

DGMT

THE DG MURRAY TRUST

DG Murray Trust:

Applicant/Implementing

Partner Survey 2014



# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	i
Executive summary/key findings .....	1
Introduction .....	3
Survey Methodology .....	4
The research sample.....	4
Data analysis .....	4
Findings.....	5
Who responded to the survey?.....	5
a) Response Rate .....	5
b) Key characteristics of respondents .....	5
What did they think about DGMT’s general communication and interaction with them? .....	7
What are their perceptions of DGMT? .....	11
Thoughts on DGMT’s new portfolio names .....	13
General satisfaction with and advice to DGMT.....	16
Impressions of DGMT’s due diligence process.....	19
Implementing Partner Section .....	21
i. Perception of the appropriateness of the partnership .....	21
ii. Frequency of interaction and visits after the grant has been awarded .....	21
iii. Perceptions of DGMT support and engagement .....	23
iv. Grantee feedback on DGMT’s reporting requirements .....	24
v. Perceptions of the Confluence of Ideas and Practice website .....	26
vi. General perceptions of DGMT and final feedback.....	28
Discussion/Conclusion .....	29

# Executive summary/key findings

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>To get feedback from organisations of their experience of applying to us for funding and as an implementing partner of the Trust.</b>	
<b>Sample</b>	451 organisations out of a possible 492 who applied for funding or were funded by DGMT between June 2012 and April 2014.	
<b>Response Rate</b>	178 organisations responded = 39% response rate.	
<b>Descriptive information on the organisations that responded</b>		
<b>Implementation field</b>	Most organisations implemented programmes which tended to include outcome areas covered by our Inclusion and ECD portfolios.	
<b>Geographical area</b>	These programmes are mostly being implemented in the Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.	
<b>Grantee status</b>	75% have been previously funded or are currently being funded by DGMT. Forty-two percent (42%) said they are currently grantees.	
<b>Grant Size</b>	Those that have received grants from DGMT before (or are receiving currently) were mostly likely to reported grants sizes of up to R300 000.	
<b>Most important findings</b>		
<b>Overall</b>	Overall feedback from applicants and grantees alike was generally positive and very encouraging. The 2014 survey offered very similar results to the 2012 survey with very few statistically significant differences.	78% of grantees and applicants said they were satisfied with their experience dealing with DGMT.
<b>Shifts from 2012 to 2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Organisations were more comfortable offering their perceptions of DGMT with considerably fewer organisations saying they ‘don’t know’ or want to remain neutral on scale items.</li> <li>– Organisations were significantly more likely to say that DGMT had provided helpful assistance – especially strategic input in programme development.</li> <li>– There has been an increase in the frequency that grantees report interacting with DGMT and a decline in the proportion of grantees that said they would like more engagement regarding the implementation of their grant project.</li> <li>– The above might have contributed to a significant increase in respondents’ perceptions that DGMT is at the forefront of new thinking and practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In 2012 29% of respondents said that DGMT provided helpful assistance. In 2014 this proportion was 45% (p=0.001).</li> <li>– In 2012 23% of organisations said they only communicated with DGMT yearly or less often and 11% said they communicated monthly. In 2014 only 12% said they communicate yearly or less often and 19% said they communicated monthly.</li> <li>– In 2012 18% of respondents said they think DGMT leads the field to new thinking and practice; in 2014 28% said they thought this was the case (p=0.03).</li> </ul>

<b>Areas of particular strength</b>	Grantees really value the way that DGMT views them and approaches working with them.	84% of grantees said that DGMT respects them and value the work that they are doing.
	Organisations tend to strongly believe that DGMT has influence that can contribute to shaping policy and tended to rate DGMT higher on this item than on others measuring their perceptions of DGMT.	79% of organisations agreed that DGMT has influence to impact public policy.
<b>Most pertinent areas for improvement</b>	<p>These suggestions were most often captured qualitatively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase our engagement with organisations further - especially face-to-face, during the application review phase, and on strategic and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) content;</li> <li>– Simplify our application process (especially the pasting in of information cell-by-cell on the Logframe table);</li> <li>– Provide feedback on declined applications at step 1;</li> <li>– More consistent and quicker feedback on submitted reports, briefs and one-page pitches;</li> <li>– Better communication as to the purpose, frequency and methodology of developing learning briefs; and</li> <li>– Creating more in-person opportunities for NGOs to come together for sharing, strategising, learning and networking.</li> </ul>	

# Introduction

This document reports back on the second DG Murray Trust Applicant/Implementing Partner Survey. The first survey was conducted in 2012. The purpose of our surveys is to get feedback from organisations of their experience of applying to us for funding and as an implementing partner of the Trust. We specifically aim to get their input on the following:

- Our communication and interaction with them (both written and in person)
- Their perceptions of DGMT as a funder
- Their perception and experience of our application and due diligence processes
- Their perception and experience of our grant management processes and reporting requirements

We use the findings of our surveys to better understand our strengths and weaknesses as a funder and to review our policies or practice where it will serve the best interests of civil society and our implementing partners.

Organisations expressing opinions about funders are likely to either be positively biased if they succeeded in securing funding from the funder, or negatively biased if they have failed to do so. We conducted this survey fully aware of this fact and although funders often only ask for or receive feedback from their active grantees, it was important to us to also give organisations that have unsuccessfully applied for funding an opportunity to give feedback. The reality is that there is often not a clear distinction between organisations that have been funded and those that have not been funded. Organisations tend to apply for funding on a regular basis and often submit multiple

proposals, it is therefore very likely that the same organisation received a grant in one year and was declined the next or that one of their proposals was successful and another unsuccessful.

We also recognise the limitations of user surveys in a situation where grant making is involved. It is indeed difficult to 'level the playing field' so that respondents feel comfortable to be entirely frank about their interaction with a funder. We hope that the anonymity of the survey – and ultimately DGMT's own level of transparency and willingness to learn and change – will convince respondents that we respect their frank appraisal of our performance. In addition we paid particular attention to 'neutral' responses as we did to those that were strongly positive or negative.

This report is made-up of three sections, (a) a description of the methodology that we used to collect and analyse the data, (b) a detailed description of the findings of the survey, and (c) a discussion/conclusion section which summarises the most important findings and reflects on their implications for DGMT.

# Survey Methodology

The most practical way of reaching a large number of organisations that are our implementing partners and/or applied for funding is to contact them via the email addresses that they supplied with their application, and to give them the opportunity to complete the survey online. The survey was prepared on the web programme Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) which is a convenient way of doing online surveys because it incorporates features ensuring the integrity of the data (for example not allowing for duplicate IP addresses to complete the survey etc.). The survey was completely anonymous and we took care to ensure that none of the questions/items included could reveal the identity of the responding organisation.

## The research sample

To compile our sample of applicant or implementing partner respondents, we extracted email addresses of 492 organisations that either applied to us or were our implementing partners (or both) between June 2012 and April 2014. Email addresses are often changed, not provided or captured incorrectly. For the sample of 492 organisations, 16% of emails bounced leaving us with 451 survey

invites delivered successfully. The survey invitations were sent out on the 9th of June giving organisations almost four weeks to complete the survey by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. A reminder email was sent out on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and the survey invite was extended for one more day after which the survey was closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July.

## Data analysis

Data were extracted from Survey Monkey into Microsoft Excel where it was cleaned and qualitative data coded. Further analysis took place in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and analysis included descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations and simple testing for difference between groups, using the Chi-Square test, which does not assume a normal distribution of data or require other parametric conditions to be fulfilled.

Although qualitative data were coded and summaries of themes provided, many quotes are included in this report to ensure that the detail of what is being shared by applicants and grantees is clearly illustrated. Note that qualitative data does not represent the number of responses, but the number of times a certain theme has been expressed. For example, several themes could be expressed in one response by a single respondent.

# Findings

In this section, general background on the organisations that responded to the survey will first be provided. This is followed by a section in which both applicants and implementing partners could participate, gauging perceptions around DGMT’s communication and interaction, general perception of DGMT and impressions of our due diligence process. Lastly implementing partners’ experience of partnering with the DGMT is examined.

## Who responded to the survey?

### a) Response Rate

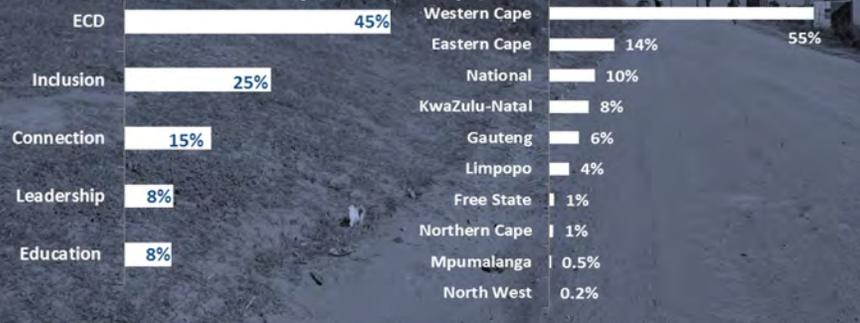
In total 178 organisations responded to the survey. This represents a 36% response rate out of the 492 organisations on our database, and a 39% response rate out of the 451 email invitations that were successfully delivered. That is a considerable improvement on the response rate for our 2012 survey which was 28%. Compared to the generally expected response rate of 26% for online surveys offering incentives<sup>1</sup>, this rate is satisfactory.

<sup>11</sup> Based on benchmarks provided by PeoplePulse, an Australian organisation specialising in online research: <http://www.peoplepulse.com.au/Survey-Response-Rates.htm>

## About DGMT Grant Making

*The DG Murray Trust distributes approximately R100 million per year in grants. The median size of grants has been between R250 000 and R300 000 over the last 2 years. Among our portfolios, our ECD portfolio had the highest number of implementing partners between 2012 and 2013 and the majority of our implementing partners implemented their programmes in the Western Cape over this period.*

### % of implementing partners by portfolio and province



### b) Key characteristics of respondents

Exactly three quarters (75%) of the respondents said that they have received funding from DGMT at some stage, i.e. they are either former or current implementing partners (66% in 2012).

The high percentage of responding current and former implementing partners might be reflecting a more focused approach to grant making that resulted from the implementation of our five year strategy (since 2011) and concerted efforts to communicate our funding priorities clearly. Over the past two years we have seen the total number of grant applications to DGMT declining considerably while the number of applications approved increased because they tended to be more aligned to our strategy. Thus, a smaller portion of our survey list represented organisations that have been declined (especially those that have never been funded) than were the case in 2012 when approximately 35% of respondents said they have applied, but have never been funded by DGMT.

In addition, it might also be reflecting an increased willingness of former and current partners to take the time to complete our survey. We did receive a small number of emails (five) from applicants that have never been approved for funding, expressing grievances explaining why they won't be completing the survey.

