

Rooted in Disability Inclusion, Rising in Collective Power



2024 Annual Report

Disability
Rights Fund



Disability Rights
Advocacy Fund

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we reflect on 2024, we do so with deep pride and a renewed sense of purpose. This year marked a pivotal moment for the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) with the launch of our five-year strategic plan, Disability-Led Futures for a Just World. Shaped by the leadership and vision of disability movements in the Global South, this plan is not only a guide — it is a call to action, rooted in our intersectional values and our commitment to justice.

We also introduced a new brand identity that reflects the spirit and strength of our work: igniting movements and building solidarity. With our strategic plan and new identity in motion, we are moving forward with vitality and a collective vision for transformation.

In a time of profound global uncertainty and injustice, we are more convinced than ever that disability rights movements are driving the solutions the world urgently needs. Across regions, DRF's grantee partners are boldly reshaping communities toward dignity and equity. In Nigeria, our partners are advocating for disability-inclusive gender-based violence prevention services. In Nepal, Indigenous women and girls with disabilities are organizing to advance their collective rights with a disability lens. Across Pacific Island Nations, disability movements are leading calls for inclusive climate action and humanitarian response.



Young self-advocates in Indonesia are shaping their own narratives and stories.

Looking forward, we affirm our commitment to participatory and trust-based philanthropy that shifts resources and decision-making power to grassroots movements. We will continue to build deep, strategic partnerships across movements and sectors for a shared vision for systemic change: Centering disability justice and intersectional feminist values is not optional — it is essential for the futures we are working to create.

We remain grateful to our community of supporters who believe in this pursuit of justice. Together, with shared purpose, we will continue to advance disability-led futures for a just world.

Gratitude,

Lorraine Wapling
Former Interim Executive
Director, Disability Rights Fund



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**.

Values in Action: Our Model

76%

of our team members identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or Persons of Color.

69%

of our grantmaking from the regular cycle was awarded to marginalized identities within disability rights movements.

100%

of our board members identify as persons with disabilities.



Staff members, Theophilus Odaudu and Faaolo Utumapu-Utailesolo, hold tactile logos of DRF.





Unleashing the power of disability movements in the Global South



UNLEASHING THE POWER OF DISABILITY MOVEMENTS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

At the heart of our purpose is a strong belief that **disability movements are solutionary and visionary, creating necessary holistic shifts for justice and inclusion.**

This is the core of the first pillar of our strategic plan: **unleashing the power of disability movements in the Global South.** We support grassroots organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) with resources that honor their lived experiences and autonomy, enabling them to mobilize, organize, and create the systemic shifts needed for inclusion.



Ugandan feminists are advocating for inclusive gender and climate justice policies.

2024 Milestones that Embody Movement Power:

Climate Justice

- In Uganda, Integrated Disabled Women Activities successfully advocated for disability-inclusive anti-gender-based violence and climate justice policy in Kaliro District.
- In Nigeria, the Network of Women with Disabilities established a climate action network to advocate for disability-inclusive climate policies and programs.
- In Nigeria, Hope Alive for Possibilities Initiative advocated for the enactment of a disability law in Benue State. As a result of sustained engagements, the Benue State Emergency Management Agency established a special fund to address the effects of climate change on persons with disabilities.

Inclusive Health

- In Rwanda, thanks to the advocacy of the Organization for Integration and Promotion of People with Albinism, the Ministry of Health strengthened and decentralized its efforts to address and prevent skin cancer among persons with Albinism.

Gender Justice

- The Organisation of Women with Disabilities for Health Promotion and Development in Rwanda (OWDHP) produced quarterly radio shows to facilitate a national dialogue and present a policy brief on the inclusion of women with disabilities in policies for gender-based violence (GBV) prevention. OWDHP is now part of the cluster organizations invited by the government of Rwanda to provide input in the ongoing review of the GBV law and policy.
- Our feminist partners in Nepal, led by the National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal, shared the challenges of women and girls with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +30 Review. This marked the first ever consultation of women with disabilities in Nepal for Beijing +30 and resulted in the Kathmandu Declaration—A Collective Call to Action.

Inclusive Policies and Participation

- Indonesia Mental Health Association led a coalition of OPDs to draft a government regulation for Concessions for Persons with Disabilities, a major step toward inclusive social protection systems.
- Our partners, KOSHISH, the National Federation of Deaf, and the National Indigenous Disabled Women Association, led a national consultation with 300 OPDs across all provinces, which centered marginalized groups to gather feedback to amend the Nepalese Act on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



The Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Beijing + 30 Review was a historical moment for women with disabilities from Nepal and Indigenous women with disabilities from Asia Pacific regions as they brought grassroots intersectional issues and concerns relating with 12 critical areas expanding the rich conversations within feminist movement.”

