



# From Crises to Solutions: Building Diverse Movements for Inclusion

2022  
Annual  
Report

DISABILITY  
RIGHTS  
FUND

DISABILITY  
RIGHTS  
ADVOCACY  
FUND

# Unlocking the Possibilities of Human Diversity

Dear friends,

In 2022, the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) team witnessed the transformative power of global movements for inclusion. From Haiti to Indonesia, DRF grantees courageously advocated to make #NothingWithoutUs a reality.

Staying true to our participatory values, DRF continued to support organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to contribute their leadership, expertise, and lived experiences to advance social justice and human rights. I invite you to read and amplify, **'From Crises to Solutions: Building Diverse Movements for Inclusion,'** our annual report that celebrates the extraordinary work of our diverse partner organizations in their communities. Their advocacy wins reveal how centering the solutions of OPDs leads to sustainable change.

We know that grassroots disability advocates are changing the conversation on equity, holding both philanthropy and movements accountable with a rallying cry: **There is no intersectionality without disability rights!** Our team is committed to mobilizing resources



Catalina with DRF grantees in Geneva.

to the disability community to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the local, national, and international levels. In 2023, we are rolling up our sleeves to launch a bold new strategic plan. We know our theory of change works, and we are ready to deepen our impact for gender transformation and seed new feminist partnerships.

Our goal is to serve and diversify global movements for inclusion to build a world that is free of barriers, exclusion, and ableism, where the vital contributions of persons with disabilities are celebrated and embraced.

Happy reading,

**Catalina Devandas**  
Executive Director



# Nothing Without Us!

## Our Values in Action



**We value inclusion:** The team, board, and grantmaking committee of DRF are all guided and led by the lived experiences and leadership of persons with disabilities from around the world. DRF also resources grassroots disability rights movements in all their diversities.



**We value accessibility:** Accessibility is at the core of everything we do. We have a holistic approach, internally and externally, so that everyone can participate equally.



**We value intersectionality:** Our model centers gender transformation, recognizing the leadership of women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).



**We value participation:** Our key strategies—grantmaking, technical assistance, and advocacy—are informed by consultations with grantees and our grantmaking committee, which includes disability rights activists and donors.



**We value human diversity:** Over 16% of the world's population lives with some form of a disability. That's 1 in 6. We pay attention to the diversity of disabilities and intersecting identities.

## Values in Action!

76%

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

67%

of our grantmaking  
resourced organizations of  
persons with disabilities from  
marginalized identities

75%

of our grantmaking  
committee members self-  
identity as persons with  
disabilities



“

**“I am not just a woman or a woman with a disability. I am sitting here with all my identities—being a young, queer woman with a disability, breaking down the walls of discrimination and exclusionary practices.”**

**BENEDICTA OYEDAYO OYEWOLE**

Program Officer for Diversity and Inclusion,  
Women's Health and Equal Rights (WHER) Initiative,  
Nigeria

# Deepening Diversity and Resourcing Grantee Priorities to Leave No One Behind

“From Port-au-Prince to Port Moresby and over a hundred projects in between, DRF grantees overcame the obstacles of 2022 to demonstrate that OPDs are critical agents of change to ensure that legislative and programming frameworks include the most marginalized. Inclusion is not just the equitable way, it's the only way to work our world out of this mess and build forward, better.”

**FAITH LEMON,**  
Former Program Director, DRF



Women with psychosocial disabilities in Kigali are supplementing their income by creating handicrafts through 'Koperative Ihumure Gikondo.'

- In 2022, we continued to strengthen our work at the intersection of SOGIESC diversity and disability in line with our [Gender Guidelines Implementation Plan](#).
- We heard loud and clear that it's not just about money—that grantees view DRF's technical assistance and support of local program officers as indispensable to their success, so we increased our capacities and diversified our offerings in response. →



A mother with albinism shares her lived experiences with the team of Albinism Umbrella in Uganda.



**“A holistic and intersectional approach is necessary for resourcing diverse and marginalized groups in the Global South fighting for climate justice. Funders must acknowledge our different identities and experiences.”**

**PRATIMA GURUNG**  
NIDWAN, Nepal



We amplified our efforts to increase the visibility and participation of Global South OPDs—especially groups led by women, girls, and Indigenous Peoples—in global and regional advocacy spaces, supporting participation in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27) and the Group of 20 (G20) for the first time.



