Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA)



ANNUAL REPORT

June
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Leading Change: Advancing the Rights, Leadershipand Collective Power of Women with Disabilities in Africa



Foreword from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustee

It is with great pride and gratitude that I present the Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) Annual Report for the period July 2025 to June 2026. This report reflects another remarkable year in DIWA's journey of advancing the rights, leadership, and meaningful participation of women and girls with disabilities across Africa. Throughout the year, DIWA continued to strengthen its position as a trusted regional leader, influencing policies, generating evidence, and building partnerships that promote disability-inclusive gender equality. Guided by our Strategic Plan and anchored in strong governance, the organization expanded its reach through collaborative programmes, research, advocacy, and movement building that amplified the voices of women with disabilities in national, regional, and global decision-making spaces.

The Board of Trustees remained committed to providing strategic oversight, strengthening institutional governance, promoting accountability, and ensuring that DIWA continues to operate with integrity, transparency, and sound stewardship of resources. We are encouraged by the organization's growing reputation, increasing partnerships, and the confidence that development partners continue to place in DIWA's work.

While significant progress has been made, women and girls with disabilities across Africa continue to face persistent barriers to equality, leadership, economic empowerment, and freedom from violence. These realities remind us that our work is far from complete. As a Board, we remain committed to supporting DIWA's long-term sustainability, strengthening governance systems, and positioning the organization to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend my sincere appreciation to our Executive Council, Secretariat, member organizations, development partners, governments, civil society partners, and, most importantly, the courageous women with disabilities whose leadership continues to inspire our work every day. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive, and more equitable Africa.

I invite you to explore this report and celebrate the collective achievements made possible through our shared commitment and collaboration.

Warmly,

Philadelphia C.O. Motladiile Kenneth
Board Chairperson, Botswana



Message from the Chairperson of the Executive Council

The period from July 2025 to June 2026 has been one of growth, collaboration, and strengthened regional solidarity for Disabled Women in Africa. As Chairperson of the Executive Council, I am honoured to reflect on a year during which our movement continued to expand its influence and create meaningful opportunities for women and girls with disabilities across the continent. Working closely with the Secretariat and member organizations, the Executive Council provided strategic leadership and oversight to ensure that DIWA remained responsive to the priorities of its members while advancing the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Together, we strengthened governance structures, enhanced regional coordination, and promoted greater participation of member organizations in advocacy, organizational development, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

This year witnessed significant achievements across multiple thematic areas. DIWA contributed to regional and international policy processes, strengthened disability-inclusive feminist movements, generated evidence to inform advocacy, and supported women with disabilities to engage meaningfully in decision-making spaces. These accomplishments demonstrate the strength of collective leadership and the power of collaboration across our diverse membership.

As we celebrate these milestones, we also recognise the challenges that continue to affect women and girls with disabilities, including unequal access to leadership opportunities, persistent discrimination, underrepresentation in policy spaces, and limited resources for organizations of women with disabilities. Addressing these challenges requires continued solidarity, innovation, and investment in locally led solutions.

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to our Board of Trustees, Executive Council members, Secretariat, member organizations, partners, and donors for their unwavering commitment throughout the year. Your dedication has enabled DIWA to continue growing as a strong regional platform that advances the rights and leadership of women with disabilities.

Warmly,

Adelaide Nyigina
Chairperson Executive council, Burundi



Message from the Executive Director

The 2025–2026 financial year has been one of remarkable progress, innovation, and collective impact for Disabled Women in Africa. Despite an increasingly complex global funding environment, DIWA continued to deliver impactful programmes that strengthened the leadership of women with disabilities, influenced policy, generated evidence, and advanced disability-inclusive gender equality across Africa. During the reporting period, we implemented programmes across multiple countries through strong partnerships with member organizations, governments, United Nations agencies, regional institutions, development partners, and civil society organizations. Our work contributed to strengthening feminist movements, advancing efforts to end violence against women and girls, promoting social protection and access to justice, supporting implementation of the African Disability Protocol, and ensuring that women with disabilities were represented in regional and global policy processes.

One of our greatest strengths continues to be our commitment to evidence-informed advocacy. Throughout the year, DIWA produced research, policy briefs, guidelines, and knowledge products that informed national reforms and regional advocacy while creating opportunities for women with disabilities to influence decisions affecting their lives. We also invested in strengthening organizational systems, governance, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, communications, and resource mobilisation to ensure the long-term sustainability of our work.

As we look ahead, DIWA remains committed to expanding its reach, strengthening regional collaboration, diversifying resources, and supporting women with disabilities to take their rightful place as leaders, advocates, and changemakers across Africa. We are inspired by the resilience, courage, and determination of the women and organizations we serve, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the years ahead. Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in our shared vision of an Africa where every woman and girl with a disability can fully exercise her rights, realise her potential, and contribute to sustainable and inclusive development.

