations to tackle unaddressed issues they identified during their FLD-funded projects, while others wanted to create a space for innovation that was not being provided by their current employers:

- A Brazilian grantee launched *Anis—Instituto de Bioética*, an organization that focuses on bioethics from a feminist perspective. According to an interviewed expert, this organization was novel in its approach: *“See, for example, the case of [the grantee], who worked with bioethics. Until she entered this debate, it was a dull thing, there was nothing happening. She then started discussing bioethics from a feminist point of view and that energized the whole thing.”*
- In India, based on her personal experience, a grantee launched an organization as a way of creating a space for incest survivors. There was no discussion or initiative addressing incest or sexual abuse at that time in India. As she noted: *“It was a wish in my heart. Through*

applying for the Fellowship, it [the wish] got concretized and put on paper. It was not only then [just] the passion or idea.”

- A Nigerian grantee, with the FLD grant she received, established the Center for Women and Adolescent Empowerment in 1997. The organization works with the community to empower women and adolescents to take responsibility for their own rights. Since its founding, it has remained one of the most active centers in the city of Yola (Adamawa state) working on gender issues. The grantee is featured in a case study.

IIE compiled a comprehensive list of organizations that grantees launched during and after the program or had started as fledgling organizations but were further established and strengthened by FLD. Some were reported by participants in this retrospective evaluation and others were mentioned in previous country-specific evaluations or country reports:

- **Brazil:** *Anis Instituto de Bioética* (Anis Institute of Bioethics); *Direitos Humanos e Gênero* (Human Rights and Gender); *Instituto Papai* (Papai Institute); *Núcleo de Estudos para Prevenção da AIDS* (Nucleus of Studies for AIDS Prevention); *Evangélicas pela Igualdade de Gênero* (Evangelicals for Gender Equality); and *Themis—Gênero, Justiça e Direitos Humanos* (Gender, Justice and Human Rights)
- **Mexico:** *Salud y Genero A.C.* (Health and Gender); *Equidad de Genero* (Gender Equality); and *Mujer y Media Ambiente* (Women & Environment)
- **Nigeria:** Adolescent Girls Initiative; Youth, Adolescence, Reflection and Action Centre; Media Resource and Advocacy Centre; Vision Spring Initiatives; and Center for Human Rights in Islam
- **India:** The MacArthur-Tata Initiative on AIDS; Recovering and Healing from Incest Foundation (RAHI); Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues (TARSHI); the Sakhi Women Resource Center; Action Research and Training for Health; the KRITI Resource Center on Gender; Women’s Health and Rights; Gender Research Information and Training; Ideosync Media; Ojus Medical Institute; Chehak Trust; Sahayog, the Centre for Health and Social Justice, and the Uger Project

After their establishment, some of these organizations received grants under the FLD partner organization programs in Brazil (*Instituto Papai, Anis*); others received institutional grants issued by the MacArthur Foundation outside the FLD funding stream. *Salud y Genero* received close to a million dollars between 1997 and 2011.²⁰ In India, the Foundation continued giving institutional grants to some of the organizations that grantees started or strengthened thanks to FLD funding; such was the case for Sahayog²¹ and the Centre for Health and Social Justice.²²

Organizational Focus

Most respondents (78 percent) indicated that their current organizations conduct work related to the PRH field. That being said, the regional focus and scope of these organizations varies. Prior to

²⁰ MacArthur Foundation Grantee profile: <https://www.macfound.org/grantees/704/>

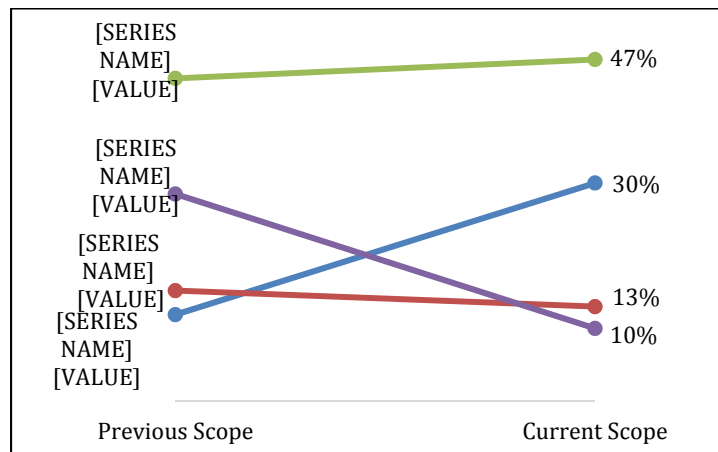
²¹ MacArthur Foundation Grantee profile: <https://www.macfound.org/grantees/2439/>

²² MacArthur Foundation Grantee profile: <https://www.macfound.org/grantees/147/>

participating in FLD, most respondents worked in organizations at the national level (44 percent), followed by the local (29 percent), regional (15 percent), and international (12 percent) levels.

Survey data provides evidence that the proportion of alumni respondents who currently work in international organizations has almost tripled, while those working at the local level has significantly decreased. Figure 9 presents the changes in organizational focus after FLD. Although quantitative data indicates that FLD has contributed to increased work internationally, qualitative data clarifies that these international engagements often support efforts at the local level.

Figure 9. Focus of grantee organizations before and after FLD



In interviews, grantees indicated moving from local to state, regional, or even international-level work but still directly support local communities. As part of her work with an international organization, a Mexican grantee reported that she works directly with local communities in each country and achieves impact at the local and national levels. Also in Mexico, some grantee lawyers started at the local level and then continued to support specific communities, but now those communities are spread across a state or various states across the country.

Although many factors might explain alumni’s decreased involvement in local-level organizations, one reason might be that alumni chose not to invest their newly acquired skills in these organizations. One case that illustrates this scenario is that of the ELDP grantees in Nigeria. In lieu of handing funds to grantees, ELDP decided to purchase equipment and learning materials for grantees and to focus the program on three week-long training sessions²³ on a range of research and project management issues. The assumption was that alumni would invest these newly acquired skills in their communities. However, most alumni of this program shared that because they did not receive any funds to implement individual projects in communities, they were less motivated to engage with communities after participating in the program. According to one ELDP grantee who is featured in a case study, these trainings may have made grantees more attractive to donor-type organizations than local ones. He noted: *“Many of my colleagues got lucrative jobs in*

²³ These sessions were the orientation/briefing meeting on ELDP’s concept, goal, strategies, and roles and responsibilities; the “strategic visioning, thinking, and planning” workshop to equip grantees with skills on results-oriented approaches; and the “advocacy workshop” to help grantees develop communication, networking, and mentoring skills. Each capacity-building training ended with beneficiaries developing an action plan of how to put new skills into practice. At the beginning of the following training, they shared their experiences and received feedback from trainers and peers.

Abuja effectively leaving behind their communities; [had they] received grant money, they would at least have been motivated to stay and run projects or in the very least they would have been compelled to stay.”

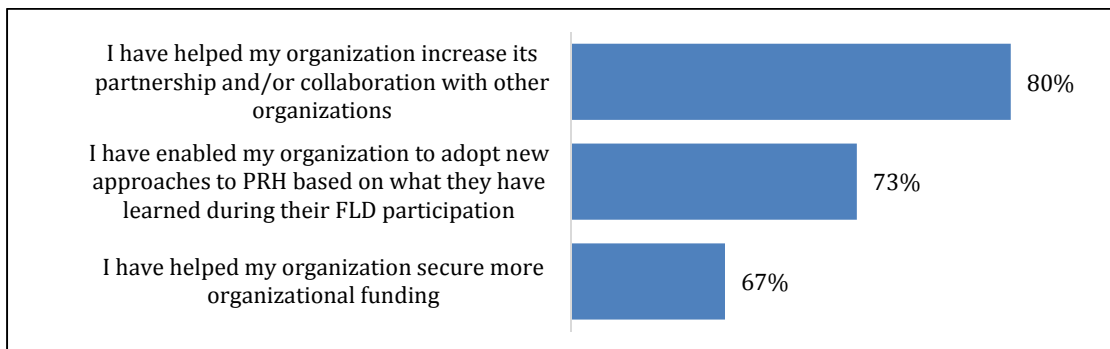
Organizational Improvements

Many grantees used their FLD experience to strengthen the capacity of their organizations: 18 percent of survey respondents indicated that they used part of their grant to staff their organizations and 12 percent stated that the grant provided additional funding for a project their organization was implementing:

- The Brazilian alum working in the bioethics NGO *Anis*, mentioned at the beginning of this section, explained how the grant was useful to structure her organization. “[The grant] allowed me, during its three-year period, ... to structure *Anis*. Only [after receiving the grant] did I have the time and financial stability to stop and think strategically instead of having to ‘sell oranges’ to pay the bills. I have always worked at the NGO on a pro bono basis. ... The problem with NGOs is that they rarely have enough resources to pay for highly qualified people. *Anis* could never do it.”

Since FLD, grantees’ employer organizations have benefited from them in many ways, including increased funding, increased visibility, expanded networks, and adoption of innovative approaches. Figure 10 presents the type of contributions grantees have made to their organizations.

Figure 10. Grantee contributions to their organizations



FLD alumni are viewed as key resources of knowledge and expertise on PRH issues. More than a third (43 percent) of survey respondents indicated that they are a resource person on PRH issues within their organization, while half (50 percent) indicated that their input on PRH issues is sought by their peers and decision-makers. As a result of FLD, a Nigerian grantee established herself as one of the most sought-after monitoring and evaluation (M&E) experts in Nigeria on PRH and women’s empowerment. In her current role as the executive director of a women’s organization, she provides technical assistance to government agencies, civil society partners, and private sector organizations and engages in policy, dialogue, and analysis on reproductive health M&E.

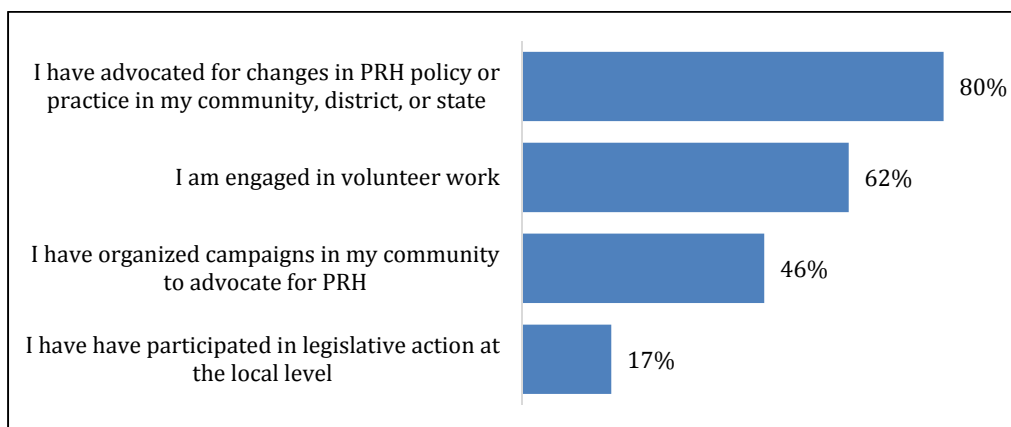
Community Outcomes

Outcomes at the community level were the most frequently cited achievements of FLD in all countries; this confirms the initial hypothesis of the program that local population problems are better addressed when priority is given to local leaders and institutions.

FLD greatly expanded grantees' exposure to their communities and community work. Prior to FLD, 27 percent of respondents indicated that they had direct involvement with their communities, either as a public educator; human rights adviser; policy, religious, or community leader; or otherwise. After FLD, 59 percent of survey respondents indicated this relationship with their communities. This statistic nearly doubled, indicating the alumni's significant commitment to their community work after the grant.

In terms of the work they are doing in their communities, 62 percent of survey respondents are engaged in volunteer work, mostly in the PRH field (Figure 11). Eight out of 10 survey respondents (80 percent) indicated that they have actively advocated for changes in PRH policy or practice in their community, district, or state.

Figure 11. *Grantees' activities at the community level since completing the grant*



Using innovative approaches to community empowerment and change, and immersing themselves in communities, grantees were able to challenge and sometimes transform power dynamics, give visibility to marginalized social groups, or bring causes with little visibility to the forefront. As a result of contextual differences, the following sections present outcomes by country.

Brazil

In Brazil, participants in FLD-funded projects leveraged their experience to empower their communities and social groups. Participants became activists for issues they were engaged in during FLD, and others founded organizations to address these issues:

- After an FLD grantee worked with transgender persons on a sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) peer education prevention program, these transgender participants launched an organization to continue the prevention work in communities.

