

# The Advocacy Project

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Pratima Jani is president of the self-help women's group in the tribal village of Sundertaila, Odisha State, India. She is part of a campaign to eradicate malaria in ten villages supported by Jeevan Rekha Parishad, a leading india advocate for tribal people and AP partner.

[www.advocacynet.org](http://www.advocacynet.org)



## From Our Director

This year's report begins with two contrasting stories that show the strengths and vulnerabilities of our partners in the Global South. Ruth Ndjeri on the left is with *Shield of Faith* in Nairobi. After flooding displaced thousands in the informal settlements, Ruth opened her single-room apartment to 25 flood refugees. The photo on the right shows Mary Atim, a founding member of *Women in Action for Women*, the association of women in Uganda who were kidnapped by rebels and have used stitching to help rebuild their lives. Mary's dream of being a tailor was about to be realized when she died from asphyxiation with one of her sons. Mary had put maize on the stove before going to bed and shut the windows to keep out intruders. The photo shows Mary wearing her design for a COVID vaccination campaign - a sign of her commitment and talent. We will continue to cherish Ruth and miss Mary. Open the QR codes below to learn more about these remarkable women.



Iain Guest



## Caste discrimination in Nepal

AP launched a start-up on caste in central Nepal with *Backward Society Education* (BASE). Caste is illegal in Nepal but lingers on and is reinforced by surnames and government subsidies for Dalit that make it hard to break with traditional professions. An AP-BASE mission visited eight sub-castes and met several inspiring advocates. They included Pabitra Badi, above, an expert drum-maker, icon for Nepal's LGBTQ community and advocate for

Badi women who cannot escape a centuries-old association with prostitution. Sunita Chidimar, below, is from a sub-caste known for killing rare birds and child marriage - two practices that Sunita detests. BASE hopes to work with both advocates in 2025.



**Fighting harmful caste practice: Sunita Chidimar belongs to a sub-caste that kills rare birds and encourages child marriage. Sunita agreed to advocate for their abolition after meeting BASE and AP.**





## Nature vs malaria in tribal India

Building on a successful 2023 project in tribal villages of Odisha State, *Jeevan Rekha Parishad (JRP)* and AP launched a start-up to turn seeds from the Neem tree into mosquito repellent. This builds on the knowledge of tribal women leaders like Pratima Jani, above, who use smoke from Neem leaves to ward off mosquitoes at home. Pratima was one of 50 tribal women who collected 1.2 tons of seeds and filled 2,700 bottles of *Neemola* oil. Half was sold, bringing the women their first disposable income. An AP assessment found that *Neemola* oil reduced mosquito itching and cured skin rashes. In addition, regular application of the oil, combined with regular washing, improves women's menstrual health and hygiene.



**Promoting *Neemola* in the villages: JRP field officer Abhilipsa Mallick distributes *Neemola* oil and mosquito nets to young mothers in Tilapadr village.**





## Improving the hygiene of girl students of Northern Uganda

AP's support for WASH in schools made progress when parents helped *The Gulu Disabled Persons Union (GDPU)* install WASH at the Kulu Opal primary school. The package included an incinerator for used sanitary pads, a changing room for girls and menstrual training from GDPU's Emma Okello. The goal is that girls can manage their periods at school and ensure their attendance. GDPU also began monitoring toilets at schools that have received WASH and found that several were in bad shape. Our thanks to *Givology* and the *Prince of Peace Lutheran Church* for their support. Open the QR code to watch our documentary.



**Awash with soap: Emma Okello from GDPU began making *Clean Wash* soap during the pandemic, with funding from AP. She supplied schools with 1,000 liters in 2024 as part of the WASH program.**





## Composting and growing food in Kibera, Kenya

Undeterred by floods and riots, *Shield of Faith* (SOF) expanded composting in the Nairobi settlements. Led by Stella Makena, above, twenty SOF members composted 5.5 tons of organic waste and produced 315 liters of fertilizer from worm castings. Fourteen members grew vegetables and saved around \$7 a week in food bills. All members received \$27 a month through a savings scheme. Five composters also set up “community hubs” for neighbors. Stella hopes to expand community composting in 2025 by partnering with the *4K Clubs of Kenya*. Click the QR codes to watch *The Worm Ladies of Kibera* and learn about the savings scheme.



