

Employee Participation as a Foundation for Human Rights

August 2026 Research Brief



For the Data Nerds

Methodology Summary

This research brief is based on data collected through the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI), a research-informed assessment designed to measure organizational priorities and practices related to human rights and organizational performance in disability service organizations. The analysis included responses from 383 disability professionals who participated in the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities (NLCDD) Leadership Institute between 2020 and 2025. Participants represented various organizational roles, including executives, directors, managers, frontline professionals, and other disability sector staff.

Human Rights was measured using composite indices reflecting Self-Determination, Community Inclusion, and Stakeholder Participation. Employee Participation was measured using indices reflecting staff voice and influence, training and support, flexibility and development, recognition, participation in financial decisions, and access to relevant organizational and field information. Index scores were derived using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Pearson correlation analyses examined the relationships between Employee Participation and Human Rights priorities and practices. Results showed strong positive relationships between Employee Participation and Human Rights priorities ($r = .663, p < .001$) and between Employee Participation and Human Rights practices ($r = .666, p < .001$).

These findings indicate that organizations reporting stronger employee participation also tended to report stronger human-rights priorities and practices. Although the results do not establish causality, they suggest that supporting and involving employees is closely connected to building organizations that advance self-determination, community inclusion, and stakeholder participation.

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National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities

Monica Mesa-Alvarez, PhD | mmesa@natleadership.org