Warmly,

Ruth Mkutumula
Executive Director, Malawi

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1.0 Executive Summary

During the July 2025–July 2026 reporting period, DIWA strengthened its leadership, visibility and influence in advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities across Africa. The organization built the capacity of 52 advocates and leaders, conducted regional research with COVAW, consulted 29 women with disabilities on Malawi's National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence, and supported women with disabilities to participate in key platforms, including the ACHPR, GIMAC, CSW70, the African Girls Summit and Women Deliver.

DIWA also contributed to disability-inclusive policy reforms, including the Pan-African Parliament Model Law on Gender Equality and Equity, the SADC Disability Protocol, social protection guidelines in Malawi and access-to-justice initiatives in Zambia. With diversified donor support, strengthened governance and growing partnerships, DIWA expanded its regional programmes, advocacy and support to member organizations while positioning women and girls with disabilities as leaders and agents of change.

2.0 About DIWA

Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) is a continental network organization dedicated to addressing the unique challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities throughout the African continent. Founded in 2002, the membership of DIWA is constituted of the national and Regional Federations of Women's with Disabilities in Africa, i.e. DIWA- Central Africa; DIWA-East Africa; DIWA North Africa, DIWA- Southern Africa and DIWA – West Africa that are representing the women with disabilities in these regions; and in addition to national organizations of Women with Disabilities in Africa. Among the members are: Disabled Women in Development (DIWODE) Malawi, Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities (NEGWDM) Malawi, Associação Moçambicana de Mulheres Portadoras de Deficiência (Mozambique), South African Deaf Women Association, Disabled Women Support Organization, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Women with Disabilities in Africa (ZWIDE), Zimbabwe Downs Syndrome Association, Women and Girls Disability Rights of Zambia, Réseau National des Femmes Handicapées de Madagascar (RNFH/MADA), Association Burundaise pour la Promotion des Droits des Femmes Handicapées(ABPDFH-URUUMU), Association pour l'Auto-Développement des Femmes Sourdes du Burundi (ADFSB), Endorois Indigenous Women Empowerment Network, Triumph Uganda Mental Health Support and Recovery Program (TRIUMPH), Disabled Women in Development, Uganda, National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), Lira District Disabled Women Association (LIDDWA), Rwanda Organization of Women with Disabilities, Women with Disabilities of Mauritius, Rwanda Network of Women with Disabilities, Mubende Women with Disabilities Association (MUDIWA), Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association, Songambele Initiative Organization, Guinean Network of Women with Disabilities, Liberia Deaf Women in Action, Advocacy for Women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI), Réseau Des Associations et Groupements des Femmes Handicapées du Tchad (RAGFHT).

DIWA is made up of and led by women and girls with disabilities; a population that is marginalized and faces intersectional discrimination and abuse by virtue of being both women and people with disabilities. DIWA focuses its work on women and girls with disabilities because it is a group of people that are found to experience greater discrimination than men with disabilities and nondisabled women, arising from the dual effect of their gender and disability.

It is headquartered in Malawi and has currently one office, however, projects are implemented in other countries through its members as well.

2.1 Objectives

- To ensure that women with disabilities in Africa are empowered to exercise their rights and positively influence their life situation and to promote effective communication and,
- Networking between women with disabilities in Africa and internationally in order to share information and knowledge on how to improve the lives of women with disabilities.
- Lobby and advocate for legislation, policies and practices that promote the interests and inclusion of women with disabilities in Africa and advance Disability Mainstreaming in all socio-economic, political and cultural spheres.
- To provide a forum for full, deliberative debate on the needs and aspirations of women with disabilities in Africa, to lobby and advocate for legislation, policies and practices that promote the interests and inclusion of women with disabilities in Africa.
- To promote gender mainstreaming in Disabled People's Organizations in Africa and to spearhead the inclusion of women with disabilities in the systems, structures, organizations, and in the leadership of the Disability Movement in Africa.
- To advance disability mainstreaming in civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations, development agencies, service providers, and government programmes and policies. To encourage the full participation of women with disabilities in all socioeconomic, political and cultural spheres.
- To encourage the formation and development of structures and organizations of women with disabilities, to strengthen them in regions where they are weak and to promote unity of purpose among women with disabilities and the wider disability movement in order to strengthen their voice.

2.2 Vision

Empowered women and girls with disabilities in Africa who can lead change that enables equal opportunities, rights and access to resources.

2.3 Mission

Building a strong network that empowers, supports, and amplifies the voices of women and girls with disabilities, fostering their full participation in society through networking, self-representation, research, capacity building, advocacy and lobbying at continental, regional and national levels.

3.0 Highlights 2026



Young women with disabilities from Ethiopia, Botswanan and Zimbabwe during the GIMAC consultations in Ethiopia , Addis Ababa.