Our team celebrated the adoption of the [UN Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization](#), including in emergencies. As one of the key collaborators in the Global Coalition on Deinstitutionalization, we call on all bodies and agencies of the UN to support the implementation. **“We look forward to contributing to the implementation of the Guidelines and underscore the importance of the participation and decision-making of persons with disabilities in all stages of the deinstitutionalization processes,”** said Catalina Devandas, DRF’s executive director.



DRF’s Program Manager, Holding Rights, Leading for Rights, Theophilus Odaudu, was one of the 2022 honorees of Diversability’s D-30 Disability Impact List. Theophilus was also selected to join the Participatory Grantmaking Community’s Accountability Circle.



# Convening to Build Unity and a Forward Vision for Inclusion

DRF co-hosted **five grantee convenings** in 2022 with key partners in Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, Nigeria, and Indonesia. These convenings offered a space for activists to dialogue on the strides made by the national disability rights movements, celebrate key milestones and wins, dialogue on a future vision, and create pathways to diversify grassroots movements for inclusion.



Nearly 40 grantees joined DRF and the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda's (NUDIPU) grantee convening in Kampala in May 2022.



**“DRF’s grantee convening with NUDIPU was a powerful opportunity to learn about the advocacy efforts of Ugandan OPDs and the projects they are delivering. The convening was vibrant and joyful, demonstrating the power of the disability movement and the importance of centering inclusion and rights. DRF has been a good thought partner for us, challenging and providing useful reflections.”**

## **HARRIET KNOWLES**

Senior Program Manager,  
Disability Inclusion Team,  
UK Government's Foreign,  
Commonwealth and  
Development Office (FCDO)



**“Our grantee convenings demonstrated the growth and diversity of Africa’s OPD movement and its collective power to make inclusive shifts. We’ve come so far! We must continue to mobilize resources to expand the leadership of women with disabilities and other persons with disabilities from marginalized identities. Intersectionality is the only way forward.”**

## **KATIYA SAKALA**

Regional Head of  
Programs, Africa, DRF



## Technical Assistance: OPDs Drive the Agenda to Build Relationships and Trust

In 2022, we heard grantees say: Gather us to share experiences so we can also learn from each other's expertise and identify opportunities for joint advocacy. We acted! Our participatory Technical Assistance (TA) strategy invested responsively in OPD learning and growth. We supported opportunities that increased knowledge and skills and shared tools to advance grantee rights advocacy goals.

Learning exchanges are intended to be safe spaces where OPDs can build relationships and trust. These spaces included culturally-rooted Indigenous frameworks for dialoguing called **talanoa**, a term shared by Tongans, Samoans, and Fijians to talk and share stories, issues, and dreams. In 2022, we organized four virtual talanoas in the Pacific region that were designed and led by OPDs with support from Faaolo Utumapu-Utailesolo, our program officer for the Pacific. In one such gathering, DRF grantee, the Disability Pride Hub in Fiji, shared their experiences as persons with disabilities of diverse SOGIESC.



DRF grantees from Asia and the Pacific met with the Australian government to dialogue on disability inclusion.

**“Our global learning exchanges are having a rippling impact! Last year, 915 advocates were trained through TA support and grantee convenings. Fifty two percent were women, and 30% were women with disabilities.”**

**CHRISTINA PARASYN**  
Technical Assistance  
Director, DRF





# From Crises to Solutions: DRF Grantees are Building Back Better!

“The Pacific Islands are among the most vulnerable to climate change and are the least resourced. As a high-risk grantmaker, 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 to fund the implementation of actions they have committed.”

## FAAOLO UTUMAPU-UTAIKESOLO

Program Officer,  
Pacific Island  
Countries,  
DRF



Women with disabilities from marginalized identities are building their capacities to advocate for inclusion in Nepal.

