

HAPI 2025 Annual Narrative Report.

Driving Disability Rights, Dignity, and Inclusive Systems in Nigeria.

In 2025, Hope Alive for Possibilities Initiative (HAPI) consolidated its role as a leading disability-led organization advancing rights-based inclusion, policy reform, and community accountability in Benue State. Through complementary support from Disability Rights Fund (DRF) and Fòs Feminista, HAPI delivered integrated interventions that combined policy advocacy, movement building, public accountability, menstrual health justice, and institutional strengthening.

HAPI's approach intentionally bridged law, culture, health, and systems ensuring that disability inclusion moved beyond commitments into practical, community-owned change.

At the policy level, HAPI played a catalytic role in advancing the Benue State Disability Rights Law, contributing to technical reviews, stakeholder alignment, public pressure, and timely legislative follow-through. At the community level, the organization strengthened the leadership and advocacy capacity of women and youth with disabilities, engaged traditional and religious institutions to challenge stigma, and amplified grassroots voices through sustained media engagement.

Simultaneously, HAPI advanced inclusive menstrual health and dignity for women and girls with disabilities an often overlooked yet critical dimension of bodily autonomy and rights. Through accessible learning resources, peer education, digital tools, public campaigns, and caregiver engagement, the organization expanded both reach and depth of impact, while addressing cultural and systemic barriers.

Across both projects, HAPI embedded institutional sustainability, strengthening governance, safeguarding, financial management, and strategic alignment. These efforts enhanced organizational credibility, accountability, and readiness for scale.

Collectively, the 2025 portfolio positioned HAPI as a trusted convener, policy actor, and movement builder, shaping inclusive development discourse in Benue State.

Executive Summary-2025 at a Glance

In 2025, Hope Alive for Possibilities Initiative (HAPI) advanced an integrated agenda focused on disability rights, dignity, youth leadership, and inclusive systems strengthening in Nigeria. With support from Disability Rights Fund (DRF) and Fòs Feminista, HAPI delivered coordinated interventions that combined legislative advocacy, movement building, menstrual health justice, public accountability, and institutional strengthening.

A defining achievement of the year was HAPI's contribution to the passage and assent of the Benue State Disability Rights Law, following sustained engagement with legislators, MDAs, traditional and religious leaders, and the media. HAPI strengthened the capacity of women and youth with disabilities to engage in rights-based advocacy and positioned grassroots voices at the center of public and policy discourse. HAPI also led a comprehensive inclusive menstrual health and dignity program, expanding access to accessible education resources, inclusive training, peer learning, digital tools, and community-wide stigma reduction campaigns.

In the final quarter of the year, HAPI consolidated gains through a Post-GDS Youth Advocacy Academy and a high-level Disability Summit, reinforcing youth leadership, multi-stakeholder coordination, and accountability for implementation of disability commitments.

Alongside programmatic achievements, HAPI strengthened its internal governance, safeguarding, and financial management systems, enhancing organizational credibility, sustainability, and readiness for scale.

By the end of 2025, HAPI had firmly positioned itself as a trusted disability-led convener, policy actor, and movement builder, advancing inclusive governance and rights-based development in Nigeria.

Key Achievements

Policy, Law, Accountability, and Advocacy

- Contributed to the passage and assent of the Benue State Disability Rights Law through coordinated legislative advocacy and technical engagement.
- Conducted high-level advocacy visits to MDAs, traditional rulers, and faith leaders, securing commitments to disability-inclusive governance.
- Convened a Technical Validation Meeting and a Press Conference to strengthen legislative content and accelerate assent.
- Hosted a high-level Disability Summit (3 December 2025) to advance implementation readiness and collective accountability.

Youth Leadership and Movement Strengthening

- Trained over 120 women and youth with disabilities on CRPD, leadership, and strategic advocacy across Gboko, Otukpo, and Oju.
- Strengthened collaboration among CSOs and OPDs through a two-day learning and experience-sharing forum on resource mobilization and accountability.
- Convened a Post-GDS Youth Advocacy Academy (6–7 November 2025) to equip young persons with disabilities to monitor and track GDS commitments.
- Strengthened youth-led accountability and national and subnational advocacy linkages.

