

# MTIRIRIKO

**Supporting the Power and Agency of  
Disability Justice Activists.**

ADD INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.  
2024-2034



# MTIRIRIKO

# FLOW

flow

mtiririko

elele

mol

ق ف د ت

okukulukuta

loumhour

okusheneneka

probaaho

erisenda

ADD is on a journey away from the traditional model of international development and towards an inclusive solidarity that heals injustice.





We have named our strategy **mtiririko** which means **'flow'** in Swahili because we want to see resources flow to disability justice movements as result of the work that we all do.

By focusing our strategic framework on the concept of flow we remind ourselves that this work is not about ADD itself. Instead, it is about using our position and networks to increase the flow of resources and opportunities to those who have the vision, agency and right to lead change – disability justice activists and organisations.

A note on language: You can find definitions and explanations of some of the key terms used in this document on the final pages.

“People need to trust persons with disability. We are working in a coherent way to change the attitude of government and society. We just need continued support to strengthen our movement. That is how change will happen.

“Being a young woman and disabled, it’s double discrimination. People make a lot of assumptions about me, but to them I say, try me, listen to what I have to say.”

**Elkhansa,**  
**Disability Justice Activist,**  
**Sudan**



# WHO WE ARE.

**ADD is a participatory grant-maker for disability justice.**

## OUR VISION

Our Vision is for a world in which ableism no longer exists, and in which disabled people can access their full rights and experience justice.

## OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to resource disability justice activists and organisations, nurture lived-experience leadership, and influence fairness in funding so that disability justice movements thrive.





## **ADD works in solidarity with disability justice movements.**

We use our position and our networks to make sure resources and opportunities flow to disability justice movements in Africa and Asia.

We focus on disability justice activists who are oppressed in multiple, intersecting ways including, but not limited to, those who are women, young people and those with disabilities that receive less attention and support. We will continue to support them through the challenges caused by climate change in the coming decade.

ADD works with organisations led by people with lived experience of disability and we seek to centre that lived experience in everything we do.

We support disability justice organisations and activists with funding and nurture their lived-experience leadership to build powerful movements for change.

ADD also works with several other partners and funders to inspire and influence them to change. We want to influence change beyond our own organisation.

ADD was created in 1985 to disrupt the way that disabled people were viewed and treated by international organisations. With the launch of this strategy, we are getting back to our roots as a disrupter; boldly challenging ourselves, and others, to do better to support disability justice movements to thrive.



# THE CHALLENGE.

---

**Disabled people make up 16% of the world's population<sup>1</sup> but still face some of the worst levels of discrimination, injustice, and threat on the planet.**

Due to the intersecting systems of oppression that exist in most societies, disabled people are amongst the most marginalised people in the world.

Everywhere in the world **disabled girls and women with disabilities experience higher levels of gender-based violence.** Disabled women are marginalised in both women's rights movements and disability rights movements.

**Young people with disabilities face barriers to fully participating in society.** They are often overlooked within human rights organisations and movements, including disability, women's and youth movements.

**Disability justice movements in rural areas are often hidden from view;** national level disability rights organisations are prioritised. This means that disability justice activists in rural areas often receive no support at all.

**Not all disabilities are equally recognised, and resources are not equally available.** This means that people with some types of disabilities face additional obstacles even within the disability organising space itself.

**Crises such as war and climate change continue to disproportionately impact disabled people.**

1. World Health Organisation



**Disability Justice Activists are powerful agents of change but face significant barriers in accessing what they need in their work for disability justice:**

**01**

## **Resources and control over them.**

There is little money dedicated for disability justice and the little there is, is often spent by large external agencies with little or no lived experience. The eligibility and compliance requirements for funding are complicated and restrictive.

**02**

## **Leadership development.**

Disability discrimination interferes with education. Few disabled people take part in existing leadership courses and networks such as those for young people or women. This means disability activists often can't access the qualifications and networks to set up and run their own organisations and to ensure long-term leadership so that organisations can outlive their founders and thrive.

**03**

## **Movement support.**

From small, informal self-help groups to larger movements, collective action is vital for healing, protection and bringing about change, connection and collaboration. But disability justice movements are often disconnected from one another. The current funding system causes competition for resources and restricted funding leads to time pressures and burn out. People experiencing multiple forms of oppression find themselves marginalised within other movements - for example women and girls with disabilities from the feminist movement, and young people with disabilities from youth movements. There is not enough focus or resource to support collaboration and collective action.

# THE RESPONSE.

---

In response to these challenges, disability justice activists work to push back, protect themselves and each other, and to transform their societies.

There is immense power in disability justice activists' own agency for change, especially when they come together for collective action.

They do not just have the right to lead their own activism, they have the lived experience and the power to bring transformative change.

They have already done so, and this should be recognised, but there is much more they can and want to do.

When disability justice activists are trusted with resources, they create lasting change. They have huge leadership potential and disability justice movements, when connected, can be hugely influential.



Around the world Disability Justice Activists are changing policy and practice around disability, advocating for inclusion and accessibility, and offering practical support to their peers.

Here are some examples:



**In Uganda**, disabled women activists leading a project to support young disabled people to grow their own food as a source of independent income and nutrition, and to protect themselves against economic instability.



**In Bangladesh**, disability justice activists campaigning to decriminalise suicide as part of their work to protect the mental health of disabled people.



**In Cambodia**, young disabled leaders advocating for disability laws and frameworks to be properly implemented, to make society fairer and more inclusive.



**In Sudan**, disability justice activists supporting disabled people who have been displaced by conflict.



**In Tanzania**, disabled women coming together to form support networks and advocate together for equality and inclusion.



# OUR MANDATE.

Our mandate and legitimacy as an organisation come from the disability justice activists and organisations that we have partnered with since 1985. We have been listening to what they have told us throughout our partnership.





Recently we have conducted deeper consultations with disability justice activists, which have informed this strategy.

**We worked with a team of consultants:** Florence Ndagire, Louis Oyaro and Dr Jacqueline del Castillo to undertake a movement consultation process in 2021.