Pratima Gurung, Convenor,
Asia Pacific Indigenous with
Disabilities Network



- In Haiti, our grassroots partners led the first disability rights forum in rural areas, secured accessibility improvements in public spaces, trained community members on disability-inclusive data collection, and made recommendations to influence national disaster-risk-reduction policies.
- Nuanua O Le Alofa participated in the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals for Samoa's Third Volunteer National Review report by partnering with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office.

Driving change and solutions through peer and collective learning



DRIVING CHANGE AND SOLUTIONS THROUGH PEER AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING

Grounded on the values of interdependence and solidarity, the second pillar of our strategic plan centers collective learning across disability and other human rights movements. In 2024, DRF resourced in-person peer and collective learning gatherings in Malawi, Nigeria, Nepal, Uganda, and Indonesia.

In Nigeria, our grantees explored opportunities for movement growth and impact, bringing together 25 former and current partners. In Malawi, grantees celebrated the passing of the new Disability Act and deepened understanding on the Africa Disability Protocol. In Nepal, our partners dialogued on diversifying the disability movement with an intersectional approach centering Dalit, Indigenous, and other marginalized voices from remote mountain communities.

Nigerian activists dialogue on building a diverse disability movement.



“Peer and collective learning is a foundational value of the Disability Rights Fund. We recognize the solutionary expertise that is embedded within disability rights movements and opportunities for cross-learning among movements and philanthropy”
Dwi Ariyani



In Uganda, grantees immersed in a creative storytelling session using songs and other art forms to paint a picture of a diverse and united national movement. In Indonesia, grantees dialogued on finding expertise within the disability movement on the intersection of climate justice, psychosocial health, livelihoods, and more.

DRF also resourced the first Asia-Pacific convening of Indigenous women and girls with disabilities in Kathmandu. From Pakistan to Fiji, Indigenous women and girls with disabilities dialogued on deepening collaboration to create a regional network and thrive together as movements. DRF also supported a peer learning exchange between DeafBlind Indonesia and the Samoa Blind Persons Association, where DeafBlind Indonesia shared their innovative outreach strategies for engaging and organizing the DeafBlind community.

Opening spaces to advocate for disability inclusion and participation



OPENING SPACES TO ADVOCATE FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

Our advocacy and partnerships shine a light on under-explored issues and help bridge systemic gaps by fostering **collaboration across human rights movements**. The third pillar of the strategic plan is grounded in intersectionality, strengthening solidarity and supporting the growth of a vibrant, inclusive disability rights movement.

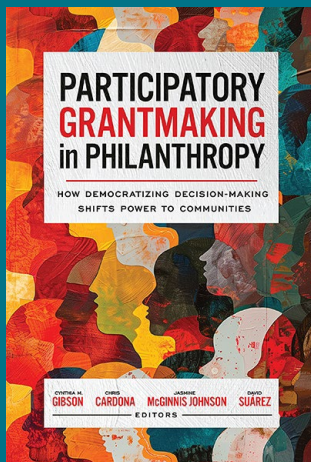
- In May 2024, DRF and partners **organized the first Wilton Park retreat on disability**, titled ‘Disability Rights: Advancing the Agenda’. The multi-stakeholder dialogue brought together around 60 participants from governments, OPDs, civil society, the UN system, and private donors to reflect and strategize on advancing disability inclusion through a human rights lens.
- We supported a delegation of feminist disability rights activists to **share their stories on rights-based care systems** at the 68th Commission on the Status of Women.
- DRF partnered with feminist grantees and allies at the Association of Women’s Rights in Development Forum to strategize on advancing an inclusive care agenda and to share Indigenous advocacy approaches for climate justice.
- In 2024, we partnered with Instituto Jô Clemente (IJC) to **support a historic gathering of disability activists at Disability 20 (D20)**, a vibrant and transformative initiative aimed at engaging persons with disabilities and bringing their intersectional perspectives at the G20 (Group of 20) gathering in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, last November.
- Our colleagues and grantees joined allies in Baku, Azerbaijan for COP29, to **advocate for the recognition of persons with disabilities as a formal constituency** within the UN Climate Change Conference.



Intersectional feminist activist cohort at CSW 68.



Dwi Suka, right, made a call for inclusive climate action at AWID Forum.



Donor advocacy is an important priority for DRF to influence philanthropy to move more and better funding for disability movements. DRF's participatory grantmaking evolution and learning were featured in a chapter by staff in 'Participatory Grantmaking in Philanthropy: How Democratizing Decision-Making Shifts Power to Communities' published in December 2024 by the Georgetown University Press.

