



# Disability Rights Fund

## Disability-Led Futures for a Just World: DRF's Path to 2029



[disabilityrightsfund.org](https://disabilityrightsfund.org)

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**“Shifting power to women and girls with albinism requires building a powerful structure from the ground-up. We need an inclusive space to manifest ourselves so that we can thrive just like others. Donors must listen to women and girls with albinism in Malawi, because our lived experiences and advocacy approaches are unique.”**

**Hilda Macheso**  
Youth member,  
Association of Persons  
with Albinism in Malawi





# Introduction

Welcome to Disability Rights Fund's (DRF) strategic plan for 2024-2029, **Disability-Led Futures for a Just World: DRF's Path to 2029**. This Plan embodies our unwavering commitment to unleash the power of disability rights movements in the Global South and celebrate disability pride.

**Our new strategic vision honors our roots:** Our founding story is linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) coming into force in 2008. Recognizing that disability rights are human rights, we began resourcing grassroots disability movements to bring the CRPD to life. Over the years, DRF grantee partners have made important gains by passing nearly 350 disability-inclusive local and national legislations and policies, including a new Disability Act in Malawi and an inclusive anti-sexual violence law in Indonesia.

We recognize that the **concept of 'disability' has strong ties with ways of knowing and being in the world**. For example, some Indigenous communities have different and more inclusive frameworks of human diversity that have been displaced by colonialism and neo-colonialism. Increasingly, we see our grantee partners also working to shift the individual attitudes and narratives that drive ableism. We are shifting our theory of change to be responsive to these new ways of bringing human rights to life for persons with disabilities.

Our work is evolving, working in solidarity with movements with an intersectional feminist approach. And it draws on the power of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to **demand new rules for accountability** amidst a loud rhetoric on equity with little action from philanthropy to resource diverse disability movements in the Global South.

**“People without disabilities are taking our issues to global and national forums. This needs to change. We have experience and expertise! We have resources. We need to be in the lead of these discussions.”**

**Villany Remengesau**  
Co-Chair, Pacific Disability  
Forum Context



Photo courtesy  
of Villany.

There is nascent recognition among social justice movements and donors that their work is undermined if it ignores disability justice. There are also louder calls from movements for philanthropy to **move towards trust-based funding**. And there is an increasing interest in decolonizing our work and for funders to confront their entrenched ableism. Our advocacy for inclusive philanthropy will accelerate the conversation.

We also live with disruptions of seemingly perpetual and interconnected crises, increasingly framed as polycrisis. These crises arise from conflict, climate change, pandemics, economic and political failures and because of the way our world has become more interdependent, these events impact more widely than ever. And they fundamentally affect our ability to work for systems change and the advancement of disability rights. **Uniting and diversifying disability movements and deepening solidarity with other human rights movements** is key for making structural shifts to ensure wellbeing for all.

All along, DRF has grown tremendously, transitioning from its startup origins to a systems-oriented established nonprofit. There is a palpable forward momentum to our work, and we are ready for more growth. We have an exciting new brand identity that does justice to our evolving story. We know our participatory grantmaking model works, and we have the potential to do so much more through our evolving philanthropy, advocacy, and peer and collective-learning strategies—all by listening to the agendas and solutions of grassroots movements for inclusion.

**Join us as we embark on this transformative journey to resource organizations of persons with disabilities that are shifting the conversation on inclusion and equity.**



## Disability in Numbers

**1 in 6**  
globally

1 in 6 people globally live with a disability, representing 16% of the world's population.<sup>1</sup>

**1 in 5**  
women

1 in 5 women globally live with a disability, experiencing multiple and exacerbated levels of violence and exclusion.<sup>2</sup>

**80%**  
of persons

Nearly 80% of persons with disabilities live in the Global South<sup>3</sup>

1 [World Health Organization](#)

2 [UN Women](#)

3 [UNDRR](#)



## State of Philanthropy

Merely **3% of all human rights funding** goes to disability rights

Only **6% of disability funding** goes to rights and social justice

A charity model of giving persists

The equity rhetoric of philanthropy **does not match the glaring funding gaps**

## Our Grantmaking

Since 2008, DRF and our sister fund, the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund, have awarded...

**\$51 Million**

**437 organizations across 40 countries**

And we must move the needle forward for **MORE** and **BETTER** funding for disability movements.

“The Pacific Islands are among the most vulnerable to climate change and are the least resourced. DRF is often the first and only funder of emerging organizations of persons with disabilities. This needs to change. We know that the advocacy of our grantees for inclusive disaster-risk reduction policies is critical to ensure no one is left behind. Our communities are way past verbal commitments, and it’s time for states and philanthropy to fund the implementation of actions they have committed.”

**Faolo Utumapu-Utailesolo**  
DRF Program Officer  
for Pacific  
Island Countries





# Theory of Change



**Purpose:** We support disability rights movements to unleash their power and celebrate diversity.

## Values

- > We celebrate **human diversity** and **disability pride**.
- > We value the **participation, access, and inclusion** of all persons with disabilities to promote human rights.
- > We embrace **learning** from success and failure as a powerful means of transformation.
- > We bring an **intersectional feminist** approach to our work.
- > We base our relationships on **collaboration, solidarity, interdependence, joy, and accountability**.



## Strategic Pillars

Unleashing the power of disability movements in the Global South

Driving change and solutions through peer and collective learning

Opening spaces to advocate for disability inclusion and participation

Strengthening DRF for sustainable and values-centric growth



## Long-term Goals

1

Stronger disability movements engage in systems change,

2

leading and contributing to solving global crises,

3

enabled by more and better funding of their work.