Several FLD-funded projects empowered members of disadvantaged communities to increase the success of their interventions:

- As part of her FLD project aimed at supporting women leaders to help others in their fight for safe and free reproductive health services, a grantee recruited women solely from poor and periphery neighborhoods in Porto Alegre, turning them into women's rights activists.
- Another grantee's project supported peer education to prevent STDs among commercial sex workers, and recruited campaigners among prostitutes in the state of Mato Grosso. The grantee noted that *"my project had to do with the feminist struggle, with the fight against racism. I always wanted to broaden the perspective."*

This close work relationship borne out of FLD was not limited to grantees who had a community background. Such was also the case for grantees who were academics:

- A grantee who held a position of researcher and lecturer at the University of São Paulo not only designed materials for an AIDS prevention program but also went in the field, taking this prevention program to public schools in the poverty-stricken outskirts of the city of São Paulo, the most populous in Brazil. The grantee is featured in a case study.
- Another grantee who was a lecturer at the University of São Paulo School of Education implemented a project that studied ethnic relations among children and adolescents and analyzed racial discrimination patterns in health services. He organized discussion groups to create grassroots advocates. Speaking of the outcomes of this project, he stated that *"these young people who participated in the discussion groups all continued their work in advocacy, and they also gained strength."* To raise awareness about discrimination, one of these young men produced rap music. This helped him connect to other music producers, and opened up opportunities to develop his talents as a rapper; the grantee shared that the young man later *"moved to Germany and is still living there."*

Many projects that targeted socially invisible groups, such as bisexual men and transgender people, were able to provide them with more social visibility. A grantee whose project aimed at conducting a study among bisexual men to analyze their perceptions of HIV/AIDS risk behavior declared that *"at that time bisexual men were being heavily criticized and attacked by epidemiologists, who said they had taken AIDS from specific groups, drug users, and homosexuals, to society in general."*

Mexico

Although selecting traditionally marginalized individuals as change agents has been part of FLD's history, the partner organization grants administered by SEMILLAS had a particular focus on individuals who traditionally had been less powerful, such as Indigenous women and young people. Through their projects, female Indigenous grantees became known within their communities and connected with government officials, which provided them with the opportunity for more significant roles in their communities. Referring to these new connections, an Indigenous grantee (featured in a case study) stated that FLD gave her *"an opportunity to be able to create social mobilization with municipal authorities, with municipal agents, with midwives, with health workers, with the proper doctors. ... For me, this was a very beautiful experience."*

Most grantees implemented projects that supported the protection of community rights and the rights of those providing services, such as maternal health promoters. Speaking of her involvement

in community activities, a SEMILLAS grantee mentioned earlier noted: *“If I didn’t have this grant, this push, I would not be here now. I would have continued living as I was and how other women are still living today. For Indigenous women, it is not easy to participate. ... Now more women are participating, but at the time, none did.”* Others raised awareness and encouraged community dialogue through workshops, radio programs, and videos on health issues, such as teenage pregnancy, maternal mortality, sexuality and people with disabilities, sexuality, rights, and HIV/AIDS.

Most important, the use of grant money played a crucial role in a power shift observed in Mexico: interviewed stakeholders mentioned incidences where bosses within organizations or husbands of grantee Indigenous women wanted to appropriate the project’s funds. In these cases, the managing organization intervened to clarify that all grant-related funds and equipment belonged to the grantee and that it would withdraw its funds if they were used otherwise. These swift interventions in cases of conflicts emboldened these female grantees to claim their rightful funds. According to a program adviser, *“visible, obvious change [was] passing the voice to Indigenous women to advocate for themselves at all levels.”*

Nigeria

In Nigeria, grantees achieved community outcomes through the creation of resource centers for women, youth, and people living with disabilities:

- An alumna opened a center for battered women that contributes significantly to her community. She noted: *“When women know they have a place or a person that supports them, no matter which type of community they come from, they will always come through because they are no longer afraid.”* That center has grown and taken positions on controversial issues, including underage marriage and child brides. In a high-profile case fought before a sharia court,²⁴ the alumna succeeded in stopping the marriage of a state minister to an underage girl. According to a resident²⁵ of the community served by the center, *“It shows you how powerful the center is, that they can take such a high-profile case and actually succeed. Many people in the community look at that case as a reference point; it is a good deterrent, if they could stop a minister, they can stop just about anyone.”* A case study provides more details about this alumna.
- Other initiatives in Nigeria include a grantee helping her community deal with issues of quality of care in the community hospitals while offering family planning services to disadvantaged women. Another grantee opened a center where young people gather, watch movies on reproductive health, and engage in open discussions with a counselor that can offer solutions.

India

In India, community outcomes include an increased knowledge of reproductive health issues brought about by grantee-provided sensitization campaigns and technical support to community actors:

²⁴ Religious court operating according to the Islamic law

²⁵ Interviewed as part of the case studies

- A grantee used her grant to make films on adolescent (14–18) years, addressing issues such as sexuality, relationships, and contraception. The grant also strengthened the training the staff provides via community radio. These films are still viewed today and are changing minds in communities.
- Another grantee conducted community-based research on maternal health has since been providing technical support to other activists working on this issue.

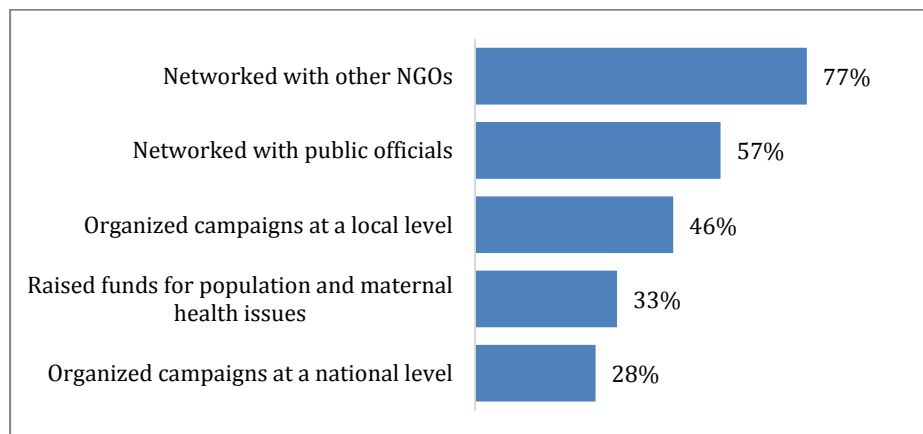
In some instances, grantees have remained in their communities, embedding the innovative practices and approaches they developed during FLD to bring about community change.

Outcomes at the National Level

Although outcomes at the national level are more difficult to measure and require time to come to fruition, the findings of the evaluation indicate that FLD grantees are making inroads in national-level policies and advocacy. About one-quarter of survey respondents (24 percent) indicated that they have participated in drafting laws at the national level. The interviews provided abundant evidence that in many cases grantees were directly or indirectly involved in policymaking at the national level. They also gained influence nationwide as activists, political and technical advisers.

Alumni engaged with civil society, national officials, and national sensitization campaigns, and participated in fundraising. More than three quarters (77 percent) of respondents indicated that they have engaged with national nonprofit organizations on PRH issues (Figure 12). Only 10 percent of survey respondents indicated that they have not participated in any national-level activities.

Figure 12. Alumni engagement at the national level since FLD



Brazil

Several grantees have conducted worked on projects at the Ministry-level, promoting change in government policy:

- After implementing an FLD-funded project that explored the nexus between religion and reproductive health, a grantee became an adviser to the Ministry of Health on its program to combat homophobia within religious groups. She spoke of the influence she acquired: *“Today, I am heard by different government agencies when they want to do something in this area, or if they need more subsidies to know how to deal with it.”*
- A project implemented by a grantee inspired the National Policy for Promoting the Health of the Black Population created by the Ministry of Health. The same grantee also worked as a consultant for UNDP and PAHO in a project to structure the field of PRH for populations of African descent in the Americas.

Other grantees have scaled up projects at the national level:

- A grantee with a background in academia designed an HIV/AIDS prevention program intended for adolescents. As an activist, he implemented this program first in middle schools in the city of São Paulo, and then in schools in the state of São Paulo. Later, this program had a large influence across the country and inspired a national AIDS prevention program in Colombia (see Outcomes at the International Level). The grantee is featured in a case study.
- A grantee also credited FLD for her rise to a decision-making position that she described as *“the highest position anyone can get as a PRH professional in Brazil, which is to be the director of the National Department of STDs, AIDS and Viral Hepatitis, from which all public policies in the field emanate.”*

Mexico

Grantees have achieved successes in academia, legislative action, and policymaking:

- A few grantees have influenced national capacity and dialogue by developing nationally recognized graduate programs or directing centers in their specializations within top universities in Mexico. An FLD grantee helped to develop the Masters of Science (MSc) and Doctorate of Science (DSc) in Toxicology at the *Instituto Politecnico Nacional* (National Polytechnic Institute); another helped to develop the doctoral program in Environmental Health at the *Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica* (National Institute of Public Health); and a third grantee currently heads Mexico’s prestigious film school, the *Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos* at the *Universidad Autónoma Nacional de Mexico* (National Autonomous University of Mexico).
- A grantee who was a practicing lawyer led the legislative process to legalize abortion in the country, working closely in support of another FLD grantee and her NGO and others to influence the broader women’s movement and mobilize support to pass this law. The grantee is featured in a case study.
- Three grantees, who have been collaborating from the early years of their FLD participation, advocated for the ban of toxic DDT based on their research²⁶ into the effect of this substance

²⁶ For more information on the grantee’s work on DDT, please see: Sierra-Santoyo A, Hernandez M, Albores A, Cebrian ME. Sex-dependent regulation of hepatic cytochrome P-450 by DDT. *Toxicol Sci.* 2000; 54:81-87. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10746934>

on the health of women and newborn children. Currently, one of these grantees volunteers as an expert in the interpretation of scientific studies to help NGOs clearly communicate the information to different audiences across the country.

- Findings from a grantee's research²⁷ and other data convinced the government to create an official norm for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and epidemiological vigilance of breast cancer; this norm requires conducting breast cancer screenings for mothers.
- As part of her FLD project on HIV/AIDS, a grantee created videos that have been shown on public television; the Secretary of Health also supported the screening of these videos in governmental institutions in the capital and in other states.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, there were mixed opinions as to the national impact achieved by FLD grantees, individually or collectively. Some grantees pointed to evidence of their peers being very active in the drafting and advocacy for many national healthcare reform projects as well as their presence in key government positions around the country. An ELDP grantee shared that *"you don't need too many people to make a huge difference on national issues, you just need one person in the right position. Imagine if a grantee were Minister of Health, for instance. With the training, they would do great things. Therefore, still give some time, some of us are still coming up, perhaps in the next 10 to 15 years you will see national impact."*

In contrast, experts and even some program staff agreed that apart from some limited instances, they could not categorically attribute any national-level outcomes to FLD grantees. Some stakeholders attributed this lack of national presence to their numbers, which they said were too small to make any impact. According to a staff member, *"It would be a far reach to talk about any collective national impact, they were too few, and as you know, Nigeria is a vast country with huge problems."*

Nonetheless, there were two instances of grantees achieving impact at the state level (Nigeria is a federation):

- A grantee advocated for and convinced the House of Assembly (legislature) in his home Kano State to set up an office that served as a liaison between civil society groups and the state legislature. He also reached out to fellow FLD members in the state to form a coalition on safe motherhood called the Prevention of Maternal Mortality and focused on advocacy. The same grantee created a radio program focused on health issues that aired from 2004 to 2006 on Pyramid Radio. For the past 15 years, he also has been writing a column called "Health Interactive" in the *Daily Trust*, a local news outlet popular in the northern part of Nigeria, and in *Gamji*,²⁸ an online news source.
- Another grantee successfully pushed for an increase in the maternal health budget in his native Oyo state (north-central Nigeria).

²⁷ López Carrillo L, Suárez-López L, Torres-Sánchez L. Breast cancer examination in Mexico: Summary of the results from the National Survey of Reproductive Health 2003. *Salud Publica Mex* 2009; 51 suppl 2: S345-S349. Available at <http://www.scielosp.org/pdf/spm/v51s2/v51s2a27.pdf>

²⁸ Examples of online columns include the reform of Nigeria's health sector, the cost analysis of seeking healthcare abroad, premature ejaculation, and the implication of national population on health and development (<http://www.gamji.com/>).

India

In India, many FLD grantees are currently in leading national positions in funding agencies, academics, and development organizations. They influence policy through their membership in technical and government committees at the state and national levels.

- One grantee served on several committees for the government of India, such as the Mental Health Policy Group (which drafted India's first national mental health policy), the National Rural Health Mission, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) Mentoring Group, the National Human Rights Commission Core Committee on Health, and the Technical Advisory Group of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram. The grantee is featured in a case study.

According to a program adviser, FLD addressed a range of issues, including incest, violence against women, and communication with young people. This has triggered others in civil society to work on these issues, thus helping create more capacity in the field:

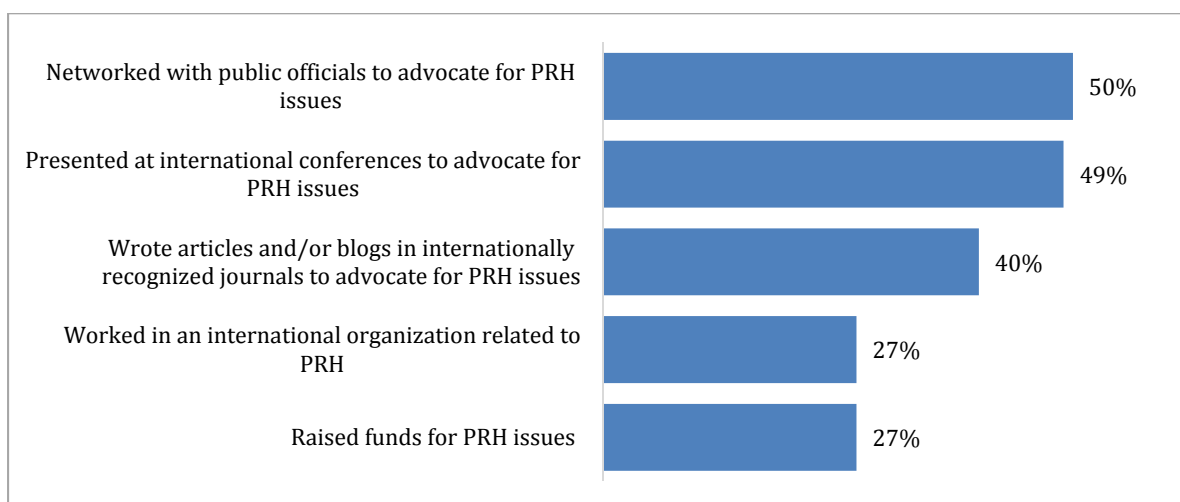
- FLD-funded projects generated greater access to emergency services. One grantee started a groundbreaking SRH helpline, the first of its kind in India.
- Others launched organizations to tackle issues that were previously taboo. One grantee established an organization to address incest and developed a healing process for victims of incest. The grantee also authored the book *"The House I Grew Up In,"* a compilation of stories of women's experiences of childhood incest. The book helped spark interest in other literature written on the issue in India.