During the period July 2025 to June 2026, Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) implemented a diverse portfolio of programmes that advanced the rights, leadership, and meaningful participation of women and girls with disabilities across Africa. Working in collaboration with member organizations, governments, development partners, United Nations agencies, regional institutions, and civil society organizations, DIWA delivered interventions that strengthened feminist movements, influenced policy reforms, generated evidence, and built the institutional capacity of organizations of women with disabilities.

3.1 Strengthened Movements to End Violence Against Women and Girls in East and Southern Africa (ACT Programme)



Juvita Sindani, from NEGWEDM poses at the 4th African girls summit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

3.1.1. Empowering Young Persons with Disabilities leadership in continental policy spaces through Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Youth Advocacy Training and AU Policy Engagement (pre-summit consultations). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Through this project, DIWA supported three young women with disabilities to participate in the 15th GIMAC Youth Advocacy Training and Pre-Summit Consultations in Addis Ababa: Martha Zenebe from the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA), Sukoluhle Mhlanga from Zimbabwe Women with Disabilities in Development (ZWIDE), and Rowena Dinah Koloi from the Young People with Disabilities Network in Botswana. The engagement strengthened their leadership, policy analysis and advocacy skills and enabled them to contribute to continental discussions on gender-responsive water governance, climate resilience and sustainable development. Their recommendations on accessible water and sanitation, gender-based violence, inclusive financing, disability-disaggregated data and meaningful participation were reflected in the final GIMAC Outcome Statement, strengthening disability inclusion and the leadership of young women with disabilities in African Union policy processes.

3.1.2. The Fourth African Girls Summit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

With support from Sonke Gender Justice under the UN Women ACT Programme, DIWA supported Juvita Sindani, representing the Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Malawi (NEGWDM), to participate in the 4th African Girls Summit held at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December 2025. Accompanied by her assistant, Pauline Mtachi, Juvita contributed to plenary sessions, the Youth Pre-Summit, intergenerational dialogues and the drafting of the Youth Outcome Statement, advocating for the explicit inclusion of girls with disabilities. DIWA also submitted policy recommendations on inclusive education, accessible healthcare and protection systems, disability-disaggregated data, inclusive budgeting and ratification of the African Disability Protocol. These contributions influenced the Summit's final declaration and Youth Outcome Statement, which recognized girls with disabilities as a priority group, while strengthening DIWA's visibility, partnerships and commitment to nurturing young disability-inclusive feminist leaders.



3.1.3. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70).

DIWA supported Martha Zenebe Belayneh from the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) to participate in the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), held in New York in March 2026. Martha participated in plenary sessions and side events addressing disability-inclusive responses to gender-based violence, access to justice, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and intergenerational leadership. She advocated for stronger collaboration between organizations of persons with disabilities and feminist movements and emphasized the importance of placing women with disabilities at the centre of policymaking and decision-making. Her participation strengthened her leadership, confidence and global advocacy experience while increasing DIWA's visibility and building partnerships with feminist and disability rights organizations.

A major achievement of the programme was advancing advocacy around the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG). DIWA convened a regional awareness and advocacy workshop that brought together women with disabilities, Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. The workshop strengthened participants' understanding of the Convention and resulted in a collective Call to Action urging African governments to ratify, domesticate, and effectively implement the AU-CEVAWG to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are fully protected from violence and discrimination.

At the national level, DIWA submitted a position paper containing disability-inclusion recommendations for Malawi's revised National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence. This contribution strengthened national efforts to ensure that gender-based violence interventions respond to the diverse needs of women with disabilities.

The programme further strengthened DIWA's regional partnerships and influence by expanding collaboration with feminist movements, women's rights organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, governments, UN agencies, and development partners. DIWA's admission into the Regional GBV Prevention Network created new opportunities for cross-learning, joint advocacy, and coordinated action across Africa. Partnerships with Sonke Gender Justice, UN Women, and other regional stakeholders significantly enhanced the programme's reach and reinforced DIWA's role as a leading advocate for disability-inclusive feminist movement building.

Overall, the ACT Programme strengthened disability-inclusive feminist advocacy across East and Southern Africa by ensuring that the rights and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities were reflected in regional and continental policy processes. Through strategic engagement with African Union mechanisms, regional feminist networks, and national policy platforms, DIWA increased the visibility of disability issues within efforts to end violence against women and girls. The programme also strengthened collaboration between Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), governments, and development partners, creating stronger and more coordinated partnerships for collective advocacy. As a result, disability inclusion gained greater recognition within feminist movements, regional policy commitments, and national GBV responses, positioning DIWA as a leading regional voice advancing the intersection of gender equality, disability rights, and ending violence against women and girls.