**Schools - the next composting frontier: Stella worked with Jacqueline Kaloki, a science teacher, to launch composting at the *Our Lady of Mercy* girls' school. She hopes to reach 5 schools in 2025.**





## Victims break the justice deadlock in Nepal

Victims and survivors of the conflict in Nepal scored big in August 2024 when they forced Nepal's squabbling politicians to pass a new law on transitional justice, breaking an 18-year deadlock. Disappearances, torture and summary executions will be prosecuted but sentences will be capped. Human rights advocates protested this compromise but survivors insisted it was the only way to secure reparations and ensure commemorations. Ram Bhandari led the campaign in Nepal and argued the case before the UN Security Council, shown above. AP supported Ram through hard-hitting bulletins during 2024 and hosted him in Washington.



**Demanding reparations: Sarita Thapa's father disappeared in the war and she has never ceased to demand reparations for her loss. Sarita herself provides psychosocial support for war victims in the district of Bardiya.**





## Conflict in Burma

AP built a new partnership with the *Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO)*, an advocate for the Pa-O ethnic group in Burma, and gained valuable insights into the brutal war. Working from Thailand, Peace Fellow Madeleine Schneider met refugees and used her blogs to describe the plight of transgender people who are conscripted into the armed forces and forced to fight their own people. Madeleine helped PYO to raised \$1,068 for refugees, use social media training and launch a newsletter. Open the QR codes to read her blogs.



**Burma's war on gender: Conscription poses acute danger for the transgender people who spoke with Peace Fellow Madeleine. One was born female and presents as a man. He worries that conscription could soon extend to women and threaten his wife.**





## Climate change in Kenya

*Children Peace Initiative Kenya* took practical steps to help warring pastoralists unite against drought in 2024. Working with a \$4,000 grant from AP, CPIK held four “peace outreach fora” for 200 warrior/herders from the Pokot and Ilchamus tribes (photo). The two tribes shared their fears about cows dying younger, fewer calves, floods, and more. Chiefs from the two tribes agreed to alert each other when their warriors need access to pasture - a major step towards reducing tensions. CPIK’s German donor has authorized more fora camps, raising hopes that CPIK’s insights can inspire others and produce serious change.



**A 3-year investment in climate resiliency: CPIK and AP organized a first cow camp in 2022, helped by Peace Fellow Julia Holladay, seen with Monica from CPIK. Over 300 Pokot and Samburu warriors agreed to share pasture, opening the way for the four new fora in 2024.**





## Tatenda Scores Big in Zimbabwe

Women Advocacy Project in Zimbabwe helps girls avoid early marriage by making and selling *Clean Girl* soap. In 2024, over a hundred girls sold 88,914 bottles, earning \$656 apiece. No participating girls have married below the legal age (18). Thirty-eight WAP soap-makers have also attended school since 2023, thanks to 15 high school students in the US who paid for the school fees by selling their own *Clean Girl* soap. The US students have raised \$2,940 and Tatenda Mukanya, 19, seen in the photo, was the first to graduate in 2024. Tatenda wants to go to college. Open the QR codes below to appreciate Tatenda's dancing and learn more.