Public Engagement and Media Advocacy

- Launched and sustained the Benue State Disability Inclusion Radio Series, broadcasting in Tiv, Idoma, and Iggede, tracking the Disability Law from second reading to post-assent public education.
- Reached thousands of community members through radio programs, public rallies, and digital advocacy.

Inclusive Menstrual Health and Dignity

- Developed and disseminated 387 accessible menstrual health manuals, including Braille and easy-to-read formats.
- Trained over 190 women and girls with disabilities on inclusive menstrual health practices.
- Established peer learning groups and introduced the DIVA App to support ongoing education and autonomy.
- Marked Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025 with a city-wide rally reaching over 7,000 people.

Governance, Safeguarding, and Sustainability

- Conducted a comprehensive Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) covering governance, leadership, programs, and finance.
- Strengthened safeguarding systems, internal controls, and financial accountability.
- Initiated development of a financial sustainability and resource mobilization strategy.

Strategic Engagements, Partnerships, and Representation

Expanding Influence Beyond Direct Programming (2025)

In 2025, Hope Alive for Possibilities Initiative (HAPI) significantly expanded its influence beyond direct project implementation, consolidating its role as a disability led policy actor, knowledge partner, and trusted institutional voice across national and thematic platforms. Through strategic participation, co-convening, and high-level representation, HAPI contributed to shaping discourse and practice across mental health and innovation, climate justice, gender equality, economic inclusion, accessibility, governance, and disability law implementation.

These engagements strengthened HAPI's positioning as a bridge between lived experience, community evidence, and policy reform, while reinforcing partnerships with government institutions, donors, OPDs, civil society actors, and private-sector stakeholders.

1. Innovation, Technology, and Mental Health Inclusion

AI Chatbot and Mental Health Support for Persons with Disabilities

11 April 2025, Abuja

(Convened by HAPI in partnership with CEDER SEED Foundation)

HAPI convened a high-level innovation dialogue to introduce an AI-powered mental health chatbot designed to provide 24/7 psychosocial support for amputees and other persons with disabilities. The engagement brought together representatives from the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), JONAPWD, mental health professionals, civil society organizations, technology developers, amputees, and caregivers.

The platform demonstrated accessibility-driven features including conversational AI, voice-command functionality, mood tracking, gamification, and interactive storytelling, with plans for AI-enabled sign language recognition. Beyond product demonstration, the engagement positioned HAPI at the intersection of disability rights, mental health systems strengthening, and digital inclusion, while opening pathways for baseline research, certification, and scale-up partnerships.

2. Inclusive Health, SRHR, and Menstrual Dignity

Educational Workshop on Menstrual Hygiene for Girls with Disabilities

26 May 2025, School for the Blind, Kuje

(Organized by Voice of Disability Initiative)

HAPI participated in an inclusive menstrual health education workshop targeting girls with disabilities, with particular attention to deaf students. The engagement emphasized accessible SRHR information, inclusive communication approaches, and caregiver involvement, reinforcing HAPI's leadership in disability-inclusive menstrual health and SRHR advocacy within institutional and school-based settings.

3. Climate Change, Disability Inclusion, and Environmental Justice

Across 2025, HAPI played an active role in advancing disability-inclusive climate justice, contributing both technical and advocacy perspectives across multiple platforms.

Inclusive Climate Action Training and Workshops

HAPI participated in an inclusive climate action training convened by the Advocacy for Women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI) on *6 February 2025 in Abuja*, focused on integrating gender and disability perspectives into climate policy and programming. Discussions emphasized intersectionality, accessibility, and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in climate decision-making processes.

HAPI was further represented at a two-day workshop on inclusive climate action for women and girls with disabilities held at the National Human Rights Commission, Abuja. The workshop framed climate change as a human rights issue and strengthened movement-building efforts, partnership models between OPDs and CSOs, and advocacy strategies for inclusive climate governance.

Climate Policy Dialogues and Evidence Generation

HAPI participated in a two-day high-level roundtable on climate change and disability inclusion hosted by AWWDI (*25–26 June 2025, Abuja*), examining gaps in evacuation planning, disaster response, disability-disaggregated data, and inclusive climate policy implementation.