This showed:

- Connection, convening, and collaboration are key to the strength of disability justice movements.
- Some groups, including women and girls, and young people with disabilities, are underrepresented, and some types of disability receive less resource and attention than others.
- Disability justice work is underfunded, and the funding that is available is short-term and inflexible, which makes long-term advocacy very difficult.
- There is a power imbalance between disability justice activists and donors, partners, and funders, in the sector.

A survey of **69 Organisations of People with Disabilities**, who are partners of ADD, conducted by Keystone Accountability in 2021 found that our relationships with our partners were rooted in mutual respect and trust, however our partners wanted greater access to, and control of, funding.



Another deeper consultation we held with **14 disability justice leaders** in 2022 told us that they need:

- Support for their organisations.
- Unrestricted funding.
- Funding for marginalised groups within the disability justice movement.
- Decision-making power.
- Collaboration.
- Accountability (to their communities rather than funders).
- ADD to play a role in shifting power within the disability sector.
- Less exclusion and fewer structural barriers that block their energy, rather than channel it for positive change.

**Through each of these processes we heard the clear message that the disabled activists we work with want to have more decision-making power and want to be able to access more resources to fund their work.**

They want marginalised groups within the disability justice movement to access resources and for the funding they receive to be unrestricted so that they can spend it on their own priorities.

They want lived-experience leadership to be prioritised and they want us to play a role in changing the sector more widely.

# WHAT WE DO.

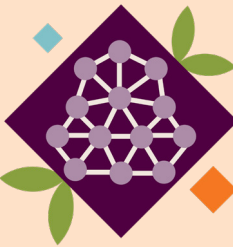
**Our drive is to challenge and change the status quo.**

We have developed this plan for the focus of our work over the next 10 years. These are our five strategic priorities.

To support this ten-year strategic framework, we will be developing rolling implementation plans that will provide more details about how we plan to implement this strategy looking forward at least two years at a time.



## 1. Resource activism



## 2. Nourish Movements



## 3. Nurture leaders



## 4. Influence Funders



## 5. Transform ADD

# 1. Resource activism

---



We will resource disability justice activism through participatory grant-making.

We will become a **channel through which resources can flow abundantly to disability justice movements**. Using participatory grant-making approaches, we will support disability justice activists and organisations to be the decision-makers about how this funding is allocated and used.

To do this we will pilot, test and learn from **different participatory grant-making approaches in Africa and Asia** that allow disability justice activists to design grant-making so that it suits their needs and is accessible and inclusive.

**Grants will be as flexible as possible** to give full autonomy to disability justice activists to set their own agenda, design their own approaches, and change direction when they feel this is needed.

We will aim at **long-term support** to enable organisations to grow and develop, rather than short-term funding.

We will prioritise funding for those groups that are most underfunded and face double discrimination, starting with **young people and girls and women with disabilities**.

**Grants will be combined with accompaniment support**, mentorship and coaching offered in response to the needs disability justice activists and organisations identify.

We will also support activists and organisations seeking to improve their access to assistive technology.

We believe that **better outcomes for disabled people** are achieved when the power to control resources lies with those with direct lived-experience. Flexible resources will support the agency of disabled people and help disability justice movements gather pace and momentum.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- At least £25 million distributed to disability justice activists and organisations by 2034.
- Disability justice activists have increased power and agency in decision-making about resources.
- Accompaniment support responds to the needs identified by disability justice activists themselves.

# 2. Nourish Movements



We will encourage collective solidarity and strength within and between disability justice movements.

**Coming together to challenge injustice is important.** We seek to support and sustain connection and collaboration between disability justice activists, organisations and movements to break down barriers between them and support them to thrive.

We will do this by **organising and funding connections and collaborative activities** for a diverse group of people with disabilities, including people with a range of different impairments and those facing other kinds of oppression as well as that related to their disability, to come together.

We will hold space for them to build collective solidarity and strength, to model new ways of being, to learn from each other as peers, to plan new collaborations, and to regenerate the strength needed to continue their activism in the face of continual threats and exclusion.

This is a particularly important activity for disabled people because exclusion from earning or controlling their own resources, as well as inaccessible travel and technology options, make it hard for them to join group meetings and participate fully in convening and collaboration.

We will also **facilitate cross-movement learning and collaboration** with other human rights movements to break down the silos that currently exist between them.

To help with this, we will explore the history, structure and work of other human rights movements including through the Global Disability Leadership Academy. We will also invite human rights organisations to host internships for disability justice leaders to facilitate a two-way exchange of ideas and perspectives.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Connections between disability justice organisations are facilitated and supported.
- Disability justice activists have engaged with other justice movements, strengthening their power and equity.
- Greater solidarity between movements which enables more creativity and impact.

“Previously, there had been small groups working on single issues, but no common voice. NUDIPU is that one voice that is able to articulate the issues faced by people with disabilities at a national level.

“We are part of local government and also working with national organisations. This set up has helped spread information at both the local and national level. NUDIPU’s hand was key in the writing of policy around the rights of people with disability in our constitution, and the government consults with us on laws affecting the groups we represent.”

**Esther, CEO of the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, on how support from ADD helped establish the umbrella organisation for disability justice in Uganda.**



“By giving us the power to decide what projects to implement and how to implement, it gives us the chance to address the actual problems that persons with disabilities face. This is because we are the ones being affected by these challenges, hence understanding the desired solutions.

“We hope that in the future, funding streams become more flexible and inclusive so that many organisations of persons with disabilities or young persons with disabilities get access to funds to implement projects that will promote disability justice.”

**Yumna, a member of a group of young disability justice activists in Zanzibar, Tanzania, who received a grant from ADD through participatory grant-making. They are using the funds to improve digital literacy among their peers.**





# 3. Nurture leaders



We will invest in Disability Justice Leadership through our Global Disability Leadership Academy.

We will nurture the unique but largely **untapped leadership potential of disability justice leaders**, especially women and girls and emerging young leaders. Many of these groups have received little or no support with their leadership journey. But their leadership would contribute to diverse and thriving disability justice movements.

We will develop and pilot the **ADD Global Disability Leadership Academy**. It will be a combination of online and in-person training, mentorship, practical leadership work and network-building delivered to cohorts of leaders on an annual basis.