Outcomes at the International Level

Although FLD projects focused on community and national outcomes, international contributions were also evident, primarily through participation in international conferences and networks, and through the expansion of innovative programs the FLD alumni pioneered in their respective countries. As mentioned earlier, work in international organizations has significantly increased as a result of FLD participation.

One in three alumni respondents (30 percent) reported work in organizations that have an international scope. In addition, half of alumni respondents reported that they have engaged public officials at the international level to advocate for PRH issues, or have presented at international conferences (49 percent) to that end (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Alumni advocacy in PRH at the international level



The following examples highlight FLD grantees' international influence:

- In Brazil, after a grantee designed and implemented an HIV/AIDS prevention program in the most populous state of the country, the program inspired the design of a nationwide prevention program in neighboring Colombia. The innovation in the grantee's approach is that in the fight against the AIDS epidemic in the 1990s, his program marked a shift from the concept of "risk" (which lays blame on the individual) to that of "vulnerability," which posited the idea that to fight the disease, programs should be sensitive to the social situation and structural limitations of the groups they target. A case study provides more information about the grantee and his project.
- In Mexico, after completing her grant in 2003, a grantee launched an organization²⁹ that addresses the reproductive health needs of people living with disabilities. This organization currently works in various countries in Latin America.
- In Nigeria, many grantees reported the presentation of papers at international conferences, including the African Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Kenya, the Maternal Health Global Conference in Arusha in 2013, and the Family Planning Conference in Dakar (Senegal) in 2010.
- In India, a grantee developed media materials for non-literate adolescents that were adapted further for use by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) for its Menstrual Hygiene Management programs in Africa. The WSSCC has acknowledged that grantee on their website. In another case, two grantees who received the FLD grant as a couple have taken the expertise gained during FLD to the WHO offices in Geneva. One is currently the technical lead for unsafe abortion within WHO, where she works on research, monitoring, technical support to countries, policy, and capacity-building. Speaking of the FLD impact on her journey, she said: *"In my work on research capacity strengthening and*

²⁹GEISHAD: Grupo Educativo Interdisciplinario en Sexualidad Humana y Atencion a la Discapacidad

running a fellowship, I bring in experiences from my FLD Fellowship. ... The experience changed me, the way I think and look at issues.”

Influencing the PRH Field and Women

Participants and respondents from all countries noted how FLD changed perceptions of the PRH field and women. For women particularly, these outcomes were reported for both female grantees themselves as well as for women who participated in grantees’ FLD-funded projects.

Contribution to PRH Field

“Thirty-three out of 78 [FLD grantees in India] are people who have made a significant mark in their work. That is a very high number by any standard—42 percent.” FLD national adviser, India*

*Author’s note: Respondent is referring to own knowledge of FLD grantees in India, not official program or evaluation data.

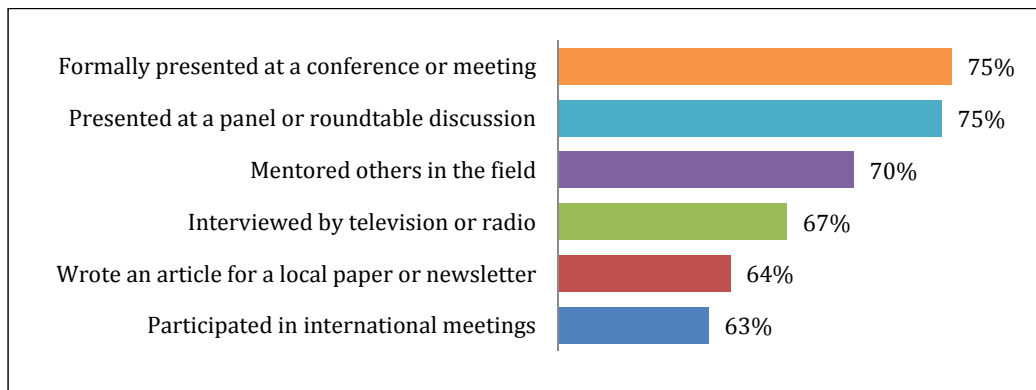
A large proportion of alumni respondents (92 percent) have created or presented at workshops, seminars, or conferences relating to PRH. According to the alumni survey, grantees have produced more than 1,300 peer-reviewed academic journal articles related to PRH since completing their grant (Table B). More than 200 books and 800 book chapters have been written, and alumni have presented at over 2,000 professional conferences or seminars.

Table B. Academic products created by FLD alumni

Academic Products in PRH Field	Sum of Total Products	Percentage of Alumni Respondents
Peer-reviewed academic journal articles	1377	60%
Non-peer-reviewed academic journal articles	518	55%
Academic books	233	45%
Academic book chapters	804	63%
Academic reports	704	63%
Workshops/seminars/conference presentations for academics	2324	92%
Websites/blogs for academics	112	36%
News articles/editorials for academic publications	872	55%
Works of art, exhibitions, musical compositions, recordings, artistic performances	338	29%
Television/radio programs or announcements promoting academic institutions	986	49%

Most alumni have shared knowledge about the PRH field since their participation in the program, with many of them presenting at conferences, formal meetings, or mentoring other individuals working in the field (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Alumni knowledge-sharing activities



In all countries, FLD grantees contributed to and expanded the boundaries of the PRH field. For instance, FLD-funded projects contributed to some topics such as masculinities, incest and sexual abuse, juridical litigation, teenage fatherhood, and mental health in reproductive health gaining momentum as key areas of interest for PRH professionals:

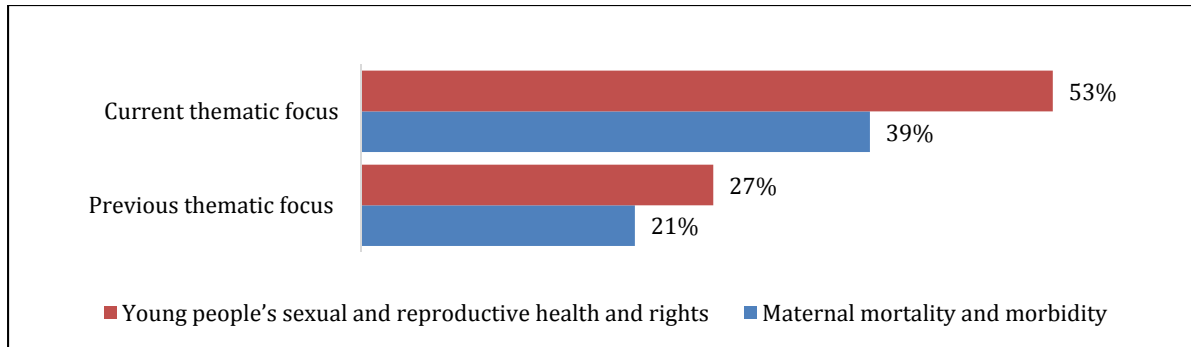
- In India, as FLD-funded research uncovered the extent of societal issues such as incest, new citizen movements were born to address them. In another case, a grantee who made a pioneering film on masculinities during the FLD³⁰ has continued to pursue the issue and has since acted as a catalyst for more films and work on masculinities in the South Asia region. A longtime program advisor who indicated from his experience that 42 percent of grantees have made a significant mark explained further that these were grantees who *“have reached senior positions in important organizations in the field (often at a relatively young age); are recognized by peers in the field as leaders; have made creative and/or innovative contributions to extending or deepening the field in significant ways; and have made a real mark in research, academic leadership, advocacy or breaking new ground in terms of programs or policies.”*
- In Mexico, in lieu of ideological arguments, a grantee championed a juridical approach in the courts to support advocacy for revising legislation on sexual and reproductive rights. This approach is based on mapping the rights or norms that characterize women as the holders of the right to make decisions about abortion. His work helped pave the way for the many lawyers who currently specialize in defending women’s rights. Speaking of how his approach has transformed the PRH field in Mexico, he stated: *“Now there are many lawyers working on rights; when I started it wasn’t like this.”* The grantee is featured in a case study.

Although 21 percent of survey respondents indicated that their work touched upon maternal mortality and morbidity prior to their FLD participation, 39 percent reported the same for their current positions (Figure 15). The percentage of those who worked on issues related to young

³⁰ Roy, R. (1999). When four friends meet. <https://beenasarwar.com/2015/10/02/rahul-roy-addressing-masculinities-through-film/>

people’s SRH and rights almost doubled, from 27 percent before the program to 53 percent currently.

Figure 15. Focus on two key themes before and after the grant



FLD broadened access to other areas of reproductive health and facilitated connections between these areas. By choosing to work on the linkages between postnatal depression and infant and maternal health, an Indian grantee with a background in psychiatry has established the linkage of mental health to the field of reproductive health at the local, national, and international levels. This work is detailed in a case study.

In Brazil in the early years of the program, an FLD grantee brought up the issue of teenage fatherhood. Speaking of how the exploration of this issue has expanded the PRH field, the grantee said: *“My research project was on teenage fatherhood. ... The issue of adolescent motherhood existed, but there [was] no research done on adolescent male parents, as if they were never actually the object of research or even socially responsible.”*

Role of Women

The percentage of female grantees who worked on advocacy for women’s rights increased from 27 percent before FLD to 57 percent currently; in comparison, this percentage increased from 2 percent before to 9 percent currently for male grantees. Among survey respondents, 16 percent indicated that their work included advocacy for women’s rights prior to FLD; following the program, 24 percent of alumni respondents reported that their current employment or academic study relates to this area.

Implementation of FLD projects empowered not only women in communities but also female grantees themselves. In Brazil, research conducted by FLD grantees contributed to women’s empowerment:

- An FLD grantee led a groundbreaking project to promote the importance of bioethics in women’s health, leading to the popularization of bioethics³¹ and opening the debate regarding the rights of black women to health services. Another FLD-funded project

³¹Guedes, C.; Diniz, D. (2009) “The ethics of genetic counseling: a challenge for medical education.” This article was coauthored by an FLD grantee and published in a peer-review journal, providing an example of how the grantee’s work contributed to the popularization of the bioethics.

involved sex workers in a peer-education program to prevent STDs; the project empowered participants to use female condoms and to demand that men use condoms as well.

- Other forms of empowerment pertained to FLD female grantees themselves. As one grantee said: *“Being a MacArthur grantee has greatly broadened the horizons of my political participation in the black movement, in the feminist movement, usually in issues related to human rights.”* FLD staff and national PRH experts alluded to the same impact: *“We had women linked to the field that had more roles in government, like the secretariat for women.”* Another noted: *“I really think there was a lot of empowerment; young women entering the field, with their projects, taking advantage of exchanges with more experienced people...”*

In Mexico, female grantees have risen to roles where they have influenced legislation, policy, and gender norms:

- One grantee wrote the law that gave women the right to make their own decisions regarding abortion. Three to four years ago, another grantee created an association³² to allow both male and female scientific researchers to work in support of gender equality.
- A grantee has become the head of a newly created political party, *México Posible*. She has held a number of high-level political positions, influenced policy, and was a candidate of the *Alternativa* alliance in the 2006 presidential election where she ranked fourth³³. She currently holds a high position in the Mexico City government and continues to be a well-respected, important figure.
- A grantee who established a human rights center noted the increase in women who have visited the center: *“Now more than 30 percent of cases are women—before less than 10 percent. Because women weren’t allowed to leave the community and go to the city. Now more understood and accepted that women would go. ... We are pioneers in human rights and women’s rights. ... Before, it was hard for women to come alone, they didn’t feel comfortable, were scared. Now they come as actors pushing [for action].”*
- An Indigenous grantee noted the effect of her work on other women and their confidence: *“Women would say ‘my husband doesn’t let me speak’. After I started working with them, then they would say, my husband doesn’t want me to do this, but I don’t care, I want to do this! ... Women started to [make] more decisions on their pregnancy and birth.”*

In Nigeria, a grantee established a center to promote women’s rights and provide counselling to battered women. She also secured loans for disadvantaged female farmers and advocated for larger funding toward the education of girls in the predominantly Muslim communities of northern Nigeria. Case studies provide more information about the grantee’s achievements.

In India, many projects have involved the groundbreaking work of female grantees. An expert referred to the case of an HPIF grantee who has, in the past 10 years, strengthened her organization from a gender perspective: *“She is a strong audible voice on HIV-positive women.”*

³² Association of Professors-Researchers of the National Institute of Public Health (Asociación de Profesores-Investigadores del Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública)

³³ Washington Post, June 9, 2006. Mexico’s Presidential Candidates -- Profiles and Campaign Information. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/09/AR2006060900814.html#mercado>

Conclusion

FLD grantees accomplished much within their organizations and in their communities. They also influenced legislative action and dialogue on PRH issues at the national level, and implemented programs that inspired similar initiatives at the international level. These achievements position FLD as an example of the program effect when innovations at the local and individual level are given the attention and support to enact greater social change.