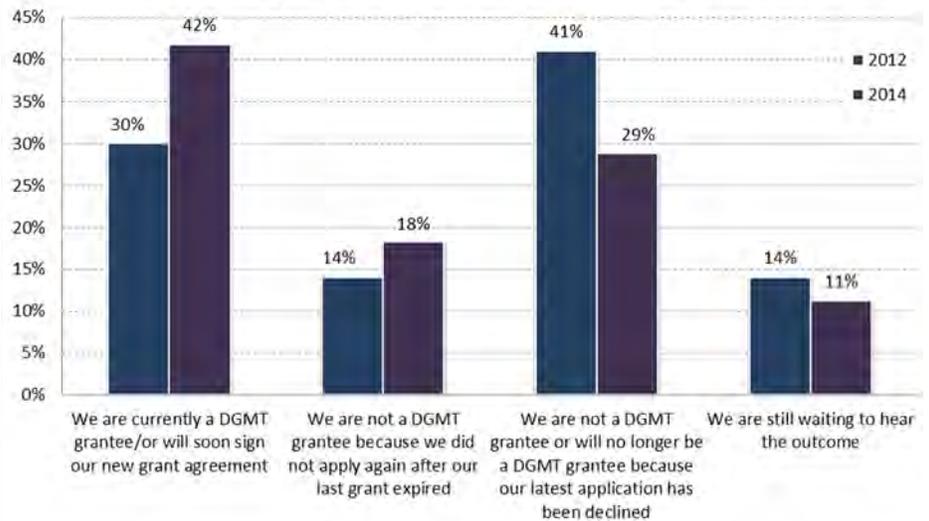
*“It would be great to have an event every now and then that brings grantees together. This type of connection and discussion could prove very useful to everyone, including DGMT”*

*“Your 5 portfolio areas are quite specific and we were fortunate to be funded for the area we were. It would be nice to see a bit more flexibility for NGO's to be able to get funded”.*

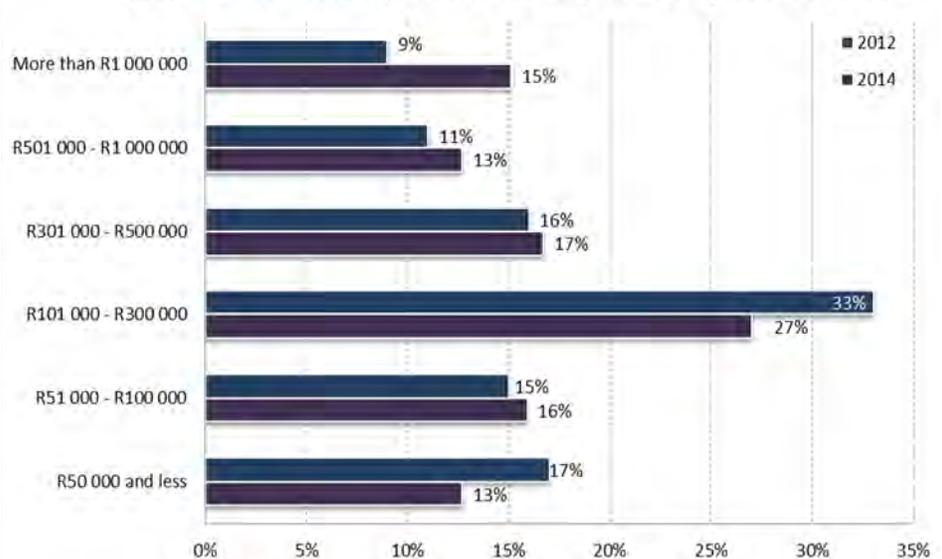
Forty-two percent of respondents said they are currently implementing partners of the Trust (30% in 2012); 29% said they are not because their latest application has been declined (41% in 2012); 11% are waiting to hear the outcome of an application (14% in 2012) and 18% said they are not partners because they did not apply for funding again after their last grant expired (14% in 2012).

Respondents that have been previously funded by DGMT were fairly evenly spread across grant size categories with the exception of organisations that received grants for R101 000 - R300 000, which were (as was the case in 2012) a slight majority (27%). Over the past two years the median size of our grants was within this funding category, thus this tendency is acceptable.

**What is your current grantee/application status with DGMT?**



**Can you indicate the approximate size of your latest grant from DGMT?**

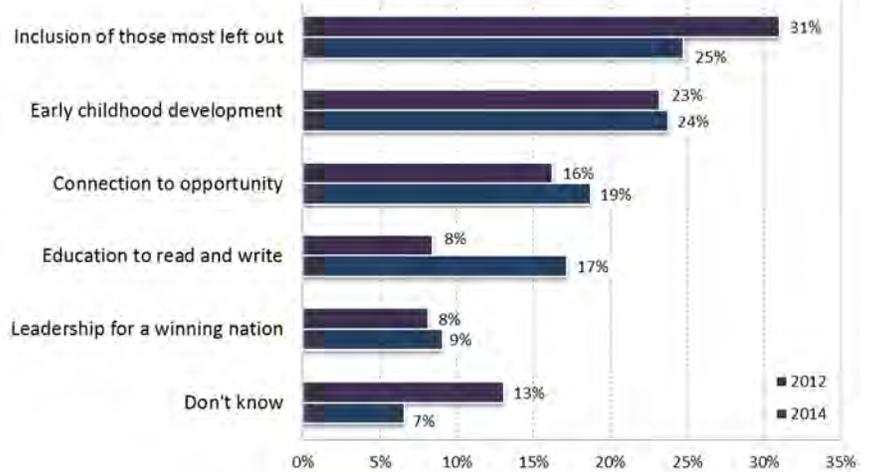


Most respondents reported that they applied for funding under the 'Inclusion of those most left out' Portfolio (25%), followed by the 'Early Childhood Development' portfolio (24%). Overall the sample distribution in terms of portfolio follows DGMT's grantmaking trends (see box on page 5) and is fairly similar to what it was in 2012, except that fewer organisations were uncertain as to which portfolio they applied to for funding, and more partners of the 'Education to read and write' portfolio responded than was the case in 2012.

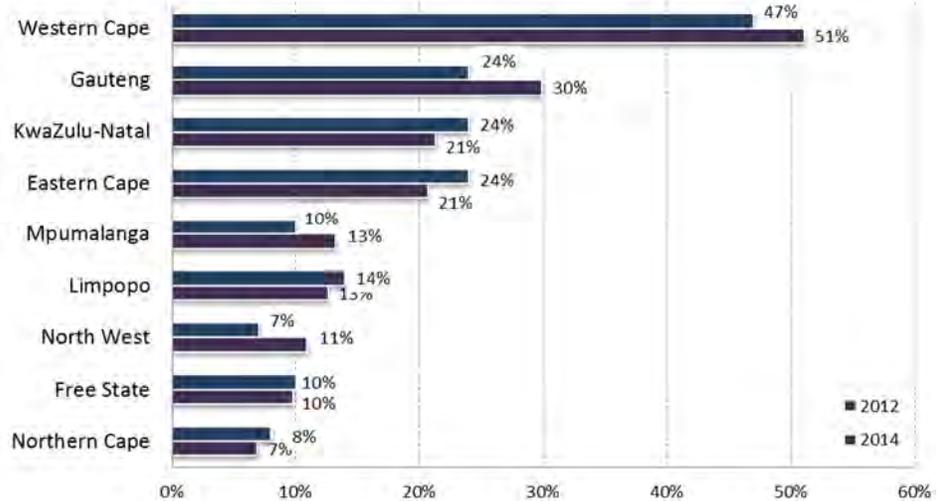
Organisations said they were mostly implementing their programmes in the Western Cape (51%), followed by Gauteng (30%), KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (both 21%). This distribution follows DGMT's grant making trends.

Respondents with proposals that have been declined reported that it was mostly declined at Step 1 level. This means that the application was reviewed, but DGMT decided not to investigate it further. This is indeed the most likely stage for an application to get declined. It is unclear why 14% of 2014 respondents believe that their grant was declined at board level, as the percentage of proposals declined at board level is very small (smaller than those declined at Step 2).

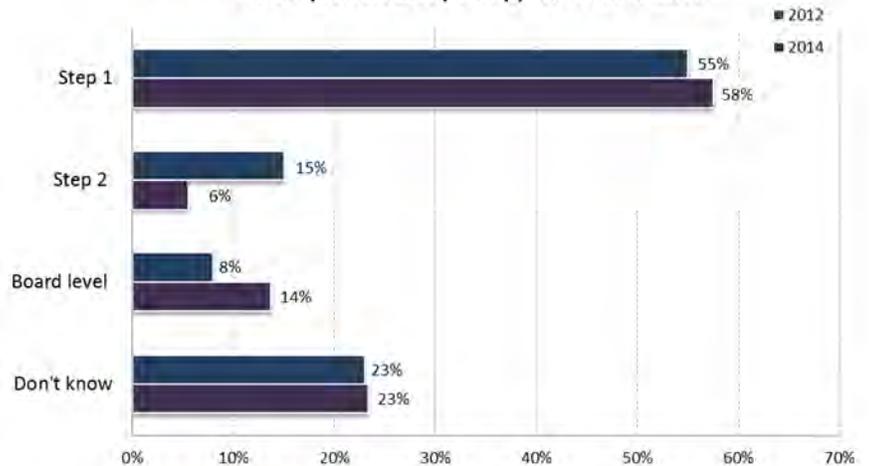
**You applied for funding from which DGMT portfolio?**



**In which province(s) are you implementing? (You can pick one or more)**



**If your most recent application was declined, at which stage of the DGMT process was your application declined?**



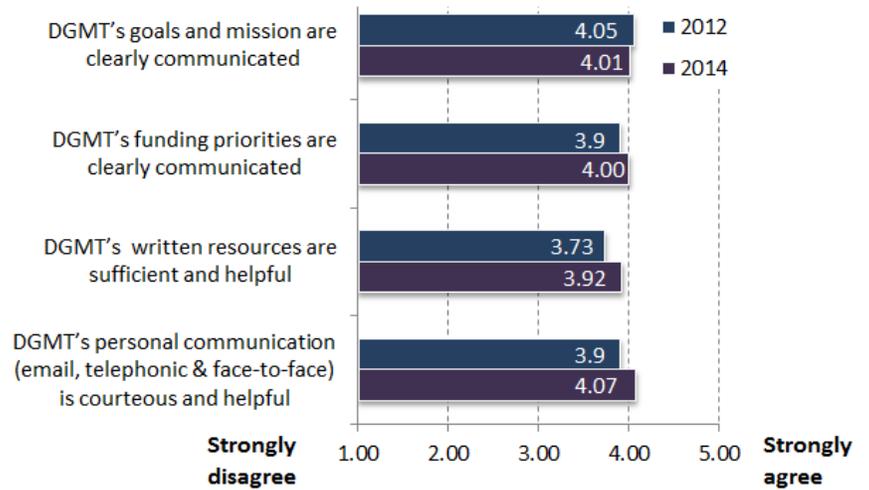
## What did they think about DGMT’s general communication and interaction with them?

As was the case in the 2012 survey, DGMT was rated highly on items related to our communication of key information and general interaction. In fact, there were no statistically significant differences between the way respondents rated DGMT on these items in 2012 versus 2014, except on whether DGMT provided helpful assistance not related to the grant/application. Respondents were significantly more likely to answer ‘yes’ to this question in 2014 than they were in 2012.

More than 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that our personal communication is courteous and helpful; that our written resources are sufficient and helpful; and that our funding priorities, goals and missions are clearly communicated. It is possible that there is some uncertainty as to what is meant by written resources, possibly contributing to a slightly lower score on this item. In future surveys it might be helpful to specifically refer to the website, brochures or publications as separate items.

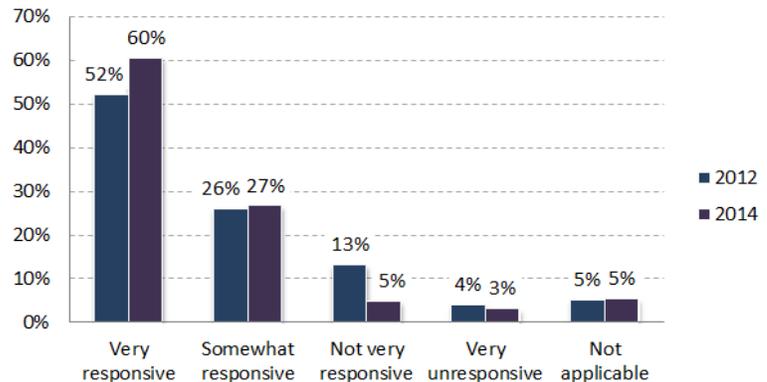
Approximately 60% of respondents felt that DGMT is very responsive in terms of their enquiries and requests, with another 27% saying

### To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



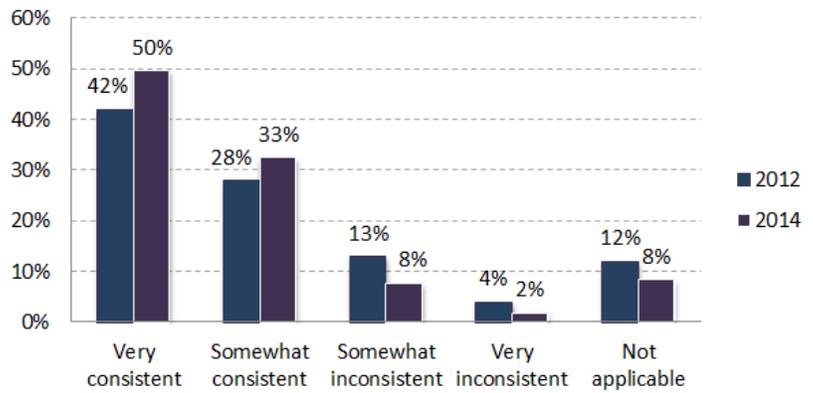
that DGMT is somewhat responsive. About 8% felt responsiveness is inadequate. In the 2012 survey only 52% or respondents felt that DGMT is very responsive with 17% reporting that DGMT’s level of responsiveness is inadequate.

