

**2024
ANNUAL
REPORT**

Improving children's lives by transforming harmful beliefs surrounding disability



Kupenda for
the
children



Our Impact

111,579

children's lives were improved through our advocacy, education, and medical interventions.

664

community leaders participated in our disability inclusion workshops and trainings.

20

countries utilized our disability inclusion resource and support services to benefit children with disabilities.



Letter From the Co-Founder and CEO

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on our accomplishments this year, I am filled with gratitude for being part of such transformative work. I hope the stories and data in this report inspire you as much as they inspire us. The positive changes we've seen in the lives of families impacted by disability are the result of their own resilience coupled with the dedication of our supporters, partners, volunteers, staff, and community leaders. Each one of you plays an essential role in the success of our mission.

This past year, we celebrated a number of new milestones. We expanded to new regions and communities. We also conducted disability inclusion trainings and shared resources with organizations around the world, empowering local organizations to better support individuals with disabilities. In addition, our new advocacy trainings reached more diverse audiences, such as community health workers, interfaith groups, and youth.

In tandem with these accomplishments, we improved educational opportunities for children with disabilities. We strengthened partnerships with government officials and educators to promote more inclusive school environments and advocate for policy changes and solutions that ensure accessibility for all students.

Yet another area of growth was in Kupenda's medical support program. This past year, we expanded our program to address the growing mental health needs of families facing disability-related stigma. We also updated some of our medical resources, such as the *Disability Guidebook*, so that our trained disability advocates would have access to critical information on disability causes and interventions.

Through all of these initiatives, we are showing the world that children with disabilities are not cursed but made in the image of God, just like any other child. Children once told they lacked faith because of their disability are now leading worship. Young people who were once thought incapable of learning are now teaching others. Parents who once hid their children from the world due to shame are now sharing the joy and blessings of their children's lives. Pastors who once preached that epilepsy was caused by demon possession are now working with doctors to ensure children receive proper intervention. And traditional healers who once profited from ineffective rituals are now connecting children with cerebral palsy to valuable physical therapy.

Together, we are changing lives and creating a more inclusive world for all!

In love and gratitude,



Cynthia Bauer
Co-Founder and CEO



Our Programs

ADVOCACY

Educating families and communities about the rights of children with disabilities and their need for inclusion in all aspects of society

EDUCATION

Supporting children with disabilities to access appropriate, high-quality education while supporting the staff and infrastructure of their schools

MEDICAL CARE

Connecting children with disabilities to appropriate medical services, including surgeries, medications, and therapy



International Advocacy

26,152

children with disabilities' lives were improved through the trainings and technical support we provided to other international organizations, including Cross International, the Micah 6:8 Foundation, World Hope International, and CURE International.

31,583

people learned about disability justice and inclusion through our international partners' disability advocacy talks, events, and trainings.

Kupenda designs, implements, and supports disability training and inclusion programs. Our innovation center is in Kenya, but we work with partners and disability advocates in low- and middle-income countries around the world. Based on our program evaluations and population size, we estimate that these partners made the above impact in the first year after their collaboration with Kupenda.



Kenya Advocacy

74,359

lives of children with disabilities were improved through the trainings and support we provided to equip community leaders as disability advocates in Kilifi, Kenya.

6,827

community leaders, parents, and youth were trained or sensitized about justice and inclusion for people with disabilities.

1,860

family counseling sessions were conducted to support the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of children with disabilities and their families.



What's New in Advocacy

- We improved the lives of children with disabilities in **new countries**, such as The Philippines and several in Central and South America, through disability trainings with 30 nonprofits.
- We developed disability advocacy trainings for **new audiences**, including community health workers, interfaith groups, and youth.
- We created **new trainings** for disability advocates on disability types, counseling skills, abuse prevention, and training facilitation skills.
- We created new resources such as the *Disability Guidebook* to help our trained advocates counsel families and make service referrals.

Kupenda for the Children

CEREBRAL PALSY

DESCRIPTION¹

Cerebral palsy (CP) is caused by brain damage to children below the age of 5 that impacts their muscles and ability to move and balance. The damage to the brain does not get worse over time, but new challenges may occur as they age.