**Sahasra Thokala, 17, led a team of students at the South Forsyth High School in Atlanta, GA, that raised \$500 for Tatenda's schooling. She says: "I'm so incredibly grateful to be a part of her educational journey!" Sahasra heads to college in 2025.**





Sign The Petition



## Composting in US high schools

2024 Peace Fellows Emma Pautz and Bella Quiroa, both 17, led a spirited campaign in Rhode Island to expand composting in schools with help from AP. They began in their own schools and turned to a 2021 state law that required most RI schools to compost but contains no enforcement or money. Bella and Emma formed the *Youth Composting Campaign Initiative* and sent out a survey that found that only 34% of responding schools respect the law. They launched a petition that raised 1,382 signatures and went on a media blitz to demand action. Their efforts paid off when lawmakers proposed a new bill to expand composting to all state schools and require schools to appoint a “composting custodian.” AP also supported composting in two school kitchens in Pennsylvania in 2024.



**Facing catastrophe: Famous for its beaches, Rhode island’s only landfill will reach capacity in 2043. Schools contribute 25% of the waste. Composting is a no-brainer for Emma and Bella!**



# Our 2024 Peace Fellows



**Madeleine Pound, (York University UK), social media**



**Olivia Landau (The Fletcher School) Children Peace Initiative Kenya**



**The Raven McGurll (George Washington University) Shield of Faith, Kenya**



**Madeleine Schneider (Georgetown) PYO, Burma**



**Adin Becker (Harvard Kennedy School) JRP India**



**Julia Davatzes (George Washington University) GDPU and WAW, Uganda**



**Ruby Meador (University School, Nashville TN), Clean Girl soap, USA**



**Bella Quiroa (East Bay MET high school, Newport, RI) High School composting**



**Emma Pautz (Barrington High School, RI) high school composting**



## Coach Julia pulls off a hat trick

Julia Davatzes in Uganda and Adin Becker in Ia embodied all that is best about our Peace Fellows. In addition to managing two projects in Uganda (WASH and embroidery), Julia found the time to coach the local girls' soccer team in Gulu and wrote a hilarious blog about the experience while making a serious point about the gulf between Uganda and the US when it comes to girls' sports. Adin made several visits to tribal villages in Odisha State, India and was deeply attracted by their mystical attachment to their forests. 2024 Peace Fellows published 54 blogs.



**Far afield - and loving it: Adin Becker (Harvard Kennedy School) was undaunted by difficult field conditions in India and played a major role in the launch of the *Neemola* start-up (Page 3).**





## Advocacy quilting

Advocacy quilting advanced in 2024 under the steady hand of Bobbi Fitzsimmons, seen above with her *Kenya Cow Quilt* at a major exhibition at the Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington North Carolina. Bobbi also gave a keynote address at the Capital Quilt guild in Raleigh, NC. We commissioned embroidered butterflies and birds from *Women in Action for Women (WAW)* in Uganda for a third *Sister Artists* quilt challenge in 2025 and earned \$2,124 from butterfly tea-towels designed by WAW. In Nepal, Kushma Chaudhary (below) was one of four fiber artists who produced sparkling designs of festivals for new tea towels in 2025.



**Festival designs in Nepal: Kushma Chaudhary lost her father during the conflict in Nepal and has since become a talented fiber artist and trainer. Kushma's design shows two siblings exchanging tikas at the Tihar festival, and will be used in making tea towels for sale in 2025.**



## Information - year of the video

AP used new tools to promote partners like Margaret Waringa from *Shield of Faith* in Kibera, Kenya, above. Peace Fellow Maddy Pound posted 18 clips on a new Tiktok page (12,149 views). Gio Ligori helped AP to produce 12 videos for Youtube (3,541 views) that included full-length documentaries about GDPU's WASH program in Uganda and *The Worm Ladies of Kibera* (1,247 views). We published 21 news bulletins (48,244 opens) and used bulletins to advocate for transitional justice in Nepal and composting in Rhode Island schools. Our bulletins provoked feedback from readers like Hurst Hannum, an Emeritus professor at the Fletcher School, who agreed with our September 30 criticism of human rights professionals in Nepal.