The design of the academy will engage the leaders themselves in identifying the range of support and skills they need to **pursue their own aspirations**. This may be in activism and movement leadership but could also be in other areas such as

business or entrepreneurship. We will work to ensure access to these opportunities for those with limited access to them in other ways.

The leadership academy will **support connection and collaborations between alumni** in different sectors, allowing disability justice leaders across different fields and parts of the world to draw on the relationships formed throughout their lives and careers.

The Global Disability Leadership Academy will be not just for the leaders and activists that ADD works with in other ways, but anyone who wishes to apply.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- At least 250 disability justice activists undergo a transformational leadership development programme.
- Disability justice activists contribute to the design and refinement of the leadership programme ensuring it is tailored to their needs.
- Graduates of the leadership programme achieve their leadership goals.





“Around the world, young people with disabilities are often absent in positions of leadership. But we have a lot of power to make change. We have a lot of time to improve, grow and get experience. We want our voice to be heard by the world. We want our rights to be known by the world.”

**Vireak, a young activist with a disability taking part in the ADD Young Leaders programme in Cambodia. This programme is a precursor to the Leadership Academy.**



“Small organisations of people with disabilities have very good ideas and very good projects to implement that can change the community, and the lives of persons with disabilities. But the only challenge they have is access to funds. When ADD International started the participatory grant-making model, it’s a very good idea I personally appreciate since persons with disabilities know the exact challenges they face, they know what is in their community and the possible solutions that can be implemented to support fellow persons with disabilities for change.”

**Zenna, a young woman with a disability who took part in a grant-making panel to make grants to young disability justice activists in Tanzania.**

# 4. Influence Funders



We will partner and collaborate to increase the flow of resources to disability justice activists.

We take seriously our positionality and the privilege it gives us to influence others and transform the funding system. We aim to **inspire, influence and support others working on human rights** – especially funders – to improve their own efforts to support disability justice movements.

Disability justice funding is marginalised even within spaces and amongst funders where there has been advocacy for more flexible funding for other movements, like the women’s rights movement. We would like to see disability justice funding centred in these debates.

**We will partner with others to advocate and influence funders to do more on this overlooked issue.** We would also like to see those working on disability and development embrace the need to fund disability justice movements directly so that they control much more of the work done in their name.

This will involve **joining forces with those who have been advocating for disability justice funding for decades.** We will learn from partners in contexts where there has been significant progress on disability justice, such as the USA.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Funders understand disability justice and how and why it is central to achieving justice for all.
- The flow of funding from funders and International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) to disability justice activists has increased as a result of our advocacy efforts.
- Funders and INGOs acknowledge harmful funding practices and commit to greater fairness in funding flows to disability justice movements.

We will also learn from **disabled people working in philanthropy** who have successfully advocated for more funds to be allocated to disability justice. Part of this work will be to analyse the political and social causes of this inequality, including exploring ableism in philanthropy.

We plan to **share learning and evidence** from our transformation and strategy, develop a disability justice ‘learning journey’ for funders and use communications to influence change.



# 5. Transform ADD

---



We will model the change we want to see in the world within our own organisation.

We want to be an organisation that leads by example and operates with integrity. We will demonstrate the change that we want to see in the world in the 'how' of our day-to-day ways of working and being together.

To do this, we need to change, and that change has already begun. In early 2022 we **transitioned our structure away from one of a traditional INGO** with a UK based Head Office and Country Offices to a global structure where all roles that do not need to be geographically specific can be located anywhere that we work. These include our Directors and Co-CEOs.

In doing so we have also begun a journey towards becoming a leaner and more agile structure able to efficiently facilitate the flow of resources.

We are in the process of responsibly exiting from previous programme commitments. As we do so we are gathering insights so that

**what we have learnt over the past 40 years can inform who we want to become over the next decade.**

As we do this, **we are committed to an anti-ableist and anti-racist culture** that centres care, safety, trust and wellbeing and to reinstating our commitment of 50% of both our board and staff being people with disabilities in the next five years. We remain committed to safeguarding in all our work.

This will also mean that we reduce our operational costs and total staff count enabling more of the resources ADD has control over to flow to the activists with whom we work.

We don't underestimate the work that this will take and are committed to investing in the internal policy, practice, training and development that will be needed to build the organisation we know we need to be for the next ten years.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- We have responsibly exited from programmes which we are implementing within five years.
- Our new global structure is established and power is distributed more effectively across it.
- 50% of our board and staff are people with disabilities by 2030.
- Our inclusive cultures work has built a just and caring internal culture that aligns with our values.

# OUR HISTORY

## ESTABLISHING ADD

ADD was originally created in 1985 as a supporter and funder to disabled people and their organisations. ADD's approach disrupted traditional ways of working.

At the time, many disability charities operating from Europe or the US were proposing solutions for disabled people in Africa and Asia and focusing on the medical model of disability which sees disabled people as needing to be 'fixed'.

Instead ADD International focused on the Social Model of Disability envisioned by disabled people themselves and supported the liberation of disabled people – their agency and power, their organisations and movements.

"Disability is a revolutionary movement – about how disabled people can liberate themselves. Travelling in southern Africa I started to meet African disabled people who aspired to their own liberation, and that was the motivating force to start the organisation. The origin of the organisation was disabled people themselves.

"The key work was concretising the idea and raising money for it. The most important work was to help disabled people to create

their own organisations and their local, national and international representation. The other side was trying to raise money to support them.

"We wanted to shift the narrative from 'charity' and 'gift giving', which can be quite short term, to people being able to take charge of their own affairs."

**Chris Underhill,**  
Founder of ADD  
International.



# AN APOLOGY

Despite this positive work in our early days, ADD lost connection with its spirit of disruption and fell into the mainstream system of 'development project' funding cycles that have been dominant for some the time.