Chapter 5: Reflections on Program Implementation

FLD's program design was meant to be flexible, and although background information has shed light on this flexibility through country-specific changes introduced in the course of the program, little is known about how stakeholders reflected on the program. This chapter presents the viewpoints of FLD participants and stakeholders on FLD program implementation, including grantee selection and staff support to grantees during and after the grant experience.

Pre-program Reflections

Prior to participating in FLD, survey respondents' work experience ranged from 2 years to 40 years;³⁴ most had 6 to 10 years of experience. Some grantees received leadership development opportunities prior to FLD, including awards, professional development grants and post-graduate and doctoral fellowships:

- In Brazil, grantees reported participating in courses offered by the Nucleus of Population Studies and receiving FLD-like grants from the Carlos Chagas Foundation, the UN Development Fund for Women, *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* in the Brazil Ministry of Education, and *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* in the Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology.
- In India, a grantee reported having received the Arkleton Trust Fellowship.

Apart from these very few instances, the program appeared to be the first grant experience for most. Some grantees said that previous opportunities were intended for people with a specific background, such as academics. Others pointed to their geographic limitations; grantees from rural, Indigenous communities in Mexico, for example, had minimal options and connections to large leadership development programs in the country.

For some, existing opportunities were not specific enough to their area of interest. A Mexican grantee said that FLD *“defined the target population in a better way. [Although] the government was providing [funding to collect] global statistics on family planning for the whole country, MacArthur supported initiatives to break down statistics according to groups and location, showing the dramatic differences between them.”* For others, barriers to accessing opportunities were socioeconomic; a Brazilian grantee noted: *“I am the son of poor people. I don't want to get into the poverty discourse, but I was poor. I had gone to college and got my MA, but I had never participated in anything else.”*

Although most grantees had defined goals, sometimes no leadership development opportunities were available to meet their specific needs. Although many tried to find funding, they were not successful. In Nigeria, a grantee noted: *“There wasn't any grant that I could have obtained in the workplace or any other institution. ... It was a golden opportunity for us to improve ourselves and carry out research, which is part of the academic existence.”*

³⁴There was only one case; the person joined in 1996 at age 51.

Selection Process

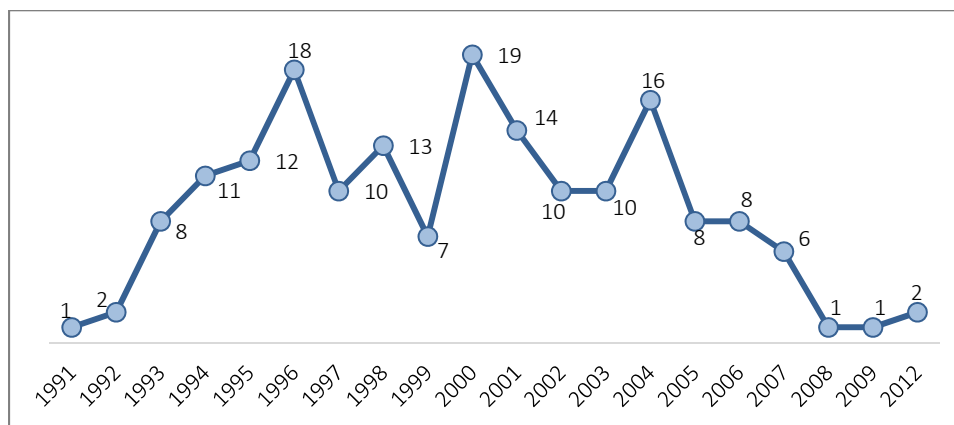
"[The] people [who] interviewed us were knowledgeable and thorough about our proposal and analysis; they questioned and cross-questioned us in nice way. I was nervous. [The process was led] by people who knew and who cared; I cherished the process." FLD grantee, India

FLD implementation included a selection process driven by program staff and national experts who were members of the annually convened selection committee. The Foundation designed FLD's program framework, but this design was adapted to country contexts. In India, stakeholders shared that there was a collective effort among national experts to come up with a country-specific vision and core values, which guided the selection process, selection criteria, and program management.

In all countries throughout the program, the selection process consisted of a call for applications, a review of applications, invitations to submit proposals, a review of proposals, shortlisting of applicants, interviews with members of the selection committee, and final decisions on grantees. In some instances, this decision was made by selection committees and Foundation staff in Chicago. Stakeholders also adjusted the selection criteria over the course of the program to respond to shifting interests, and in all countries, annual selections were based on a different theme.³⁵

Most survey respondents participated in FLD in selection years 1996, 2000, and 2004 (Figure 16). In comparison, program records indicate that most grants managed by country offices were made in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000, and most partner organization grants were made in 2004 and 2006 (21 each).³⁶

Figure 16. Survey respondents by selection year



Most respondents (85 percent) agreed that the selection process was equitable. Alumni from India were most likely to feel that the process was discriminatory and that it did not allow for the best candidates to be selected ($p < .05$). This feeling might be the result of the selection focus at the time

³⁵For more information about changes to thematic foci over the years, see the background paper the evaluation team developed as part of this evaluation.

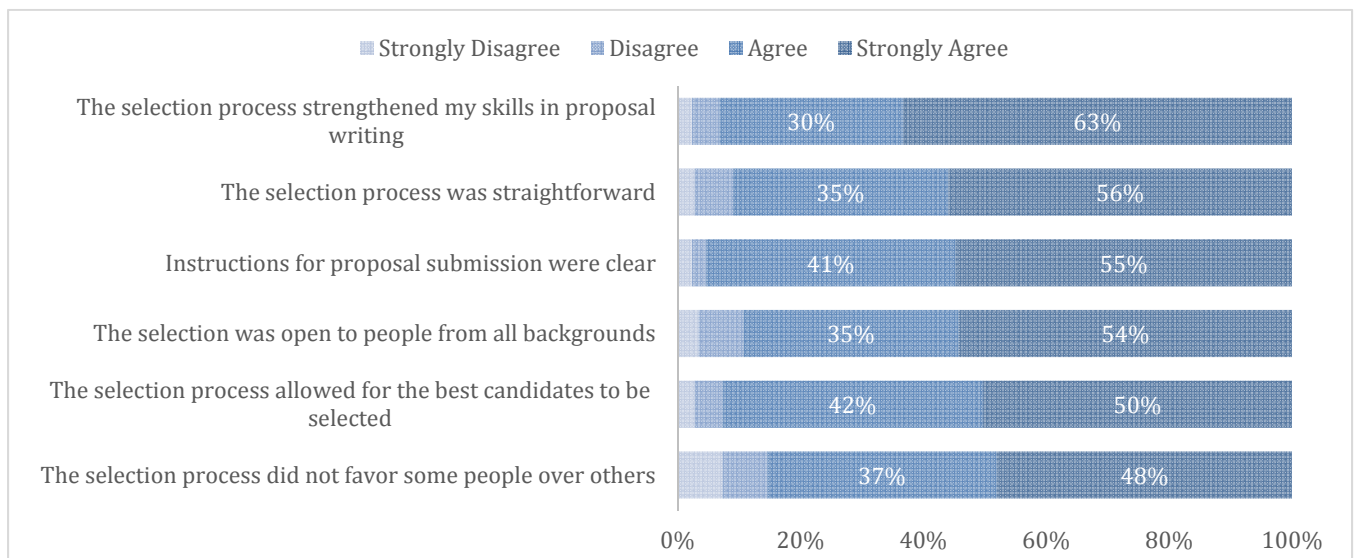
³⁶Only the annual breakdown of grants managed by country offices was accessible to the research team. The team based the annual breakdown for transitional grants in India and Nigeria on the review of FLD country reports; the team used averages for Mexico (total=58).

the FLD started in India in 1995; at that time, the selection criteria focused more on sexual and reproductive health rights, and less on the broad PRH field. In interviews, some stakeholders shared that the process lacked structure or uniformity, so it is likely that some respondents may have interpreted these differing criteria as discrimination.

In contrast, alumni from Nigeria were most likely to agree that the overall selection process was fair and objective, perhaps because selection committee members did not allow themselves to be influenced by external parties in a country where nepotism is prevalent. A member of a selection committee indicated that he and his peers were “vigilant” and that “during selection, we had to be careful to explore the motives of the applicants. Some may not be sincere, and we regarded it as a duty to find out those with genuine motives from those who just wanted the grant but were not planning to do anything with it.”

A large majority of alumni respondents agreed that the selection process was straightforward (Figure 17). Younger alumni found the selection process more difficult ($p < .01$), perhaps because they did not have as much professional experience in proposal writing.

Figure 17. Assessment of selection process



In individual interviews, stakeholders spoke of the various aspects of the process, including the criteria, the diversity of applicants’ profiles, attributes of selection committee members, and challenges and differences that Foundation offices observed over time from FLD administration to partner organizations in Mexico, Nigeria, and India.

Selection Criteria

Interviewees spoke of the creativity and innovation of the selection process in terms of the variety and diversity of the subjects covered, and its openness to untested ideas and to young talents who were not yet references in the field:

- In Brazil, the selection committee incorporated aspects of affirmative action in selection criteria. According to a member of the selection committee, “We ... established criteria for

affirmative action. ... People that came from more distant regions, for example, were included. ... Whoever came from Amazonas or Maranhão would score three points. We did not have Indigenous applicants at the time, [but we had] racial criteria. And that was fundamental.”

- During early design meetings in India, an expert came up with the phrase “fire in the belly,” which related to the commitment and passion that committee members should look for in each applicant; this became the selection committee’s motto. The committee also looked at whether the proposed project incorporated a cutting-edge idea, whether it was methodologically sound, and whether it was thoroughly considered.
- Reflecting on interviews the selection committee conducted prior to picking grantees, stakeholders in Mexico indicated that these interviews allowed committee members to assess candidates’ motivation and capacity to implement their projects. Interviews provided an opportunity for applicants to engage with established leaders and PRH experts, rethink their implementation strategies, and fine-tune their proposals. The selection process often provided applicants from Indigenous communities their first opportunity to travel outside of their communities and to defend their ideas. A selection committee member said of the process that *“by the end, the projects were much more realistic and enriched, because they were interacting with people who were experts in the area. It helped them to make their work stronger.”*

Diversity of Applicants

Applicants came from various backgrounds, including academia, healthcare, research, journalism, legal studies, psychology, and population studies. In each country, the diversity of the program cohort was a key consideration:

- In Brazil, the diversity in applicants’ backgrounds was seen as an innovation; according to an FLD staff member, it included *“a mix of academics and militants/activists.”* According to an expert, *“It was helpful to bring in people that were from a field that is not [in reproductive health]; they were not necessarily specialists in population, but they were journalists, activists.”* According to a grantee, *“The selection process valued both academic achievements and advocacy skills.”*
- In Mexico, stakeholders felt that the selection was open to new individuals and new approaches. According to a grantee featured in a case study, *“This program had the advantage that external people could access it. ... It was able to be open to others.”* A program staff member acknowledged that although FLD’s *“outreach was somewhat limited,”* the selection process *“never had a lack of strong applicants.”*
- Interviewed staff and selection committee members reported that over the years, the program attracted strong candidates. According to an interviewed expert in India, the process was credited for selecting *“individuals who would have been successful ... but it also gave [those who did not have this capacity] an ability to leverage; it gave them a leg up.”*

Selection Committees

Stakeholders, particularly grantees, generally spoke highly of selection committee members in terms of their competence and fairness:

- In India, all involved viewed the authority of the selection committee as an important part of the selection process, because of its ability to make decisions and defend them. An expert noted that *“no one could question their judgment; it was a very important element of the selection process.”*
- In Brazil, grantees praised committee transparency when sharing feedback with unsuccessful applicants. One applicant said that committee feedback after rejection of his first application allowed him to submit a better, successful application on his second attempt: *“[My first project looked at] male masculinities, homosexuals, bisexuals, and transsexuals in their relationship with HIV, and I clearly sensed in the questions that this was considered too much. [Based on the committee’s feedback], the project I submitted for the second year focused on bisexuals.”*

Reflections

In general, grantees shared that they had a good experience with the selection process:

- Reflecting on the process’s unbiased approach, a Mexican grantee noted: *“I can’t remember that a recommendation letter was required. So, if there was no letter, that was certainly on purpose... People who are at the beginning of their career don’t really have recommendation letters.”*
- In Nigeria, grantees and advisers noted that the process was sincere, open, and rigorous. Explaining her experience of the process, a grantee said, *“[In my first attempt] I wasn’t able to defend my proposal and own it to their satisfaction, and that was why I was disqualified. ... I think that did not stop me from being considered. I saw a sense of sincerity and openness in the selection process. ... Regardless of how many times you think you have attempted, it was based on merit. The second time I applied, I didn’t need anyone to tell me I did a good defense. I liked the process.”*

There were some challenges, however:

- In Mexico, stakeholders noted that grantees from Indigenous groups faced difficulties in submitting applications in Spanish as required. Even though program staff addressed this challenge later in the grantees’ capacity-building sessions, this difficulty might have prevented the submission of applications from those whose maternal language was not Spanish.
- In Nigeria, experts agreed that the stringent requirement for proposal writing might have left behind grantees who were truly grassroots but did not have the capacity to write technical proposals. A program staff member noted that *“while insisting on academic rigor, we should be mindful of the quality of our educational institutions and the types of products from them. We sitting in our offices in Abuja should not make the mistake of thinking that the quality of the applications that we see is the quality of the person writing the application; the educational system is not what it used to be.”*

Selection Changes over Time

Both FLD and partner organization programs shared the same multi-staged selection process, but it evolved in some countries.