“The greatest triumph of the D20 was showing the world the power and expertise of people with disabilities. In addition to facing daily challenges imposed by exclusionary societies, they are specialists in numerous areas, bringing irreplaceable contributions to any debate on relevant topics, ranging from food systems to philanthropy and sustainable development.” **Instituto Jô Clemente members**



“Who better to make these decisions than young people who are facing these challenges day-by-day. When young people lead, resources go to where it is impactful and needed.”
Rebeca Jawara, a youth activist.

Youth Transforming Philanthropy

What would the world look like if the agency and visionary leadership of youth were centered in philanthropy? DRF is proud of our strategic partnership with the Children’s Rights Innovation Fund, an innovative participatory grantmaking pooled fund to make children’s rights a lived reality. Through youth-led strategies and decision-making, CRIF is shifting power and driving systemic change by placing youth in the heart of philanthropic practices. DRF’s funding supports CRIF to advance youth rights with a disability lens.

Nothing Without Youth!

One of DRF’s cross-cutting priorities in our strategic plan is resourcing the intersectional and dynamic leadership of youth with disabilities. From Malawi to Indonesia to Fiji, young leaders with disabilities are asserting their right to decision-making powers on critical issues—from climate justice to inclusive education.

In Indonesia, Alice Tandri, a young DeafBlind activist with PELITA, is championing inclusive care and support systems. Alice joined the Asia-Pacific Care Forum in Thailand, where she advocated for transforming models of care to center the rights of women and girls with disabilities. In Fiji, the Disability Pride Hub—the first LGBTQI-led OPD in the Pacific—centers the lived experience and solutions of queer youth with disabilities. In Malawi, Duster Lucius with DeafBlind Malawi is working to expand early childhood education services for children with DeafBlindness. And in Uganda, youth activists with Show Abilities Uganda are powering a growing movement for inclusive democracy and political participation.



Namwase Marion advocates for inclusive democracy in Uganda.



Across movements and borders, youth with disabilities are not waiting to be included—they are leading the way.



Alice Tandri is a rising DeafBlind activist in Indonesia.



Our Impact

These significant achievements accomplished by persons with disabilities are built upon strong foundations that are rooted in communities.

After years of sustained support from DRF, our partners achieved significant milestones in 2024. Here's how their efforts have advanced disability rights since 2008:

More than

5,000

activists participated in peer and collective learning gatherings

Nearly

200

national laws, policies and government programs were enacted or created by the leadership of persons with disabilities

More than

100

reports monitoring progress on human rights and development agendas submitted to the United Nations and other multilateral agencies.

Numbers are only a small part of a greater story of growth and cross-movement expansion. Organizations of persons with disabilities are growing and focused on creating real impact and change.



Strengthening DRF for sustainable and values- centric growth



DRF staff members at a team retreat in Barcelona.

The fourth pillar of our strategic plan strengthens DRF to ensure sustainable and values-centric growth.

In 2024, we benefitted from the fresh perspective of our interim executive director, who guided cross-functional development and enhancement of our internal processes and infrastructure. We updated key policies to better reflect our values and provide greater clarity for staff. For example, updates to our Reasonable Accommodation Policy provide staff with more examples of types of accommodations they might request and several options for how to submit a reasonable accommodations request. We invested in new technology systems, including a new financial management platform and document storage system, that are strengthening collaboration within and across teams. We revised our learning system with grantee input to better understand how DRF supports collective power.

In addition to process and infrastructure improvements, we also grew our collective understanding and interpretation of our values and ways of working across our staff team. With staff coming from a diversity of identities, lived experiences, and perspectives to their work, listening to and learning from each other is critical to strengthening our work. At a July retreat, staff shared reflections about words like “participation”, “trust-based philanthropy”, and “inclusion” that built new layers of understanding and alignment across all of our work.

Shifting the Power for Inclusion: Grantee Perspectives on DRF



“DRF’s continued partnership with us over the years in disability rights advocacy is a demonstration of your belief in our work, which is a source of inspiration, motivation, and pride. Thank you for supporting our efforts towards sustaining national advocacy on disability inclusion in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”

Esther Kyoriza, Chief Executive Officer, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda

“Our partnership with the Disability Rights Fund has been amazing. We worked on a project on early childhood development services (ECD) in Malawi for children with DeafBlindness. We learned that most children do not have access to ECD services. At the end of the project, we saw an increase in the number of learners with DeafBlindness admitted to ECD centers, and some have graduated to primary school.”