1 in 4 out of every 1,000 people have cerebral palsy.²

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS^{3,4,5,6}

Someone with cerebral palsy may show one or more of the following signs or symptoms.

CP

- 23% Quadriplegia
- 39% Hemiplegia
- 38% Diplegia

MUSCLES NOT WORKING
Different types of CP can impact different parts of the body, as shown in pictures.

STIFF MUSCLES

LEARNING CHALLENGES
Up to 80% of people with cerebral palsy have learning challenges.

DIFFICULTY HOLDING OBJECT IN HAND

INABILITY OR DELAY IN WALKING

DIFFICULTY WITH BALANCE

INABILITY TO SIT UP

DIFFICULTY CRAWLING OR TRAILING

DIFFICULTY OR ABNORMAL GAIT

DIFFICULTY HOLDING HEAD UP

The way the body and abilities are impacted depend on what part of the brain is damaged.

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“Resources such as the ... Disability Guidebook helped me to understand my child’s disability better and its interventions. That understanding relieved my pain and I started to accept my child. I started taking my child for therapy at Rabai Hospital. After some time, my child learned to sit, and, today, he crawls from one place to another.”

- Mother of nine-year-old Issa

Issa's Story

When Margaret's son, Issa, was born with cerebral palsy, Margaret struggled to feel love for him. Their community believed he was cursed, and they were often excluded. Margaret's husband also abandoned her.

Fortunately, Margaret attended one of Kupenda's disability training workshops for parents and caregivers. Margaret stated, *"[Kupenda's] resources ... helped me to understand my child's disability better and its interventions. That understanding relieved my pain, and I started to accept my child."*

She started taking her son to physical therapy. She also educated her husband about disability, and he returned home.

In addition, she began to help others in her community impacted by disability and formed a parent support group. These caregivers meet every week to discuss challenges and successes, provide emotional support, and collaborate on income-generating activities.



"As a parent, I have been sharing [Kupenda's Disability] Guidebook information with other families impacted by disability. I have also sensitized my community about the rights of children with disabilities and the need to include them. ... Thank you [Kupenda] for empowering me. I have become a disability advocate for my child and many others with disabilities in my community."



Increasing Impact Through an Advocacy-Focused Model

The pages that follow describe the impact of Kupenda's medical and education programs over the past year. This work is conducted on a smaller scale than our advocacy program because, in recent years, Kupenda has evolved to be more than a direct service organization. This change came about when we realized that training influential local leaders about disability justice reduces harmful beliefs about disability and supports long-term inclusion and support for people with disabilities. Over the past 10 years, we expanded this disability advocacy work and, as a result, the leaders we've trained have improved the lives of thousands of children with disabilities throughout sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, we've continued to serve 1,000 Kenyan children with disabilities through our medical and education programs. This sample population enables us to provide direct support to the families in greatest need while tracking the impact of our advocacy work to inform program improvements.



Education Support

1,112

students benefited from 10 Kupenda-funded **teachers and support staff** at accessible schools.

768

students received **education and career guidance**.

348

students received **tuition support** to attend special needs boarding schools.



What's New in Education

- We partnered with government officials and educators to support more **disability-inclusive school environments**.
- We relaunched our Child Sponsorship Program as a **Child Scholarship Program** to better reflect that we are partners with the children we support and that schools are often the access point to receiving other critical support services. We also took time to strengthen our program infrastructure to support more children.
- We partnered with Micah 6:8 to conduct **running clubs** that promote learning, running, and inclusion among children with and without disabilities.

Philip's Story

Philip was born with brittle bone disease, which often causes him pain and discomfort due to frequent bone fractures. His parents blamed themselves for his disability and had difficulty accepting him or imagining a future for him.

When Kupenda staff began to work with his family, however, his parents learned that Philip's disability was not their fault, how to care for him properly, and that he had a right to an education. As a result, they enrolled Philip in school.

Today Philip is in the 6th grade and is performing at the top of his class. He is particularly gifted in math and science and is often found helping students who are struggling. He dreams of one day becoming a doctor.



“Initially, I was struggling to accept my child's condition and was blaming myself for having a child with a disability, but with ... education support, my attitude changed. [Philip] is a child with lots of potential that would not have been discovered if he was not taken to school.”



Medical Care

913

children with medical challenges received **healthcare services**, including physical therapy and wellness checks.

