

Kupenda<sup>for the</sup>  
children



Equipping Children with Disabilities to  
Achieve Their God-Given Potential

**FY18 ANNUAL REPORT**

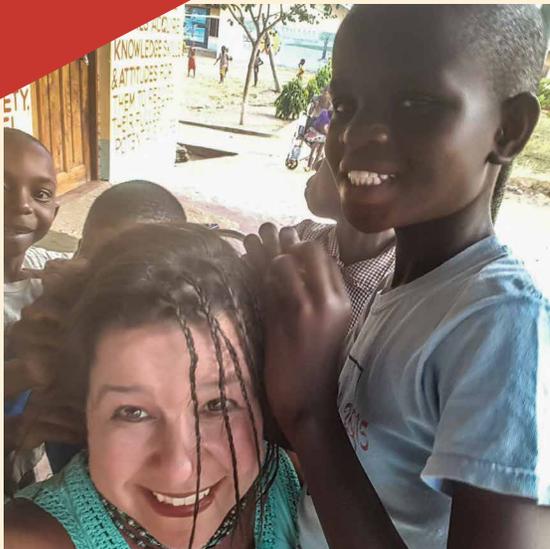
(July 1 2017—June 30, 2018)



**415,333**  
Community  
Members  
*Reached*

**10,190**  
Children's Lives  
*Improved*

**33,556**  
Program  
*Participants*



Cynthia with students at the Kupenda-supported Gede Special School.

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## Message from Cynthia

our Founder & Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2018, we are grateful for the support of our donors, staff, volunteers, and community leaders who made it possible to improve the lives of 10,190 Kenyan children with disabilities and their families last year. This is twice as many children benefitting from our work as compared to 2017 and is resulting in Kupenda's global expansion!

Our world-wide growth is happening through organizations operating in 24 low-income countries who are interested in implementing our disability advocacy workshops with the community leaders and families impacted by disabilities in their networks. This includes confirmation of pilot tests of our model in 3 new countries expected next year!

Last year, our data collection efforts revealed that Kupenda's disability advocacy workshops resulted in 4,573 children with disabilities being informed of their rights to community inclusion, education, and medical intervention.

Furthermore, 5,617 children with disabilities accessed education and medical care last year through the volunteer community leaders we've trained, and direct support from Kupenda.

In 2018, we were able to accomplish what many believed impossible through a 28% increase in our U.S. income and an addition of 2 staff members in Kenya and 3 new board members in the U.S.

Our successes occurred despite our Kenya director's ongoing cancer treatments, heavy flooding destroying our income generating farm, increased grant reporting requirements, and the continued discrimination against children with disabilities we battle every day.

There are more than 580 million children and youth with disabilities in the developing world. Most are ostracized from their communities without hope for the kind of future their non-disabled peers experience.

But, this year, we are reminded how our locally-led work is transforming the dire situation faced by this marginalized group of people so they are experiencing more justice, care, and inclusion—now and for generations to come.

May the stories and program highlights in the following pages remind you how, together, we can change the world for thousands of people who are now included in loving communities, and accessing academic and medical support once thought impossible.

Thank you for another incredible year!

*Cynthia Bauer*

## Our History

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When Cynthia and Leonard met in 1999, they never imagined their support for a few children with disabilities would one day lead to improved health and inclusion for thousands.

Leonard Mbonani, a Kenyan special needs teacher, met Cynthia Bauer, an American graduate student, while she was conducting wildlife research on the Kenyan coast. Cynthia was born without her left hand and discovered that many people in Kenya believed disabilities like hers were caused by curses. In fact, she may have even been killed if she had been born there. This knowledge inspired Cynthia to respond when Leonard introduced her to children with disabilities who did not have access to medical care or education. Over time, Cynthia and Leonard

began working together to support children with disabilities by helping them access schooling and medical care and working with families and communities to change superstitious beliefs and dangerous practices connected to disability. By 2003, their work had grown so broad that they registered as a non-profit called Kupenda for the Children, with a vision of a fully integrated society where people of all abilities have access to health, education, and a loving community.



Cynthia and Leonard at Marafa School, where they've helped more than 1,000 children access education over the past 10 years.

## Our Approach

### THE NEED

**More than a billion people in the world have a disability** severe enough to limit their participation in family, community, and political life. In many areas of the world, people with disabilities are believed to be cursed, leading to their neglect, abuse, rape, and murder.