Duster Lucius, DeafBlind Malawi



Shifting the Power for Inclusion: Donor Perspectives on DRF

"At The Schmidt Family Foundation, we believe in inclusion and human rights for all. We proudly support the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) for their strategic investment in persons with disabilities to advocate for equal rights, full participation in society, and a level playing field. We firmly stand with DRF as they strengthen the vitality of the global disability rights movement."

Christopher Nichols, Senior Project Manager, The Schmidt Family Foundation

"The collaboration between BMZ and the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRAF) in the context of the Global Disability Summit 2025 has played a vital role in ensuring the meaningful participation of activists with disabilities and highly marginalized groups throughout the Summit preparation process and at the event itself. Drawing on its previous experience with GDS and its strong networks with grassroots organizations worldwide, DRAF contributed significantly to the diversity and representation at GDS2025 — for example, by enabling activists to advocate for national GDS commitments and by bringing their voices into panel discussions during the Summit."

Hans-Peter Baur, GDS Commissioner, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)



Gratitude

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our donors for resourcing grassroots movements for inclusion and our organizations.



DRF was supported by United States Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)¹; U.K. Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; Adobe Foundation; the Ansara Family Fund at the Boston Foundation; Channel Foundation; Dreilinden; Expedia Group; the Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation; Foundation Chanel; Ford Foundation; Foundation for a Just Society; the Global Fund for Women; Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation; Mina Fund; Oak Foundation; Schmidt Family Foundation; WE Trust; and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

We thank our individual donors for funding disability rights and inclusion.

DRAF was supported by the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Government of Germany's Agency for International Cooperation; and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

The views expressed in this communication do not necessarily reflect the official policies of any of our donors or the governments they represent.

¹ This grant was terminated effective March 7, 2025. We appreciate the DRL team's support throughout our grant.

“Disability rights intersect with every pressing issue of our time—from climate resilience to healthcare access to economic justice. By supporting our work, you're helping to build a more equitable future where no one is left behind.”

Jen Bokoff, Director of Development



[See our current donor list here.](#)