3.2 Inclusive and Empowered Feminist Movements in Africa project (UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women)



Panel discussion during the regional convening and exhibitions

The Inclusive and Empowered Feminist Movements in Africa project significantly strengthened the leadership, participation, and visibility of women and girls with disabilities within the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) movement across Malawi, Kenya, and Rwanda. Through targeted leadership and advocacy capacity-building, regional networking, and evidence-based advocacy, the project empowered women with disabilities to actively influence policy discussions, engage with feminist movements, and participate in national, regional, and global decision-making spaces. The project reinforced the principle that women with disabilities are not merely beneficiaries of gender equality initiatives, but leaders driving inclusive responses to violence against women and girls.

3.2 Inclusive and Empowered Feminist Movements in Africa project (UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women)



3.2.1. East and Southern Africa Sub Regional Convening Networking Forum-Malawi

A major achievement was the strengthening of regional solidarity among women with disabilities through the Second Sub-Regional Convening held in Malawi, which brought together 70 advocates, women's rights organizations, governments, human rights institutions, and development partners from Kenya, Rwanda, and Malawi. The convening provided a platform for sharing experiences, building partnerships, and developing a common regional agenda to address violence against women and girls with disabilities. The accompanying Solidarity Walk, outcome statement, and media engagement increased public awareness while reinforcing collective commitment to disability-inclusive feminist action.

The project also generated critical evidence to inform advocacy through research assessing the participation of women and girls with disabilities in the EVAWG movement. The findings highlighted persistent barriers—including tokenistic participation, inaccessible spaces, stigma, and underrepresentation in leadership—while providing practical recommendations for governments, civil society organizations, and feminist movements to strengthen disability inclusion. The dissemination of these findings enabled partners to advocate from a shared evidence base and strengthened the credibility of disability-led advocacy across the region.

Beyond building individual leadership, the project fostered stronger collaboration between Organizations of Women with Disabilities (OWDs), Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), feminist movements, and broader civil society actors. Participants developed collective strategies focused on strengthening regional networks, promoting disability-inclusive laws and services, enhancing research and documentation, expanding community awareness, and building sustainable advocacy movements capable of influencing long-term policy and social change. Participants left the convening with renewed commitment to advancing inclusive leadership, strengthening cross-country collaboration, influencing policy reforms, and ensuring that disability inclusion remains central to feminist and gender equality movements in Africa. These achievements have positioned DIWA as a leading regional voice championing the rights, leadership, and meaningful participation of women and girls with disabilities in efforts to eliminate gender-based violence.

3.2 Inclusive and Empowered Feminist Movements in Africa project (UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women)



Participants during the sub regional convening in Malawi

3.2.2. DIWA in Collaboration with COVAW conducts a regional assessment on participation of women wit disabilities in EVAWG spaces.

In partnership with the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), DIWA conducted regional research titled Assessing the Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Movements to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Covering Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda, the study documented the experiences, barriers and opportunities affecting the meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls with disabilities within feminist and EVAWG movements. The findings generated evidence-based recommendations for women's rights organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, governments and development partners to strengthen accessibility, representation, leadership and resourcing. The research was subsequently presented at regional and global platforms, including CSW70 and Women Deliver 2026, strengthening DIWA's advocacy for disability-inclusive feminist movements and responses to violence against women and girls.

3.3 Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Disability Rights in Africa (SPADRA)



Beatrice Mutale, Chairperson of ZNAFOWD, Zambia

The Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Disability Rights in Africa (SPADRA) project, implemented by the Pan-African Consortium comprising the African Disability Forum (ADF), Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA), and Inclusion Africa (IA), continued to strengthen the rights, leadership and participation of women and girls with disabilities in Malawi and Zambia. During the reporting period, DIWA focused on influencing national and continental policy processes, strengthening partnerships, generating evidence, and building the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities to advocate for inclusive laws and policies. Through strategic engagement with governments, regional institutions and civil society, the project positioned women with disabilities as active contributors to disability and gender policy reforms rather than passive beneficiaries.

3.3 Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Disability Rights in Africa (SPADRA)



Participants at the launch of the guidelines and tool kits to access justice in remote areas for women with disabilities in Zambia

3.3.1. Influencing National Policy and Legislative Reform

SPADRA made significant contributions to national policy reforms in both Malawi and Zambia. In Malawi, DIWA facilitated consultations with women with disabilities, organizations of persons with disabilities, government ministries and civil society to influence the development of the National Action Plan for Persons with Albinism, and the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy. In Zambia, DIWA led extensive consultations to inform the review of the Zambia Disability Act No. 6 of 2012, ensuring that the experiences of women and girls with disabilities shaped legislative reform.

These evidence-generation processes reached hundreds of women with disabilities through workshops, consultations and online surveys, strengthening disability-inclusive policy development.

During NAP consultations with NEGWDM members.

At the national level, DIWA conducted consultations with 29 women with disabilities, including members of the Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Malawi (NEGWDM), to gather their lived experiences and priorities for Malawi's revised National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence. The findings informed the development and submission of a policy brief containing recommendations to strengthen disability inclusion and ensure accessible prevention, protection, reporting, response and support services for women and girls with disabilities

During NAP consultations with NEGWDM members.