**If we change the belief systems, children with disabilities will benefit.**

### OUR RESPONSE

Through our 3 programs, we equip families and communities to create a fully-integrated society where people of all abilities have access to health, education, and loving community . . .

### Advocacy

Incorrect beliefs about the causes of and treatments for disability are often a larger obstacle for children with disabilities than physical barriers. Kupenda removes stigmas related to disability by educating leaders and communities through training workshops, large-scale public events, family counseling sessions, and our resource center.

### Education

Consistent access to high-quality education gives children with disabilities life and career choices that otherwise would not be available to them. Kupenda supports this goal by providing special education teachers, school supplies, teacher trainings, construction of school facilities, and boarding school fees.

### Medical Intervention

Many parents and caregivers of children with disabilities are unaware and/or unable to afford the medical care these children need. In response, Kupenda provides funding, referrals, and transportation to help children access medical services such as physical therapy, doctor visits, surgeries, medication, nutritional support, and equipment.



Leonard Mbonani, our Kenya Director, with students and staff at the Kupenda-supported Gede Special School.



## Kenya Advocacy

Incorrect beliefs about disability often pose greater challenges to children with disabilities than their physical limitations. But when community leaders and families impacted by disability no longer believe that disability is a curse, they create long term sustainable solutions to make a more inclusive society.

*“This day has not been a waste. It has been an eye opener. It has been public participation. It will make the work of loving these children easier.”*

—Member of Parliament closing Kupenda’s Stakeholder Meeting

Last year we organized, facilitated, and funded **671 gatherings, workshops, and meetings with 39,009 participants**. This is 5 times more program participants than FY17 due to greater participation from local leaders we’ve trained as disability advocates in years past.

Our advocacy activities included community awareness and volunteer days, parent support groups, training workshops for local leaders, and meetings with influential pastors, traditional healers, nonprofit leaders, and government officials.

For the first time, several of these meetings were facilitated by local leaders we have trained to run the sessions on their own, so more and more children can be reached across Kilifi County.

Based on population estimates and follow-up data collected from our field team, these activities improved the quality of life for **4,573 children with disabilities**, which is **double the number of children we reached last year**.

Our methodology of outreach means money can stretch further and change is taking place through community members themselves. Through our advocacy efforts, it costs just 10 cents a day to dramatically improve a child’s life.



Kupenda’s (“Kuhenza” in Kenya) Disability Advocacy Singers who perform at our Disability Awareness Days



## Zainabu's First Conversation, School, and Hope

By Cynthia Bauer

*Zainabu, 6, does not walk or talk because of her cerebral palsy. Although her family longs to help her, their small farm generates less than \$1 each day, like 90% of people in her home village of Lango Baya. Many community members believe Zainabu's cerebral palsy was caused by witchcraft, causing the family further alienation and lack of assistance.*

The first time I met Zainabu, I was leading a group of American medical volunteers to assess several vulnerable children with disabilities in Lango Baya. One of our volunteers used her experience as a special education instructor to teach Zainabu how to use a simple communication device that recorded sounds. After recording the Swahili greeting "Mambo" into the device, the volunteer passed it to Zainabu and showed her how she could press the button to make the greeting herself. Within a few moments Zainabu pressed the button so it said "Mambo" as she looked at her mother. Her mother flashed a wide white smile and responded "Poa." Tears welled up in my eyes at the realization what I had just witnessed: this was their first conversation.

Zainabu's first conversation came about because of Kupenda's outreach to community leaders and families in her community. Over the last two years, we've conducted individual workshops in this area with pastors, traditional healers, and government representatives to change the stigma of disability and encourage them to act on behalf of families impacted by disabilities.

After our workshops, these community leaders identified 76 families impacted by disabilities, none of whom had access to proper education or medical services. They then brought these families together for a parent disability workshop where Kupenda gave them a safe space to share their challenges and learn about the causes of disabilities and their legal rights. Although the families were motivated to sign their

children up for specialized education, we soon discovered that the appropriate schools were far away and too full to accommodate their children.

Fortunately, the parents and community leaders used what they had learned in our workshops to begin meeting together and fighting for their children's right to specialized education.

In just a few months, their group has inspired the local government to donate 10 acres of land for a new special school. The government also committed to paying the salaries of the school's teachers once the facility has been built.

Kupenda is now working to fund the first two classrooms for children with cerebral palsy while a local Kenyan business is reviewing our proposal for construction of the dining room, kitchen, therapy room, and dormitories.