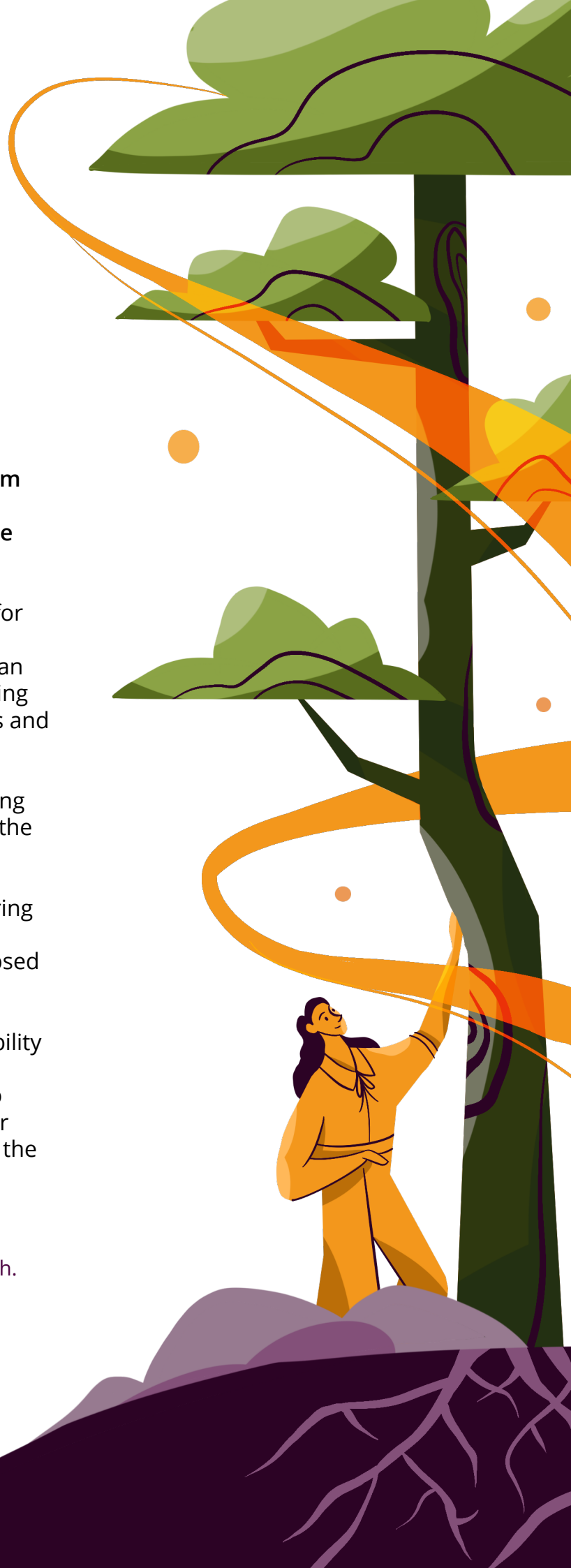
We became reliant on restricted funding for projects sometimes devised on behalf of the groups we were supporting, rather than centring them. We know this way of working makes funds less available to local groups and grassroots movements.

We were headquartered in the UK, meaning that key decisions were made away from the groups they affected.

Many years ago, ADD committed to ensuring that at least 50% of our staff would be disabled people. But this commitment lapsed as well.

For these things we apologise to the disability justice movements we exist to serve and be in solidarity with. We are committed to continuing to put them right as part of our transformation as an organisation during the time frame of this strategic framework.

This commitment to apologising is a practice inspired by our work with Decolonising Wealth.





# OUR TRACK RECORD

Over the years we have worked with many organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) to strengthen, support and fund them.

Our key strength has been in bringing people together to develop their own solutions to the problems they face and helping them to access resources and opportunities.

We have worked with different OPDs to set up umbrella organisations to strengthen national disability justice movements, for example the National Union of Disabled People in Uganda, and the National

Grassroots Disabilities Organization (NGDO) in Bangladesh. Following our support and investment organisations like this have been able to access more funding of their own, advocate for better disability laws and policies and worked to make sure these are implemented.

We have worked especially with groups facing intersecting discrimination, including women with disabilities and young people with disabilities. We have also worked with displaced people with disabilities in Sudan. It has been important to us to recognise where double discrimination plays a role and address this inequality in our work.



**“Working with organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) is not just fair, its better.**

“I’ve seen projects around disability involve no OPDs. When the project ends the work ends. OPDs being involved would likely have meant that work and those learnings would have continued long after the end of the project. The organisations would have been strengthened by it.

“I know there are enough resources out there, they just need to be distributed more fairly. I hope other organisations will join us to make this happen because it’s what is needed to shift power and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We cannot work towards justice if there are still inequalities within our systems.”

**Fredrick Ouko, Co-Chief Executive and Transformation Officer of ADD International.**



# BACK TO OUR ROOTS



In 2021, in response to a growing awareness of injustice in the INGO sector, our Trustees recognised that ADD needed to change.

They launched a transformation project with a clear commitment to getting back to our roots and working in solidarity with disability justice movements in everything we do, by shifting more resources and opportunities to them. This strategic framework outlines how we will do this.

We also know that many funders are moving away from restricted funding and we commend that change. Shifting more core funding to local organisations is a way for the entire sector to commit to leaving no-one behind, support lived-experience leadership, decolonise philanthropy and development and shift power to those who are at the frontline of real change.

Through this change we hope to inspire and influence others away from current failing models of international development and towards a solidarity that aims to heal injustice through the reparative flow of resources, opportunities and support. This means not just working for justice but also ensuring we do our best to not perpetuate existing injustice in everything we do.

**In this way, we are returning to our roots as a disrupter in the sector, supporting the movement for disability justice.**

# HOW WE THINK

## TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS



There is very little funding and resource available for disability justice activists. We want to change this.