3.3 Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Disability Rights in Africa (SPADRA)

3.3.2 Advancing the African Disability Protocol

A major milestone during the year was DIWA's leadership in advancing advocacy for the African Disability Protocol (ADP). Through research on the perspectives and challenges surrounding Zambia's ratification of the Protocol, national dissemination conferences, webinars, media campaigns and stakeholder dialogues, DIWA generated evidence that informed advocacy with government ministries, parliamentarians, civil society organizations and development partners. The project also supported the establishment of advocacy task forces and strengthened collaboration among organizations of persons with disabilities, leading to coordinated national campaigns calling for ratification of the Protocol and improved protection of the rights of women and girls with disabilities.



Hon. Minister Mary Navicha, Minister of Gender launching the tool kits and guidelines

3.3.3 Developing Practical Tools for Inclusion

The project also focused on strengthening implementation by producing practical resources to support governments and service providers. During the year, DIWA facilitated the development and validation of Guidelines and Toolkits on Inclusive Social Protection in Malawi and Access to Justice in Zambia, while producing evidence reports, advocacy strategies and policy briefs that support disability-inclusive service delivery. These resources equip service providers, organizations of persons with disabilities and government institutions with practical guidance to improve accessibility, accountability and inclusion for women and girls with disabilities.



Model Law on Gender equality and equity consultations held in Ghana, Accra with Hon. Mariam Dao-Gabala, Chairperson of the Committee

3.3.4. Regional and Continental Advocacy.

DIWA participates in the PAP Model Law on Gender Equality and Equity Consultations, Accra Ghana.

DIWA member organizations from Malawi and Zambia (NEGWDM and ZANFOWD) were supported to participate in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) consultative meeting on the draft Model Law on Gender Equality and Equity, held in Accra, Ghana in August 2025. The delegates effectively represented the voices and priorities of women and girls with disabilities, contributing disability-responsive recommendations that strengthened the inclusivity and intersectionality of the regional legal framework. The Model Law was subsequently adopted in November 2025 during the African Union Summit in Kenya, marking an important advocacy achievement and providing a stronger framework for advancing gender equality and the rights of women and girls with disabilities across Africa.

DIWA Attends the 85th and the 87th Ordinary Session of the African Commission, The Gambia, Banjul.



Women with disabilities Mauritius in The Gambia, Banjul during the 87th ordinary session

DIWA participated in the NGOs Forum preceding the 85th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), held from 17–19 October 2025. As a central part of its engagement, DIWA hosted a dedicated side event that elevated the voices, experiences and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in continental human rights discussions. This strengthened DIWA's leadership, visibility and influence in regional advocacy while advancing disability-inclusive approaches within African human rights mechanisms. DIWA also engaged in the 87th Ordinary Session in April 2026, supporting advocacy relating to the periodic reviews of Kenya and Mauritius women with disabiltiies through disability-inclusive shadow reporting on the progress of ACHPR and the Maputo protocol, policy recommendations and engagement with relevant stakeholders. These engagements strengthened DIWA's leadership, visibility and influence within African human rights mechanisms and promoted greater accountability for the rights of women and girls with disabilities

Strengthening Partnerships and Organizational Leadership.

SPADRA considerably expanded DIWA's strategic partnerships across Africa. The project strengthened collaboration with government ministries, the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD), Sightsavers, the Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations, the Pan-African Parliament, ACHPR, GIMAC, ECOSOCC, civil society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities. These partnerships enhanced coordinated advocacy, increased DIWA's technical credibility, and positioned the organization as a regional leader on the intersection of gender and disability rights. The project also enhanced DIWA's visibility through regional conferences, media campaigns, policy dialogues and advocacy materials, significantly increasing awareness of disability-inclusive governance.

Overall, through SPADRA, DIWA strengthened disability-inclusive policy advocacy from community to continental level. The project ensured that the voices of women and girls with disabilities informed legal reforms, social protection systems, gender-based violence responses and regional disability frameworks. It also reinforced DIWA's position as a trusted technical partner and regional thought leader capable of influencing African Union processes, national governments and development partners in advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities across Africa.



DIWA, African Disability Forum, Inclusion Africa and International Disability Alliance at the Women deliver 2026

DIWA Exhibits at Women Deliver Conference, Australia, Melbourne.

Through SPADRA project support, the consortium of DIWA, ADF and IA participated in Women Deliver 2026, amplifying the voices and leadership of women and girls with disabilities in global discussions on gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. DIWA facilitated a roundtable on intersecting realities, presented regional research findings, showcased the lived experiences and leadership of women with disabilities, and engaged donors and strategic partners. DIWA also contributed to consultations that strengthened the Melbourne Declaration, helping to ensure the meaningful inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in its gender equality commitments. These engagements strengthened DIWA's visibility, partnerships and influence while promoting greater investment in disability-inclusive feminist initiatives.