**“Thank you for your thoughtful essay on accountability in Nepal. This is an issue on which ‘human rights advocates’ remain deliberately blind. Too many have built their careers on accountability rather than recognizing that criminal punishment, human rights, peace, and truth vary greatly depending on the domestic context” - Hurst Hannum**



*The Worm  
Ladies of  
Kibera*



## People of AP

Above: Dawa Sherpa donated \$500 to the WAP/AP education fund, which puts vulnerable girls in Zimbabwe through school (page 9). Dawa served as a Peace Fellow in Zimbabwe in 2022 and has continued to actively support WAP since joining USAID. Many former Peace Fellows remain connected with AP through our news service and social media.

**Board:** Scott Allen, Tom Carver, Karen Delaney, Colleen Denny, Talley Diggs, Joe Eldridge, Bobbi Fitzsimmons, Devin Greenleaf, Iain Guest, Larry Ingeneri, Merry May, and Delaney Rogers. **Staff and contractors:** Iain Guest (ED), Mary Ellen Cain (Accounts and administration), Gio Liguori (Video), Josh Nichols and Matt Heinrich (Web maintenance), Beverly Orr (Accounts), Ed Suarez (Auditor). **Peace Fellows:** Adin Becker, Olivia Landau, Madeleine Schneider, Julia Davatzes, Madeleine Pound, The Raven McGurrl, Emma Pautz, Bella Quiroa. **High Schools:** (Georgia) Lalitha Appana, Nina Thakur, Sahasra Thokala, Aum Ragavendrissa, Aishwariya Vijaykumar, Radish Gupta, Saanvi Rambole. **Quilters:** Ann Millard, Cindy Ferguson, Ellen Fisher, Edith Churchman, Glenda Mah, Gretchen Saunders Mrwauwa, Hope Barton, Jessica Arends, Joan Halley, Joan Taylor, Julie Stiller, Karen Pulaski, Kathleen Dixon, Linda M. Kim, Lois Peterson, Lori Scott, Lynn Flaherty, Mari de Moya, Bobbi Fitzsimmons, Merry May, Gill Rebelo, Anne Watson, Colleen Ansbaugh, Dawn Piasta, Deborah Weir, Peg Sullivan, Donna Bergman, Susan Louis, Janice Ewing, Nancy Hershberger, Raji Syan, Sheryl Fowler, Susan Louis, Tricia Deck, Veronica Mays, Winnie McGarraher, Nairn Stewart.

# 2024 Partners

**Communities:** Tribal people in Odisha, India; Single mothers in Kibera, Nairobi; Mothers of children with albinism in Nairobi; Girls in inner-city Harare, Zimbabwe, at risk from early marriage; Pa-O community in Burma; Pastoralists in Northwest Kenya; Families of the disappeared in Nepal; Dalit and Tharu people in Nepal; Primary school students in Gulu District, Uganda; Survivors of forced marriage and pregnancy in Gulu District, Uganda; Families affected by Agent Orange in Vietnam; High school students in Tennessee, Rhode island and Georgia.

**Leaders:** Stella Makena, Caren Mybyaki and Christine Kibuka in Nairobi, Kenya; Constance Mugari, Dickson Akenga and Trish Makanhiwa in Harare, Zimbabwe; Ram Bhandari, Pinky Dangi, Kancham Chaurdhary and Kushma Chaudhary (Tharu people and families of the disappeared) in Nepal; Hilary Bukuno (Gabra tribe) in Northern Kenya; Simon Ojok, Emma Ajok, and Victoria Nyanjura in Gulu District, Uganda; Manoranjan Mishra, Surajita Sahu and Biraj Krishna in Odisha State, India; Khun Oo and Nan San (Burmese ethnic communities) in Chian Mai, Thailand.