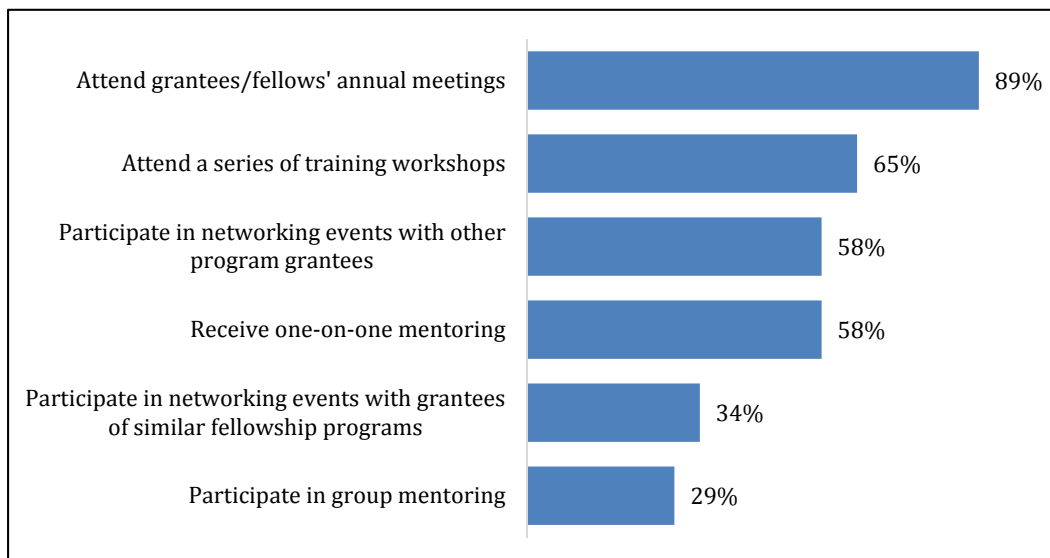
In India, the Health and Population Innovations Fellowship (HPIF) tried to mirror the FLD selection process, but because of the Population Council's research background, HPIF staff were, according to a national expert, *"more conscious of products, documentation, and quality of research papers. ... They looked at proposals more in detail and had more staff for follow-up. They also received fewer applications and gave fewer fellowships. Their selection committee had fewer external people and more internal staff. The narrowing of the thematic also led to fewer good proposals."* This approach was a departure from the FLD model. According to an FLD grantee who later served as an expert on HPIF, *"FLD was more open to anything that was a good idea. ... The charm of FLD was that grantees were from diverse fields, and they were bringing that into the Fellowship."*

Program Activities

"[FLD staff] were quite organized, and each meeting I attended was well run; if it was a grantees' meeting, they brought professionals and experts of various subjects, so that stood out to me. The office also related closely with grantees; they kept in touch, so there was a good flow of communication between grantees and MacArthur office staff." FLD grantee, Nigeria

Activities the program implemented included mentoring, training workshops, networking sessions, annual meetings, and evaluations. Figure 18 presents the most popular program activities.

Figure 18. FLD program activities

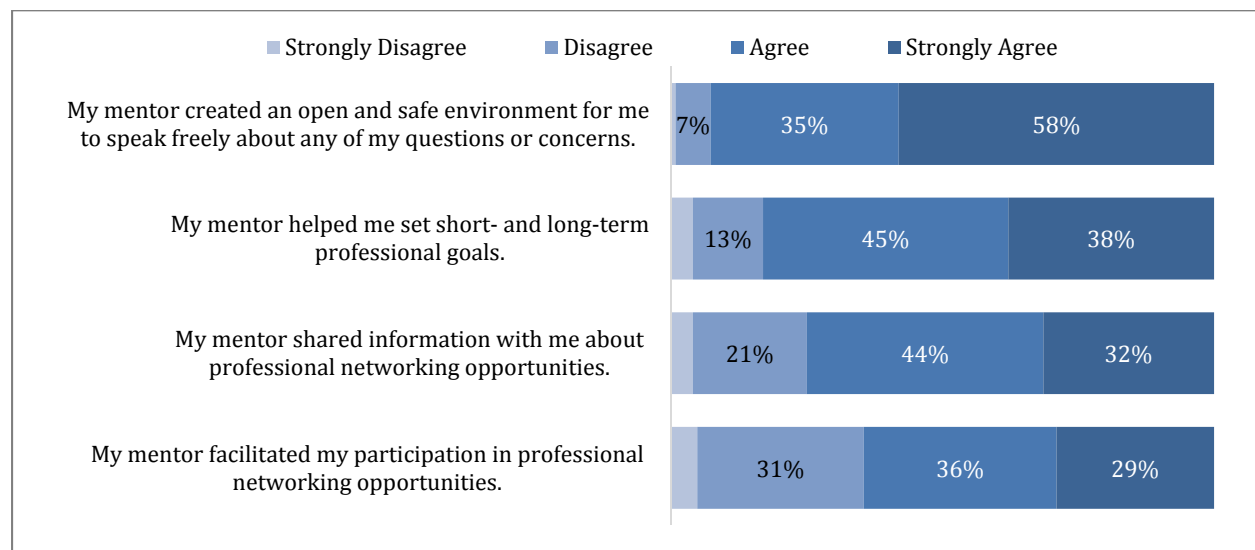


Mentoring

Mentors were an integral part of FLD in all countries, both in the initial year and later years. Some mentors were paid for their time; others were not. Most grantees had mentors during their grant, and although mentoring was largely provided on an individual basis, some grantees were mentored through group sessions. Three out of four respondents (74 percent) indicated they had a mentor during their grant period. A large portion received guidance from multiple mentors; nearly a quarter (24 percent) had two mentors and four percent indicated as many as five mentors over the course of their grant. Younger alumni were more likely to receive mentorship from multiple individuals.

Communication with mentors typically took place a couple of times a year (59 percent), with some alumni respondents communicating as frequently as a few times a month (18 percent). Nearly all (97 percent) of the alumni felt that their mentor(s) had an impact on their development as a leader in PRH, regardless of their gender, age, home country, grant amount, or grant length (Figure 19). One third of respondents (30 percent) felt that their mentor was very impactful.

Figure 19. Mentorship assessment



In all countries, grantees' interests and vision drove the timing and type of support received from mentors. Mentors were well-known experts who could provide high-level feedback and help connect the grantee with knowledge and activities outside of their own network. Given the similarities of mentoring in all FLD countries, the following sections present a number of findings that emerged from interviews.

Matching of Interests

Interviewed grantees reported that they had good working relationships with their mentors, whose support was critical:

- In Brazil, grantees, program staff, and national experts had very positive reviews of FLD's mentoring component. They indicated that mentoring was important, as it connected established experts and specialists to young grantees with minimal experience, and that it

helped many grantees reorganize their workplans and overcome challenges in the implementation of their individual projects.

Mentoring also made the discussion on the specificities of some projects easier. According to an FLD staff member: *“Later, grantees presented their performance [and] the development of their projects to specific mentors in groups of two [or] three people and sometimes to individuals.”* A program staff member shared that although *“special attention was given in terms of grouping mentors according to their affinity to the topic of projects, ... many times, meeting the right mentor was difficult.”* A grantee credited mentoring as a central role in the success of his project: *“The relationship with the mentor helped me a lot in methodological terms, in how to do new types of research.”*

- In India, a grantee shared how he and his mentor worked together closely; the Delhi-based grantee traveled to Jaipur to meet with his mentor. An HPIF grantee shared that she had external mentors who were *“medical doctors and social scientists; it was my first time doing community-based research study, and mentors did handholding.”*
- In Mexico, some grantees felt that their mentors were a good match; others switched mentors. In some instances, grantees who were not receiving needed support from their mentors relied on their supervisors, colleagues, and FLD staff.
- In Nigeria, some grantees shared that their mentors were not responsive, and two grantees stated that their mentors could not effectively deliver because they lived very far away. Others pointed to *“communication problems”* or to *“a lack of connection or shared values.”* Grantees from the Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP) pointed to instances where there was a mismatch between the grantees and their mentors.

Conflicts of Interest

Two cases of conflicts of interest were reported by grantees:

- According to a Mexican grantee, his mentor asked to be hired—along with her team—to support the grantee’s project, in addition to the stipend the mentor was receiving from FLD staff.
- In Nigeria, grantees reported instances where there was an apparent conflict of interest between the mentor’s goals and theirs and blamed this for their poor mentoring experience. As one grantee said: *“I had serious problems with my mentor. He was working as a commissioner for the state government, and when he discovered that I was talking about women dying because of government neglect, it became a political issue. He stopped supporting me and was even critical of my work. I had to change mentors. It was a difficult time.”*

Reflections

Reflections on the impact of the mentoring were mixed:

- In Mexico, grantees mentioned that some mentors were inspiring and succeeded in helping them build their confidence and network. One grantee spoke of how his mentor inspired

him to “*think bigger.*” A male grantee shared that he had a U.S.-based mentor who helped him overcome the challenge of working in a female-dominated movement.

- In Nigeria, one grantee mentioned that he had an excellent experience with his mentor, who helped him open his thinking and gave him useful tips on his project; the mentor inspired him, reviewed his work, and helped him broaden his network. The mentor provided both technical and moral support, which made a significant impact on his project. As a result of this support, the grantee reported that he went back to his community after his FLD-funded research and implemented projects about sensitization and awareness on environmental issues.

Although mentors were paired with grantees at the beginning of the grant, there were cases of cohorts starting up without mentors. A Brazilian grantee in the 1994 cohort mentioned that his cohort began receiving mentoring only on the second year of their grant: *“There was some awkwardness in the choice of the mentors since it occurred during the second year of support. ... Some people showed resistance in this regard, which is something cultural, linguistic ... I remember that the introduction of this character was not the happiest moment, considering that the group had started out without him. It was something introduced after a full year.”*

Finally, there were cases of mentors not being paid, particularly in India, where FLD relied on volunteers to provide mentorship. According to an FLD direct expert, *“There was difficulty with the mentoring, which is usually a weakness when you get mentors to work for free and as a ‘labor of love.’ Some will do that, and some won’t.”*

Annual Meetings

A large majority (89 percent) of grantees attended annual meetings organized by program staff; this includes all but one grantee in Brazil; 92 percent of grantees in Mexico, and 85 percent of grantees in Nigeria and India. Annual meetings were the most popular program activity among grantees. Grantees from Brazil and Mexico shared their experience of these meetings, though recollection was more difficult for Nigerian and Indian grantees.

Sharing Experiences and Learning from Others

Annual meetings aimed to bring grantees together to share their experiences from the field and learn about fellow grantee projects, topics that were being explored, and emerging topics in the field of reproductive health:

- In Brazil, these meetings brought together grantees from three cohorts to reflect on their experience and challenges and to share knowledge. As a grantee noted: *“The annual seminars were moments of learning and interaction ... It was interesting because ... you had the people who were coming in, the people who were in the middle of it, and those on their way out ... generally we had 30 grantees present, and we believed this dialogue was important for new [grantees] to learn with each other.”*

These meetings were enriching in many ways, allowing each grantee to *“bring motivation and insights”* and also to *“exchange ideas and have contact with people that were doing things similar to [what] we wanted to do.”* Inviting national experts to these annual meetings was also seen as a valuable experience: *“People from outside were called in, and I remember a*

seminar in Teresópolis. Renato Janine Ribeiro (a Brazilian philosopher and Professor emeritus from USP) was invited; he talked about democracy. So, these were very qualified meetings.”

- In Mexico, annual meetings included “sub-meetings” or “working groups.” Grantees spoke of how these meetings helped them learn from others around the country and in different areas, build common understanding around issues, or get support and encouragement from their peers. One grantee discovered a source of inspiration for her work at one of these annual meetings. Because the films that she produced as advocacy tools “*could be cross-cutting or include a range of perspectives,*” the meetings helped her “*look at issues more holistically and see the complexity.*” She said that it was through annual meetings that she first learned about “*masculinity*” or “*violence against women,*” which have continued to influence her work today.

Some grantees saw these meetings as valuable for their professional and personal growth:

- A Brazilian grantee stated: “*The annual MacArthur meetings were phenomenal for the learning process: to provoke us, and to make us think that even though it is an individual project, we can do nothing alone. This work must be carried out in a network; this was what we learned from the beginning.*” A grantee shared how much of an impact these meetings had on his success: “*I had gone to college, earned a master’s degree there, and never participated in anything else. Honestly, I knew [external expert] from other things related to AIDS, but it is one thing to know a guy from a lecture. It is another thing to sit next him to discuss my project.*”
- Another Brazilian grantee spoke of how annual meetings expanded his thinking and approach to his work and helped him “*better link [his] scientific work with the society/community.*” Looking at transgender issues, he decided to “*ask biologists at the meeting if there was a biological basis for showing differences in transgender.*” These encounters led him to do more research on sexual identity, which was later published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*. Another grantee created an organization based on his discussions with peers at annual meetings. Many spoke of these meetings increasing their motivation and giving them “*a sense of being part of something bigger.*”

Training Workshops

Most respondents (72 percent) attended at least one training seminar or workshop in the course of their grant. These workshops were aimed at building grantees’ capacity on PRH issues and strengthening their skills in proposal writing, language, technical and financial project management, advocacy, and donor engagement. These workshops were organized by the FLD managing organization, but there were instances, particularly in Mexico, where FLD management paid for grantees to attend workshops organized by other organizations:

- SEMILLAS staff shared that they provided more workshops than the Foundation’s country office, given the specific challenges their grantees faced based on their lack of experience compared with the mid-career grantees managed by MacArthur. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that these workshops had multiple functions.
- In Nigeria, ELDP grantees’ entire grant experience was focused on training sessions. These sessions took place within and outside of grantees’ home states.