417

students benefited from the financial support we provided to retain **8 healthcare staff** at schools.

727

children received **health counseling**.

414

children received **assistive devices**.

What's New in Medical Care

- We hired a **mental health officer** to support the increasing mental health needs of our children and parents who have experienced trauma as a result of community stigma about their disabilities.
- We partnered with the American Academy of Pediatrics to establish a **mobile therapy clinic** that is now providing services to children with disabilities in the most impoverished and remote areas of Kilifi County.



Martha Omar, Kupenda's Mental Health Officer

Olivia's Story

When Olivia was two months old, her parents noticed an increase in her head size, frequent crying, high fevers, difficulty feeding, and a growing weakness. To make matters worse, the community blamed them for her disability and did not want to associate with them.

As a result, Olivia's parents took her to a traditional healer who believed the disability was caused by demons. The healer conducted painful burning rituals that left Olivia wounded.

Next, Olivia's parents sought out a faith healer who believed Olivia had been bewitched. After prayers and other rituals, there was still no change in her health.

Eventually, one of Olivia's relatives heard about Kupenda and referred the family for support. Staff members counseled the family about Olivia's hydrocephalus and

referred her for urgent care at a nearby hospital. They then provided resources for a lifesaving procedure to drain excess fluid from her head and frequently check in on her to monitor her progress. Today, Olivia's head has reduced in size, and she no longer cries in discomfort.

Before



After



“Thank you so much, Kupenda, for saving the life of my child. ... She is [now] loved by her siblings and people within our community.”

Our Global Presence



1,030 people in 20 countries
participated in our disability
advocacy workshops!

Based on our program evaluations
and population size, we estimate that
these participants sensitized **40,903**
people about disability justice and
supported and improved the lives of
32,539 people impacted by disability
in the first year after their trainings.

Our Key Partnerships



Countries: Ethiopia, Zambia, Niger, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, The Philippines
Number of people trained: 391
Type of people trained: Hospital staff



cross international

Countries: Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Nicaragua, Uganda, Zambia
Number of people trained: 27
Type of people trained: Nonprofit staff



Country: Gambia
Number of people trained: 19
Type of people trained: Physical and occupational therapists



Country: Kenya
Number of people trained: 10
Type of people trained: NGO and running clubs' staff



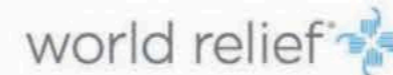
Countries: Kenya and Ethiopia
Number of people trained: 50
Type of people trained: Parents of children with developmental disorders



Country: Rwanda
Number of people trained: 3
Type of people trained: Nonprofit leaders



Country: Sierra Leone
Number of people trained: 117
Type of people trained: Religious leaders