DRF's resourcing portfolio embodies OPD power and possibilities! Often, it's a long road to achieve advocacy wins. Donors and allies must recognize the labor, ingenuity, and creativity of activists with disabilities as they plant seeds for inclusion. Here are some highlights of grantees persisting and winning:

- ➔ Thanks to the advocacy of Rwandan OPDs, the government signed and ratified the African Disability for Human Rights Protocol.
- ➔ The team of National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN) continued to advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous persons with disabilities, demanding a seat at the table in key decision-making spaces for policies on climate justice and disaster-risk reduction. ➔

➔ As Haiti continues to weather a socio-political crisis, DRF grantee, Coalition Nationale des Associations de Personnes Handicapées (CONAPH), advocated to engage political and humanitarian actors and civil society to recognize the leadership of OPDs. CONAPH also highlighted the multi-dimensional impact of climate and other humanitarian emergencies on the wellbeing and security of persons with disabilities who continue to face economic challenges after the 2021 earthquake. CONAPH also advocated for the rights of persons with disabilities to access humanitarian aid in line with Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

➔ DRF's funding supported Malawi's OPD movement to develop commitments that were adopted by the government as part of the 2022 Global Disability Summit (GDS). The GDS22 commitments are an effective tool to realize disability rights as evidenced by the progress made in the timely implementation, including in the development of the Inclusive Education Policy.

➔ DRF grantee Tonga National Visual Impairment Association (TNVIA) mobilized to offer relief assistance to persons with disabilities after a devastating submarine volcanic explosion lasting nearly four weeks wreaked havoc. TNVIA distributed food and water and also cleaned homes of members that were covered in volcanic dust and ash.



Children and youth with disabilities mobilized for inclusion with the support of Organisation des Enfants Demunis et Handicapés d'Haiti.



ODPs, like TNVIA, are often first responders during natural disasters, mobilizing critical support to persons with disabilities.

# Indonesia's Women with Disabilities Create History!

“Our grantmaking in Asia prioritized the leadership of women and girls with disabilities who are on the frontlines of climate and humanitarian emergencies. DRF also resourced cross-movement building so that the agendas of women with disabilities for inclusive reproductive justice are recognized by the mainstream feminist movements.”

## DWI ARIYANI

Regional Head of Programs,  
Asia, DRF



OPDs, led by women with disabilities, met with various government actors to share their perspectives on inclusion and ending gender-based violence.

In Indonesia, women with disabilities advocated successfully to pass an inclusive and historic anti-gender-based violence bill in April 2022. What's important to note about this monumental victory is that the draft version of the bill was not inclusive, risking the bodily autonomy of women with psychosocial disabilities and women with intellectual disabilities. Women with disabilities mobilized to engage the mainstream feminist movement to remove a harmful article of the bill. DRF, too, acted swiftly, mobilizing resources to fund cross-movement building and seizing an opportunity to strengthen unity and build consensus between women-led OPDs and the mainstream feminist movement. This experience is an important case study on how philanthropy can be responsive, listening to the urgent priorities of grantees and resourcing their efforts for game-changing policy shifts.



# Celebrating Intersectional Feminist Leadership!

## Meet the Three Winners of the 2022 Diana Samarasan Disability Rights Advocacy Award



Grace Jerry

Our team was thrilled to award the 2022 Diana Samarasan Disability Rights Advocacy Award to three powerhouse intersectional feminists—all Nigerian women with disabilities. Congratulations **Grace Jerry**, founder of Inclusive Friends Association, **Benedicta Oyedayo Oyewole**, program officer for diversity and inclusion at WHER Initiative, and **Hauwa Ojeifo**, founder of She Writes Woman.



Benedicta Oyedayo Oyewole

This award is given annually to recognize outstanding leadership and intersectional advocacy that is advancing disability rights, particularly for women and others from marginalized identities. This award also honors the living legacy of DRF's Founding Executive Director, Diana Samarasan.

"I could not be more honored by the gift of this award to these three ground-breaking Nigerian women activists. Their work where disability intersects with gender across issues of violence, mental health, and LGBTQI rights is a model for all pursuing justice-based approaches," shared Diana.