**Partner organizations:** Shield of Faith, Nairobi; Children Peace Initiative Nairobi, Kenya; Gulu Disabled Persons Union, Gulu, Uganda; Women in Action for Women, Gulu, Uganda; Women Advocacy Project, Zimbabwe; Backward Society Education, Tulsipor, Nepal; Network of Families of the Disappeared, Bardiya District, Nepal; the PYO Association, Thailand and Burma; Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disability, Quang Binh province, Vietnam; Jeevan Rekha Parishad (Lifeline), Odisha State, India; Cameron Art Museum, Wilmington, NC; VIBHA Club of the South Forsyth High School, Atlanta, GA; Clean Girl group at the University School, Nashville, TN.

# 2024 Benefactors

## **Organizations**

Amalgamated Foundation, The Brimstone Fund, Foundation for Systemic Change; Givology, Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America CFC; Humanity United; Michele de Nevers Fund, PA CleanWays; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Dublin OH); Sierra O'Connell Family Fund; Zonta Club of Washington

## **Individuals**

Scott Allen, Colleen Ansbaugh, Jessica Arends, Hope Barton, Adin Becker, Donna Bergman, Betty Branda, Edith Churchman, Sandra Coliver, Julia Davaltzes, Tricia Deck, Charles Dougherty, Lloyd Feinberg, Cindy Ferguson, Ellen Fisher, Bobbi Fitzsimmons, Lynn Flaherty, Rosa Goldsmith, Sara Hunsicker, Linda Kim, Joyce Leader, Pia Leitgieb, Josh Levy, Annie Levy, Ali Lichtenstein, Susan Louis, Glenda Mah, Siamak Majidi, Susan and Michael Martin, Merry May, Veronica Mays, The Raven McGurll, Donald McInnes, Lois Peterson, Dawn Piasta, Karen Pulaski, Madeleine Schneider, Sandra Shaw, Marjorie A. Showalter, Nairn Stewart, Julie Stiller, Margaret Sullivan, Joan P. Taylor, Ana Torres, Anne Watson, Deborah Weir, Susan Williams, Betty J. Young

## **World Bank Staff/Retirees**

Maria Alyanak, Patricia Bliss-Guest, Maria Dacunha, Michele de Nevers, Susan Goldmark, Kei Kawabata, Catherine Mwaniki, Tawhid Nawaz, Mona Neibhur, Bayo Oyewole, Adrian Poffley, Steven Shalita, Kathy Sierra, Bowen Uhlenkamp, Kanako Yamashita-Allen

## **GlobalGiving**

Meredith Avery, Hope Barton, Adin Becker, Donna Bergman, Caroline Berksoy, Tim Bliss, Frederick H. Bliss, Anna Braverman, Mary Ellen Cain, Sandra Cronauer-Mitra, Julia Davatzes, Karen Delaney, Talley Diggs, Becky Ducrest, Bobbi Fitzsimmons, Van Fitzsimmons, Tina Forkner, Jack Gasdia, Achim Giebler, Iain Guest, Susan Hay, Julia Holladay, Syed Ibrahim, Kim Ingeneri, Lawrence Ingeneri, Bernadette Jordan, Olivia Landau, Susanne Landau, Elianna Landau, Eleanor Levie, Bert Lockwood, Nancy Lujan, Sarah Brown Montagne, Julie Moran, Misselle Newton, Madeleine Pound, Delaney Rogers, Madeleine Schneider, Elizabeth Schneider, Viktor Schneider, Philip J. Silvers, Alison Soldano, Sherrod Sturrock, Jane Wamwirwa, Deborah Weir

# 2024 Financials

## **Income**

Grant	\$20,000
Unrestricted Contributions	\$99,714
Restricted Contributions	\$24,208
Program revenue	\$4,517

**Total Revenue and support** **\$148,439.00**

## **Expenses**

Personnel costs and benefits	\$28,728
Contract Services	\$14,373
Project officer stipends	\$9,050
Fellowship fees	\$570
Office expenses	\$5,421
Depreciation expense	\$339
Insurance	\$3,010
Meetings and conferences	\$2,301
Information technology	\$6,491
Miscellaneous	\$80

**Total Expenses** **\$182,646**

**CHANGE IN NET ASSET:** **\$34,207**