

A n n u a l R e p o r t

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Towards
more diversity,
equity and
inclusion





While attacks on human rights and on diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as tensions and wars dominated the political landscape in 2025, Dbl remained on course as a network of networks and the inclusive point of connection in deafblindness worldwide.

In doing so, we have further increased our capacity to be effective and have made progress across all three key objectives of the current term:

- Clear progress in recognition of deafblindness as a unique and distinct disability
- Clear progress in becoming THE link to information and exchange in the field
- Clear progress in becoming more inclusive, participative and relevant

If anything has particularly defined the year 2025, it is the growing embedding of diversity, equity and

inclusion within Dbl. This has been evident across all three objective areas.

And that's something we can all be delighted with. Vital diversity, equity and inclusion are what make Dbl thrive, providing a bright and peaceful counterpoint to what is often a rather gloomy political climate. Hence the dove on the cover.

This Annual Report 2025 provides an insight into the most important developments from the perspective of the Management Committee (ManCom). Enjoy reading it and stay involved. Only together have we achieved so much and can continue to move forward.

Thank you very much for all your commitment!

On behalf of ManCom and the Board:

Mirko Baur, Dbl President



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Dbl in a Nutshell

Dbl is an inclusive international network association that

- promotes awareness of deafblindness as a unique disability;
- facilitates the exchange and learning from each other among service organizations, people with lived experience, practitioners, leaders, researchers, and any other person with and without deafblindness in the field;
- and influences for inclusion, full participation, and access to appropriate services for persons with deafblindness around the world.

Dbl is also an international association registered in the Netherlands and recognized as a Public Benefit Organization (ANBI).

According to this Annual Report, Dbl has 1,872 individual members and 73 organisational members worldwide.

Dbl has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is a member of the WHO Disability Health Equity Network and the Interna-

tional Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), and is very active in the International Communication Rights Alliance (ICRA). Dbl works closely with the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB) on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding.

The management structure comprises an active Board, which sets the direction for Dbl, and its standing committees: the Management Committee ManCom, which is responsible for implementing decisions and day-to-day business, the Communications Committee ComCom which handles communications, the Fundraising Committee FundCom, which is responsible for securing sufficient financial resources, and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee DEICom, which deals with precisely these issues. The current composition of the Board and the standing committees is published on our website. Here is the link to the Board page: [The Board – Deafblind International Dbl](#).

Dbl is a network of networks and has currently 17 thematically or geographically specialized networks. Find out more about the networks on this page: [Networks – Deafblind International Dbl](#)

Key objective #1: **Clear progress in recognition of deafblindness as a unique and distinct disability**

For the Right to Education for ALL Children with Deafblindness!

The major story in the first key objective area in 2025 was the Global Education Campaign. A key highlight was the first official Dbl Regional Conference in Asia. It took place from 1 to 3 March 2025 in Pokhara, Nepal's official tourism capital. The conference exceeded all objectives and expectations. Among other things, with 320 conference participants from 22 countries with 68 presentations and an inclusive post-conference trek with 60 participants from 8 countries, including 14 with deafblindness from Nepal, India and Bangladesh.

As always with Dbl, the success is due to networking. The regional inter-organisational team was central to the work on site, with the Deafblind Association Nepal, the Society of Deafblind Parents Nepal, the Nepal Association of the Blind, the National Federation of the Deaf Nepal, and Sense International India. The Scientific Committee was delighted to welcome, among others, SEAMEO SEN, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs.



INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR
Voice from the Silence:
Raising Awareness and Commitment for Children with Deafblindness

Opening Remarks **SPEAKERS**

Dr. Abu Khair, M. Pd.
Head of BBGKT East Java
Indonesia

Mirko Bauer
President of Deafblind
International, Switzerland

Dr. Namita Jacob
Dbl & Children Trust,
India

Weningdyah
SEN
Indonesia

Dewi Hanjaka Kencana
SEN Parents Forum
Yogyakarta

DATE: June 19, 2025
TIME: 1.00 to 5.00 PM
Jakarta time (GMT +7)
PLATFORM: Zoom Meeting

WHO SHOULD ATTEND
Teachers, Educators,
Government Representatives,
Parents of Children with Special
Needs, Students & Researches

FREE REGISTER NOW
Link URL dan QR Code
<https://s.id/4P2WK>

Get Webinar Materials and e-Certificate!

bbgktjatim bbgktjatim.kemdikbud.go.id 0811-3653-667



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Dbl is also deeply grateful to the sponsors: cbm, Inclusive Futures, Kéta Kéti Avenir, and Sense International.