Additionally, HAPI contributed evidence-based insights during a focus group discussion on climate change and disability inclusion organized by the Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (*21 October 2025, Abuja*), reinforcing the principle of *Nothing About Us Without Us* and strengthening collaboration with climate-focused CSOs.

4. Gender Equality, GBV, and Intersectional Advocacy

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Strategy Engagement

HAPI participated in the co-design of a collaborative campaign titled *“Orange FCT: Ending Violence One Voice, One Community at a Time.”* The initiative promoted low-cost, community-led advocacy with a strong focus on women and girls with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and rural communities.

HAPI contributed strategic input on inclusive communication, ethical storytelling, community mobilization, and digital amplification, reinforcing intersectional approaches that link GBV, disability, displacement, and climate vulnerability.

Capacity Building on Gender-Sensitive Disability Engagements

29 May 2025, Abuja

(Organized by MimiJane Foundation)

HAPI participated in a capacity-building workshop focused on strengthening gender-sensitive disability engagement, framed around Nigeria’s Global Disability Summit commitments. The training catalyzed dialogue on institutional reform, accountability, and inclusive service delivery, with particular attention to advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

5. Economic Empowerment, Employment, and Inclusive Livelihoods

Technology and Employment Inclusion in Marginalised Contexts (TEIMC) Roundtable

19 June 2025, Abuja

(Hosted by Jobberman Nigeria in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation)

HAPI represented and contributed to disability-inclusive perspectives to a national roundtable focused on expanding access to digital work and employment pathways for marginalized populations. Engagement centered on digital skills development, remote work accessibility, and inclusive employment policy, reinforcing HAPI’s advocacy at the intersection of technology and livelihoods.

National Dialogue on Institutionalizing TVET and Apprenticeship Systems

14–15 October 2025, Abuja

(Convened by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment with ILO and GIZ)

HAPI participated in a multi-stakeholder public dialogue on strengthening Nigeria’s TVET and apprenticeship systems. Contributions emphasized the inclusion of persons with disabilities in workforce development, employability strategies, and national skills policy reform.

Stakeholder Engagement on Women with Disabilities in Agriculture

7 November 2025, Makurdi

(Organized by AWWDI)

HAPI engaged in a policy-oriented forum examining barriers faced by women with disabilities in agriculture, including access to land, finance, adaptive tools, and extension services. Insights from the engagement are informing national research and policy advocacy on inclusive agricultural reform.

6. Accessibility, Mobility, and Inclusive Infrastructure

Workshop on Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities

5 February 2025, Abuja

(Organized by the Nigerian Association of the Blind with support from DRF)

HAPI participated in a policy-focused workshop that advanced a SMART, one-year advocacy plan aimed at promoting inclusive transportation systems. The engagement strengthened stakeholder coordination, public accountability, and policy advocacy to improve mobility and access for persons with disabilities.

7. Policy Engagement, Governance, and Disability Rights Ecosystem

Global and National Disability Accountability

HAPI participated in the JONAPWD Action Plan Workshop on Nigeria's 2025 Global Disability Summit commitments (*26 June 2025, Abuja*), contributing to the development of actionable frameworks for tracking and advocating implementation across the six geopolitical zones. HAPI also participated in the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRF) Regional Grantee Convening (*10–13 November 2025*), engaging on trust-based funding, advocacy alignment across CRPD, UPR, and SDGs, safeguarding standards, and OPD coordination, strengthening institutional readiness and strategic positioning.

Government and Institutional Engagements

The Executive Director led a courtesy visit to the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (*6 August 2025*), exploring collaboration on disability inclusion within humanitarian response, disaster management, and social protection systems.

HAPI also hosted a courtesy visit by the Chairman of the Nasarawa State Disability Rights Commission (*18 August 2025*), exploring collaboration on entrepreneurship, education, and skills development for persons with disabilities, and strengthening inter-state learning and partnerships.

Disability Law Implementation and CSO Coordination

HAPI participated in NWTF–CBM quarterly stakeholder meetings under the D-RAPID project (*August and November 2025, Benue State*), strengthening collaboration among MDAs, OPDs, and CSOs on disability law implementation, youth participation, and monitoring of accessibility standards.