Resource Activists

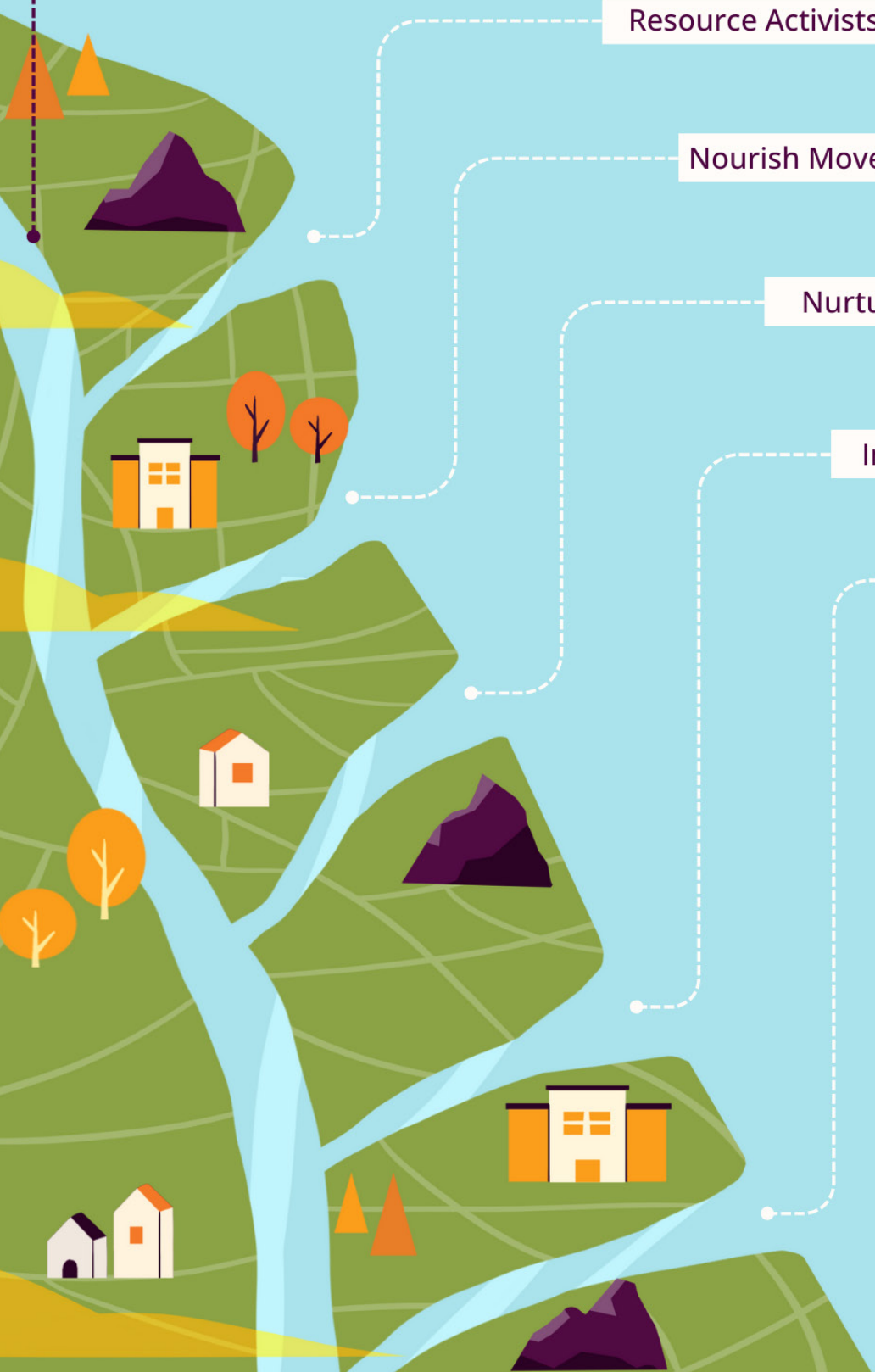
Nourish Movements

Nurture Leaders

Influence Change

Transform ADD

By supporting resources and funding to flow directly to disability justice activists, we want to see movements thrive.



## **We believe that when we invest in movements, activists can strengthen their agency, power, and collaborative action to drive change and create a more inclusive world for all.**

We know that change does not happen in a linear way. Movements teach us that it ebbs and flows, iterates, and emerges over time.

Sometimes it gathers pace, at other times it can feel stagnant and lack momentum.

As a result, we also know we need to track the momentum and respond accordingly in different ways at different moments.

Activists are struggling to access the necessary resources and support to do the work they know is needed for disability justice. In this illustration the flow of these resources is represented by the river. By resourcing activists, supporting leaders and nourishing movements, by transforming ADD and influencing the sector, ADD is channelling more of these resources towards disability justice activists and organisations, to create a more just society.