Once completed, this new special school will serve Zainabu and 160 other children like her. Zainabu and her mother are excited to think that one day soon they will have access to education, therapy services, and medical care. Our occupational therapist has told them that these services will improve Zainabu's functioning and one day she may even be able to walk and communicate.

Zainabu reveals how our work with community leaders results in sustainable and locally-led change that benefits families impacted by disability and transforms communities.

## Global Advocacy

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

—Margaret Mead

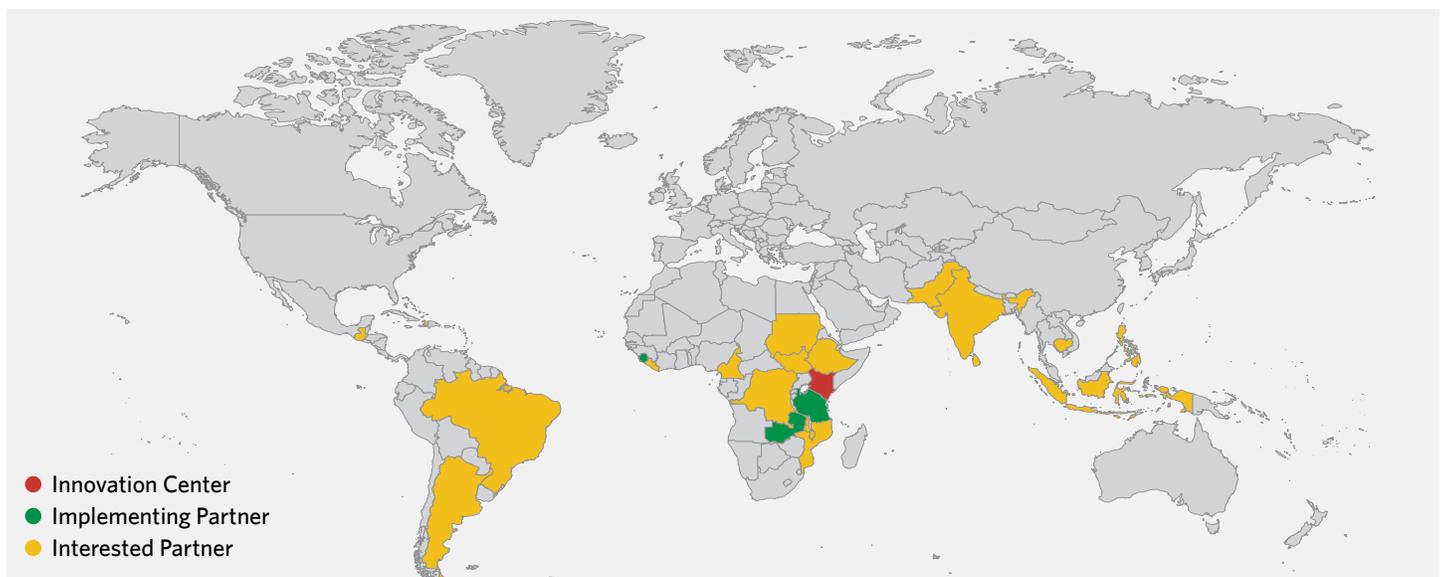
This year we followed up with the 2014 Advocacy Programs we conducted in Tanzania as our first step beyond Kenya. We found that our work had improved education and medical services for **hundreds of children in Chalinze, Tanzania**. Furthermore, the pastors, parents, and community leaders who had participated in the program are continuing to advocate for improved care and inclusion for children with disabilities in their communities—they are **now asking for more training of their pastors and traditional healers**, so they can be advocates and support more children.

This long-term impact in Tanzania and the effective activities being reported by our workshop alumni in Kenya, inspired us to pursue program expansion this year and **document our community leaders’ workshops** so they can be easily utilized by others in low-income countries. We were able to make significant progress on these goals, thanks to our **first government grant from the UK Department for International Development (DFID)**. In addition to equipping us to evaluate and document our disability advocacy programs for community leaders, this grant also enabled us to **engage partners in 19 nations** who are interested in pilot testing our Advocacy Program in 2019!