### How responsive is DGMT in terms of your enquiries and requests?



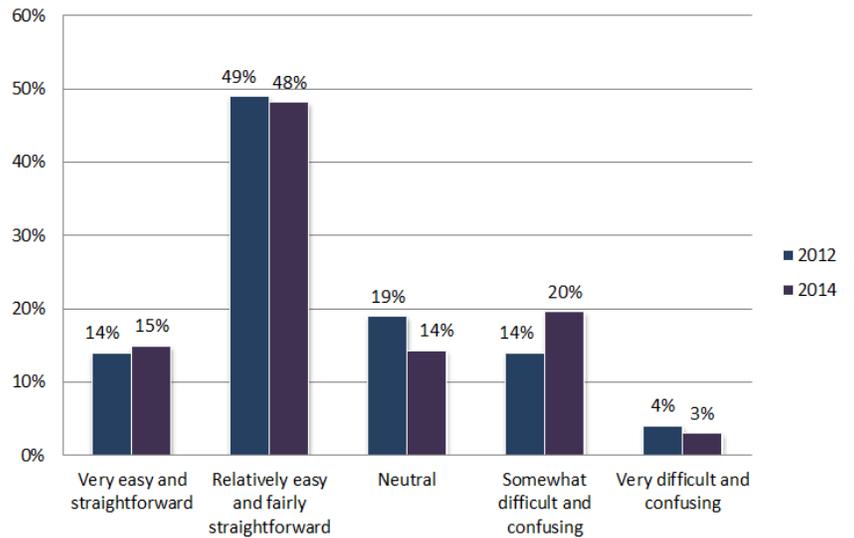
Although DGMT was rated higher in terms of the consistency of information shared by different contact points in 2014 than it was in 2012, it should be noted that the implication of the scores on this item is that about half of respondents in the 2014 survey encountered some inconsistencies when they engage with DGMT at different contact points.

**How consistent is the information provided by different contact points in DGMT, both personal and written?**



Despite the fact that DGMT moved from a mail submission system for applications to an entirely online application process in April 2012, perceptions in terms of the difficulty of DGMT’s application process have not shifted much from 2012 to 2014. The move to an online application system might however account for the slightly higher percentage of respondents saying the application process is somewhat difficult and confusing in 2014 (14% in 2012; 20% in 2014).

**How would you describe our application process?**



Forty-five percent (45%) of respondents in the 2014 survey said that DGMT provided helpful assistance not related to the grant/application. In the 2012 survey only 29% of respondents said they received such assistance. This difference was statistically significant (p=0.001). When describing the type of support that they received, they mostly related that DGMT staff have been helpful in guiding them through the

Description of helpful assistance received by DGMT	#	%
DGMT staff was helpful to explain and provide support/advice on completing applications/thinking partner on programming	31	43%
Referral to other funders or opportunities/networking in general	14	19%
Support on M&E/or other subject specific workshops helpful for strategy/organisational development	12	17%
Meaning of comment not clear/not applicable	7	10%
Sponsored or provided access to useful research/information (including learning briefs)	5	7%
Provided support when it was decided to phase-out funding for our cause	1	1%
Provided support with government stakeholders/advocacy	1	1%
Feedback on unsuccessful applications	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>

application process, both with technical issues (such as using the online system) and in helping them to think through their project objectives and strategy. Referrals and assisting with networking were also often mentioned. Workshops, especially those hosted on M&E in 2013 were also well appreciated.

There were statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) on all items related to DGMT's general communication and interaction between respondents from different grantee status categories. As a rule, current grantees rated DGMT more positively. Especially those whose recent applications have been declined rated DGMT more negatively or were more likely to remain neutral or to select not applicable. There were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) differences between respondents that have been funded by DGMT before and those that have never been funded on the following statements:

- DGMT's written resources are sufficient and helpful;
- DGMT's personal communication (email, telephonic & face-to-face) is courteous and helpful;
- DGMT's responsiveness in terms of enquiries and requests;
- The consistency of the information provided by different contact points;

### Selected quotes

- *"Went the extra mile to understand in detail what we do and relate to our frame of reference in terms of getting clarity for purposes of approving the request for funding".*
- *"Whenever we were unsure about anything we felt confident that we could make contact with DGMT. They would always hear us out and respond ASAP".*
- *"The programme manager and I had extensive communications regarding the 'ask'".*
- *"Several meetings to ensure mutual understanding and how the proposed strategy aligns with DGMT thinking in relation to ECD".*
- *"General advice regarding our planning and focus; as well as sustainability. Also challenging us to find ways of reaching more children".*
- *"Support with monitoring and evaluation. Always willing to discuss ideas".*

- On whether DGMT provided any helpful assistance not related to the grant/application.

Those that have previously been funded rated DGMT significantly higher/more positively on all these statements.

## What are their perceptions of DGMT?

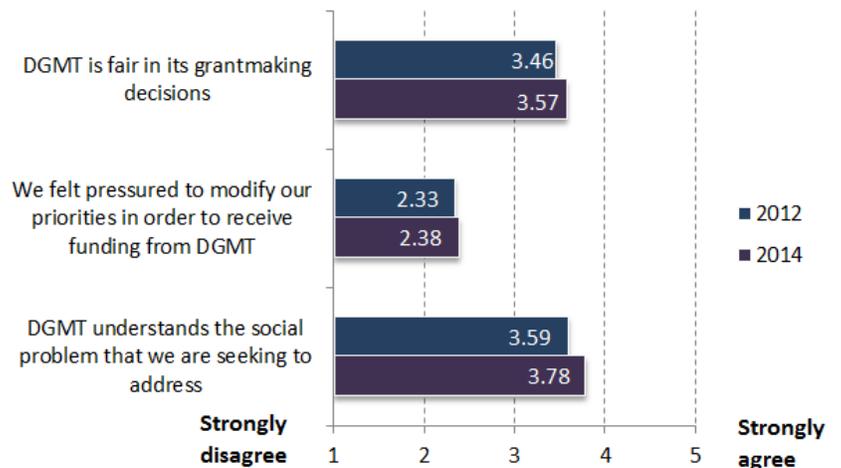
There were small shifts in respondents' perceptions of DGMT, none of which are statistically significant except for their opinion on whether DGMT leads the field to new thinking and practice. On this they expressed significantly more confidence in DGMT in 2014 than they did in 2012. In general it seems that respondents felt better able to express an opinion of DGMT in 2014 than in 2012 as the proportion of respondents that said they 'don't know' on statements declined considerably. Respondents were more likely to think that DGMT has influence that can shape public opinion than that DGMT advances knowledge in the field that they are working in or that DGMT leads the field to new thinking and practice.

Respondents tended to remain neutral or agree with the statement that DGMT is fair in its grantmaking decisions. They tended to disagree with a statement asserting that they felt pressured to modify their priorities in order to receive funding from DGMT. Although not statistically significant, there was a small improvement in respondents' rating of DGMT's understanding of the social problem that they are seeking to address.

As was the case in 2012, the majority of respondents believe

***“We often feel, as an organisation working at a grass-roots level, that institutional donors push their own funding priorities and focus areas on the organisations they fund. We often feel pressured to reframe our programme so it fits with the funders' priorities. We feel that this can inhibit growth at the grass-roots level, and undermine programmes that may have innovative, and culturally and geographically specific social solutions. It also forces under-resourced NPOs to put a disproportionate amount of time and energy into writing grants and reworking proposals and implementing associated admin tasks, when these same funders often frown upon top-heavy organisations. DGMT and all institutional donors should take a deeper look at this trend, and try to find a way to support innovative solutions without dictating too much. Perhaps they should even look at sponsoring the evaluation of these programmes themselves, so that some of the burden of proving social impact and meeting the needs of the funders can be shifted to the donor”.***

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

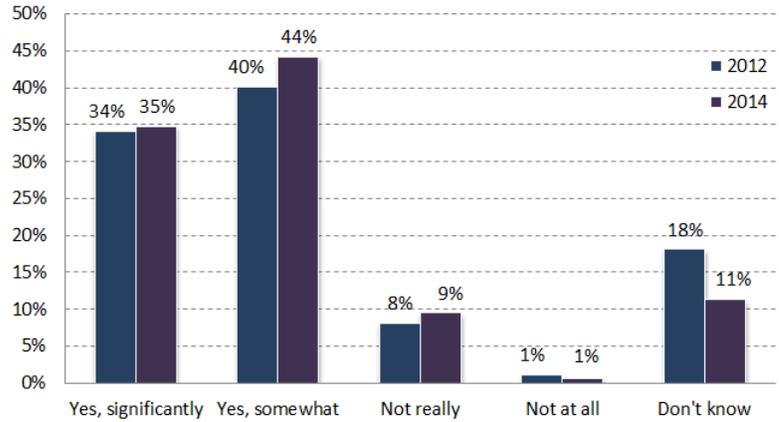


that DGMT has influence that can contribute 'somewhat' (44% of respondents in 2014) or 'significantly' (35%) to shaping public opinion. In both surveys DGMT was rated stronger on this statement than on those testing perceptions whether DGMT advances knowledge in the field that the respondent is working in and on whether they think DGMT leads the field to new thinking and practice.

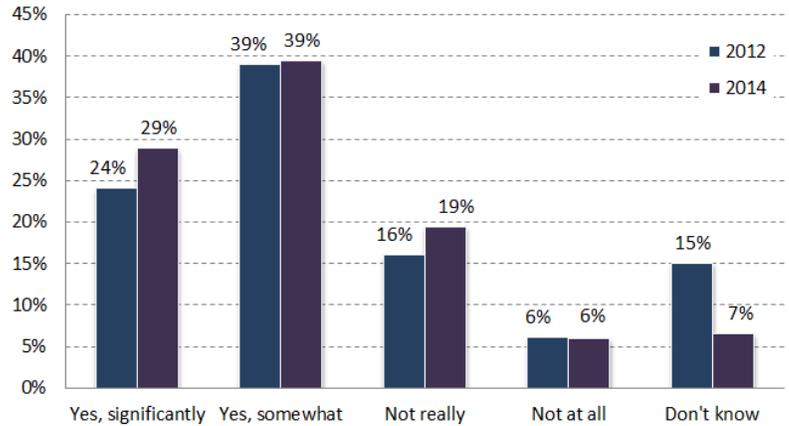
Most participants said they think DGMT advances the knowledge in the field they are working in 'somewhat' (39% in 2014) or significantly (29%). Significantly ( $p=0.03$ ) more respondents said they think DGMT leads the field to new thinking and practice in 2014 (28%) than in 2012 (18%).