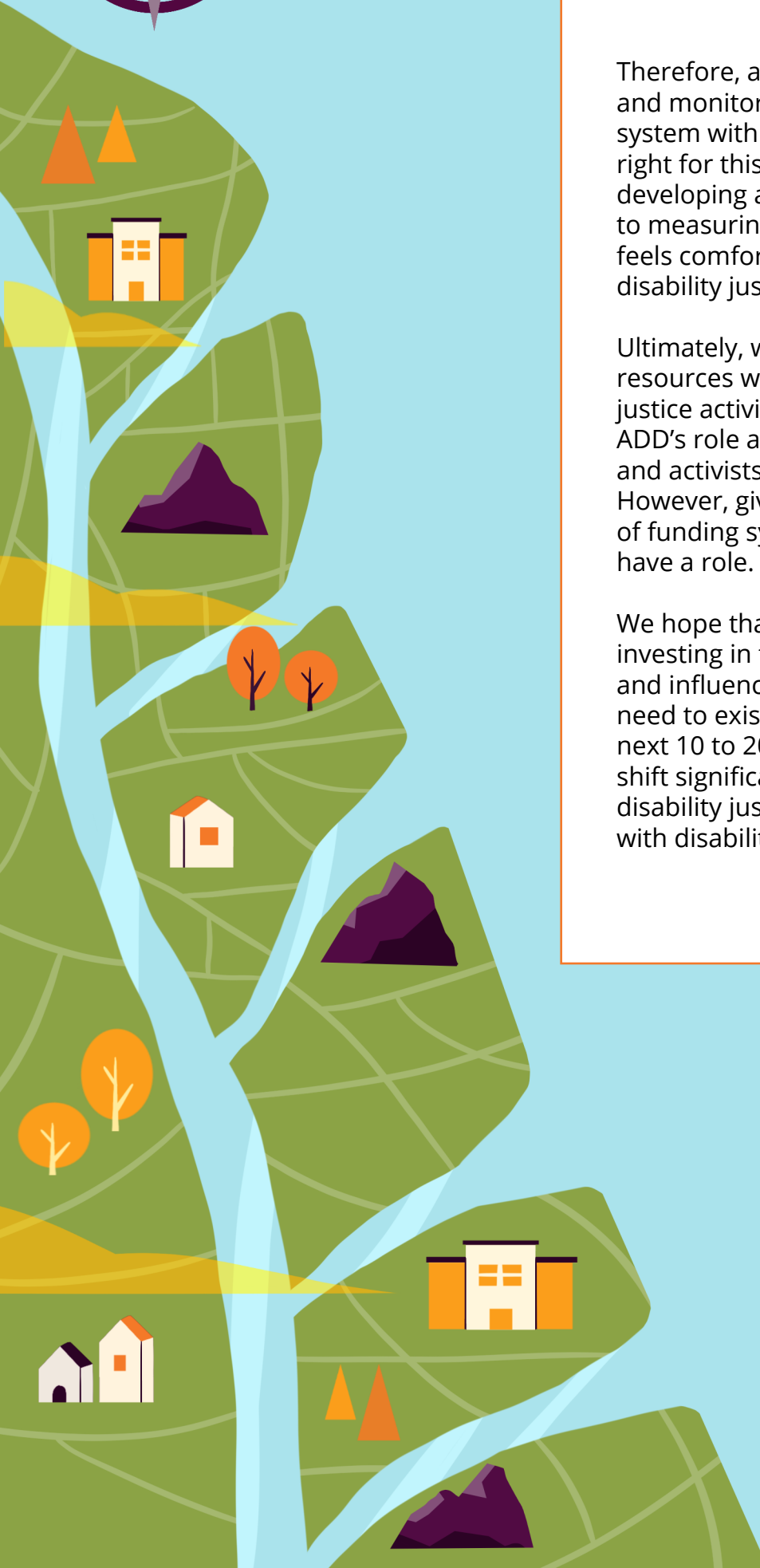
Over time this channel will become wider, represented here by the river flowing into the sea, creating an environment in which movements can thrive.



Therefore, a traditional theory of change and monitoring, evaluation and learning system with specific targets does not feel right for this strategy. Instead, we are developing an activist-centred approach to measuring change at the pace that feels comfortable and appropriate for the disability justice activists that we work with.

Ultimately, we imagine a time when resources would flow directly to disability justice activists and organisations, and ADD's role as a bridge between funders and activists would become obsolete. However, given the current inaccessibility of funding systems, we believe we still have a role.

We hope that through a combination of investing in the growth of our grantees and influencing donors, ADD will no longer need to exist in its current form in the next 10 to 20 years or that our role will shift significantly to supporting funding for disability justice in relevant ways identified with disability justice movements.



“When funds are directly given to organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) or disability advocates rather than first passing through INGOs which makes OPDs sub-granters, it reduces the tendency of the big INGOs channelling funds to other projects or priorities. When this happens, by the time the funds actually reach the OPDs it will have reduced a lot.

“The direct funding through participatory grant-making will ensure that OPDs receive their actual funds and hence implementing sustainable projects with a lasting impact.”

Jamila, a young woman with a disability in Tanzania who has received a grant as part of participatory grant-making, to fund her group's project to improve digital literacy among young people with a disability in Zanzibar.





# OUR PHILOSOPHY

These are the beliefs that guide our work. We recognise that it is not just what we do that matters, but how we go about it.

---



## Lived-experience Leadership.

Disabled people know best what needs to be done to achieve justice. We will listen to and support them, and act in solidarity rather than making decisions on their behalf. We will centre their agency and voice in our work.



## Justice.

There is no justice without disability justice. We will address the need for reparative justice for disabled people and their organisations who have been marginalised and overlooked. We recognise that the systems we operate within are unjust, and we are here to disrupt them. This includes working to protect livelihoods and resources in the face of climate change.



## Intersectionality.

"We do not lead single-issue lives"<sup>2</sup> and we acknowledge the way that white supremacy, white saviourism, racism, gender injustice and other forms of discrimination may be experienced in multiple forms by disabled people. Our work takes this complexity into account.



## Learning, Trust and Care.

How we do what we do matters. We centre trust and care for each other and for disability justice activists and organisations. When something goes wrong in relationships or practice, we deal with it in clear and transparent ways that aim not to destroy trust. We are ready to learn dynamically and improve, fostering a culture that makes it safe and open to test, fail, learn and rapidly improve together, internally and with partners.

<sup>2</sup>. Audre Lorde





# OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

**ADD will not 'localise' by setting up independent 'country offices' that would compete with indigenous disability justice organisations in the countries where we operate.**

We will instead focus on creating a lean, geographically dispersed team of staff that works as effectively as possible. To reach more disability justice activists in Africa and Asia, we will work with advisors in countries that are new to ADD, to help us understand the movements within those contexts and help identify groups of activists that would benefit from the support of a partnership with ADD.

ADD's position as an organisation registered in the UK means that we have access to resources and networks that are not accessible to many of our partners. We commit to utilising that position with intention over the next ten years to influence a significant increase in funding flowing to disability justice organisations in Africa and Asia.

Our presence in the UK will focus on this goal, rather than represent the

headquarters or decision-making centre of the organisation.

Instead, all our roles except those that have a necessary geographic specialisation are open, at a minimum, to those able to work in any of the countries where we operate. Meanwhile we have already reduced our overall staff size from 80 to 60 to prepare for this strategic framework and we envisage that it will reduce further over the first five years of this framework meaning we have about 40 staff across ADD by 2028.

Most of this reduction will happen over time as we transition out of the direct implementation of programmes. This will enable us to reduce some costs and more efficiently pass on resources to activists through our participatory grant-making.

We have also moved to a co-leadership model for our CEOs and Chairs with a commitment to at least one of our Co-CEOs and at least one of our Chairs being a person with lived experience of disability who is based in and has heritage from the regions where we work.

# A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Here are some explanations for some of the key terms we use in this document:

## Ableism

---

Ableism is the ideology that favours non-disabled bodies and minds and assumes that they are the 'norm'. It is in the design of our systems, cultures, mentalities, and buildings. It causes discrimination against disabled people and creates barriers to them fully participating in society and accessing their rights.