Additionally, HAPI engaged in a capacity-building workshop on the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act (*5 August 2025, Makurdi*), strengthening advocacy and monitoring skills for effective implementation of the Benue State Disability Law.

8. Civic Space, Economic Justice, and Public Interest Advocacy

PAACA Press Conference on Fuel Import Tariffs

10 November 2025, Abuja

HAPI joined allied civil society organizations at a press conference opposing the proposed 15% import tariff on petrol, PMS, and diesel. HAPI highlighted the disproportionate impact of rising fuel costs on persons with disabilities, particularly regarding transportation, healthcare access, and livelihoods, reinforcing its engagement in broader economic justice advocacy.

Strategic Value of these Engagements

Through these strategic engagements, HAPI:

- Expanded its influence beyond project sites into national and multi-sectoral policy spaces
- Strengthened partnerships with government, donors, OPDs, CSOs, faith actors, and innovators.
- Positioned itself as a thought leader on disability inclusion across health, climate, GBV, technology, and governance
- Enhanced institutional learning, visibility, and readiness for scale

Reflections on Challenges Encountered

While the journey to the passage and assent of the Benue State Disability Rights Law was ultimately successful, implementation was shaped by several challenges that required adaptability, persistence, and strategic learning.

1. Bureaucratic Delays

The movement of the bill across different arms of government was frequently slowed by administrative bottlenecks. Despite strong verbal and written commitments from key actors, the forwarding of documents, scheduling of meetings, and legislative hearings often took longer than

anticipated. These delays required sustained follow-up, repeated advocacy visits, and continuous engagement to prevent loss of momentum.

2. Resource Limitations

Financial and human resources were significantly stretched. As a women-led organization of persons with disabilities with a lean staffing structure, HAPI relied heavily on volunteers and community allies. This constrained capacity made it challenging to simultaneously sustain grassroots mobilization, legislative tracking, media engagement, and high-level advocacy, especially during peak periods of political activity.

3. Political Uncertainty

Shifting political priorities and leadership changes created moments of uncertainty throughout the advocacy process. Competing policy interests at times threatened to push the Disability Bill down the government agenda. Maintaining progress required continuous engagement, rebuilding relationships with new office holders, and securing alliances with champions across different levels of government to keep disability rights visible and prioritized.

4. Media Bias and Stereotypes

Although media engagement later became a strength of the project, initial interactions revealed prevailing charity-based and stereotypical narratives around disability. Targeted capacity-building and sensitization of journalists were required to reposition disability within a rights-based framework and promote more dignified, inclusive reporting.

5. Grassroots and Cultural Barriers

At the community level, deeply rooted cultural perceptions of disability posed challenges. Some traditional and faith leaders were initially resistant to disability rights messaging. Overcoming these barriers required patience, repeated dialogue, and context-sensitive advocacy approaches tailored to local realities and belief systems.

6. Security and Accessibility Constraints

Escalating insecurity across parts of Benue State, including violent herder attacks, significantly affected community engagement. In some instances, mass casualties and displacement forced entire communities to flee to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. This insecurity limited physical access to certain locations and increased the cost and complexity of organizing inclusive advocacy activities.

The humanitarian impact of this insecurity further compounded vulnerabilities for women and girls with disabilities, particularly those displaced into IDP camps, where access to basic water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) facilities and menstrual health supplies became severely constrained.

7. Institutional and Compliance Learning (Tax Obligations)

An additional challenge encountered during implementation was limited institutional awareness of certain statutory tax obligations, specifically Withholding Tax (WHT) requirements. This gap resulted from inadequate prior exposure to regulatory compliance processes. Upon identification, HAPI proactively engaged the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) to address the issue and has since taken corrective steps. Going forward, the organization is strengthening its financial compliance systems, including improved tax education, documentation, and internal controls, to prevent recurrence.

Learning and Forward-Looking Actions

These challenges have contributed significantly to HAPI's collective learning. They reinforced the importance of building resilient advocacy strategies, strengthening institutional systems, diversifying alliances, and integrating risk mitigation into program design. The lessons drawn from this experience will inform future disability rights advocacy and organizational development efforts, ensuring stronger compliance, adaptability, and sustainability.