- In India, training was first organized by the Foundation’s office and facilitated by external experts. Over time, the five-day training was administered as an institutional grant given by the Foundation’s India office to the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. This, however, did not happen every year in the latter years.

Grantees spoke of how helpful the training workshops were for them to gain or nurture their skills and broaden their perspectives:

- In Mexico, training workshops allowed SEMILLAS’ grantees, who were younger and less experienced, to strengthen their skills in language (Spanish, English), computers, report writing, or advocacy. Some mentioned learning how to better manage project finances: *“I was scared about how I would manage this money because it seemed to me so, so, so, so much money at that moment ... On the way, we learned how to manage—how to check—and this was something that gave me a lot of experience.”*
- In Nigeria, most grantees said that training and workshops made implementing their workplan easier. Others said training and workshops gave them broader knowledge, as what they learned could be applied outside of FLD projects to future endeavors. Many said that they used proposal development training to write proposals and secure grants. A grantee stated that all the materials given during training sessions were shared with their peers outside of the ELDP, and that training and workshops helped them build a network.
- The Population Council in India included training on proposal development, qualitative research, and other topics. An HPIF grantee recalled that one training taught proposal development, qualitative research, research ethics, and how to convey research findings. According to staff, the training program helped grantees build their perspectives on reproductive health, rights, and gender issues; create a sense of community; build synergies; and make connections with country leaders. Some grantees mentioned that these sessions gave them more visibility and helped build understanding of gender and reproductive health. Not all grantees recalled the training, however, and one grantee shared that the training was difficult and theoretical.

Enabling Learning and Feedback

Although workshops were primarily aimed at building grantees’ skills, they also gave grantees a forum for discussing their results and updating their peers on their progress. A Brazilian grantee stated that *“this methodology of bringing together all the grantees to talk about what we were doing ... helped us out of our impasses.”* The workshops were also seen as useful opportunities for grantees to exchange knowledge among themselves and learn from experts, described by grantees as *“spaces of learning and listening.”*

Others saw workshops as an opportunity to be evaluated by their peers. A Brazilian grantee stated that *“the presentation of the seminars and the meetings ... were the best mechanisms in terms of the evaluation of the projects.”* A grantee acknowledged that these peer evaluations were also a source of stress: *“There was also a certain tension, I think, in the second meeting and afterward because there was the evaluation. So, I would get a little tense, but I also think that is natural.”*

Evaluations

Globally, external experts evaluated about half of the survey respondents (49 percent). India had the highest percentage (71 percent), followed by Mexico (50 percent); just 40 percent and 33 percent of respondents in Brazil and Nigeria, respectively, indicated that they were evaluated.

Evaluations were primarily conducted by external experts to assess the extent to which grantees were achieving their goals:

- In Nigeria, FLD program staff stated that they had regular monitoring visits and required their grantees to submit narrative and financial reports, but this was vaguely remembered by interviewed FLD grantees.
- In India, a program staff member shared that they evaluated grantees every year and that they were called “*reviews, not evaluations.*” This evaluation “*would not criticize, [but rather] help and support.*” Through this evaluation, they “*tried to find a solution and strengthen or push grantees beyond current horizons.*”

Program staff made changes to the implementation of this program component. In Mexico, grantees were formally evaluated through narrative reports and through self-evaluation. Also in Mexico, some evaluation took place during the training workshops; there, grantees made presentations, and experts would provide feedback and guidance on how to move forward.

Reflections

Recollection about evaluation experience was challenging during this evaluation:

- In Brazil, none of those who indicated being evaluated could share specifics about this experience.
- Among the very few who recalled evaluations in Mexico, some shared that it was challenging; one mentor shared that this “*task was difficult, because of [their] lack of training and limited Spanish language.*” Although self-evaluation was part of program implementation, IIE could not obtain any data on this activity.
- In India, although most grantees had a positive experience being evaluated, a grantee shared that she was not happy with her reviewer; she felt that he was very critical and “*made her break down.*” According to her, the evaluator/reviewer needed to be supportive and not so critical.
- In Nigeria, although ELDP grantees were required to submit reports of their post-training activities, none of the survey respondents from the ELDP indicated being evaluated.

Networking Sessions

More than half (58 percent) of grantees participated in networking sessions limited to FLD participants, and about a third (34 percent) participated in networking sessions open to grantees of similar programs in their country. Brazil recorded the highest participation, with 85 percent of survey respondents indicating that they participated in networking sessions. Notwithstanding

these high percentages, recollection about grantees’ experience with this activity was an issue, particularly in Nigeria.

Reflections

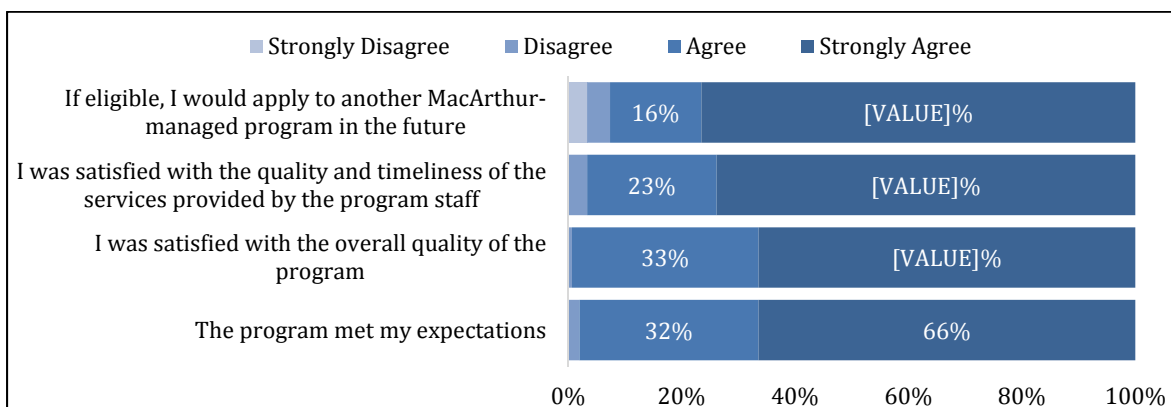
Reflections about the networking sessions generally focused on the extent to which grantees were able to grow or strengthen their networks, or how it created a sense of community:

- Most Brazilian grantees and advisers spoke positively of this activity. A grantee said that this activity was based on group sessions and helped create a national network of grantee researchers: *“I think that some networks were created based on the program, and I think this is something very positive. For example, we from the South [had a network]; I remember [a grantee’s] case who was in contact with a national and even international [experts], and I think this is one of the very positive things [of the program].”*
- In Mexico, grantees shared that group sessions and annual meetings helped create strong relationships with other grantees and that many of these survived beyond the program. They mentioned that this networking was a good way of *“connecting outside of communities”* and that networks provided *“strong peer support and collaboration.”*
- In Nigeria, examples of networks developed as a result of FLD group activities were extremely rare.
- In India, grantees shared that participating in these meetings helped them feel part of a larger community and allowed them to meet with a diverse range of grantees. One FLD grantee said, *“Doing incest/trauma work can be isolating, and there has to be a community. Being a part of a larger community gave me courage and confidence.”* These sessions helped grantees learn from each other, and connections formed with mentors and grantees helped to extend their work beyond limited boundaries.

Program Satisfaction

Nearly all survey respondents (98 percent) who were managed by Foundation country offices indicated that the program met their expectations (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Program satisfaction



Despite overall high satisfaction rates, alumni respondents who received greater funding were more likely to be satisfied with the overall quality of the program and more likely to indicate that it met their expectations ($p < .05$). This response might be because these grantees had enough resources to address challenges that surfaced during the implementation of their projects. For instance, a Nigerian grantee noted that *“at \$24,000 per year, the grant was quite sufficient; we were able to carry out our workplan and keep some stipends to ourselves, so it was quite significant.”*

Compared to other partner organizations, there was a higher level of dissatisfaction among ELDP grantees who were managed by Pathfinder International (Nigeria). This may have to do with the structural changes during transition from FLD, when the Foundation and Pathfinder International decided not to distribute funding directly, but rather use the grant money to purchase training equipment and materials for grantees.

In interviews, the lack of individual funding seemed to be a sticking point with ELDP grantees; for some, disappointment came very early, as they found that despite going through the same selection process and being asked to submit proposals under FLD, they did not receive money to implement individual projects. This disappointment still lingers, as many ELDP grantees strongly pushed back when they were invited to participate in the survey for this evaluation; just 7 out of 29 ELDP alumni completed the survey. This experience may also explain that since completing ELDP, most grantees did not update their contact information with Pathfinder International. ELDP staff said they were aware of this sentiment among grantees, and the program officer in charge of ELDP at the time said during the interview that if she were to do it all over again, she would advocate for grantees to receive some funding to help them carry out projects in addition to the training they received.

Post-grant Support

“How can you invest so much in people and then just leave them like that? Surely there are many ways we could have been useful as an alumni or network together.” FLD grantee, Nigeria

Developing leaders requires equipping them with the resources and tools needed to make an impact and ensuring that their investment is sustained. Although FLD’s support was limited to the duration of the grants, there were instances where this support went beyond the grant period. For most grantees, however, this level of support was not sufficient.

More than half (56 percent) of alumni who launched organizations during or after their FLD participation indicated that the staff of the Foundation’s country office or partner organization did not engage or support the operations of their new organizations; just 20 percent felt that the staff engaged them “a lot.” Forty-three percent of alumni indicated that the FLD managing institution did not support their academic endeavors after the completion of their grant; just 16 percent reported that the institution supported them “a lot.”

In most cases, post-grant support came in the form of an institutional grant made to the organization the grantee was affiliated with. To some extent, FLD staff from both the Foundation’s country offices and partner organizations supported grantees in their post-FLD grant endeavors. Many interviewees, however, felt that this support was negligible at best and, in many cases,

nonexistent. Because of the contextual nature of management, the following sections present experiences of post-grant support for each country separately.

Brazil

The Foundation closed its office when it terminated FLD in 2002; therefore, references to post-grant support are limited to the period between 1993 and 2002.

Grantees reported instances where FLD staff facilitated their participation in national-level events, particularly those organized by the Ministry of Health. Through these events, grantees presented on the engagement of religious groups in HIV/AIDS prevention, blacks in the media, and the concept of vulnerability, among other topics.

Many also shared that post-grant support was weak; one stated: *“The leaders who were trained were not properly taken care of, as well as the incentives for the maintenance of a network among them. ... [Due to this departure], attention and care should have been given to the training of leaders. Even if leaving was necessary, there had to be an exit plan, [where it should pose the question]: How are we going to take care of the leaders that are at the forefront of the field?”*

Mexico

In Mexico, the most common post-grant support was funding from other Foundation or SEMILLAS programs to help grantees continue their work. Although this type of funding occurred when there was an alignment of interest, it contributed to ensuring the sustainability of the grantees' work. Some grantees structured their organizations to make them less reliant on philanthropic funding.

The Foundation's name recognition and prestige were another type of post-grant support, albeit indirect. Alumni reported that during their post-grant interactions and engagement with national and international organizations, their connection with the Foundation *“opened doors”* for them in terms of collaboration, client recruitment, or access to resources.

Another type of post-grant support was the mutual support and collaboration borne out of FLD participation. Although no formal FLD network was created, alumni continued to connect with each other and use these informal networks for support.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, some alumni received institutional grants for organizations they worked for after their FLD participation, such as the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria or the Women's Aid Collective. They also received these grants for organizations they had launched as part of FLD, such as the Center for Communication and Reproductive Health Services.

In the absence of a formal support, grantees networked with each other informally after the program and leveraged each other's support when they undertook projects that required outside expertise. Most of those interviewed said that they would have preferred a more structured level of engagement, such as a formal alumni network. ELDP grantees stressed that they received no support, and their engagement with staff was non-existent; these grantees pointed out that since completing their grants, being interviewed for this retrospective evaluation was the first time they were contacted regarding the program. One ELDP grantee said: *“I met the former country director of*

[the managing organization] the other day and told him that it is about time that we come together as ELDP grantees to form networks, because none of us would be where we are today without ELDP."

FLD program staff acknowledged these shortcomings in post-grant support. They mentioned that they have been providing ongoing support to grantees whenever they could (e.g., writing reference letters or recommending them for certain positions). Staff said that there was a push by the grantees to form an alumni network, but the office was reluctant to support it because staff *"could not support a network or movement they could not control."*

ELDP staff have engaged less with their grantees; they mentioned that there was never a plan for a formal network, and although they still maintain contact with a few very successful and high-profile grantees, many ELDP grantees had *"gone their way"* after the program.

India

In India, although there was no formal post-grant support in relation to FLD, informal support ensured the sustainability of the Foundation's FLD investments. More specifically, the Foundation gave institutional grants to some grantees, who used them to seed newly launched organizations. Recipients of these institutional grants *"went on the fast track,"* according to an expert. With the Foundation reducing its funding in India, however, one grantee mentioned that there was no one to support rights issues anymore, and that it is hard to find funding for this area of work.

Reflections on Program Management

"One of the best ways they could have evaluated the program was to have brought us (selection committee members) together to look at the completion rates of the program and see if the grantees have done what they said they were going to do with the money ... But no one ever called us, so we never knew how well the program went." FLD adviser, Nigeria

As highlighted previously, FLD was first implemented by staff in Foundation country offices in all four countries for the first 8 to 10 years. After this period, the Foundation transitioned program management to partner organizations that implemented the program with some support from country offices.

In Brazil, however, the transition was different in two ways: First, the Foundation closed its office in Brazil, so there was no support for CEBRAP/CCR, the organization that assumed responsibility for the program. Second, unlike in the other three countries where transitional grants continued to be awarded to individuals, grants were solely awarded to organizations.