It is also more than this, as Talila Lewis explains: 'A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on social constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence and fitness. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism. This systemic oppression leads to people and society determining people's value based on their culture, age, language, appearance, religion, birth or living place, "health and wellness", and/or their ability to satisfactorily re/produce, "excel" and "behave". You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.'<sup>3</sup>

In this strategy we are focusing on the way ableism causes discrimination against disabled people, while acknowledging how this is connected to other types of discrimination in a complex way.

## Accompaniment

---

As well as funding, we recognise the need for support in the form of accompaniment. This was raised by the

3. We borrow this definition from Talila A Lewis. This is Talila's 2022 definition. Please do check the website for updates to this.

disability justice activists and organisations we surveyed and consulted with in the development of this strategy.

Rather than taking the approach of "capacity building" that we at ADD design, we will listen to what activists want and need, and tailor our accompaniment to each individual situation.

We will create a space in which activists and organisations can identify the kind of support they need, which might look like training, networks, or equipment, and we will work with them to meet that need. This might be through the Leadership Academy, or as support alongside a grant.

We consider this support to be part of a two-way knowledge exchange, in which we share the support we have access to, and we learn from the activists and organisations we work with.

## Activists

---

This is the term we use to talk about leaders of organisations of people with disabilities, individual activists, groups of activists, movement leaders and members. When we use it, we mean anyone who is actively working for disability justice who has lived experience of disability.

## Ageism

---

Ageism is the discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice because of age. This is much more prevalent in some societies

than others. Older people are more likely to have a disability, while young and old disabled people alike may face double discrimination based on their disability, and their age.

## Decolonising

---

In this strategy we talk about decolonising development. We want to openly acknowledge how colonisation has caused damage that still exists today, and how the development sector has reinforced the power structures set up through colonisation. This is evident in power, resources, language, and the structures of development organisations. We want to acknowledge and challenge this situation knowing that it shows up in many different ways including the ways in which we and those we work with internalise it.

This involves 'deconstructing and dismantling colonial-era and neo colonial ideologies of the superiority of Western thought and approaches.'<sup>4</sup> For us, at this time, this means that we are focused on deconstructing and dismantling the ways in which current approaches to international development within our space prevent the flow of resources to disability justice movements.

## Disability

---

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) recognises that 'disability is an evolving concept'<sup>5</sup> and defines 'persons with disabilities as those who have 'long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

We recognise the diversity of disability, and that ultimately an individual determines how they define their own disability.

## Disability Justice

---

Disability justice highlights that all people have inherent value which is not linked to their productivity. It fosters solidarity between people with different types of disability, collaboration with other social justice movements and a commitment to self-care. Disability justice supports activists to claim their power.

Broader than an approach that focuses specifically on disability rights, this term originates from queer, disabled women of colour and others who were excluded from the mainstream disability rights movement, as a response to the most historically excluded groups of people being left out of the disability rights approach.

Disability justice prioritises people that are most excluded because they experience many different types of oppression, such as women, people of colour and people who identify as LGBTQ+<sup>6</sup>.

Disability justice recognises that 'the root of disability oppression is ableism, and we must work to understand it, combat it, and create alternative practices rooted in justice.'<sup>7</sup>

## Disability Justice Movements

---

We think of the Global Disability Justice Movement as being made up of disability justice activists across the world advocating for justice for people with disabilities

Movements are organisations that come together around shared goals to tackle the roots of injustice.<sup>8</sup> They are powerful in part because they do not have a central

4. Peace Direct, 'Time to Decolonise Aid'

5. UNCRPD, 2006, p. 1

6. This definition is borrowed from The Disability and Philanthropy Forum Factsheet

7. Sins Invalid 'What is Disability Justice'

8. CREA, 2020 All About Movements

organising force or hierarchy, but instead, are collectives of disparate groups and individuals coming together for common cause who do not all need to be united in a single strategy or tactic. Within movements therefore there is space for many voices and a wide range of lived experiences and activities.

We work with international, regional, national, local and community level groups who are part of disability justice movements. They may use a variety of terms to describe what they are organising about including disability rights.

We particularly recognise the challenges experienced by lesser-known groups at local and community level, those facing multiple forms of systemic oppression and those with less well-supported types of disability face in accessing resources and believe this needs to change to enable disability justice movements to thrive in their full diversity.

Non-disabled people, INGOs, partners, allies and funders also have a supporting role to play in the movement for disability justice.

## **Disabled People / People with Disabilities / Persons with Disability.**

---

At ADD we use the terms 'Disabled people', 'People with Disabilities' and 'Persons with Disabilities', and associated terms such as Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs)/Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) interchangeably in different contexts. We use the most appropriate term for the context in which we are communicating.

In our communications we tend to use 'disabled people', a term widely used by the disability movement in the UK where most of our public fundraising currently happens to emphasise that barriers in society are 'disabling' for people with

impairments. However, we acknowledge that in different contexts, other words, such as 'persons with disabilities' or 'people with disabilities', are preferred and that these are the terms which are used in the UNCRPD. There are a wide range of views about these terms in our teams and across the regions where we work.

When referencing individuals, we always use their preferred term.

## **Disability Rights**

---

Disability rights is an approach to working in disability issues that focuses on seeking equal rights for people with disabilities. It is often used interchangeably with disability justice, but it is not the same. Some activists have noted the limitation of a disability rights approach because it focuses on what people in power can give you and only on single identity issues, meaning it doesn't always consider the intersections with race, gender, sexuality, age, immigration status, religion, etc.

## **Intersectionality**

---

Intersectionality, a term first used by academic and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, explains how the systems of oppression described above, and others, can meet in the experience of a person, meaning they experience multiple systems of oppression through their identity.

It is vital that we consider this in our work and acknowledge the lived experience of disabled people who may also be experiencing other forms of oppression or find themselves excluded from movements and funding tackling just one of these.

## **Lived Experience**

---

We refer to disabled people as having a 'lived experience'. We want to centre their

experience, views and power. As part of this, we are committed to centring Lived-Experience Leadership.