We collaborated with organizations in three countries this year to pursue pilot tests of our advocacy programs in FY19:

- **Zambia.** In August of 2018 (FY19), **Special Hope Network** will run our Disability Advocacy workshop for 32 pastors. They will lead the pilot independently with remote support from our U.S. and Kenyan teams. We were connected to this organization through the DFID award and training session.
- **Sierra Leone.** In August of 2018 (FY19), Kupenda will facilitate our Disability Advocacy workshop for 80 pastors in partnership with **The International Theological Education Network (ITEN)** and **Eduations** and professional support from **World Hope International and Humanity and Inclusion**, funded by a family foundation.
- **Haiti.** In preparation for a 2019 Disability Advocacy pilot program, **Pazapa** has asked us to conduct a needs assessment among their beneficiary populations in southeastern Haiti. We co-developed a grant to support this work which is currently being reviewed by the Ansara Family Foundation.

### Kupenda’s Global Reach



1 Innovation Center, 4 Countries with Implementing Partners, 19 Countries with Interested Partners



## Education

*“When I was at home before joining school I used to crawl and I couldn’t speak. People used to beat me. But at school I have a wheelchair and I am learning, eating, and sleeping well. In the future, I want to teach deaf children.”*

—Kasere Kaingu, 20

Around the world, less than 10% of children with disabilities receive even a primary school education and yet education is essential to reducing poverty and stigma for children with disabilities.

Last year, we improved education access and quality for 3,441 students with disabilities, which is more than double the number of students we were able to reach in FY17!

We supported these young people by funding 4 support staff salaries at 3 special needs schools, meeting with key government and community leaders to improve school access, and securing resources for the construction of 2 specialized classrooms, a dormitory, and land for a new boarding school in Lango Baya. We also provided learning materials to 8 special needs units for children with cognitive delays and sign language and autism trainings for parents and teachers.

Through our sponsorship program, 312 students were financially supported to attend schools that suit their needs. This is a 24% increase in the number of students attending school with our financial assistance compared to 2017. The community leaders we trained reported that they had referred an additional 149 children with disabilities to education services, which means we supported 461 children in accessing quality education to meet their needs. This is an 83% increase compared to last year.

We expect this substantial growth to continue each year as we engage and empower more community leaders to support children with disabilities in their communities.

## Three Children’s Stories of Transformation

This year we interviewed three children in our Education Program and were humbled to hear of all the ways in which their lives have been transformed. Each story illustrates how this program has provided them, not only with tuition, but also adequate nutrition, shelter, assistive devices, and a loving community of friends.



**Kennard Kahindi, 15**

*“I got polio when I was 3 years old. My legs were turned back and I could only walk for short distances before I fell down. But now, with the help of the school doctor, I can walk. There are other children like me here so I feel like I’m in the right place.”*



**Kasere Kaingu, 20**

*“When I was at home I used to crawl and couldn’t speak. People used to beat me. But at school I have a wheelchair and I’m learning, eating and sleeping well. In the future, I want to teach deaf children.”*



**Katana Kazungu, 16**

*“I used to walk to school on my hands [and] on my knees—it took 2 hours. I’d go to school for 2 days and then had to stay at home for 2 days to recover because it was so painful. Now I feel things are just ok because I have support—the legs are being worked on by the doctors two times each week. Now I can walk without crutches.”*



A child with cerebral palsy at the Kupenda-supported Gede Special School.

## Medical

*"I got an infection as a baby and then couldn't walk or eat independently. [Other children] were afraid to play with me—they thought I'd infect them. But [now] I'm doing exercises with the doctor. I came here crawling but now I can walk and eat on my own. And I have made so many friends."*

—Florence Tom, 11

Half of all people in our world who are living with a disability cannot afford the health care they need.

Last year, **2,176 children with disabilities benefitted from our medical support**, which included provision of assistive equipment, medications, medical referrals, healthcare trainings for families and school staff, surgical interventions, and emergency care and transport. We also secured funding from a local philanthropist to hire a full time occupational therapist.

This is a **95% increase from last year** due to the fact that the **community leaders** we've trained as disability advocates have been actively identifying, counseling, and referring children with disabilities in their communities for care.

As our program trainings expand and our monitoring and evaluation systems improve, we expect these improvements to sustain and even expand in years to come.

## A Future for Emmanuel

Two months ago, if you had told Alex Mchenga that his son would soon be gaining weight, holding utensils, and preparing to go to school, he wouldn't have believed you. Until recently, all Alex knew of his son, Emmanuel, was that he couldn't walk or talk and that none of the prayers and rituals he's paid for had helped his child.