3.4 Promoting Disability-Inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights through Community Awareness (GIZ AWARE Project)



During the 2025–2026 reporting period, Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA), in partnership with the African Disability Forum (ADF) and with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), implemented the AWARE Project in Malawi as part of its broader regional commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities. While the intervention was implemented nationally, it contributed to DIWA's continental agenda of promoting disability-inclusive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), challenging harmful social norms, and strengthening community-driven approaches that can be replicated and adapted by member organizations across Africa.

Drawing on its regional network and movement-building approach, DIWA worked closely with its member organizations and local partners to design and deliver community awareness initiatives that addressed stigma, discrimination, gender inequality, and barriers preventing women and girls with disabilities from accessing information and services. The project demonstrated the importance of locally led action, while reinforcing DIWA's role as a regional platform for sharing knowledge, strengthening organizational capacity, and promoting effective models of disability-inclusive programming.

A key component of the project was the use of participatory community theatre as a tool for social and behaviour change. Through collaboration with member organizations and community actors, 30 interactive theatre performances were conducted across targeted communities, reaching an estimated 40,000 people with messages on disability rights, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the prevention of violence against women and girls with disabilities. The performances created safe and inclusive spaces for dialogue, enabling communities to reflect on harmful stereotypes and identify practical actions to foster inclusion and respect for the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

3.4 Promoting Disability-Inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights through Community Awareness (GIZ AWARE Project)



To reinforce community engagement, the project produced and distributed 1,200 accessible information, education and communication (IEC) materials, ensuring that key messages continued to reach community members beyond the awareness sessions. In addition, 300 dignity kits were provided to women and girls with disabilities to promote menstrual health, dignity, and confidence, while also encouraging broader community conversations on menstrual health as a fundamental human right.

Recognising the important role of the media in shaping public attitudes, DIWA collaborated with Zodiak Television and Radio to broadcast programmes promoting disability inclusion, gender equality, and the sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls with disabilities. These broadcasts extended the project's reach beyond the intervention areas, helping to raise awareness among wider audiences and contributing to positive shifts in public perceptions of disability.

Beyond the immediate project outputs, the AWARE Project strengthened collaboration between DIWA, its member organizations, local authorities, community leaders, and other stakeholders working to advance disability inclusion. The experience generated valuable lessons on community mobilisation, participatory awareness raising, and accessible communication, which will inform DIWA's future regional programming and support peer learning among member organizations across Africa.

The project reaffirmed that sustainable social change is most effective when local organisations and communities are empowered to lead the process. Combining community ownership with DIWA's regional leadership, the AWARE Project not only improved awareness and promoted more inclusive attitudes within Malawi but also contributed to the growing body of evidence and good practice that informs DIWA's advocacy and programme development across the continent.

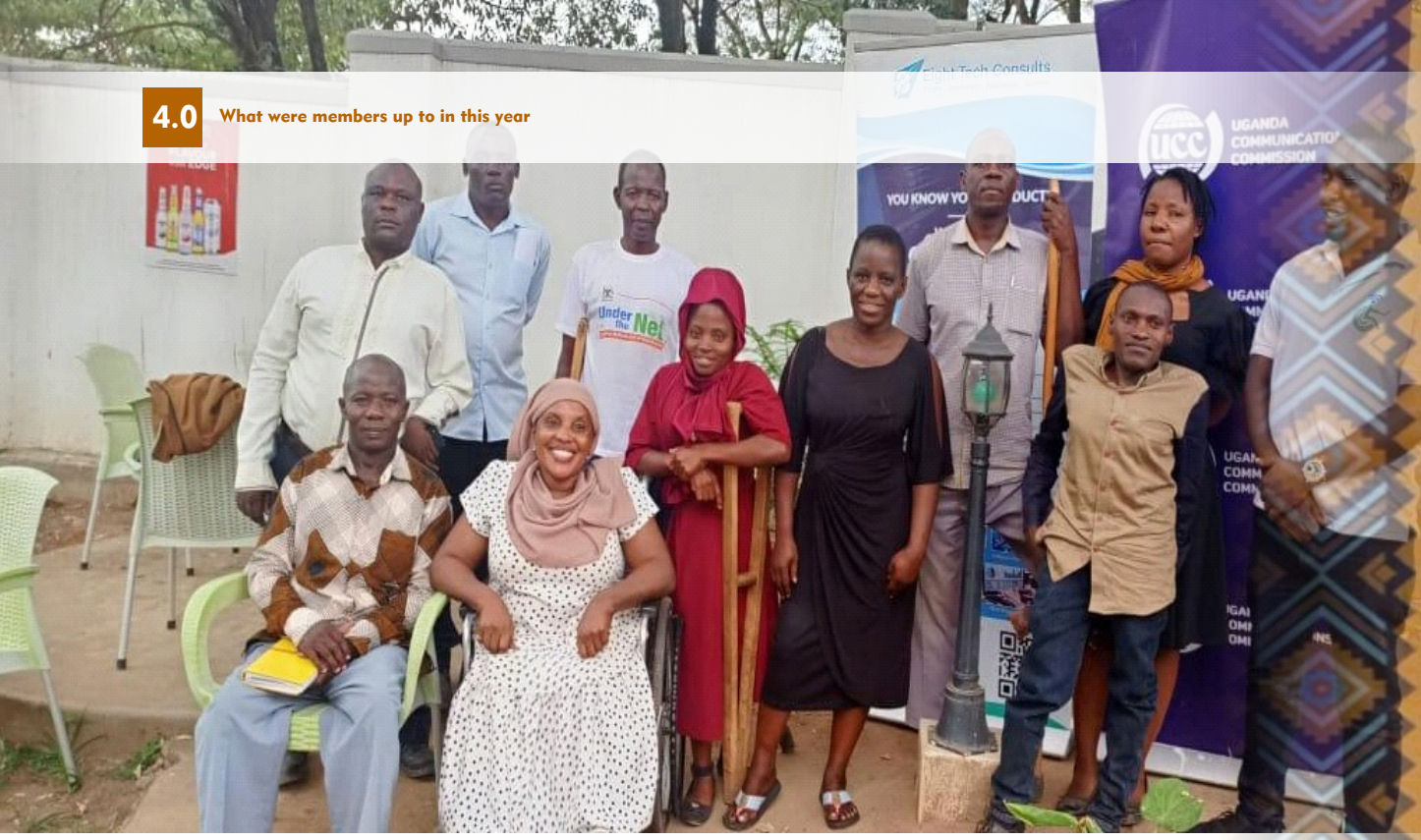
4.0 What were members up to in this year