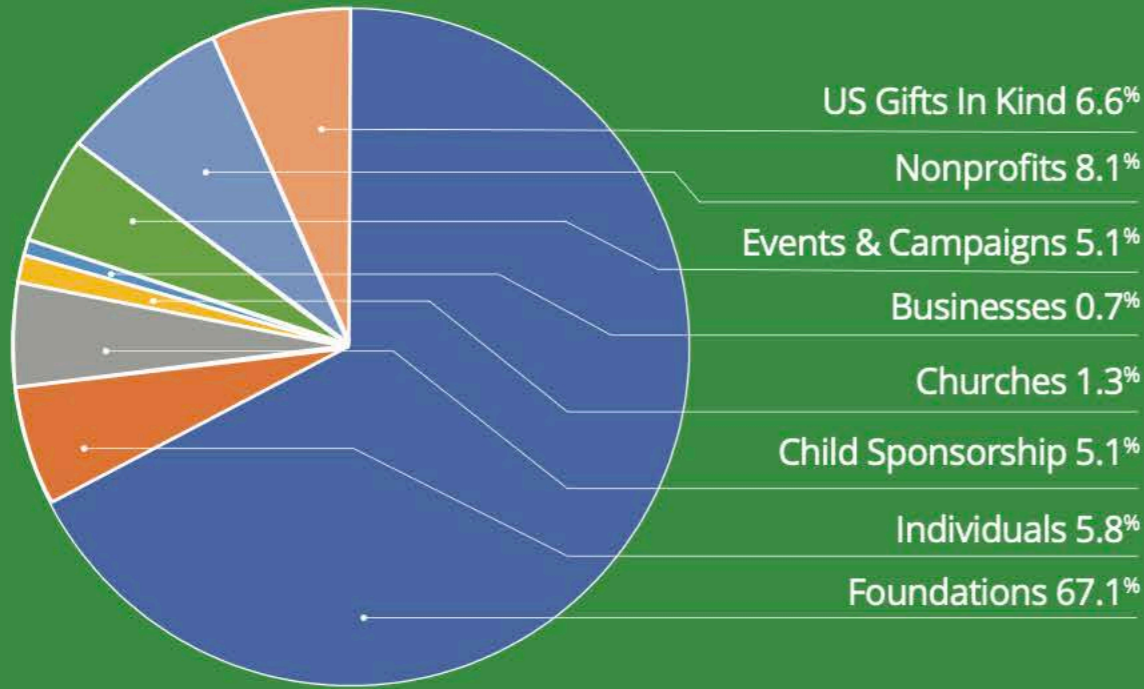


Country: Kenya
Number of people trained: 2
Type of people trained: Nonprofit leaders

Financial Summary

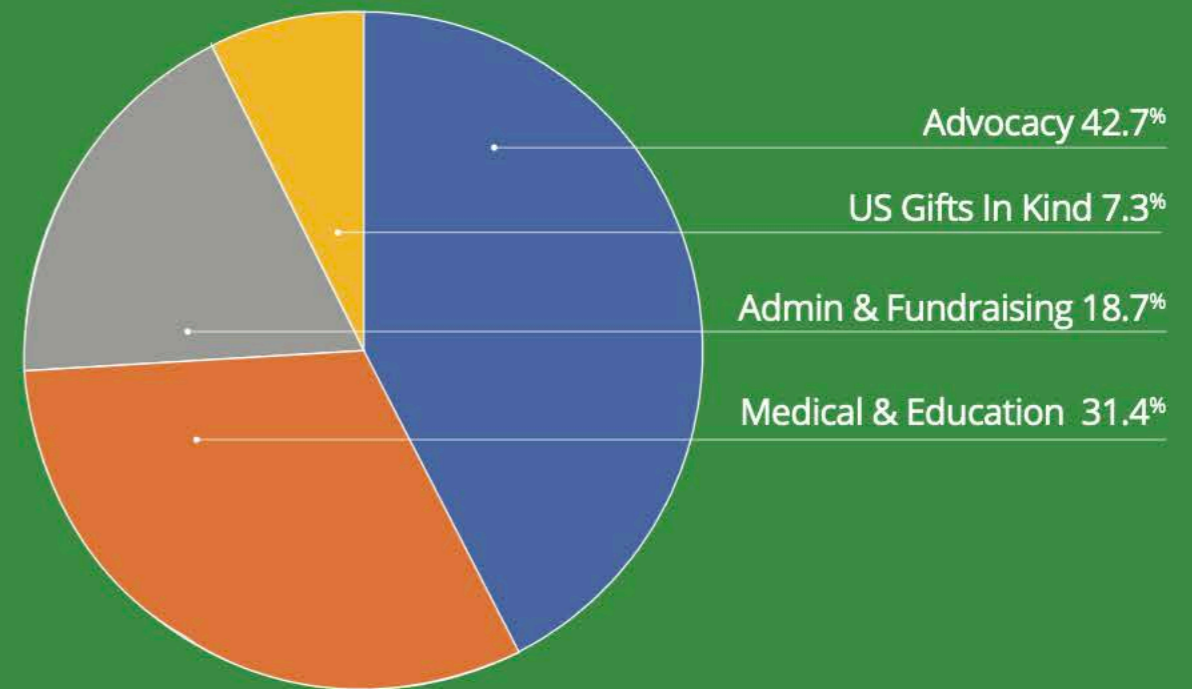
INCOME

\$1,038,751



EXPENSES

\$940,234



KUPENDA IS HIGHLY RATED



**Note: This only includes funds that were raised by Kupenda and does not include the \$65,849 Kuhenza raised and spent on their own outside of Kupenda's funding*

**FY2024 Ending Net Assets: \$568,845.71*

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