Emmanuel was born three years ago under grueling conditions. His young mother had struggled to give birth at home for three days and, although she and Emmanuel survived, the child was born with severe cerebral palsy. When community members told Alex they believed Emmanuel had been bewitched, he sought spiritual cures but neglected the child's physical needs. Over time, Emmanuel suffered from malnutrition, seizures, and chronic pneumonia. Because he was left in bed and rarely moved, his back also became painful and deformed.

Fortunately, a local traditional healer who had completed Kupenda's disability advocacy training referred Alex to one of Kupenda's parent support groups. Alex was relieved to learn there were other children with cerebral palsy in his community. He was also happy that Kupenda's education and care programs for these children would take place in his village, as poverty had made it nearly impossible for him to bring Emmanuel to distant clinics and hospitals.

Today, just two months later, Alex has seen his son's life transformed. Emmanuel can now sit up, hold objects, recognize his family members



and even follow discussions with his parents. The family reports that he is "very jovial" and gaining weight, thanks to Kupenda's nutrition training for parents. Alex was also pleased that Kupenda's occupational therapist taught him how to help Emmanuel with simple therapy exercises at home.

Alex can hardly believe that next year Emmanuel will be starting school. He's grateful that Kuhenza's trainings have helped him to understand Emmanuel's condition and that he's now connected to other parents and professionals who can support him.



Florence Tom, 11, began attending the Kupenda-supported Marafa Special School 4 years ago. After just one year at the school, the physical therapy she received enabled her to walk for the first time in her life.

# Management and Fundraising

*"Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving."*

—Hank Rosso.

Every dollar invested in management and fundraising equips Kupenda to support and expand our work, benefitting thousands of children with disabilities every year.

## Program Management

Kupenda's operational growth enabled us to reach twice as many children this year as compared to last. As part of this growth, we carefully assessed our programs in order to enhance our implementation strategy and improve our impact on children's lives.

Data from a sample of 23 pastors and traditional healers who had participated in our Disability Advocacy workshops showed that, in just 8 months, these leaders had given disability justice talks to

nearly 43,000 community members and supported more than 1,700 individuals impacted by disability through counseling and medical, educational, or support group referrals.

Each of Kupenda's 1-day disability advocacy workshops are designed to train 25 leaders. As such, these results indicate the potential for a single Kupenda workshop to sensitize 40,000+ community members and improve care for 1,000+ children with disabilities.

## Fundraising Progress

This year, our Kenyan team raised 15% of our organizational income! As part of this achievement, they earned their first grant from the Mergon Foundation in South Africa and their first major philanthropic contribution from an Italian donor, which supported the hire of a new Occupational Therapist. The team in Kenya also hired two new staff and piloted innovative income-generating strategies like a goat roast fundraiser and selling crafts from disabled artisans.

On the U.S. side, Kupenda's corporate income increased through event sponsorships from five businesses, matched employee donations from two corporations, and \$13,000+ in in-kind donations from corporations and local artists. We also made first-time presentations about our work to more than 15,000 individuals at 19 organizations, 6 international conferences and through a Boston-based TED Talk. To support our growth, we welcomed 3 new Board members from the corporate, education, and church sectors.