Respondents that have never been funded by DGMT were significantly ( $p$  values between 0.00 and 0.025) more likely to remain neutral; to say they don't know; or to rate DGMT negatively in terms of the statements aimed at establishing respondents' perceptions of DGMT. Current DGMT grantees were also significantly ( $p$  values between 0.00 and 0.045) more likely to rate DGMT positively and less likely to remain neutral or to say they don't know than those falling within non-funding categories. Similar trends were recorded in the 2012 survey.

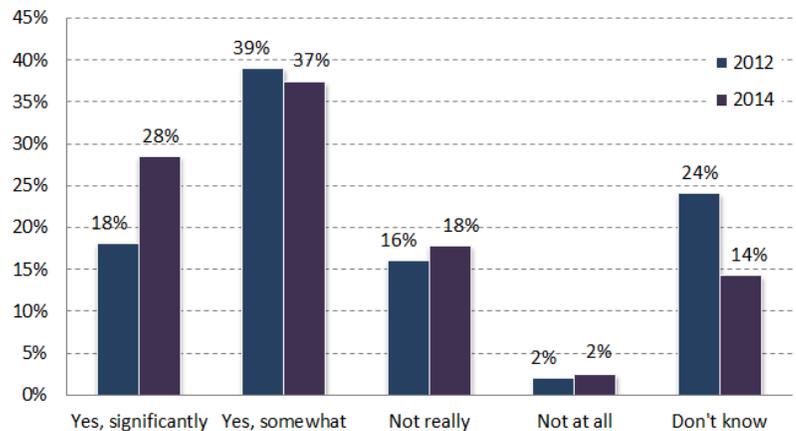
**Do you believe DGMT has influence that can contribute to shaping public opinion?**



**Do you think that DGMT advances the knowledge in the field you are working in?**



**Do you think DGMT leads the field to new thinking and practice?**



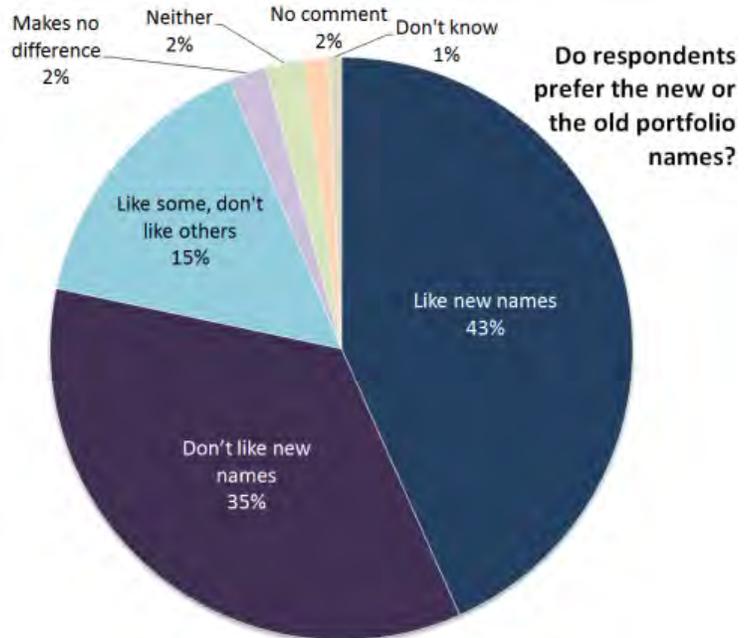
## Thoughts on DGMT's new portfolio names

DGMT is changing its portfolio names in order to better signal our specific areas of interest. We also want to focus more on the people-outcomes that we want to achieve:

Was	Will be
Early Childhood Development	Resourceful young children
Education to Read and Write	Creative learners
Connection to Opportunity	Enterprising school leavers
Leadership for a Winning Nation	Game-changing leaders
Inclusion of Those Most Left Out	Inclusive, enabling communities

We asked organisations whether they prefer the old names or the new names and for what reason. About 43% of respondents said they liked the new names better, while 15% said they liked some names, but not others. This last mentioned category might actually be larger, because in many cases respondents would only say they don't like one of the new names, but since we don't know their opinion about the others we have coded it as, 'don't like the new names'. About 35% of respondents said they don't like the new names, or did not like at least one of them, but did not indicate how they feel about the rest.

Not everyone provided reasons for their preferences, but when they did it seems to be a matter of personal preference, for example, some people thought the old names were clearer and more



Why the old/new portfolio names are preferred	#	%
<b>Why they like the new names (in general)</b>		
New names are more descriptive of outcomes to be achieved	10	8%
New names are more inspirational and aspirational/positive/encouraging	4	3%
New names are more innovative/interesting/creative/sounds better	9	7%
New names are more inclusive/reach more people/allow for a greater range of projects to be included	6	5%
New names are clearer/more focussed/more direct/easier to relate to/give more direction	10	8%
New names are directly applicable to us/or our funding needs	3	2%
<b>Why they don't like the new names and like the old names better (in general)</b>		
New names are vague/confusing	5	4%
New names are jargon/buzzwords/game of semantics (especially the word 'game-changing')	6	5%
New names are limiting/will be problematic to guide funding	2	2%
New names are too broad and open	1	1%
New names not entirely clear in terms of which types of applicants they are relevant to	1	1%
The specific names chosen by DGMT don't fit the outcomes well	1	1%
Old names are clearer/more specific/more meaningful/more descriptive/easier to understand	23	18%
Old is broader/more inclusive	3	2%
Old names are more similar to the language that other organisations use	1	1%
Old names sound more professional	1	1%

descriptive, but then again, some people thought exactly the same about the new names. People reacted strongest to the name changes of the Early Childhood Development portfolio, where people felt that ECD is a well-recognized term and that 'Resourceful young children' doesn't capture all the elements addressed through ECD. People were also worried that the name change to the Education to Read and Write portfolio is shifting the focus of the portfolio a lot and that losing the emphasis on literacy development is problematic.

A few people commented that it will be necessary to provide very good definitions of what is meant by the new portfolio monikers and what categories are actually covered in terms of DGMT's funding strategy.

Why the old/new portfolio names are preferred	#	%
<b>Comments on specific portfolio names</b>		
Resourceful young children: The old name is better since ECD is a well known term covering various aspects which does not seem to be addressed through the term resourceful young children	12	9%
Add resilient to resourceful young children	1	1%
Creative learners: Reference should be made to literacy/creativity is not directly applicable to literacy development initiatives and seems to change the focus of the portfolio/Education to Read and Write is more appropriate to the current level of SA children	7	5%
Inclusive enabling communities - prefer old name because it shows that this category is applicable only to those marginalised	4	3%
Inclusive enabling communities - this area is more positively framed through the new name	3	2%
Enterprising school leavers is less inclusive than Connection to Opportunity	3	2%
Enterprising school leavers - ages need to be specified as all people are school leavers	1	1%
Leadership for a winning nation was a more powerful statement	1	1%
<b>Other comments</b>		
Clear definitions should be provided for new names	7	5%
Specific funding areas make it difficult to apply for funding for running costs	1	1%
Names are beside the point since portfolios are not alligned to the needs of the country	1	1%
It is difficult to adapt to changes like these by donors	1	1%
Meaning of comment unclear/not applicable	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Selected quotes

- "The new names are more innovative - allow for more exciting thinking and projects".
- "Completely disagree with your new portfolio names. The old names clearly define the areas of impact. The new ones are vague. If DGMT is focusing more on people outcomes then the new names are less descriptive of people focus than the old ones. Also the most marginalised group in this country, the economically disempowered adults, who would have fallen under "Connection to Opportunity" now would fail to find a home in "Enterprising school leavers". "Leadership for a Winning Nation" is so much more inspiring and impactful than "Game-changing leaders". I am surprised that DGMT is going for this here-today-gone-tomorrow jargon. Why fix what is not broken?"
- "These (new) names are more descriptive. Description is one thing however I am not convinced that those assessing our application are informed about what are doing. DGMT is doing excellent for our country. It is important to appoint people who are actually doing work in a community. The people we have dealt with thus far did not understand how a poor community functions and what it takes to unlock the potential of a poor community".
- I much prefer the new names. "Creative learners" is excellent but it does not specify any phase or age group - whereas the previous name implied Foundation Phase learners. "Game-changing leaders" gives off a vibe and a sense of being on the move - it could be judged as being somewhat clichéd - does "Change Leadership" sound too boring?

## Selected quotes

- *“Prefer ECD it’s a generally accepted term and used fairly universally. ECD is about more than just the young children”.*
- *“I still find the categories too vague and potentially confusing. I would suggest ensuring the main portfolio name is very clear/obvious and that the subheading be the way you have the new portfolio names. E.g. Early Childhood Development (that is obvious what the portfolio is) and subheading Resourceful young children (that indicates what your specific focus/your vision for this portfolio is under this heading. Education Empowerment (this would make it clear you are funding programmes supporting education) with the subheading “Creative Learners” (shows that you are specifically looking for creative/alternative/integrative ways to support educational empowerment)”.*
- *“I prefer the old names, they are less politically correct and more direct, easier to understand. The new names sound like PR/management speak. A major language/communications problem of our time is a tendency to use cliched abstract language and jargon instead of simple straightforward language. It is, of course, apart from being lazy, a power game which ensures that those who are, or appear to be, comfortable with the jargon are in a position to dictate who is in the in-group and who is not. There is no substitute for simple straightforward language free of cliché. Not only is it more direct, it is more honest”.*
- *“I prefer “Inclusion of Those Most Left Out”. For me it says better that this category is ONLY for those who are continually marginalised (such as Blind People) by the community. Often when funding is made available for “Enabling Communities or Developing Communities” - those same Communities continue to leave out the Blind / Disabled people - whereas - the other way round - it is the Blind People who HAVE to seek out their able bodied members of the community in the process of “Enabling Communities”.*
- *“ New name for ECD could refer to children ABOVE the 5 year old so detracts from specific emphasis in the critical ECD field - so I would prefer the OLD name (too soon to change until all ECD is nationally co-ordinated). 2. Again ‘Creative learners ’ could be anyone outside the Foundation/ Intermediate or ABET phases and deflects from the critical need in the Literacy field in our education system - teaching and learning 3. (Enterprising school leavers) I like this new name - as it fits the post-school arena in which we work and encourages broader thinking about the world of work ( The old name is still OK though)”.*
- *“We prefer the old names because they give a clearer picture of what would be funded - for example ‘resourceful young children’ could apply to any young children not necessarily pre-primary school children; ‘creative learners’ is very broad and does not indicate anything to do with reading and writing/literacy”.*
- *“The new names are stunning! They are a positive reflection of what we are trying to achieve. However, they are not entirely clear in terms of which types of applicants they are relevant to - we have become so used to using particular key words to search for funding that the name changes may result in the missing of these opportunities by potential applicants”.*
- *“1: Resourceful young children: Sounds like support for children who have been left to fend for themselves 2. Creative learners: This name brings artistic creativity to mind. 3. Enterprising school leavers: Sounds like entrepreneurial support for matriculants. Doesn’t sound inclusive enough. 4. Game-changing leaders (like) 5. Inclusive, enabling communities (like)”.*
- *“Mostly they seem good. Apart from number 2. I think ‘creative learners’ is a bit misleading if the focus remains literacy. Creativity includes many aspects and not only literacy. The name seems too broad”.*
- *“I like the idea of changing the titles to ones that are positive and descriptive of the outcome you are looking for rather than the programme type. I am not sure however the titles you have chosen fit the outcomes. I think the titles are a little idealistic and hard to measure and can be positive or negative. Maybe choose words that infer a positive outcome. ‘Nurtured young children’ ‘enabled learners and creative educators’, resourceful and resilient school leavers, Leaders for positive change (game changing is not always a good thing). I like the last one! Inclusive, enabling communities”.*

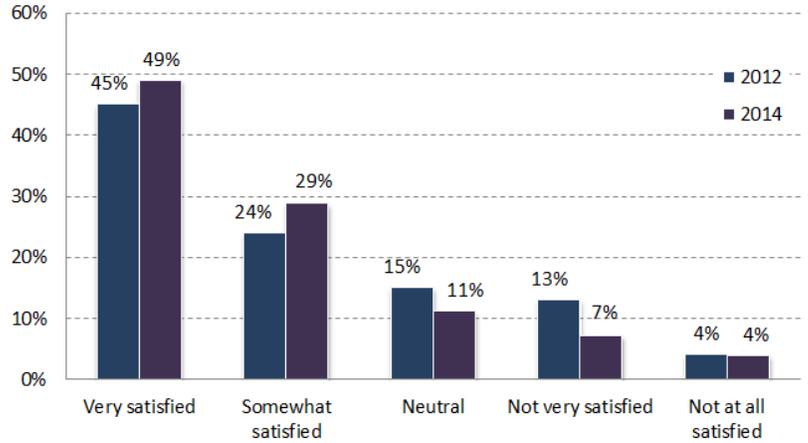
## General satisfaction with and advice to DGMT

Although there seems to be a slight shift towards greater satisfaction with DGMT in 2014 than in 2012, the difference is not statistically significant.