The following provides insights into grantee experiences about the support they received from staff and advisers, as well as program staff and adviser experiences in their interactions with each other and grantees throughout both phases of the FLD program. Because this evaluation is only concerned with outcomes achieved by individual grantees, reflections about program management in Brazil will not cover the transition period.

Brazil

In Brazil, there was little recollection of grantees' day-to-day interactions with staff and national experts, though a few highlighted the country office's openness to grantees' concerns and its ability to provide them with support and mentorship whenever needed:

- One grantee spoke of the Foundation's ability to provide support for grantees regardless of where their project was implemented: *"In the specific research field I was concerned with, when I arrived in the United States, I received a lot of support from the Chicago bureau."* Grantees who traveled abroad for conferences also recalled a positive experience regarding support provided by the country office.
- A grantee spoke highly of the freedom the office offered grantees in the management and use of their funds: *"I had established in my budget [to] purchase a laptop computer, which at the time was not very common. I got four or five different price listings and sent a fax with everything to MacArthur. I sent a letter saying I could choose model X, which was not the cheapest, and one month later I still had no response. Then I called one day thinking they had thought I shouldn't have done that. Someone in accounting answered; she was very nice, but stern, and she said: 'I read it; that's not nonsense, you can do it. The grant is yours.'"*

Staff and experts shared the lengths to which they went to ensure that grantees could implement their projects unobstructed, including hiring a lawyer to provide legal protections to grantees and adopting a unified stand on reproductive health issues to provide guidance to grantees. For example, a staff member mentioned that in reaction to media inquiries about FLD and the topics it covered, the Foundation's office had to share its stance on abortion so grantees whose projects addressed that issue were better equipped to ask and answer questions.

Mexico

The transition from the Foundation office to SEMILLAS occurred in 2002, nine years after the launch of FLD in Mexico. Prior to taking over FLD administration, SEMILLAS had been a part of the FLD process. According to a SEMILLAS staff member, they *"started out slowly and then did more and more. (The country office had just two staff, which was not enough.) We provided training, etc.; it was a natural progression to managing FLD."*

- In terms of structure, SEMILLAS included Foundation staff in program implementation (e.g., in selection committee sessions [though they had no vote], when holding meetings, etc.). The biggest change made by SEMILLAS was a thematic shift from a broad population and reproductive health field to youth and women from Indigenous communities, which was intended to build a critical mass of Indigenous leaders.
- FLD grantees had difficulty remembering specific details and shared little about their experience with the program structure. The general sense is that it was open and flexible. SEMILLAS' grantees shared that management put in place by program staff was fairly informal, with no specific workplan to commit to or scheduled meetings to attend; one grantee recalled that *"after a bit, they developed forms to fill out and submit."* Another mentioned that he could call when he had a question, and staff made themselves available; he stated that *"it worked very well."*

- Staff and advisers recalled that one of the challenges was selecting young people for the grants. An adviser spoke of how hard it was for members of the selection committee *“to know [young people’s] level of commitment to the area of work, because they were so young and you can’t see through previous experiences.”* Another adviser shared that one of the difficulties was applicant confusion about the nature of the opportunity: *“It was initially difficult for people to grasp that this concept was not an academic scholarship, but a grant to support their leadership in their work. In Spanish, you use ‘beca’ to mean scholarship and grant.”* With additional communications and meetings, staff and selection committee were able to dispel the confusion.

Nigeria

Nigeria had a bigger strategic shift in FLD structure after its transition from the country office to Pathfinder International and the ELDP:

- Instead of distributing funds to grantees to implement projects, Pathfinder International refocused the program to provide what its staff called “high-level training,” so grantees could use skills gained to strengthen their individual and organizational leadership. According to an ELDP staff member, *“It was a decision we made at the beginning; the grantees could never have been able to afford this training program. We gave them the training and showed them how they could all source for funding and scholarships. Many of them were able to get money for their organizations using what we taught them.”* This decision was informed by Pathfinder International’s previous experience running similar programs and was *“aimed at enhancing the program.”*
- Grantees also shared that getting funds out in time was quite challenging because, at the time, financial institutions in Nigeria were not working as well as they should have been; only one bank in the state capital provided funds in U.S. dollars.
- FLD staff recalled that many grantees could not keep with their workplan because they already had jobs, so they did not have sufficient time to devote to the project. In fact, staff stated that they had to deal with a number of grantees who underestimated or overestimated their workplan; to remedy such situations, staff sought larger mentor involvement and helped grantees adjust their timelines. They also offered no-cost extensions.

Staff also reflected on their relationships with the selection committee and how these relationships impacted the program experience. They felt that program reach and scope could have been better, but they were limited in intervening because they had to respect the wishes of the selection committee members: *“Sometimes ... you (program staff) would want to draw the attention of the selection committee members to certain things, but there is a limit to how much you can interfere in their work, and you have to accept what they decide because there is no use bringing people of that caliber together and then interfering in their work.”*

Staff shared that they worked extra hard to incorporate states that were not represented in the program, but despite their best efforts, they acknowledged that they may not have been successful in fully incorporating rural areas. In terms of relationships between both organizations, FLD staff stated that once they handed over the project, they tried hard not to be seen as too intrusive. Interviewees reported that Pathfinder International struggled with disseminating outreach information across the country. The organization tried to increase its reach using newspapers and brochures, and staff admitted that they may not have been

as successful as they had desired. They also tried to broaden the selection of grantees and make it less academic; according to one staff member, *“During our selection process, we tried to open up the field to take in applicants who were working in fields beyond just PRH and gave them trainings that would enable them to function in a much wider world (for instance, government and other public institutions).”* Still, ELDP staff acknowledged that the pool of applicants remained very small, and the size of the annual cohort was significantly lower than that of FLD.

India

In India, FLD was transitioned in 2004 to the Population Council and administered as HPIF. Program staff shared that after the appointment of a new Foundation president, the focus of the program narrowed to two themes: (1) maternal health and (2) adolescent reproductive and sexual health and rights. This shift led to a reduction in applications. Staff also cite managing FLD in the country office before the transition to the Population Council as a challenge, *“as it required full-time effort.”*

Information about challenges grantees faced while implementing their projects is scant. This may be because *“[FLD/HPIF] was not a controversial program, and stars were aligned,”* according to a program staff member. Staff and national experts (selection committee members and outside experts) highlighted that the country office displayed a culture of support based on trust, respect, and equal treatment and that the country office was *“investing in people—innovations, explorations, experimentation, and risks.”* They shared that it was challenging for them to turn down those they believed were excellent applicants, but the biggest challenge was *“when two FLD alumni were arrested while receiving an institutional grant.”*³⁷ Other challenges faced by staff included instances where staff realized that a selectee was a wrong choice and had to be terminated; two such cases occurred. A staff member stated that *“if we made a wrong choice of a grantee, we had to bite the bullet, and it came to an end.”*

Conclusion

Stakeholders’ reflections about program management and implementation show that the program successfully identified individuals who could make a change and that selection committees were not influenced by local interests. In each country, program stakeholders came from various backgrounds and helped ensure that innovation was rewarded, from selection committees who identified innovation to mentors and program staff who nurtured it to fruition.

Various activities were implemented to support grantees, some more popular or impactful than others; nevertheless, all activities helped grantees strengthen their leadership in the PRH field. Although projects were individually implemented, they required collective support to be successful; regular group sessions allowed exchanges between grantees of all cohorts and between grantees and experts in the field. This experience proved valuable, as evidenced by the popularity of annual meetings.

In contrast, grantees felt that the lack or weakness of post-grant support lessened the impact of the Foundation’s investment in leadership development in the long term. Recommendations on how to structure this post-grant support and other components of FLD are the subject of the next chapter.

³⁷ These FLD alumni were arrested for producing a sex education booklet that implied the existence of HIV/AIDS in the region where they worked, earning the ire of the conservative regime in power in Uttarakhand State.

Chapter 6: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of lessons learned and recommendations based on feedback provided by grantees in the online survey and by interviewed FLD staff, national advisers, and national PRH experts.

Lessons Learned

Relevance of Support to Leadership Development

The key lesson learned is that it is important to invest in individuals, but this investment should go beyond the financial support period. FLD funded those with potential who demonstrated leadership, but it has yet to strengthen the exercise of this leadership in the long term. According to an Indian FLD adviser there was a feeling that the Foundation did not quite realize FLD's added value and how critical it was for national PRH stakeholders: *"FLD was a gem that was recognized in the country but insufficiently recognized by the MacArthur Foundation."* Grantees mentioned that there were other leadership development programs at the time of FLD, including the Ashoka Fellowship, but that none were focused on PRH issues. This role in leadership development was limited to the grant period; post-grant support was desperately nonexistent to a large extent and minimal in some instances.

Design

Interviewees praised FLD's design and the flexibility it allowed at country-level. Although participation to program activities was high on average (See Figure 18), none of the program component emerged as being more essential than others. Interviewees did not deem that some activities were more essential than others, and none of the services offered was reported as being redundant.

Importance of the Selection Process

Selection criteria were defined to allow committee members to look for emerging leaders; it was, according to an Indian expert, about selecting *"individuals who would have been successful and had the capacity [and giving them] the ability to leverage—giving them a leg up."* Grantees, staff, and experts spoke of the importance of the selection process. The selection process had rigorous criteria that prioritized leadership potential over level of experience, and focused on rights-based approaches. Criteria were flexible, allowing for innovation and risk-taking. The program carefully chose selection committee members and gave them the necessary liberty to make decisions that, in almost all cases, could not be appealed.

The composition of the selection committee was critical, and its working principles were unique. An Indian committee member said that *"I have sat on many selection committees since then. I have never sat on a committee that had that sense of ownership and passion. Look at attendance at meetings; it was almost always 100 percent. Members didn't want to miss meetings with such an interesting set of people; [it was a] unique space. Everybody loved being part of that space. It was a vibrant selection process."* Selecting grantees from multiple backgrounds was seen as important because similar programs focused on only one type of candidate.

However, investing in leadership development starts with the ability to reach future leaders wherever they are. Although the Foundation and its partners significantly invested in the selection process, some stakeholders felt that this process was not as successful at reaching people located far from the capital. In Brazil, this was the case for those *“located far from the center and the south of the country.”*

Program Management Team

Managing a program such as FLD and supporting grantees required a dedicated and large team for follow-up, information dissemination, networking facilitation, capacity building, and close support, if required. The program team should have varied skills, such as program management, leadership development, capacity building, thematic expertise, and financial management. According to some stakeholders, this variety was lacking in some instances.

In India, FLD was administered by one Foundation staff member, who at the same time provided support to the country representative and managed the institutional grants program; this ended up being too much for one person to manage. The Population Council had a larger team, which made a difference in the support provided to the grantees, particularly the dissemination of their research products and publications. According to an HPIF staff member, program management *“needed more than one full-time person; [it] needs to be ready with intensive hand holding and technical support, linking with appropriate people for research studies. [The program] needed resource persons to support. The program filled a gap that perhaps others should have been doing.”*

Money Matters

In developing countries, gaining access to funding sources is often a challenge for organizations and individuals. Providing funding to individuals made FLD a unique program; in some cases, this funding was the program’s most attractive aspect. Although two percent to seven percent of survey respondents indicated that some program components were “not at all useful,” all indicated that receiving funding was useful, with 90.5 percent of survey respondents indicating that it was “very useful.” It was, therefore, important to account for and retain this aspect throughout the program. The partner organization program in Nigeria, the Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP), alienated its grantees because they did not receive direct funds; as a result, many took the training they received to strengthen PRH leadership to other international donors and organizations.

Performance Reviews

Flexibility was key to FLD design, and over the years, program staff regularly sought stakeholders’ feedback to better structure program activities. In Mexico, program staff introduced grantee self-evaluation to tailor its support to grantee needs. The India country office reportedly regularly evaluated grantees and continuously adjusted the program’s structure to meet objectives.

Program staff regularly assessed grantees’ capacity to accomplish their projects and, when necessary, assigned experts to help grantees address conflicts, overcome challenges, and achieve their goals. When staff realized that grantees lacked commitment to their own projects despite the support they were receiving, grants were terminated to reduce the risk of diminishing returns.

Program Scope

The broader thematic focus of the program in initial years and flexibility allowed for more applications and innovation. The narrowing of the thematic focus and subsequent research focus led to a reduction in applications in India and Nigeria.

Program Transition

Prior program knowledge or prior involvement of the partner organization in FLD's initial phases allowed for a more natural transition. The key lesson here is that it is better for the transition to be gradual to allow sufficient time for the new managing organization to gain a strong understanding of the program prior to assuming full responsibility for its management.

Stakeholders in Mexico saw added value in the transition and credited SEMILLAS's prior participation in FLD for the smooth transition. Prior to administering FLD, SEMILLAS was an institutional grantee of the Foundation; it had been conducting trainings for FLD grantees. In addition, FLD's program manager when it was managed by the Foundation became the interim director at SEMILLAS, making the transition smoother and rewarding both parties. At the time of transition, SEMILLAS was unanimously selected to administer the program. According to an FLD staff member, the country office *"couldn't have chosen a better organization."*

Organizations that administered partner grants in Nigeria and India were selected following a competition between high-caliber organizations, none of which had an involvement similar to SEMILLAS. In Nigeria, Pathfinder International made a structural change to the program—not handing out direct funds—that alienated ELDP grantees who were expecting to receive money to implement projects. Although the change was a joint decision with the Foundation, it might have been handled differently if Pathfinder International staff had previously been involved in FLD.