Hauwa Ojeifo

**"It's humbling to get this award. It's an extra level of validation and visibility for the work that we do. And this work is very personal. The Disability Rights Fund is perhaps one of our friendliest donors. We know that they are there for the long haul," shared Hauwa.**



## Grantee Testimonials

**“Collaborating with the Disability Rights Fund has been a great opportunity! Their support built our capacity in advocacy and enabled young people with disabilities to realize their full potential. Today, youth are trained and are steering the movement. DRF’s support has empowered youth with disabilities to know they are leaders, and they can lead at any level.”**

**BETTY CHEPTOEK**

Executive Director,  
Show Abilities Uganda





## Grantee Testimonials

**"DRF has enhanced our capacity to advocate for SOGIESC and gender diversity. Malawi Human Rights for Women and Girls with Disabilities is now recognized, and we are a member of the committee to monitor a World Bank Project called Governance Enable Service Delivery. Through technical support from DRF, we are learning how we can continue to advance and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities who identify as LBT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans)."**

**STELLA CHISANGWALA NKHOMA**

National Coordinator,  
Malawi Human Rights for Women and Girls with Disabilities







## Grantee Testimonials

**“DRF was the very first funding partner for Triumph.  
We used to do voluntary work, but DRF gave us the first fund  
that supported us to build a team of Triumph self-advocates.  
We believe DRF’s ongoing support is building sustainability  
and continuity of Triumph’s work!”**

**ROBINAH ALAMBUYA**

Founder, Triumph Uganda Mental Health  
Support and Recovery Program





DJP Fellow, Nissy Namuyomba, films DRF and NUDIPU's grantee convening in Kampala.

## Changing the Ableist Narrative: How DRF Grantees are Shifting the Conversation

Narrative shifts are critical to dismantle the dominant narrative, which is ableist and dehumanizing. Around the world, DRF grantees are doing just that by reclaiming their stories, creating their own media, and calling out systemic erasure. Changing the ableist narrative in philanthropy is essential as well to center the leadership and solutions of human rights defenders with disabilities who are building a more inclusive and just world.

**“DRF grantees are flipping the script of ableism by creating powerful counter narratives, revealing possibilities of inclusion. This self-determination in storytelling is key to challenge the status quo and build disability-centered narrative power.”**

### **RUCHA CHITNIS**

Director of Communications,  
DRF



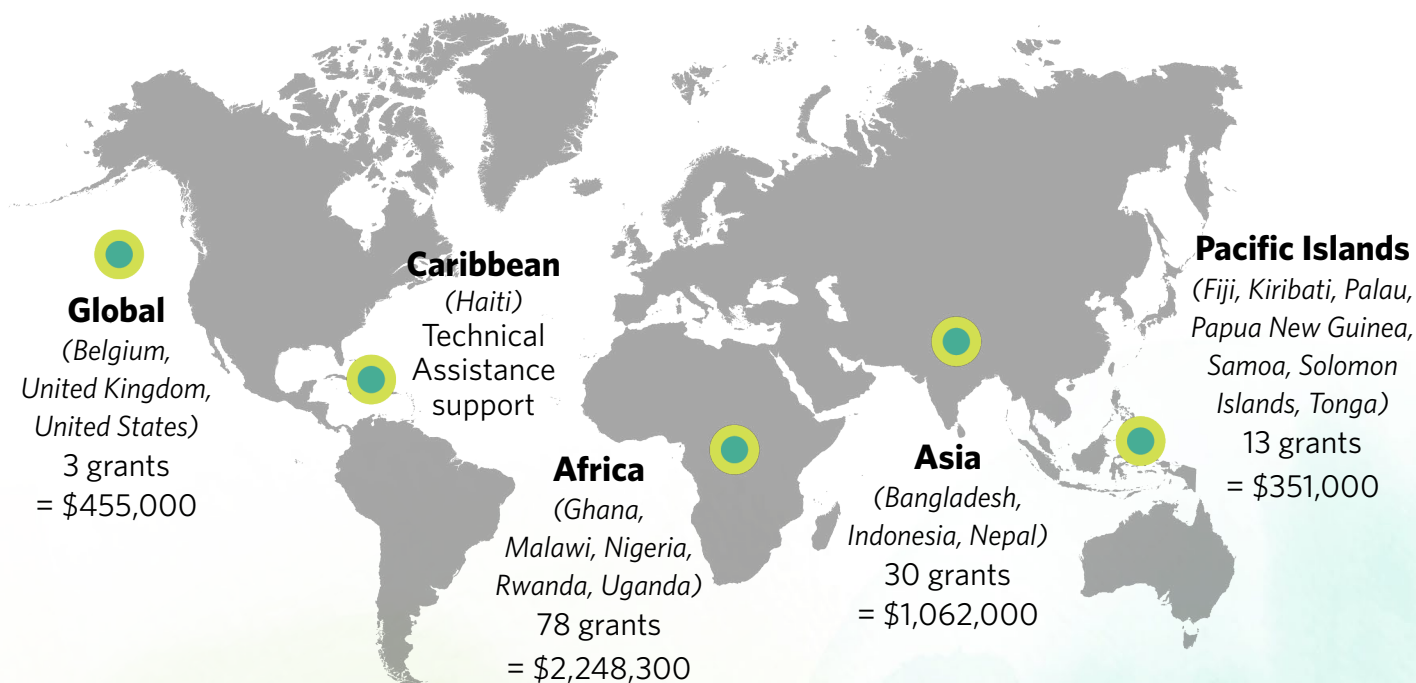
DRF's strategic partner, the Disability Justice Project (DJP), has trained, mentored, and resourced storytellers with disabilities—all working with DRF grantees—to frame their own narratives by creating accessible multimedia projects. In Indonesia, Djia, an Indigenous DJP Fellow, produced a short film, *Not to be Feared*, documenting the stigma experienced by persons affected by leprosy.