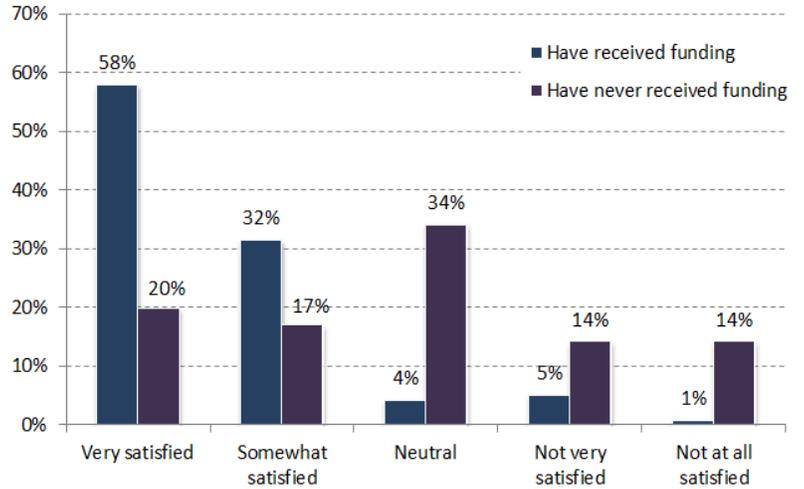
As was the case in 2012, there is a statistically significant difference ( $p=0.00$ ) in the general satisfaction levels of organisations that have been previously funded by DGMT and those that have never been funded. Similarly between those falling in different grantee status categories. Organisations that were previously funded by DGMT were more likely to be satisfied with their experience dealing with DGMT, and similarly those that are currently grantees or are waiting for the outcome of their grant application. The group that was most likely to say that they are not satisfied were those whose latest grant application has been declined.

Respondents offered various advice to DGMT on how to improve its relationship with and service to civil society and NGOs. As was strongly recommended in 2012, organisations would like to have more site visits and opportunities for engagement. In terms of DGMT's technical processes, the most pressing need is to receive feedback on why applications are declined at Step 1. Another suggestion mentioned by a few

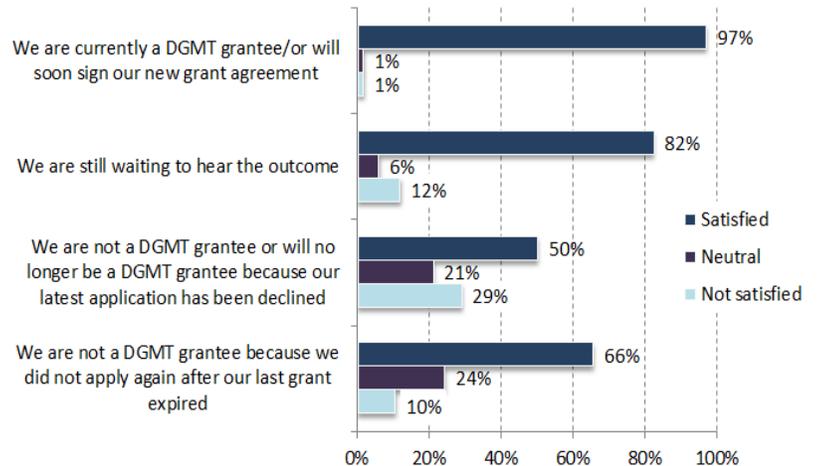
How satisfied were you in general with your experience dealing with DGMT?



Level of satisfaction with their experience dealing with DGMT - previously funded vs those that have never received funding



Level of satisfaction with their experience dealing with DGMT - by current grantee status



organisations is for DGMT to create more opportunities to bring organisations together for networking and learning.

Advice to DGMT to improve its relationship with and service to civil society and NGOs	#	%
DGMT is doing a good job - no advice	14	13%
Meaning of comment not clear/not applicable	7	6%
<b>Engage more</b>		
Do site visits (especially as part of the application process)	10	9%
Create more oppportunities to engage with organisations	6	5%
Create opportunity for one-on-one engagement with prospective applicants on their applications	3	3%
Engage with NGOs before pulling in external consultants	1	1%
Assist organisations to meet funding requirements (especially new/young organisations)	1	1%
<b>Improve technical processes/requirements</b>		
Become familiar with all organisations in the field before choosing one over the other for grants	1	1%
Explain why applications are unsuccessful (in step 1 specifically)	9	8%
Application/funding process is long and difficult	3	3%
Provide quicker response and feedback on narrative and financial reports	3	3%
Be more transparent in terms of how funding decisions are made	2	2%
Simplify Step 1	1	1%
Make the online application system more user-friendly (the copying and pasting is specifically problematic)	2	2%
Investigate applications more thoroughly before declining	2	2%
Improve on follow-up with small grantees	1	1%
Make reporting requirements less demanding	1	1%
Various improvements needed on the structure of the application, the application language, budgeting requirements and measurables	1	1%
<b>Improve communication</b>		
Create more awareness of DGMT's work/broaden communication	3	3%
Better communication on funding opportunities/broaden funding criteria	4	4%

Advice to DGMT to improve its relationship with and service to civil society and NGOs	#	%
Ensure consistency when there is a change in staff	3	3%
Ensure website is clear and up to date	1	1%
Provide updates on when grants will be paid	1	1%
Acknowledge communication received from applicants	1	1%
Give indication (3-4 times a year) of the grant sizes that you envision making	1	1%
<b>Adjust funding policies/strategy</b>		
Provide more grants per annum	1	1%
Provide longer term grants (3-5 years)	3	3%
Create sustainable exist strategies when funding is discontinued	2	2%
Look at trend to push funding priorities thereby pressuring organisations to reframe their programmes in order to receive funding	1	1%
Include all role-players in the formulation of strategy	1	1%
Merge the Education to Read and Write and Connection to Opportunity portfolios	1	1%
Providing only partial funding for a project is problematic	1	1%
Appoint staff who are actively involved in community upliftment/DGMT staff should be better aware of the situation on the ground	2	2%
<b>Provide more opportunities/resources</b>		
Provide resources and training on M&E; Theory of Change	1	1%
Create more opportunities to bring organisations together for networking or mutual learning/host information summits/workshops	7	6%
Place greater emphasis on advocacy for policy change/linking key stakeholders/roleplayers	4	4%
Provide support/funding for exploratory research	1	1%
<b>Other</b>		
DGMT has the potential to be very influential	2	2%
Ensure that service providers behave ethically towards beneficiaries	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Selected quotes

- “My experience is that DGMT already works very hard at maintaining good relationships with civil society and NGOs. The primary challenge remains addressing and dispelling misconceptions that people have about what DGMT is doing, and how and why it is doing those things. This means exposing people to the work of DGMT - so that they become the messengers for DGMT”.
- “Of all the donors I have approached, as fundraising co-ordinator for our two NGOs, DGMT was in the top 1% in terms of responding to emails, ease of application, caring consultants, effort to understand our work and to dovetail our application with your funding requirements without asking us to compromise our objectives. The funding took 16 months to be approved and come through, but we are just so grateful to have been treated with such respect and care, that the long timeframe is not an issue. The terms of agreement are clear and simple enough not to cause a headache or clash with other possible funding. I also appreciate the efforts of DGMT to understand our niche service so as to better advocate and influence for change at national level. It was clear that the funding was given out of a clear understanding that a gap exists in services (filled by us) which should be filled by Government”.

## Selected quotes

- *“There is no point in asking for applications for funding over a period of 3 years and then asking organisations to re-apply each year”.*
- *“None. Best Foundation to deal with. Extremely respectful of many pressures NGOs face particularly with regard to Admin overload. You try to enable us not tie us up in paperwork. An absolute pleasure partnering with DGMT”.*
- *“The online application system was difficult to work with - in particular the table since this required cutting and pasting into each individual cell and it was then difficult to see what had been written. It was also difficult because the online form could not be revised”.*
- *“It would be very beneficial to smaller, growing organisations to have workshops on various aspects of management, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, etc. Your website is fantastic in this regard, but not everyone has the capacity to interpret and execute the valuable learnings contained there”.*
- *“I think it would be useful to engage with first time applicants when they are declined rather than sending a letter that just denotes the decline. The reality is that there are great projects out there that clearly meet the DGMT objectives but are being declined for reasons that are not well communicated. I also think that the DGMT is more inclined to refund current grantees than take on new grantees as it reduces risk, but at the same time it makes grantees complacent and those that have been declined despondent. I would suggest a grant funding cycle of e.g. 3 years. Quicker response and feedback on narrative and financial reports. At times we have had no response or waited for months which have delayed funding considerably”.*
- *“The DGMT website is fantastic in terms of learning from practice. I think for true learning and influence, there needs to be more opportunities for connecting with other NGO's, which DGMT can facilitate, as well as encouraging NGO's to apply as consortiums. This will increase the impact of funding in this sector”.*
- *“To take the time to explain why you turn people down is so, so important. Your application process requires applicants to spend many hours formulating the information, as not two application forms ask for the same two things. To get no feedback at all makes such an application procedure a resource wasting process when turned down and leaves applicants unsure whether to try again. Even if you had a choice of responses such as 1) you do not fit our criteria 2) Your programme is not sufficiently detailed or thought through 3) Your financials are not sufficiently explained 4) You have insufficient funding or programme partners to make this viable in the long term 4) we were very oversubscribed and could not support you this time, but we like your programme and would encourage you to apply again. This would be a developmental response that shows transparency of DG Murray processes and enables organisation to improve even if turned down and makes the time investment of the application process worthwhile. In this way you help grow every applicant from their interaction with you, even those you do not fund”.*
- *“It is very hard to write a proposal for funding - no matter who the funder is and what the requirements are. Standing with hat in hand, with very specific requirements, places an applicant in a predicament when approaching a funder with defined areas of funding. In our organisation we need to fundraise to pay wages to people who perform a very important and responsible duty in a team of people who work to educate children with intellectual disability. Our applications are often turned down with very little explanation, but I am very aware that funders are wary of funding for wages. Finding a way to link our really big organisation wide need to the outlines set is hard, and despite our offer to be fully transparent in our administration of funding for wages, it is often not even investigated, as not meeting the funders' vision. My challenges are - How do you link human resource needs to any of these areas - or even to only one of these areas? As an applicant, I find it extremely hard to write proposals that meet the funders' requirements in terms of areas being funded, and I find myself giving up when I see names for areas like the proposed ones, as it really limits the scope of what I can apply for. This also often leaves us with a dilemma of receiving funding for a part of a project, but not the core requirements, and we then need to divert funds to projects to meet the shortfall, while still needing the human resources to look after the children in the school. I am eager to learn more about how to do proposals better, and how to keep that very delicate balance between seeking funding for an existing successful program while still meeting the funder's requirements and expectations”.*

## Impressions of DGMT’s due diligence process

Organisations whose previous applications were declined at Step 1, i.e. they did not go through our financial and organisational due diligence processes, did not participate further in the survey. We asked grantees and organisations that proceeded through the Step 2 due diligence process: (a) whether they were visited as part of their assessment and (b) how they would rate our due diligence process on a five point scale.