**Vision:**  
Disability rights  
for everyone,  
everywhere







**Purpose:**  
We support  
disability rights  
movements to  
unleash their power  
and celebrate  
diversity.

Edward Kaboyi is the founder of Umoja People with Disabilities, a group advocating for the rights of refugees with disabilities in Malawi.

## Values

Our values inform how we are  
in the world:

- › We celebrate **human diversity** and **disability pride**.
- › We value the **participation, access,** and **inclusion** of all persons with disabilities in the promotion of human rights.
- › We embrace **learning** from success and failure as a powerful means of transformation.
- › We bring an **intersectional feminist** approach to our work.
- › We base our relationships on **collaboration, solidarity, interdependence, joy,** and **accountability**.

# Strategic Pillars

Our strategic pillars are foundational for achieving our vision. They are critical elements that center the inherent power of disability rights movements. Our commitments below serve as a pathway to achieve our objectives, holding us accountable to our values.

<b>1. Movements:</b> Unleashing the power of disability movements in the Global South	<b>2. Learning:</b> Driving change and solutions through peer and collective learning	<b>3. Opening:</b> Opening spaces to advocate for disability inclusion and participation	<b>4. Strengthening:</b> Strengthening DRF for sustainable and values-centric growth
Our Commitments:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Connect disability movements to resources by providing flexible, multi-year, core funding to emergent and marginalized OPDs.</li> <li>› Connect DRF grantee partners to other donors to strengthen sustainability of disability movements.</li> <li>› Support the advocacy of disability movements by disability movements.</li> <li>› Evolve and support collective care frameworks within disability movements.</li> <li>› Evolve participatory approaches in disability movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Facilitate peer and collective learning with DRF grantee partners and disability and other movements.</li> <li>› Distill collective learning into insights to strengthen disability rights expertise and advocacy and inform DRF's work.</li> <li>› Share these insights (as knowledge products) to transform attitudes and inform systems change work and solutions to global crises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Broker strategic partnerships between disability movements and other movements.</li> <li>› Advocate with funders to activate new, more, and better funding for disability movements.</li> <li>› Resource DRF, disability movements, and other stakeholders to dismantle ableism and strengthen cultures of accessibility and inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Ensure DRF's systems, infrastructure, process, and approaches are fit-for-purpose, embracing a culture of accessibility, inclusion, collective care, and participation.</li> <li>› Equip DRF to identify and challenge ableism, ageism, patriarchy, transphobia, homophobia, classism, racism, casteism, and colonialism.</li> <li>› Transform DRF's learning culture by centering OPDs and disability movements in our Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems.</li> <li>› Strengthen internal communications and build disability-centered narrative power externally.</li> </ul>



## Long-term Goals

### 1. Stronger disability movements engage in systems change,

Disability movements advance social justice, challenge ableism, and other oppressions everywhere. They are proud, connected, diverse, inclusive, participatory, sustainable, resilient, and adaptive, especially in times of polycrisis. They are nurturing of each other.

### 2. leading and contributing to solving global crises,

Stronger disability leadership and movements are contributing their expertise and lived experiences to building inclusive, equitable, and sustainable solutions to global and local challenges.

### 3. enabled by more and better funding of their work.

Financial and political resources are sufficient and available to disability rights movements and for disability inclusion. Resources are available to invest in working with those at the margins, facing multiple and intersectional discrimination and poverty.

**Vision:**  
**Disability rights  
for everyone,  
everywhere**



Khursaid Mansur (left) and Amrita Bastola advocate for the rights of little people with Nepal Dwarf Association.



**“International Women’s Day is just one day in a year. We need intersectional solutions that demand equal participation of Dalit women and girls with disabilities in movements and decision-making spaces.”**

**Pampha Purkoti**  
Acting President  
of Dalit with  
Disabilities  
Association





## Funding Our Plan

The budgets for DRF and DRAF in 2024 are over 10.5 million USD and nearly \$2 million USD respectively. This strategic plan was activated in April 2024, and two key outcomes from our first year include designing our movements work and costing the changes to our structure and operational growth. This will confirm our programmatic frameworks and activities in line with the strategic plan. This exploration will enable us to properly cost the strategy through to 2029.

**“Let’s put solidarity as a priority. No one can advance unless we all advance together.”**

**Patience Ogolo-Dickson**  
Founder of Advocacy for  
Women with Disabilities  
Initiative in Nigeria





## A Call for Collaboration

Our new strategic plan is more than a document— it's a call to action. It outlines a bold roadmap to abundantly resource and center the transformative solutions of movements for inclusion, dismantling ableism, and other intersecting oppressions. It calls for the reimagination of solidarity and narratives of equity that have long ignored disability rights advocates in the Global South.

Our Plan is the culmination of listening and learning from the lived experiences, rich expertise, and audacious dreams and leadership of persons with disabilities over the past 15 years. We are excited to build bold alliances with diverse partners committed to justice, grounded in the values of intersectionality, interdependence, and collective care.



For donors interested in investment in DRF's work, email [development@disabilityrightsfund.org](mailto:development@disabilityrightsfund.org)



For cross-movement organizations interested in exploring strategic partnerships, email [jmanhique@disabilityfund.org](mailto:jmanhique@disabilityfund.org)

Dwi Suka, Executive Director of CIQAL, advocates for inclusive climate action and gender justice in Indonesia.



**We will be counting on you  
as we journey forward with  
hope and renewal.**

**[disabilityrightsfund.org](https://disabilityrightsfund.org)**