And these stories abound! In the midst of COVID-19, the media-savvy, youth-led team of Show Abilities Uganda generated visibility on radio and television talk shows, producing over 110 spot messages in multiple languages to highlight the growing crisis of violence faced by youth with disabilities. “Show Abilities has given young people a voice to talk about their own rights,” shared Betty Cheptoek, the organization's executive director. **“Youth are telling the government and development decision-makers, ‘Yes, we are here! We have rights as young people, and this needs to be mainstreamed in development programs.’”**

# Grantmaking Data

In 2022, DRF/DRAF awarded  
**124 grants to 118 organizations**  
**= \$ 4,117,300 USD**

**83 grants** to OPDs  
representing marginalized  
persons with disabilities  
(67% of our grantmaking)



[Click here to view the full directory of 2022 grants](#)





## Why Donors Support Inclusion Through DRF

**“Foundation for a Just Society is proud to support DRF as their work strengthens movements and catalyzes change globally. DRF is deeply committed to grassroots groups and activists which is evident in their deep relationships, strategic advocacy, and participatory grantmaking model. Feminist analysis is woven in DRF’s values, vision, and grantmaking making the organization a vital, intersectional changemaker and partner.”**

**JULIANA VÉLEZ URIBE**

Global Program Officer, Foundation for a Just Society





## Why Donors Support Inclusion Through DRF

**“DRAF looks at societal structures and identities through an intersectional lens and prioritizes resourcing OPDs that represent the most underrepresented identities within the disability community. DRAF’s participatory grantmaking approach also centers the voices and lived experiences of persons with disabilities. We realized that we weren’t paying enough attention to this in our work to address inequalities. Resourcing DRAF has been a wonderful opportunity to support this critical work while shifting our own practices.”**

**ATJE DREXLER**

Senior Vice President Global Issues,  
Robert Bosch Stiftung





Triumph Uganda's youth self-advocates are destigmatizing mental health in Jinja.

## Thank You for Supporting A Billion Reasons to Give!

In November, we launched A Billion Reasons to Give!, our campaign to raise \$50,000 in support of our mission. Around the world, over one billion people live with a disability. We are the largest identity community that anyone could join at any time. At DRF, we know that accessing rights and pushing toward equity are a win-win for all. Supporters around the world knew this too and contributed generously to help this campaign meet its goal. Some of the billion reasons to give that you shared included:

**"To support disabled-led disability advocacy in the Global South."**

**"This work is creating a world I want to live in."**

**"There's a need, and I want to help!"**



# Gratitude

**We are deeply grateful to all our donors for resourcing our intersectional programs in 2022!**

DRF was supported by the United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), U.K. aid from the U.K. government, Adobe Foundation, the Ansara Family Fund at the Boston Foundation, Channel Foundation, Dreilinden, Ford Foundation, the Foundation to Promote Open Society, part of the Open Society Foundations, Foundation for a Just Society, the Global Fund for Women, Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Oak Foundation, Tambourine, WE Trust, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.