The conference led to the launch of a new Dbl network, the emerging Dbl Asia Network. It has developed very well since then and is expected to be formally established at the 2026 Annual General Meeting. As part of the Global Education Campaign in Asia, one focus of the conference was, of course, education. And indeed, the conference proved to be an excellent platform for sending out the campaign message 'LET ME IN'.

This also applies to the 1st Dbl South Asia Webinar, which took place on 19 June thanks to the tremendous commitment of a newly founded organisation in Indonesia, MIPI, the Ministry of Education and Culture in East Java, Indonesia, and SEAMEO SEN. A fantastic 820 people registered for the webinar.

And there were further positive developments in the Global Education Campaign. On a regional level, Latin America was very successful in organising trainings in collaboration and/or with the support of the University



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Network REDLAT (Red Interuniversitaria Latinoamericana y del Caribe sobre Discapacidad y Derechos Humanos), the OEI (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos) and FOAL (ONCE Foundation for Latin America). The Global Education Campaign was also represented by the Dbl President at the 3rd ICEVI Latinoamérica conference in Brazil. In Africa, the possibility of holding a conference in South Africa or Zambia was considered, but these plans were put on hold due to a lack of sufficiently robust local networks. However, it is precisely this kind of exploratory work that can contribute to the further development of these networks.

At a global level, in 2025 the “Global Education Campaign” was successfully placed on the agenda of the Global Disability Summit in Berlin – with a breakfast reception sponsored by the Swiss Embassy. The campaign was also well represented at the Zero Project conference at the UN headquarters in Vienna.





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1st official Dbl Regional Conference in Asia. Akiko Fukuda, her team of communication assistants/interpreters, and one of the conference IS interpreters.

The launch of the Research Initiative in early 2025, which focuses on the education of children with deafblindness in the Global South, resulted in 54 research proposals from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Advisory Committee, led by its Chair and Vice-Chair, Pawlos Kassu and Isabel Amaral, has done an excellent job and selected 30 projects by mid-July: 13 from Africa, 12 from Asia and 5 from Latina America. With one exception, the research projects have progressed very well since then.

Finally, a small number of practical campaign projects at national level were also able to go ahead because they secured sponsors. However, an attempt to encourage Dbl members from the Global North to donate to projects in the Global South was financially not very successful. That said, it did contribute further to the discussion and organisation of processes relating to funding options.

None of these achievements of the Global Education Campaign would have been possible without all the incredibly



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dedicated and passionate people involved. DbI would like to extend a special thank you to the regional leaders: Mary Maragia for Africa; Akhil Paul;

Namita Jacob and Weningsih for Asia; and Carmen Guerrero, Graciela Ferioli, and Yvette Gallegos for Latin America.

ICF Core Sets for Deafblindness & Global Definition of Deafblindness

There were also positive developments in 2025 regarding the ICF Core Sets for Deafblindness and the work on a Global Definition of Deafblindness.

The successful development of the ICF Core Sets for adults was completed in the first quarter of 2025. Ever since you can access the free downloadable versions of the brief Core Set (33 ICF codes prioritized for individual clinical encounters), the intermediate Core Set (137 ICF codes chosen for interdisciplinary communication) and the comprehensive Core Set (218 ICF codes covering every aspect that is relevant, including those important for advocacy and policy) like this:

Wittich, W., Dumassais, S., Jaiswal, A., Ogedengbe, T. O., Lopez, R., & Granberg, S. (2025, February 18). The WHO ICF Core Set for Deafblindness: The comprehensive core set <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/A942K>

Wittich, W., Dumassais, S., Jaiswal, A., Ogedengbe, T. O., Lopez, R., & Granberg, S. (2025, February 18). The WHO ICF Core Set for Deafblindness: The intermediate core set. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/627PF>

Wittich, W., Dumassais, S., Jaiswal, A., Ogedengbe, T. O., Lopez, R., & Granberg, S. (2025, February 18). The WHO ICF Core Set for Deafblindness: The brief core set. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/NK29J>

The work continued with the start of the development of ICF Core Sets for children and young people with deafblindness, a project led by Shirley Dumassais. Following their nominations in 2025, the two leaders of the first development process, Walter Wittich and Ricard López, were awarded Perkin's Anne Sullivan Medal in early 2026. Dbl congratulates them wholeheartedly here as well.



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Work on a global definition of deafblindness also took a decisive step forward in 2025. A qualitative study conducted in collaboration with the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB), which examined how deafblind people define deafblindness for themselves, was completed in March 2026. The study demonstrates once again how diverse deafblindness is and how clearly this becomes apparent, particularly from the perspective of people with lived experience. DbI takes this opportunity to

extend its warmest thanks to the Board members involved: Meredith Prain, Saskia Damen and Walter Wittich.

Speaking of the WFDB: its campaign led to the United Nations General Assembly recognising the International Day of Deafblindness in June. DbI was, of course, delighted to support the campaign and helped celebrate its success through its communications.