DIWA attending the 85th Ordinary session

DIWA member Triumph Mental Health Support (TRIUMPH) Uganda actively participated in national, regional and global initiatives. Its engagements included climate action, participation in the 85th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in The Gambia, with support from the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) where they also contributed to DIWA's side events. Through Transforming Communities for Inclusion Global (TCI Global), Robinah also participated in the Regional Workshop on Enhancing the Ratification and Implementation of the African Disability Protocol, held in Johannesburg, South Africa and further spoke at TCI Global's virtual side event during COSP19 on centring youth, women and gender-diverse persons with psychosocial disabilities within the deinstitutionalization agenda on youth leadership, digital and technology training, and inclusive education workshops.





Mubende Women with Disabilities Association (MUDIWA)

MUDIWA held a stakeholder engagement meeting with the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to advocate for increased digital inclusion and skills development for women and girls with disabilities. The engagement highlighted the importance of equipping women and girls with disabilities with the knowledge, skills and accessible technology needed to participate and thrive in the digital world. Following the meeting, UCC committed to providing digital skills training to 20 women and girls with disabilities and supplying each participant with a tablet to support their continued learning and digital participation.

Internal capacity training during the year

Refresher Training on Communication and Monitoring.

DIWA participated in refresher training on communication and monitoring with coalition partners, the African Disability Forum (ADF) and Inclusion Africa (IA). The training strengthened the partners' capacity to document programme results, monitor progress, communicate impact and maintain consistent reporting and coordination across the SPADRA project.



With ADF, IA and DIWA in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa



DIWA staff members during the training

DIWA conducts PSEA training alongside communication and security training

DIWA conducted training on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), communication and security for its staff and partners.The training strengthened participants' understanding of safeguarding responsibilities, confidential reporting and response mechanisms, responsible communication, and measures for managing safety and security risks during programme implementation. This initiative reinforced DIWA's commitment to creating safe, accountable and inclusive working environments for staff, partners and programme participants.

5.0 Strengthening Organizational Sustainability through the Black Feminist Fund

During the reporting period, DIWA continued to benefit from flexible institutional support from the Black Feminist Fund (BFF). The grant strengthened governance, human resources, resource mobilisation and essential operations, including office rental. This support enabled DIWA to maintain a capable Secretariat, coordinate regional programmes, support member organizations and pursue new partnerships and funding opportunities. The investment demonstrates the importance of flexible funding in building resilient, accountable and sustainable feminist organizations.