DRAF was supported by Australian Aid and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

**A big thanks as well to our individual donors for resourcing inclusion.**

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



**Australian Government**  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

[See our current donor list](#)



**In 2022, our donors were critical partners in resourcing disability inclusion and demonstrating thoughtful allyship. To shift power, we have to shift resources, and our donors are leaders in showing what's possible. I've been particularly energized to see more funding recognizing the critical intersection of gender and disability, like our new grant from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor."**

**JEN BOKOFF**, Director of Development, DRF



# 2022 Financial Summary

	Total	Disability Rights Fund	Disability Rights Advocacy Fund
<b>Revenue</b>			
Restricted			
Government	\$3,536,735	\$2,050,435	\$1,486,300
Foundations	\$459,900	\$459,900	--
Unrestricted			
Foundations, Corporations, Individuals	\$2,841,617	\$2,841,617	--
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,838,252</b>	<b>\$5,351,952</b>	<b>\$1,486,300</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Grants	\$4,053,300	\$2,817,700	\$1,235,600
Personnel	\$2,095,658	\$1,831,680	\$263,978
Accessibility & Reasonable Accommodations	\$54,114	\$40,586	\$13,529
Travel	\$346,927	\$278,893	\$68,034
Other Expenses	\$1,175,886	\$1,145,354	\$30,533
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,725,885</b>	<b>\$6,114,212</b>	<b>\$1,611,673</b>

## Key Expense Ratios:

Program (inc. grants): **81%**; Administration: **14%**; Fundraising: **5%**

[View most recent audited financials and 990](#)

# Grantmaking Committees

Our Grantmaking Committees (GMC) make all pooled funds' grantmaking decisions and inform our grantmaking priorities. Committee members are a mix of disability rights activists and donor representatives.

## **GMC members:**

Nikki Brown-Booker  
Nandini Ghosh  
Ishumael Zhou  
Waqar Puri  
Harriet Knowles  
Daryl Lloyd  
Andrea Cole  
Rebecca Cokley  
Myroslava Tataryn  
Lu Han (non-voting member)  
Sikelelwa Alexandrina Msitshana (board observer)  
Michael Njenga (board observer)  
Alberto Vasquez (board observer)

**We extend our deepest gratitude to departed committee members, Sanja Tarczay and Lachlan Dawson.**



**9**

GMC members self-identify **as persons with disabilities.**

**8**

GMC members self-identify **as women.**

## **Board Committee Members:**

Mariel Gonzales  
Charlie Clements  
Setareki S. Macanawai  
Sikelelwa Alexandrina Msitshana  
Beth MacNairn

**We also want to acknowledge the labor of our 'Board Committee' members who make all grantmaking decisions for our non-pooled funds and critically inform our grantmaking strategy. Members are a mix of disability rights activists and others on the DRF board.**



# Board of Directors

Maria Ní Fhlatharta (Co-Chair)  
Lorraine Wapling (Co-Chair)  
Mariel Gonzales (Treasurer)  
Andrew Ferren  
Setareki S. Macanawai  
Sikelelwa Alexandrina Msitshana  
Beth MacNairn  
Michael Njenga  
Alberto Vásquez  
Charlie Clements

**We thank Andrew Ferren for his devoted service to the board as DRF's co-chair. And we welcome Maria Ní Fhlatharta as our new co-chair!**



**"For fifteen years now, DRF's participatory model has centered the critical advocacy and radical dreams of disability rights advocates, who are transforming our world to be inclusive and just. We know that DRF's model is shifting philanthropy practices to be truly intersectional and feminist. Looking into 2023 and beyond, DRF's future looks bright as we embark on our ambitious new strategic plan that will move resources to build OPD power. It's time to mainstream disability rights!"**

**LORRAINE WAPLING AND MARIA NÍ FHLATHARTA**

Board Co-Chairs

# A Great Team Manifests Our Dreams!



**We thank all DRF team members** for their profound contributions to our organizations last year. DRF's hardworking and committed team powers our program, operations, development, communications, accessibility, and learning and evaluation efforts.

[\*\*View our current team members here\*\*](#)

# Credits

**This report was produced by Rucha Chitnis, DRF's director of communications.**

We thank all our team members for contributing to this publication!

**Report designer: Elissa Schloesser, Visual Voice**

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Cover photo: The dancing team of NIDWAN Nepal, all Indigenous women with disabilities, embodies joy and unity.

Back cover photo: Show Abilities Uganda is building the leadership of youth with disabilities to advocate for their rights and create their own media.