In India, according to an FLD program staff member, it was *"a bad idea to hand over the FLD Fellowship to an intermediary organization. Country coordinators did not agree with the decision for the handover but had to follow a decision that came from senior levels within the Foundation's Chicago office."* The feedback is that rather than handing FLD over to another organization, an alternative strategy would have been to terminate it or to create a new institution to manage the Fellowship.

In Brazil, the termination of the individual grants program was criticized because it came as the program was generating significant interest in the country. The Foundation's justification for shutting down the program, or "graduating" Brazil, was unclear to the PRH community, which felt that its momentum was interrupted and that it was left vulnerable to a conservative backlash that is now overturning many of the gains made in reproductive rights over the last decades.

Alumni Network

FLD attempted to bring grantees together through networking sessions held along with annual meetings, workshops, and seminars to develop a feeling of community and build synergies. However, the program could have done more. Grantees mentioned that although FLD was a unique program, it fell short of spurring an alumni network in the long term, which could have helped build a more substantial collective impact. Many expressed their disappointment that there was no platform to bring all grantees together across cohorts; according to an Indian grantee, *"Having this would have helped to build solidarity among alumni."* According to some grantees, individuals have

done remarkable work on SRH, but according to an Indian grantee, these *“amazing individual successful stories didn’t come together as a cohesive story. That would have had a more collective impact. It would have helped to have been able to connect the dots.”*

Recommendations

Interviewed stakeholders made many recommendations, which are shared here to inform future, similar programs. These recommendations are organized based on the three phases of programming: the planning phase, the intervention phase, and the period after the program.

Planning Phase

Set the vision for a successful leadership program: There is tremendous value in these mid-level leadership development programs because they rejuvenate leaders in the development sector and help to support and strengthen emerging leaders. In India, FLD helped to build a new field—reproductive health and rights—and created a cadre of advocates, leaders, researchers, activists, and media professionals. As the civic space has grown in the past two decades and synergies are being established between governments and civil society, there is a need for leadership programs at different levels, including *“building leaders within the government system,”* particularly where governments recognize and allow space for these leaders to influence change. In some developing countries, turnover in public service is less visible; therefore, leadership development for government employees has a good chance of sustainability versus in civil society, where leaders are faced with funding issues on a routine basis.

Adapt the program goal to the local context: Any similar program designed today would have to be adapted to the current environment to maximize program effectiveness. To build ownership and ensure relevance, program leaders and stakeholders should take a participatory approach to choose and examine a theme and develop a gap analysis.

In India, the analysis should account for a shrinking civil space, politicization of the democratic space, and less tolerance for dissent. It may be more controversial to support this type of work in today’s climate in the country. The selected theme should be a well-researched idea that takes into account needed innovations and an understanding of government policies. According to an FLD staff member, the program cannot work in isolation. The fundamental problems in India continue, along with gender, caste, and violence issues.

In the same vein, according to a Brazilian staff member, *“I think that, evidently, they would have to take into consideration the current discussion and current problems and issues. We are in a certain way going through a phase of downscaling and pushing back on these issues of reproductive health and even gender issues.”* There are also more complex issues, such as the decrease in fertility rates in Latin America *“because of serious violations of reproductive rights, forced maternity, illegal abortions, the use of contraceptives according to the terms of pharmaceutical companies, and a conservative medical training system, which has not incorporated reproductive rights.”*

In Nigeria, government ambivalence toward NGOs has shifted dramatically since the last grant was awarded. The government is now more willing than ever to work with civil society organizations. Programs like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health interventions in Gombe state are examples of how donor agencies and the government can do great work in communities. Future programs should take advantage of this changing reality and align

themselves with current strategic goals laid out by federal and state governments. This will encourage more collaboration and partnership on both sides. An ELDP staff member said that *“energy should be focused in areas that are more in need—for instance, northeast Nigeria because of the high maternal death rates. The northeast and northwest contribute to 70 percent of the maternal mortality rates in Nigeria. Therefore, if you don’t have enough resources, it is best to target those areas specifically.”*

There should also be an emphasis on retaining the culture and core values of the program while allowing for flexibility, as this was FLD’s approach. Finally, depending on the local context, donors should work more collaboratively with other actors within the civic space.

Program Phase

Expand outreach and leverage new tools for communication and community-based actors: The outreach strategy should go beyond those already known to the Foundation and include marginalized people, such as those living with disabilities or those who live far from urban centers, leveraging both traditional and social media and ensuring a wider dissemination of information. At least two Indian grantees emphasized the need for outreach targeting those with disabilities. Communications and outreach to inform potential candidates about the program should go beyond immediate connections to broaden opportunity and impact.

According to a Nigerian FLD program staff member, *“Instead of newspapers and brochures, town halls should be held in areas that are in most need; these town halls would serve as an avenue to discuss with community members and get the right people who are doing great work in their communities.”* Outreach should also leverage the knowledge of community-based organizations, as these organizations are in a better position to convey messages effectively. According to a Mexican grantee, *“[The program] should consider [working with] small organizations with work experience. Use very simple words for organizations speaking Indigenous languages because there are some words that cannot be understood. The calls/outreach should all be in Spanish, and none in English.”*

Engage qualified members for selection committees: The quality of the selection committee is critical. It is important to have people from diverse backgrounds, even if the focus of the program is, for example, in research or advocacy. According to a Brazilian grantee, it is important to ensure that committee members do not have a conflict of interest; they should be people who have *“some level of experience in the area of work to make sure there is no opportunism.”* It is equally important to invite people with differing opinions; according to a Mexican stakeholder, the Foundation should be *“thoughtful about who to invite onto the selection committee and then create an environment where they feel empowered and not biased by the Foundation.”*

Choose distinct and diverse selection criteria: Diversity should be an important aspect of the selection process, and it should be continually reviewed to reflect the changing environment and needs. In Brazil, the inclusion of affirmative action in the selection process was credited with bringing issues affecting Afro-Brazilians out of the academic discourse and into activism. According to an FLD staff member, *“I think that the criteria we used at the moment ... should be maintained, which is affirmative action criteria taking into consideration race, ethnicity, social class, and region of origin; these constant parameters and references to a transversal dimension mean that the program could create this space of convergence between the academic conversation on these issues and the conversation being carried out by activists.”*

The selection committee should take into account the size and diversity of a country's population. Because there are important differences between regions, there might be a need to contextualize each intervention according to the program area and deploy resources to those areas most in need. In Nigeria, by trying to spread out the few grantees equitably among geographical zones, the program risked spreading itself too thin. In the future, if geographical spread is the priority, then significantly more grantees are needed. An "indirect expert" stated that "[the] next [similar] programs should pay particular attention to northeastern Nigeria; the insurgency has created a reproductive health catastrophe there."

Customize ongoing program support: Differences in individual trajectories should be considered for the definition of the working timeline. According to a Brazilian grantee, "*The grantee that had the greatest need in terms of learning ... perhaps needed some more time. In the course of time, I tried to adapt the agendas as things progressed, but there was no way of having known beforehand.*" There needs to be flexibility, particularly in regard to dealing with diversity. According to a grantee, flexibility means to "*understand that applicants are human beings*" and addressing their needs accordingly.

Support and ensure the quality of mentoring component: The mentoring process should be stronger, consistent, and more structured. Future programs should give as much effort into matching grantees with mentors as they did with the selection process, ensuring that the pair is compatible, well matched, and readily available for each other. Mentors should also be aware of the types of responsibilities involved in the process. Some grantees have suggested using social media to select and match grantees. The program can also leverage existing relationships that grantees have with PRH experts in their areas; that way, the mentorship process can start right away. Findings have shown that when the mentorship process is done well, it results in a very productive partnership. Mentoring should not be unpaid; because of mentors' busy schedules and competing priorities, program staff and mentors should agree to a contractual agreement including specific time requirements. Also, there should be continued monitoring or support for mentors and a focus on building peer support and peer mentorship.

Align deliverables with project activities: The same deliverable should not be required for all the grantees, because each individual has a different skill set. For example, a grantee who implements a project in training and one who conducts research should not be required to submit the same type of deliverable. The deliverable needs to be defined according to the grantee's skill set and focus.

Tap into ongoing leadership training opportunities for grantees: Capacity building should be stronger and more systematic, and the program should focus more on leadership development and building leadership capacity. One cannot assume that once grantees are offered training, they will figure out how to apply it. Grantees need to be able to lead processes of change—to explore what leadership means and how to practice it. The program should provide opportunities for exposure, conferences, and training to broaden grantees' horizons. Instead of the Foundation creating training programs, it should connect with trainings that are already available. There should be training or support on how to manage team dynamics. This type of training may be a better fit for longer grants than for grants lasting just a year, but in the latter case, it can be considered part of the longer-term post-grant support.

Build cross-learning and networking: It is important to have a formal network of grantees. According to a Brazilian grantee, a solid network was not formed: "*MacArthur invested in people in the field of reproductive health that collectively could have had a good result if these people had been brought together. I don't say as MacArthur alumni, or something like that because collectively people*

make less of an effort, so something should have been done. And I think this was a negative point for MacArthur in Brazil.”

There should be more facilitated opportunities for sharing, cross-learning, and networking. Options like social media and closed interactive platforms are critical to building alliances, collaborations, and knowledge exchange. There could have been more efforts to connect the dots and create a more cohesive whole, especially for grantees who were working on similar themes within each country and across the four countries. To build stronger collective action, it is crucial to locate annual meetings in different regions, where grantees can conduct site visits.

Post-Program Phase

Provide post-grant support: This was the weakest part of the FLD program according to stakeholders. In Brazil, it was a particularly serious problem, as the Foundation closed its office. According to a Brazilian grantee, *“Training a leadership and leaving the country must be done very carefully, so as to not leave these leaders alone. If I had not been at the top of the social hierarchy of a young doctor going to university, I would have probably been money wasted.”*

This evaluation has demonstrated the advantages of engaging local leaders whose capacity has been built toward further advancing the Foundation’s agenda on PRH issues at the national level. The Foundation should have a post-grant program for following the alumni’s development after the end of the grant to assess their career paths and contributions to the field.

There should also be a system to keep track of current alumni activities. The interviews for this evaluation helped grantees remember their FLD years and revived interest in reconnecting with other grantees. In India, this evaluation provided the impetus for a grantees’ meeting scheduled for later in the year, facilitated by a grantee. One grantee said that it is a good time to look back and bring people together. There should be ways for the grantees in the same country and across countries to connect, share experiences, and perhaps collaborate; such connections should not just be for FLD but for all MacArthur grantees and stakeholders in a country.

Conclusion

This retrospective evaluation of FLD was commissioned by the MacArthur Foundation with three goals in mind: to determine the extent to which the program achieved its overarching goals and mission; to determine the extent to which the Foundation’s financial investments met grantees’ expectations and whether these grantees were selected according to innovative practices that added value to the PRH field; and, finally, to determine the extent to which program administration provided effective practices and strategies to inform future programming in the field and beyond.

Using a mixed-method approach, the evaluation was conducted simultaneously in the four countries in which the program operated. Data revealed that leadership development occurred in all countries, and many examples show that organizations, local communities, and grantees’ home countries all benefited from grantees’ activities during and after program participation. Grantees also influenced knowledge and practice in and beyond the PRH field and improved the rights and access of marginalized groups to reproductive health services in all countries.

The findings of this evaluation are limited by the fact that more than 10 years have passed since the program concluded. As such, it is difficult to distill program effect specifically, given the extensive work and professional trajectories of FLD alumni. Moreover, it is also realistic to conclude that further program outcomes and potential impacts are yet to be seen. According to an FLD staff member in Nigeria, *“it would be wrong to assume that everyone trained or everyone who received the grant would be right where they are expected to be. There are a few stars, but some people would just carry on as if nothing had happened. ... I assume that there are many people whose life journeys will take them a different way than we anticipated; people will do different things, and it is okay because the connections you make with them are what really matters. We should not expect to see an immediate impact. Some more time needs to be given, maybe 10 years or 15 years from now.”*

The evaluation succeeded in identifying, comparing, and contrasting FLD program outcomes across beneficiary countries. The rationale for selecting these countries was their size and population, with the hypothesis that FLD could, over time, inform the population field in its respective regions. Today, these countries are among the top 10 populated countries in the world and make up 25 percent of the world’s population. According to the 2016 UN World Population Policies Database,³⁸ which includes reproductive health and family planning policies, governments in these four countries provide direct support for family planning, none restricts access to contraceptive services, and all provide school-based sexual education, with India and Nigeria raising or enforcing the minimum age for marriage.

These developments at the national level provide a potential opportunity for the Foundation to consider future research that examines both the geographic effect of FLD beyond the national sphere and to explore the extent to which the practice in each beneficiary country may have influenced population practices regionally. Such an endeavor would be valuable in three ways: first, it would shed light on whether the shift from population control to population wellbeing was a regional experience, or if it was limited at the country level. Second, it would help determine the extent to which FLD’s program outcomes have contributed to the achievements of the plan of action of the 1994 ICPD. Finally, such an initiative would help the Foundation identify the next frontier countries for its reproductive health investments, a quarter century after it launched FLD.

While the Foundation’s distinctive philanthropic style shaped the FLD, evaluation findings suggest that other donors interested in leadership development programming can successfully use the FLD model to achieve their desired outcomes. Although the FLD was specifically focused on the PRH field, findings from this evaluation suggest that the program model could be adapted to support building leadership in related fields, such as in emerging areas of social justice, climate change, democracy and human rights, gender digital divide, or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education.

³⁸ United Nations (2015). World Population Policies—2015 Database: Fertility, Family Planning and Reproductive Health. https://esa.un.org/poppolicy/wpp_datasets.aspx