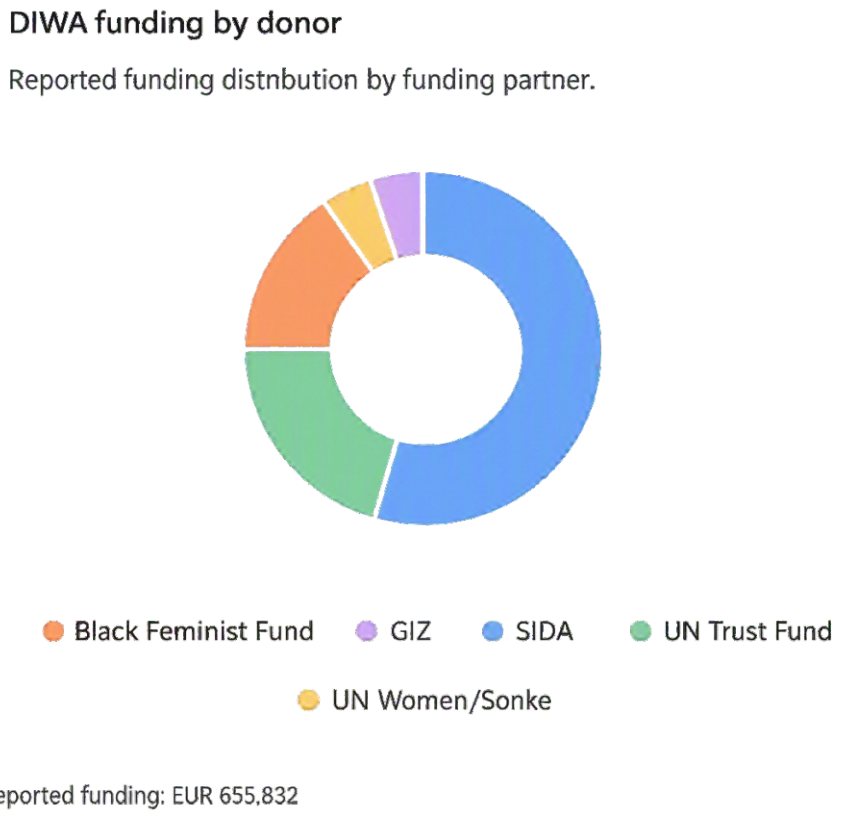
6.0 Challenges and Opportunities

The reporting period generated strong momentum for DIWA's work through increased policy influence, regional visibility, research, partnerships and the growing leadership of women and girls with disabilities. DIWA's engagement with the ACHPR, African Union processes, Women Deliver, CSW70 and national policy platforms created important opportunities to deepen disability-inclusive advocacy and strengthen collaboration between disability rights, women's rights and feminist movements. The organization's research with COVAW in Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda also produced valuable evidence on the barriers affecting the participation of women and girls with disabilities in movements to end violence against women and girls. This evidence provides a strong foundation for policy engagement, programme design and resource mobilisation.

However, significant gaps remain. Women and girls with disabilities—particularly those in rural communities and those with psychosocial, intellectual and multiple disabilities—continue to face exclusion from leadership, inaccessible services, violence, limited access to justice and inadequate participation in decision-making. There is an urgent need to translate research findings and policy commitments into practical interventions at community and national levels.

Limited resources remain a major constraint to scaling successful initiatives, supporting member organizations and sustaining the participation of women with disabilities in regional and global advocacy spaces. High accessibility, travel and reasonable-accommodation costs further restrict meaningful participation. Shrinking civic space, resistance to gender equality and limited funding for disability-led feminist organizations also threaten progress. DIWA will therefore build on the year's momentum to mobilise flexible and long-term resources, expand sub-granting, strengthen member organizations, deepen evidence-based advocacy and scale inclusive programmes across Africa.

7.0 Financial updates



During the financial of 2026, SIDA provided the largest share of DIWA's funding at approximately 54.9%, followed by the UN Trust Fund at 20.6% and the Black Feminist Fund at 15.2%. UN Women/Sonke and GIZ contributed approximately 4.7% and 4.6%, respectively. This diversified funding supported DIWA's regional programmes, advocacy and institutional strengthening.

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8.0 Appreciation to partners and donors

DIWA extends its sincere appreciation to all donors, partners, member organizations and allies whose financial, technical and strategic support made the year's achievements possible. We particularly recognize SIDA, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the Black Feminist Fund, UN Women, Sonke Gender Justice, GIZ, the African Disability Forum, Inclusion Africa and COVAW. We also thank our governance structures, Secretariat, women and girls with disabilities, advocates and community stakeholders whose leadership and commitment continue to advance disability-inclusive gender equality across Africa.



9.0 Conclusion

The year 2026 demonstrated DIWA's growing influence, partnerships and capacity to advance the rights and leadership of women and girls with disabilities across Africa. Through research, advocacy, capacity strengthening and engagement in national, regional and global policy processes, DIWA contributed to more inclusive movements, policies and institutions. Building on this momentum, DIWA remains committed to strengthening its members, mobilising sustainable resources and ensuring that women and girls with disabilities are recognized as leaders and agents of change.



Contact us

www.diwa.org
infodiwaafrica@gmail.com
info@diwaafrica.org
facebook page: disabledwomeninafrica1/