Key objective #2:

Clear progress in becoming THE link to information and exchange in the field

DbI's Core Identity: Connect to Act!

As in the previous year, DbI's 17 official Networks – each specialising in a particular theme or geographical area – and our communications remained central to the second key objective area and, indeed, to DbI's identity. Ultimately of course, DbI thrives on its individual and organisational members.

Networks

As reported in the previous chapter an 18th Network – the emerging Asian Network – was taking shape in 2025. All Networks have continued to grow in membership. And by the end of the year, initial enquiries regarding two further networks had been received. New initiatives can, of course, also become part of existing Networks and enrich them. For sure, all of this demonstrates that DbI remains a genuine and vibrant network of networks.

To continue to coordinate this network effectively and with passion, the role of the Network Coordinator held very successfully by Trees van Nunen was supplemented in 2025 by that of





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**Dbi NETWORK
OF THE AMERICAS**  **Deafblind
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SAVE THE DATES
for our
upcoming Topical Discussions!

**We are excited to present the following
90- minute presentations:**

Thursday July 10, 2025
David Brown: The Forgotten Senses

Thursday Nov. 6, 2025
Maria Bove: "Inclusive Systems: Bridges
for Inclusion"

**We hope you will join us for healthy
discussion and sharing about the wonders
of the world of deafblindness.**

**Presentations include ASL, Portuguese and Spanish Translation
and take place at the following times:**
3:30 pm PST/4:30 pm MST/5:30 pm CST/6:30 pm EST/
19h30 horário de Brasília/Hora de Mexico 4:30 pm/Hora de Argentina 19:30 horas

**Registration information will be sent prior to each
presentation date.**

the Network Co-Coordinator. Following a call for expressions of interest, Yvette Gallegos from Mexico was selected for this new role. The Networks' leadership teams now also have a coordinating team as their point of contact, which, like them, spans different countries and cultures. Four coordination meetings took place in 2025.

For the first time in Dbl's history, preparations were also underway for a joint pre-conference of the Networks ahead of the 2027 World Conference in Davos, Switzerland. The pre-conference will take place on 18 and 19 July 2027. Whilst the political world has often focused on what divides us, Dbl – and Dbl's Networks in particular – have prioritised connection and collaboration.

In other respects, too, many of the Networks were wonderfully active in line with our motto, 'Connect to Act'. They participated, for example, in providing content for Dbl's new member newsletter, 'Deafblind Connection'. Four Networks organised webinars, the Acquired Deafblindness Network ADBN, the Communication Network, the CHARGE Network and the Network of the Americas. The Youth and the Outdoor Network each organised activities in the



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The DBI Outdoor Network Week 2025 in Denmark

Friluftcenter Sletten, Søhøjlandet. September 22-26

Netherlands and Denmark respectively. And the Research Network awarded among other activities research grants to researchers working in low-income regions

Dbl wouldn't be Dbl without Networks. A round of applause for all the members involved, and a big thank you to the leadership teams and the coordination team.



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Communication

Our communication was further strengthened in 2025. The Communication Committee (ComCom) and the Secretariat, which is also part of ComCom, continued to play a key role in this. And communicative coordination with the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB), for example regarding the UN General Assembly's recognition of the International Day of Deafblindness, became significantly more important.

Speaking for Deafblind Awareness: The ComCom campaign in June has been reliably bringing together and inspiring members and friends for several years now. In 2025, the campaign was expanded beyond yarnbombing to encompass all possible forms of artistic expression – making it more diverse and inclusive.

Since 2025, Dbl communicates also with the 'Community Connections' section in the Dbl Review and the member newsletter 'Deafblind Connection'. Among other things, the calls for proposals from the Global Education Cam-





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Graciela Ferioli receiving Dbl Lifetime Achievement Award.

campaign's Research Initiative and the calls for expressions of interest regarding membership on the ComCom, the newly formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEICom), and the Planning and Program Committees of the World Conference 2027 have generated a great deal of interest.

In total, the Secretariat ran 34 MailChimp campaigns between mid-April 2025 and mid-April 2026. Good open rates for newsletters generally range between 20 and 25 per cent. Dbl achieved a fantastic rate of 38.6 per cent. Rates of over 50% were achieved in May, June and July 2025, as well as in March 2026, specifically with the call to researchers in the Global South, the invitation to the 2025 Annual General Meeting, the mailing marking the first UN-recognised International Day of Deafblindness, and Dbl's announcements in March. This is a great sign that Dbl's members and followers really want to get involved and stay informed.