In 2014 52% (out of 95) of respondents falling in this category said that they were visited by DGMT as part of the due diligence process. In 2012 it was similarly just over half of respondents (54%) that said they were visited.

Respondents’ rating of DGMT’s assessment and due diligence process did not differ significantly between 2012 and 2014. Approximately half of respondents feel that these processes are reasonable and helpful in strengthening the organisation. The other half mostly said that the process was somewhat reasonable and helpful or chose to remain neutral. Only 14 of the respondents in this category were never funded by DGMT before. Half of these respondents chose to stay neutral on this subject. Current grantees

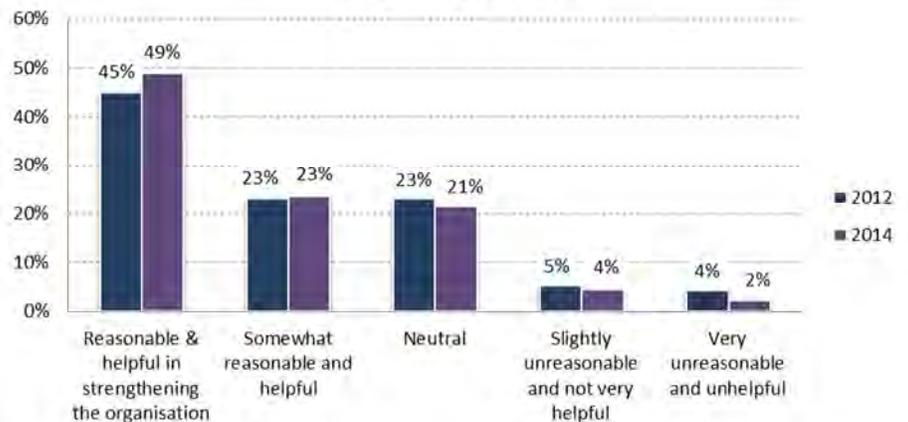
*“I appreciated the attitude being one of being there to help and support us rather than “inspect and check.” The advice and support I received at all times was deeply affirmative and really made a significant difference to keeping us motivated to continue doing what we set out to do. DGMT really wants to help us succeed”.*

*“Some of it was slightly confusing, as it seemed that the focus of discussion was more about how we frame our programme in wording. Although none of the programme activities changed, the way in which we worded our programmes in the application made all the difference. However, the feedback was very helpful in understanding DG Murray’s main focus and stance on social interventions”.*

*“I don’t feel that the project manager understood the success rate of our work in ... \*, instead we were given advice on what projects we should be implementing which felt patronising and no appreciation of the success we have achieved in ... \*”*

\* ... to protect anonymity, specific project and portfolio details are excluded

**How would you rate DGMT’s assessment and due diligence process?**



were more likely to rate DGMT's assessment process as reasonable and helpful. While those that were not grantees were most likely to remain neutral or to rate it more negatively (p=0.021).

When we asked respondents if they had any general comments that they would like to share with us regarding our due diligence process, there were quite a few that said we should have funded their application, this was coded under comment 'not applicable' as is illustrated in the table to the right. Most comments were however positive, complimenting the process and the DGMT officers, although individual organisations did raise some issues that they experienced, such as struggling using our grantee portal, finding the Stage 2 requirements confusing etc.

***“DGMT was very open and flexible in relation to our plans and any changes that arose after the funding agreement had been signed. We got a sense that DGMT was only interested in assisting us to do the good work that we do”.***

General comments regarding DGMT's due diligence process	#	%
Cannot comment/comment unclear/comment not applicable	8	26%
Good/supportive process - DGMT staffmember helpful/professional/knowledgeable	6	19%
Financial assessor was helpful/financials are well checked	2	6%
The process is fair and very thorough	2	6%
Good guidance on how to complete the application	2	6%
The type of language that you use to describe your programme makes a difference to DGMT	1	3%
Site visit was helpful	1	3%
Grantee portal is daunting	1	3%
Provide for longer funding cycles	1	3%
Provide feedback on why application is not approved	1	3%
DGMT was flexible in terms of programmatic changes	1	3%
Process took too long	1	3%
Advice given felt patronising	1	3%
DGMT should treat applications fairly	1	3%
Stage 2 requirements are confusing	1	3%
The fact that no site visit was made was problematic	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19%</b>

### Selected quotes

- *“The financial assessor was very helpful indeed - he tried to understand our circumstances - in fact he immediately telephoned to pursue his queries”.*
- *“Excellent application process. Had to think through the project VERY carefully, costing etc. Good overview of the organisation requested”.*
- *“Process was helpful - improved our internal processes”.*
- *“I applied for funding in October 2013, was notified of non-funding in May 2014. This puts a huge strain on proposed developments. In January a gamble is taken, either: (1) We take on 16 students, and hope the money does come in (big risk) or (2) we don't take on students and then the funding does arrive and we are stuck with non-compliance!”*

## Implementing Partner Section

The following section reports on questions asked specifically to those organisations that have indicated that they are current or prior implementing partners of DGMT (called grantees from here on).

### i. Perception of the appropriateness of the partnership

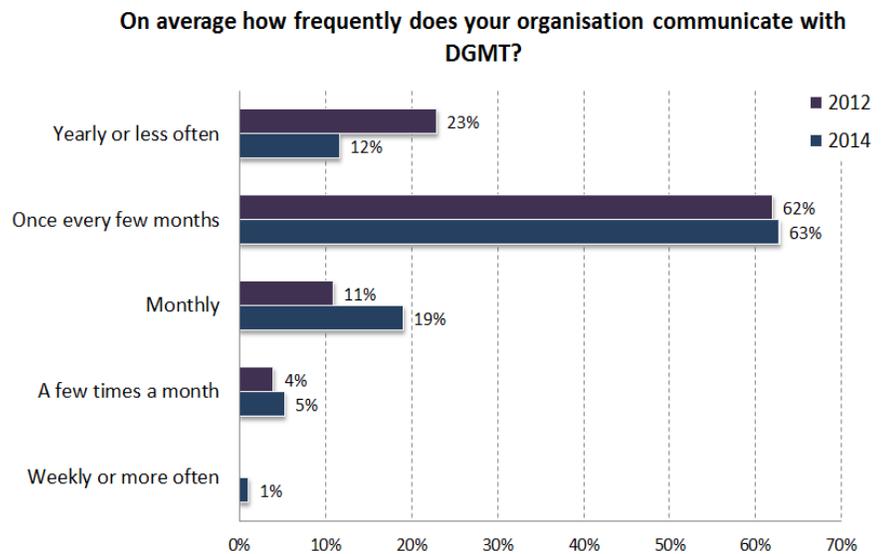
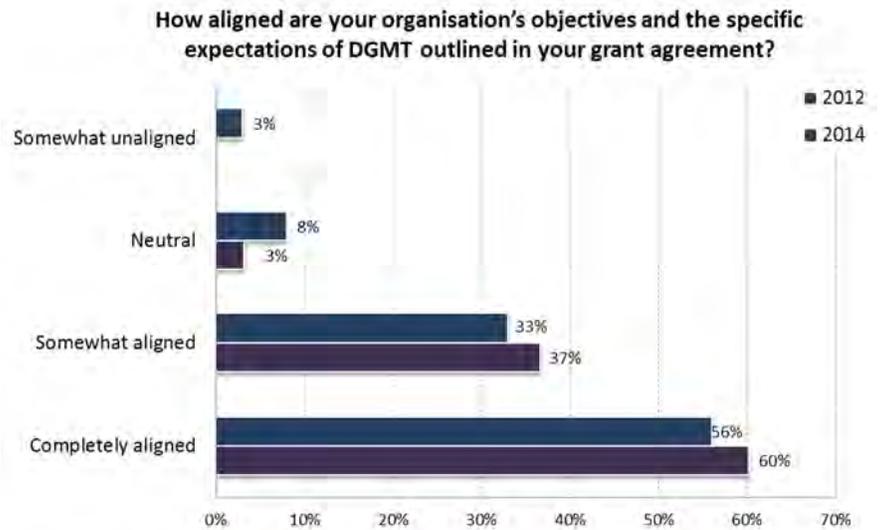
In both 2012 and 2014 most (60% in 2014; 56% in 2012) of grantees (responding to this survey) said that their programmes were completely aligned with DGMT's objectives and the specific expectations DGMT outlined in their grant agreements.

### ii. Frequency of interaction and visits after the grant has been awarded

There has been an increase in the frequency of DGMT interaction with grantees from the 2012 survey to the 2014 survey, although this difference was not statistically significant. Fewer organisations are now saying that they are communicating with DGMT yearly or less often and more are saying that they are communicating monthly. The majority however still report that communication takes place once every few months.

*"I would like DGMT to play a more active role in strengthening NPO's to tackle these massive social concerns we are dealing with--- Greater collaboration and understanding of the need".*

*"I am not sure what bigger strategy we are forming a part of. Sharing a bigger strategy would be helpful".*



Expectedly, the number of site visits increase with the duration of the grant period with more than half of grantees having been visited at least once during a one year grant period. More than 80% of organisations with multi-year grants report being visited 1-3 times during this period. Organisations with larger grants are also more likely to receive follow-up site visits than those with smaller grants.

About 53% of grantees in 2014 said they would like to have more interaction or engagement regarding the implementation of their grant. In 2012 this proportion was higher when 67% of grantees said they would like to have more engagement (this difference is not statistically significant). When we asked grantees what would be the ideal level of interaction with DGMT 24% of responses relayed that the current relationship is fine as is, however 51% of responses called for increased interaction, specifically site visits, more regular communication and exchange of ideas in general, and more strategic discussion, especially on M&E.

Number of site visits by implementation duration



Please describe the level of interaction and type of relationship that you would like DGMT to have with you as a grantee	#	%
Our relationship with DGMT is fine as it is	16	24%
More site visits to develop an indepth understanding of the organisation/in person support for programmes	14	21%
More general communication, exchange of ideas and updates on progress	11	16%
More strategic and M&E discussion/support and feedback on reports	9	13%
Support for fundraising and linking to other donors/government/networking in general	7	10%
Opportunity to discuss future projects/long term sustainability	2	3%
Continued funding	2	3%
Workshops to strengthen organisations/capacity building	2	3%
Online support for report submission	1	1%
Provide updates on the status and progress of grant requests	1	1%
Raise the profile of good organisations	1	1%
Meaning of comment unclear/not applicable	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Selected quotes

- “I like a weekly exchange of ideas and updates on the progress of the project - even if it is not necessarily two way communication - it could just be a sharing of information and notification of current challenges - it is not feasible or practical for DGMT to sustain prolonged face to face or hands on contact in all the schools in the project”.
- “What we presently have with \*portfolio team\* is perfect. We have regular contact and I know that I can pick up the phone at any time for advice and help”.