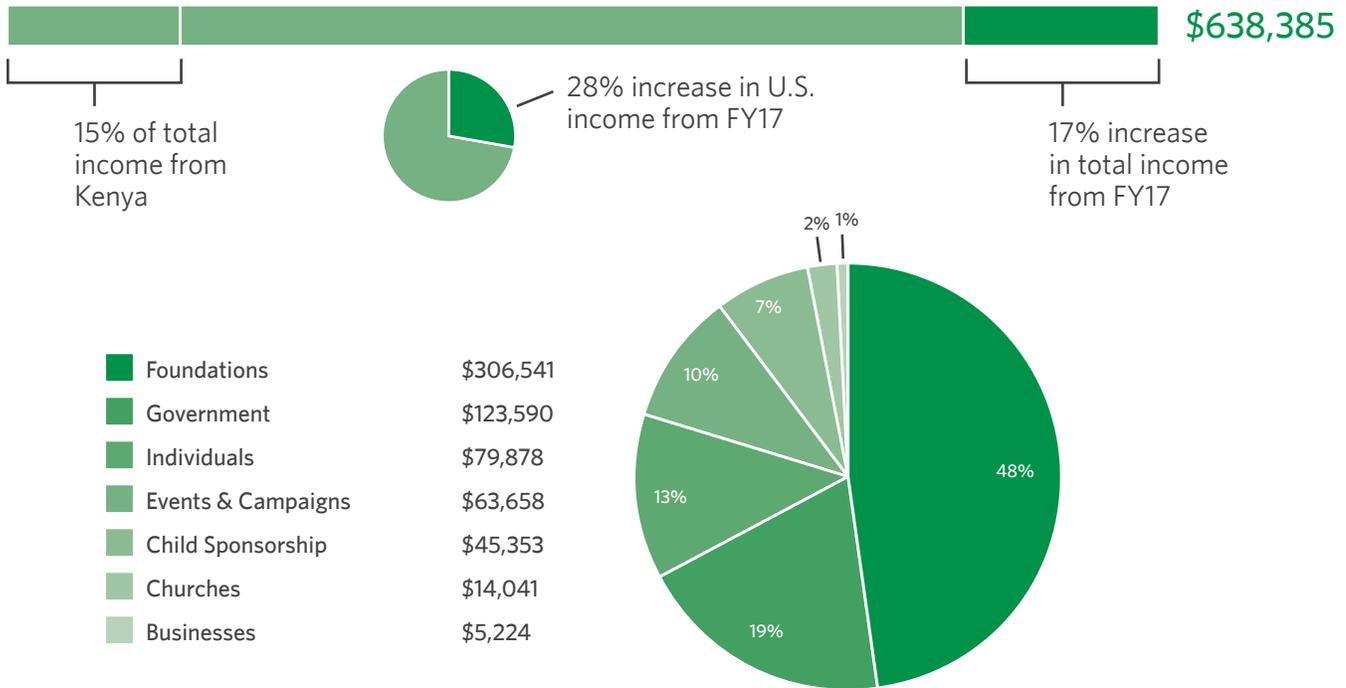
## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Spring Celebration



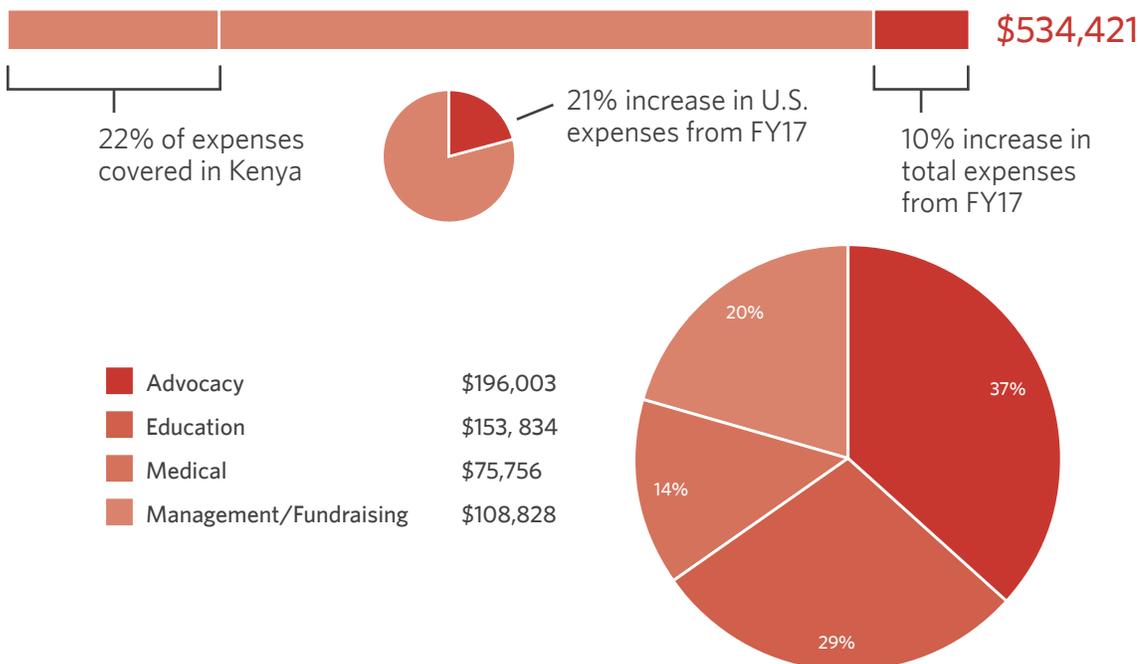
To expand and thank our New England community, we held our first annual Spring Celebration in April of 2018, which was attended by 219 guests and raised more than \$33,000 to support children with disabilities around the world!

# Financials

## Income



## Expenses





**Kupenda for the Children**

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