This means that we place equal value on having a disability, as has traditionally been placed on professional or academic experience.

## Participatory Grant-Making.

---

Participatory grant-making is a different approach to giving out money as grants where the people receiving the money also get to say how much is given to whom, and how it is spent.

This could look like a panel of disability justice activists deciding which of their peers should receive funding based on their knowledge of the context of the work, and of being disabled. It could also be done slightly differently, for example in the context of an emergency, but always has the group it is funding at the centre of decision-making.

This is in opposition to traditional models of grant-making, where money often comes with a set of conditions about how it must be spent, and the requirement to report back in a very specific way about it. The trouble with this is that it means the money often goes to people and organisations who are good at applying for grants, and good at reporting, but not necessarily those who are best placed to do the work. We want to make sure money flows to disability justice activists and organisations who have the right, and the unique knowledge to use it. Participatory grant-making is the approach we are taking to make this happen.

At the heart of participatory grant-making is the idea that decision-making power about funding sits with the groups it aims to serve. This includes power over the design of the funding as well as who receives the grants.

## Patriarchy

---

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold power and privilege over women and non-binary people. Arguably this system benefits no one, but it awards power and control to some groups over others.

## Philanthropy

---

Philanthropy describes donating funds for good, usually on a large scale. We appreciate and rely on this type of giving to fund our work. However, we also acknowledge that in the past, the roots and power dynamic to this type of giving have been overlooked. We are committed to a relationship with donors that acknowledges the privilege, power and history of wealth and decision-making around how it is used and strive for equality and fair partnership in our funding relationships.

## Social Model of Disability.

---

The Social Model of Disability is envisioned by disabled people themselves and supports the liberation of disabled people – their agency and power, their organisations and movements.

This contrasts with the Medical Model of Disability which sees disabled people as needing to be ‘fixed’.

“The Social Model holds that a person isn’t ‘disabled’ because of their impairment, health condition, or the ways in which they may differ from what is commonly considered the medical ‘norm’; rather it is the physical and attitudinal barriers in society – prejudice, lack of access adjustments and systemic exclusion – that disable people.”<sup>9</sup>

9. Shape Arts definition, Social Model of Disability



# OUR THANKS

Thanks to everyone who supported in the development of this strategic framework.

---

Abdur Rahim, Golap OPD, Kolapara, Patuakhali

Akhyar Omer, Women with Disability Association, Gedarif

Al Amin Sheikh, President, Alor Prodip OPD, Sirajganj

Aneth Gerana, Founder and Director, FUWAVITA

Ariful Islam, Centre for Disability Development, Dhaka

Asaduzzamn Rashel, President, Rajanigandha OPD, Rajshahi

Bashir Al Hossoin, Programme Manager, National Grassroot development Organization, Dhaka

Catherine Hyde-Townsend, Disability Inclusion Senior Adviser, Office of the President, Ford Foundation

Debora Adong, Wakiso District Women with Disabilities Association

Dr Jacqueline del Castillo

Edgar Villanueva, Decolonizing Wealth

Esther Kyoziira, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda

Eve Nagel

Faith Njahîra Wangarî

Felician Mkude, East Africa Research Foundation for Disability.

Florence Ndagire, International Disability Rights Consultant

Justine Bbakali, Federal Director Zambia Federation of Disability

Kalule John, Albinism Umbrella

Khun Vannet, Women and Children with Disabilities Forum Kampong Cham

Lilian Kivuti, Co-founder, Women Spaces Africa

Louis Oyaro

Lupi Mwaisaka, CHAVITA - Chama cha Viziwi Tanzania

Masud Rana, General Secretary, Spondan OPD Federation, Sirajganj

Mercy Mbasha

Min Sophal, Women and Children with Disabilities Forum Kampong Spue

Mojammel Haque, Organizing Secretary, Surjodoy OPD, Patuakhali

Morjina Ahmed, Founder & Executive Director, Disabled Welfare Society, Dhaka

Nabeel Shamseldeen, National Union of Physical Disability, Khartoum



Nakyesa Joy, Kamuli Women with Disabilities Association

Namwanje Justine, Buganda Disabled Union

Naomi Neville

Nasima Akter, President, National Coalition for disabled Women, Dhaka

Nasrin Jahan, Founder and ED, Disabled Children Foundation

Nuon Sarun, Representative Solidarity Disable Organization in Bateay District

Nurun Nabi, President, Sitakunda OPD, Chittagong

Oem Samet, Somrong Tong Disability Development Federation

Omer Akhyar, Women With Disability Association, Gedarif

Orn Chanthorn, Organization for Disability Development Kompong Thom Province

Ou Sombo, Disabled People's Organization Representative Kompong Speu Province

Ragia Sultana, General Secretary, Jagaoron OPD, Bagerhat

Rosemary Choma, Androse Disability Organization Tanzania

Run Vireak

Rustom Mia, Programme Manager, DWS, Dhaka

Rutachwamagyo Kaganzi, Inclusive Development Promoters & Consultants

Sam Sambath, Union of the Disabled Rehabilitation in Kompong Rou district

Shampa Khatun, President, Safole OPD, Sirajganj

Shirin Akter, General Secretary, Khulna Mohanagor OPD

Sieng Sok Chan, Women and Children with Disability Forum Battambang

Soneni Gwizi

Ssemakula Abraham, Uganda National Association of the Blind

Stella Jairos, VODIWOTA- Voice of Women with Disability

Sum Sameang, Somrong Tong Disability Development Federation

Trishna Bharadia

Vanessa Thomas

Yun Chenda, Women with Children Disabilities Forum in Kompot



The illustrations in this document were created by Portia Lapidario






International



The Old Church School,  
Butts Hill,  
Frome,  
Somerset,  
BA11 1HR.  
0300 303 8835  
supportercare@add.org.uk  
www.add.org.uk

Company no. 2033925.  
Charity Commission no. 294860.  
ADD International. Registered in England  
and Wales as Action on Disability and  
Development.

## JOIN US ON OUR SOCIALS!

-  [add.international](https://www.facebook.com/add.international)
-  [adduk](https://twitter.com/adduk)
-  [addinternational](https://www.instagram.com/addinternational)