*\*Specific names were excluded to protect the identity of individuals*

## Selected quotes

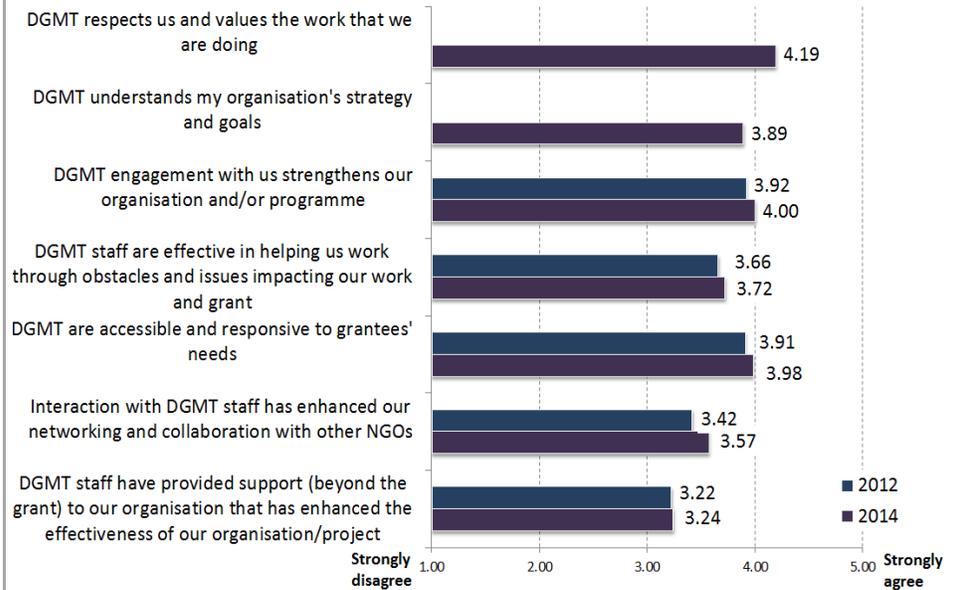
- *“It would be great to talk through our plans and projects with them and have their views and opinions, as well as their sharing of knowledge gained from other projects experiences. Although we have access to the learning briefs, it often helps when there is someone who is able to translate that learning to your own project. It would also be great if we could receive advanced reminders of deadlines.”*

### iii. Perceptions of DGMT support and engagement

Overall grantees rated DGMT positively on scale items aimed at measuring their perceptions of DGMT’s support and general engagement with them. There were no statistically significant differences between how grantees rated DGMT in 2012 versus how they did in 2014.

An area of particular strength is reflected in the high ratings that grantees gave DGMT on the item measuring the extent to which they believe DGMT respects and values the work that they are doing. Grantees also believed strongly that DGMT’s engagement with their organisation strengthens their organisation or programme. By this organisations mostly referred to the grants provided since the rating on whether DGMT provided support beyond the grant that increases the effectiveness of the organisation/project was much lower. Where such support has been provided, it mostly took the form of strategic/organisation development support, facilitating connections and networking, and sharing of information.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



\*The first two items were asked in a different context in the 2012 survey and responses could thus not be compared here.

Examples of support received from DGMT (beyond the grant)	#	%
Ongoing communication, interaction and strategic/organisation development support	9	31%
Networking like referral to other funders and connecting organisations and stakeholders	8	28%
Sharing information resources/learning briefs and webplatform (Confluence of Ideas and Practice)	7	24%
Meaning of comment is unclear/not applicable	3	10%
Advocacy	1	3%
Capacity building through workshops	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

*“DGMT staff member assisted us to consider our goals more deeply and has had some input into the conceptualisation of our research”.*

*“Intellectual support - our decision to start a pathways programme at the school was triggered through interaction with DGMT”.*

iv. **Grantee feedback on DGMT’s reporting requirements**

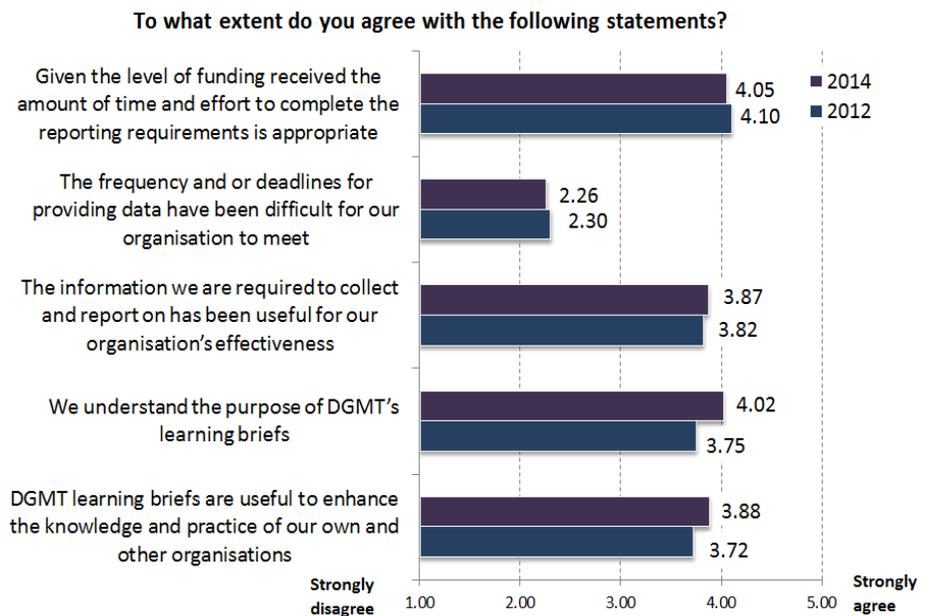
As was the case in 2012, grantees felt that the amount of time and effort required to complete DGMT reports are appropriate. They also reported that they did not find the frequency and deadlines for reports difficult to meet. There was a slight decline (not statistically significant) in grantees’ understanding of the purpose of learning briefs and also in the extent to which they believed the briefs were useful to enhance the knowledge and practice of their own and other organisations.

Even though some organisations say it is challenging to develop learning briefs, most report that it is a useful reflective process to develop them. Most comments documenting grantees’ impressions of the learning briefs and their experience of preparing them were positive; there were however one or two areas highlighted for action by DGMT:

- more consistent feedback on submitted briefs and pitches; and
- better communication as to the purpose, frequency and methodology of developing learning briefs.

An interesting suggestion is for DGMT to start developing learning briefs to reflect on site visits.

*“It is always useful to have to explain oneself in writing because the very act of writing forces one to reflect on what one means and to clarify one’s thoughts and intentions”.*



Please describe your impressions of DGMT learning briefs and your experience of preparing them	#	%
Good opportunity/useful process to reflect on practice	22	39%
Have not developed a learning brief yet	8	14%
Can be difficult and time consuming to develop/huge task/discipline to develop especially as activities don't change often/difficult to reach DGMT's standards	5	9%
Enjoy reading them; find it useful to learn from others	5	9%
Don't receive feedback on learning briefs/one-page pitches	3	5%
Meaning of comment unclear/not applicable	2	4%
Will be better if they are developed only once a year/less	2	4%
Was confused as to what they should entail and how they should be developed	2	4%
DGMT should prepare learning briefs after site visits	1	2%
Problematic that not all briefs are selected for sharing	1	2%
Have not find them helpful	1	2%
No time to read them	1	2%
Incorrect brief was published	1	2%
Hands-on is professional, thought-provoking, leading edge	1	2%
Serve as tools to illustrate models and to replicate	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Selected quotes

- *“It is a great opportunity to reflect on practice - forces you to stop and think. Sometimes feels painful as I am never too sure if I am writing the correct or most accurate subject matter”.*
- *“We have enjoyed reading them and find them useful. Preparing them is a huge task”.*
- *“To date I have never used any of the learning briefs and never have the time to read the articles. I glance at the titles but in general do not feel they are critical or relevant enough for me to take the time to read. I also find writing these learning briefs two times per year to be less valuable than maybe only once per year”.*
- *“Personally it is a discipline for me to sit down and write a learning brief; but once I do, I always find it an extremely useful experience”.*
- *“We value them as a way of learning about others work and how they have overcome obstacles. However, it is very difficult to prepare a Learning Brief twice a year, even once a year is a lot when you are doing very much the same thing each year”.*
- *“It was really useful for us to interrogate how we work and what our impact is. Really worthwhile exercise”.*
- *“The impression is good and encouraging but it is not easy to reach DGMT’s expectations and if your brief is not chosen they don’t provide feedback and tell you where did you go wrong”.*
- *“They are valuable learning tools as they make us think strategically about learning and impact. We are sorry not to have ours printed”.*
- *“Once we started writing the exercise was useful for ourselves and the published brief could be used to give credence and affirmation of our projects and their implementation to other donors and new approaches”.*
- *“Time consuming but a worthwhile exercise”.*
- *“When writing a learning brief, we are compelled to review an aspect of our work in more detail. This reveals much which would otherwise have remained below the surface”.*
- *“These provide a good and progressive structure for reporting on our work, that facilitates critical thinking”.*

**v. Perceptions of the Confluence of Ideas and Practice website**

*\* This section was not included in the 2012 survey since the Confluence website did not exist then.*

Nearly half (46%) of grantees participating in this survey said they were notified by the Confluence of Ideas and Practice website that a new learning brief has been published. It is typically grantees with grants of R100 000 and more that get auto-registered on the Confluence website (although registration is open to all interested organisations). The notification is typically linked to the email address of one representative of the organisations (which might or might not be the person that completed this survey on behalf of the organisation).

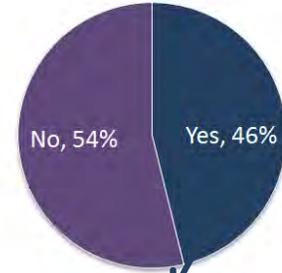
Of those that said they have received a notification, 60% said that they normally follow the link and read the published learning brief. Of those 86% said that they found the learning brief that they have read helpful.

In the vast majority of cases where grantees said they did not always read the learning briefs and provided a reason why they don't always read it, they said it was because of time constraints (89%). There were however two grantees that indicated they are not reading them because the content is either not relevant or not fresh/useful.

Although the system offers an easily usable service by sending out notifications with descriptions of and links to newly published learning briefs, few organisations are fully utilising all the features of the website, indicated in by the fact that only 15% knew that they can (and how to) edit their profile and learning brief information by logging into the website.

**“For organisations that deliver simple effective solutions it becomes ever more challenging to produce ongoing fresh and creative learning briefs”.**

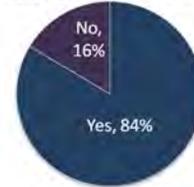
Received notification of newly published brief



If yes, do you normally follow the link and read the learning briefs?



Have you found the learning briefs that you have read helpful?



Have you found the learning briefs helpful? Please explain your answer	#	%
Offers helpful/interesting learning (on how other organisations deal with challenges and solutions)	13	23%
Not applicable	7	13%
Briefs are thought-provoking/useful/inspirational/broadens perspective	5	9%
Deepens strategic thinking because it provides information on best practice direct from the field	5	9%
Only found it helpful sometimes	5	9%
Useful tool to understand similar work in sector and for networking	4	7%
Meaning of comment unclear/not applicable	4	7%
Sometimes information provided is too general or it is hard to distil key learnings	2	4%
Interesting to see what DGMT regard as useful information	2	4%
Have not offered anything new to learn/could not apply lessons because they are not applicable	3	5%
Good length	1	2%
Provides a sense of contemporary thinking	1	2%
Promotes sharing in a space where sharing is limited	1	2%
Add to and enhance existing knowledge	1	2%
Provides useful information on programme models	1	2%
Promotes awareness of DGMT	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>

Commenting on why they found the learning briefs helpful (or not), grantees mostly said that it was helpful/interesting to read about how other organisations are approaching programming and challenges. There were however also a few grantees who thought it was not offering anything new to learn or that it was hard to distil or apply the learnings.

### Selected quotes

- *“Deepened my strategic thinking on either organisational practice or direct practice with young people”.*
- *“Great learning of other organisations challenges and solutions and also to open to new and different organisations activities”.*
- *“As a new person coming into the organisation it been a useful tool to understand the sector I am working in”.*
- *“It is an opportunity to learn more about other providers AND to learn FROM them too”.*
- *“Inspirational; provide ideas of how to tackle similar problems”*
- *“My answer would actually have been somewhat. I found it difficult to distil the key learnings and they seemed more useful for the organisation themselves. Just my impression though”.*
- *“Always useful to see what DG Murray feels is worth publishing. We get a sense of contemporary thinking in the development space which is important and not always easy to discover as not many forums exist that promotes sharing”.*
- *“Reading these broadens one's knowledge and perspective of each focus area on a national level and one can recognise best practice and improve one's own projects accordingly. It also helps to collaborate and network with other similar organisations”.*
- *“It helps provide critical information on innovative models that can be replicated in the sector”.*
- *“Some have been interesting but overall I didn't find that we were learning anything new”.*

We also asked grantees if they have any suggestions of how we can improve the Confluence website and notification system. Only a few of them answered this question, but many of the answers revealed further unfamiliarity with the system/website. For example, suggestions such as sending notifications to more organisations than just the one publishing, or providing a link and a description of the brief to allow the reader direct access to the brief and the option to choose if they want to read further, are all features that are being implemented (either since the launch of the system or for longer than a year).