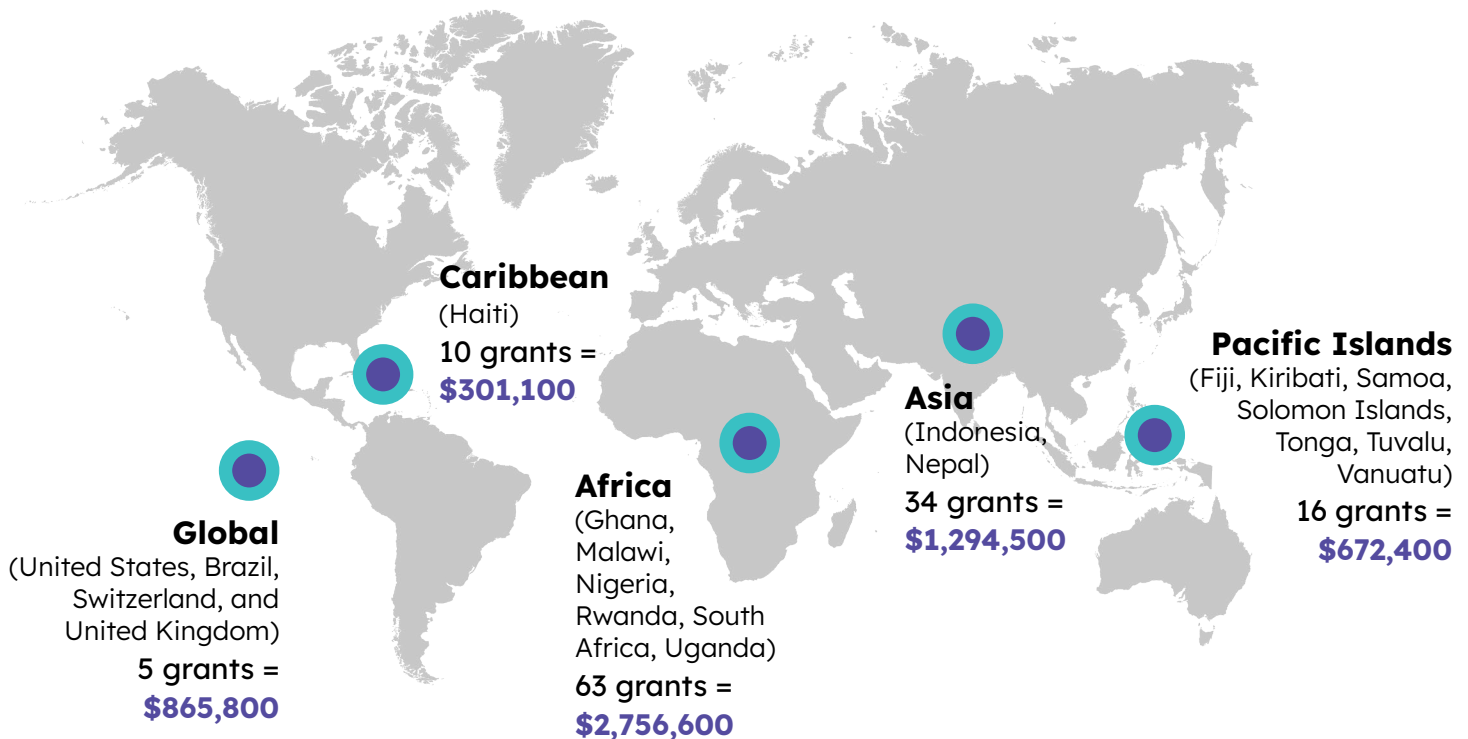
Grantmaking Data

In 2024, DRF and DRAF awarded

134 grants to
121 organizations



\$5,890,200
USD



[Click here to view the full grants directory](#)

2024 Financials

	DRF	DRAF	Total	%
Revenue				
Restricted				
Government	\$3,715,000	\$1,451,012	\$5,166,012	56%
Foundations	\$596,000		\$596,000	6%
Unrestricted				
Foundations, Corporate, Individuals	\$3,280,782	\$222,948	\$3,503,730	38%
Total Revenue	\$7,591,782	\$1,673,960	\$9,265,742	100%

Operating Expenses				
Program Services - Grant Awards and Oversight	\$7,040,194	\$1,780,892	\$8,821,086	78%
General and Administrative	\$1,884,991	\$131,438	\$2,016,429	18%
Fundraising	\$405,603	\$61,521	\$467,124	4%
Total Expenses	\$9,330,788	\$1,973,851	\$11,304,639	100%

Grantmaking Committee

Our Grantmaking Committee (GMC) makes all grantmaking decisions pertaining to DRF's annual grant round and informs our grantmaking priorities. Committee members are a mix of disability rights activists and donor representatives.

GMC members

Nikki Brown-Booker, USA

Nandini Ghosh, India

Ishumael Zhou, Zimbabwe

Waqar Puri, Pakistan

Sena Ar-Rikaby, UK

Hannah Birks, Australia

Catalina Hodenfield, USA

We thank our departing GMC members, Myroslava Tataryn, Susannah Rodgers, and Helena Woods, for their devoted service.



“Serving on DRF's Grantmaking Committee (GMC) has been deeply enriching. Beyond funding, it's about shifting power, fostering leadership, and supporting the visions of national OPDs across the Global South. It's a unique chance to engage with grassroots movements and learn from the innovation within the disability rights space. With DRF's new strategic framework, this past year has been one of bold growth. As GMC members, we're proud to support the grantmaking priorities and advance the vision of disability rights for everyone, everywhere.” **Waqar Puri**



2024 marked a powerful new chapter for the Disability Rights Fund. With the launch of our bold five-year strategic plan and refreshed brand, we reaffirmed our commitment to disability rights movements in the Global South. This new direction is rooted in the leadership of persons with disabilities and guided by our values of interdependence, intersectionality, and collective care. As Co-Chairs, we are proud to stand alongside our grantees, staff and communities as we move forward together — united and more visible and determined than ever.”

**Maria Ní Fhlatharta and
Alberto Vásquez,**
DRF Board Co-Chairs

Current Board of Directors



**Maria
Ní Fhlatharta**
(Co-Chair)



**Alberto
Vásquez**
(Co-Chair)

Setareki S. Macanawai
Sikelelwa Alexandrina Msitshana
Michael Njenga
Michael Szporluk
Benjamin Mahnke

Powered by People: Celebrating Our Team

We thank **ALL DRF team members**

for their unwavering dedication and powerful contributions to our organizations last year. DRF's diverse global team brings strategic insights from our movement, operations, learning and growth divisions.

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We thank former staff members,
Lorraine Wapling, Christina Parasyn,
Krishna Gahatraj, Jean-Pierre Sibomana,
and Federico Martire for their profound
contributions to our organizations.

Credits

This report was produced by Rucha Chitnis, DRF's Communications Director.
We thank all our team members for contributing to this publication.

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The Disability Rights Fund is a 501c3 organization, EIN 27-5026293.

The Disability Rights Advocacy Fund is a 501c4 organization, EIN 27-5026463.

Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.