Do you have any suggestions of how we can improve our Confluence of Ideas and Practice website and learning brief notification system	#	%
No suggestions /it is adequate	6	35%
Not applicable	2	12%
Workshop its functionality to improve understanding	1	6%
Send notifications to all organisations and not just the one publishing	1	6%
Provide a summary section that people can read and then decide if they want to read more	1	6%
Make it easy to use by people with low computer literacy	1	6%
Provide a link to get in once notified (don't use passwords)	1	6%
More timeous publication of briefs	1	6%
Publish all briefs not only a selection	1	6%
Improve feedback process on 1-page pitches	1	6%
Send out more reminders about the website (also about how to use it)	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

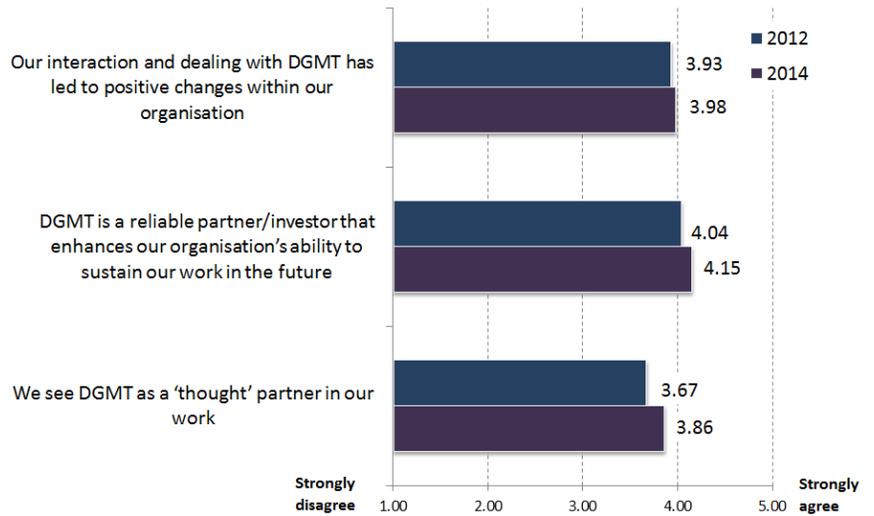
*“I think even those learning briefs that do not get into the official publication can be useful for learning and sharing for the sector as a whole”.*

**vi. General perceptions of DGMT and final feedback**

As was the case in 2012, DGMT was rated strongly as a reliable partner/investor that enhances organisations’ ability to sustain their work in the future. They also tended to believe their interaction with DGMT has led to positive changes within their organisation. Although not a statistically significant difference, slightly more grantees thought of DGMT as a thought partner in their work in 2014 than did in 2012 (in 2014 72% agreed or strongly agreed; 2012 – 70%).

As a final question we asked grantees what would be the one thing that they would change about the way that DGMT works. Most often mentioned recommendations were to simplify our application process, to increase personalised communication and site visits and to adjust the offering of our portfolios to allow for more flexibility in terms of funding.

**To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**



If you could change one thing about the way DGMT works, what would it be?	#	%
Reduce the number of steps in the application process/simplify applications/simplify the process of completing the online forms	6	11%
Increase communication/accessibility	6	11%
Provide for more face-to-face interaction/site visits	5	9%
Reduce confusion in terms of what is supported by portfolios/provide more flexibility in funding criteria/make it more applicable to rural development	5	9%
Meaning of comment unclear	4	7%
Provide longer term grants/longer funding cycles/more security to allow for planning	4	7%
DGMT is doing a good job/no complaints or recommendations	4	7%
Reduce the pressure to deliver learning briefs with each report/make the reporting format shorter/be more flexible in terms of the reporting format	3	5%
Provide support in networking and getting key stakeholders on board	3	5%
Quicker and more constructive feedback on reports/one page pitch documents	3	5%
Reduce DGMT staff replacements to improve consistency	2	4%
Ensure fair and transparent selection of implementing partner organisations/more transparency in decision making	2	4%
Enhance DGMT's capacity to influence policy and to unblock bottlenecks for the NPO Sector	2	4%
Provide support for operational costs/no partial funding of direct costs	2	4%
Provide updates on progress of funding applications	1	2%
Be less opportunistic	1	2%
Provide more recognition of work	1	2%
Provide more comprehensive financial report-back	1	2%
Take on a more active role in strengthening NGOs	1	2%
Provide more strategic input in programme design and M&E	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Selected quotes**

*“While it is important to be opportunistic, it is also important to drive a programme of action slowly and consistently. I think in striving to be a leader in various fields DGMT sometimes comes across as too opportunistic”.*

*“The online application system should allow for revisions and the table, if necessary, should be something you can upload as a Word document, rather than cutting and pasting into each individual cell”.*

## Selected quotes

*"For DGMT to reconsider its "policy" of short-term (up to 3 years) partnerships. To make significant change in this country DGMT should support a few big successful models over a 5 year plus period and then watch the magic happen. As most business people know: It takes 15 years to become an overnight success!"*

*"In answering this survey I was honest in my appraisal - I really think DGMT is hitting the mark in how it works and interacts with NPOs. A really big thank-you. My response to the support I have received from DGMT is that as the leader of the organisation, I want to ensure that we do not let DGMT down and that we honour the faith they have placed in us".*

*"We would like to be more involved in thinking about systemic impact and learning more of the impact of other leadership programs. Proactive advice on improving scale or impact. We would have liked to engage in a senior level discussion on our Impact Fund but could not find the correct forum".*

*"To know the probability of a renewed grant for projection purposes; and to be invited to apply again- for multi-year funding- this is the biggest help".*

*"Very often charities cannot start new projects and have to consolidate the projects that are in existence - companies and trusts donating funds like to sponsor projects and not operational costs and these are often a big expense. Sustainable projects are often difficult in this economic climate".*

*"To get a landscape view of the bottlenecks at international, national and provincial levels and gear key advocacy campaigns to unblock bottlenecks for the NPO Sector".*

## Discussion/Conclusion

We don't see many significant differences between the findings of the 2012 and the 2014 survey. Overall DGMT has been very positively rated on both surveys. There is however a clear tendency recorded in both 2012 and 2014 for the survey to be completed by those organisations that have received or are receiving funding from DGMT and at the same time, we see that those that have received funding from DGMT tend to rate DGMT more positively than those that did not. This might indicate bias, especially since even former grantees that have been recently declined tend to rate DGMT more negatively than those with approved funding. On the other hand, organisations that have had more interaction with DGMT might feel more comfortable completing a survey rating their interaction with DGMT, and they might offer more informed or fair commentary since they had more exposure to the way that DGMT works. Regardless, the positive ratings in this survey should be interpreted with caution, and much attention should be given to comments by respondents, which is why so many quotes have been included in this report.

As a reminder: **in the 2012 survey** areas of specific strength for DGMT was its responsiveness and accessibility to grantees' needs. Organisations also felt quite strongly that DGMT is fair in its decision making and has influence to impact public policy. Reporting was another area of strength, especially the

learning briefs were viewed very positively. Areas that needed work included DGMT's application process where respondents asked for procedures to be simplified. Organisations also felt that DGMT needed to work harder on understanding their organisations and their work, specifically asking for more site visits and face-to-face meetings. Organisations were slightly less convinced of DGMT's leadership ability in terms of leading and enhancing the knowledge in the field in which they are working and being a thought partner to the organisation.

**In 2014** we see that organisations were significantly more likely to say that DGMT has provided helpful assistance which they felt went above and beyond what is required for their grant or application. This assistance tended to be mostly related to strategic support and advice on their applications and grants, some specifically mentioning DGMT's role as a thinking partner. We also see, responding to strong recommendations in the 2012 report to increase engagement, that there has been an increase in the frequency that grantees report interacting with DGMT and a decline in the proportion of grantees that said they would like more engagement regarding the implementation of their grant. This increase in interaction and especially the strategic nature of this interaction, might have contributed to the other area where we saw a statistically significant improvement; in 2014 respondents' perception that DGMT is at the forefront of new thinking and practice grew significantly.

In terms of their perceptions of DGMT, in general it seems that respondents felt better able to express an opinion of DGMT in 2014 than was the case in 2012 when considerably more 'don't know' or neutral responses were recorded. As was the case in 2012, organisations tend to strongly believe that DGMT has influence that can contribute to shaping policy and tended to rate DGMT higher on this item than on others measuring their perceptions of DGMT.

Responsiveness and general communication remains a strong area for DGMT in 2014. It would however be useful to ask specific questions about the different types of written communication that DGMT offers in future surveys. For example, several positive comments were made about the usefulness of DGMT's website, but, a glaring omission in retrospect, we asked no questions specifically gauging respondents' impressions/use of the site. Although half of participants rated DGMT's communication to be consistent across contact points, we should keep in mind that this implies that half of respondents found some inconsistencies in our communication.

As part of the response to simplify our application process, we moved to an online application system in April 2012. Despite this significant change there were no significant changes in the way that respondents rated the difficulty of our application process. Some difficulties were however mentioned in commentary, especially the copying and pasting to complete the logframe table seem to be problematic.

Most respondents liked DGMT's new portfolio monikers (or liked some of them). Greatest concern was expressed in terms of the change of the Early Childhood Development Portfolio name, to Resourceful young children. Some organisations felt that ECD is a well recognised term and that 'Resourceful young children' doesn't capture all the aspects involved. It was mentioned a number of times that good definitions of what the new portfolio areas entail exactly, especially as it apply to funding priorities, will be essential.

One of the areas of particular strength for DGMT is how we approach our work with grantees. There is very strong agreement (higher than for other items measuring grantee perceptions of DGMT support and engagement) that DGMT respects its grantees and value their work. This sentiment was also expressed numerous times in qualitative statements.

Grantees remain happy with DGMT's reporting requirements and even though they often feel challenged by the development of the learning briefs, they tended to find it both a valuable process and a useful resource. Two areas for action are highlighted for DGMT in terms of learning briefs and reports:

- More consistent and quicker feedback on submitted reports, briefs and one page pitches; and
- Better communication as to the purpose frequency and methodology of developing learning briefs, which implies we need to ensure that all organisations have reviewed and understand the information contained in Appendix D of our grant agreement.

The learning briefs published on the Confluence of Ideas and Practice website are generally appreciated, possibly most of all for the sense of community that is created while it creates awareness that other organisations are similarly challenged. Organisations are however not as familiar with the system/website as they can be.

Finally, supporting the earlier point made about organisations' growing perception that DGMT is at the forefront of new thinking and practice, DGMT was also rated slightly higher in terms of being seen as a 'thought' partner in the work of organisations. Organisations continue to see DGMT as a reliable partner/investor that enhances their organisations' ability to sustain their work.

Popular suggestions for DGMT to improve its service to civil society organisations included: increasing our engagement with organisations - especially face-to-face, during the application review phase, and on strategic and M&E content; to simplify our application process and to provide feedback on declined applications at Step 1. These were also themes that strongly emerged from the 2012 survey. Lastly, there were various requests for DGMT to create more in-person opportunities for NGOs to come together for sharing, strategising, learning and networking.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all implementing partners and applicants who responded to this survey. We find the results so helpful as we try and improve our interaction with you.