Of course, meetings remained an important form of communication at Dbl in 2025, continuously supported by Zoom, including AI for the first draft of minutes and for captions. All meetings occurred online. The Board met eight times. The Management Committee (ManCom), the ComCom and



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the DEICom met seven times, and the Fundraising Committee FundCom met six times. Dbl has continued to use Google Workspace for Nonprofits successfully.

When it comes to the performance figures for the website and Dbl's social media, these are the relevant data:

Facebook: In February 2020 there were 3053 people following Dbl on Facebook, by mid-April 2026 6000 (+6.4% compared to the previous year). The number of Facebook followers has only increased in the last 6 years.

According to Facebook estimates, the largest user group is the 35–44 age bracket, accounting for 28.1%, with women making up well over half of this group. The analysis of data by city shows that Facebook is important for Dbl's diversity. Dbl's

Facebook page was used most frequently in the cities of Kathmandu, Córdoba (Argentina), Cairo, and Addis Ababa.

The posts that generated the most views and interactions were those about events that are significant to the deafblind community, or posts about well-known Dbl figures – like the posts about the first UN-recognised International Day of Deafblindness or the passing of Marianne Riggio.

Dbl continued to perform well in Facebook's benchmarking for the last 28 days. We had more followers and new followers in comparison with similar organisations.

Instagram: Dbl started to use Instagram in November 2018. In February 2020 we had 280 followers, by mid-April 2026 1720 (+10.9% compared to



the previous year). The number of followers has only increased in the last 6 years.

The posts that generated the most views and interactions were again those about events that are significant to the deafblind community, or posts about well-known Dbl figures – like the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award to Graciela Ferioli in Argentina.

Bluesky & LinkedIn: At the beginning of 2025, Dbl decided to leave X. Continuing to maintain a presence on this platform was no longer compatible with Dbl's clear commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Instead, new accounts were opened on Bluesky and LinkedIn. By mid-April 2026, they had 50 (+42.9% compared to mid-April 2025) and 389 (+527.4% compared to mid-April 2025) followers respectively.

Website: Compared to 2024, the website had 29.2 % more active users in 2025, and around 16,000 new users were registered, 30.5 % more than in 2024. However, the average time spent on the site decreased by 43 % to 58 seconds.

By far most new users came directly. This channel has grown by about 67% compared to last year. Except for non-assigned and paid search, the relevance of all other channels became less important, including newly generated traffic from social media.

The most important page in terms of views and users was by far again the landing page, again followed by the Dbl Review page. The pages with the biggest positive change in terms of views and active users were the individual membership and the Board page (views approx.+100%). The biggest



negative change was registered for the page of the Networks (views: -28.06% views).

Compared to 2024, more countries in Africa were reached. Encouragingly, with an increase

2024



of 230.6%, the website now has the fourth highest number of active users in China, and Singapore is now among the 10 most website-using cities, showing the biggest positive change in active users among them.

2025





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By the way: The main website user language in 2025 was still and by far English, but now followed by Chinese and then, among the most important 10 languages, by Spanish, German, Dutch, French, Norwegian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Italian.

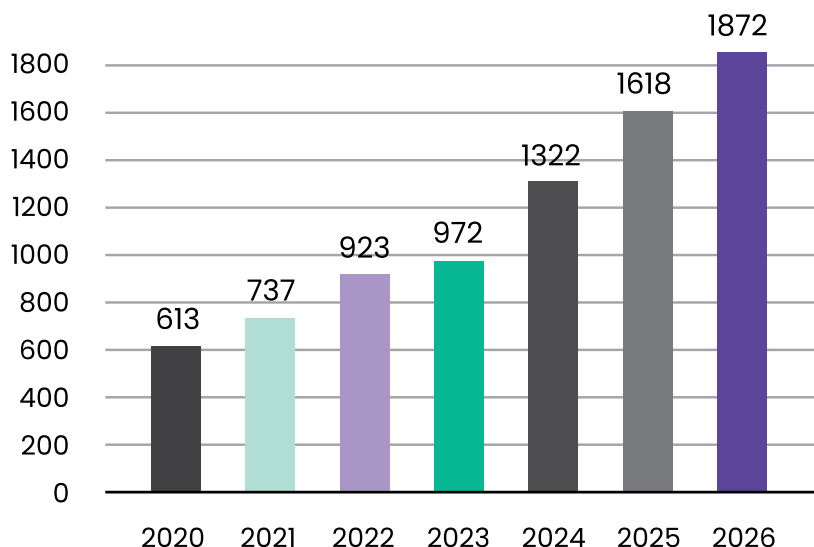
Finally, some personnel changes in the Communication Committee ComCom: Latin America remained actively represented in ComCom with a change in representation of the Dbl Networks from Trees van Nunen to Yvette Gallegos. ComCom also enlarged and gained Asako Kawahara from Japan and Dorene Myrie from the USA as new members. After six years, Mirko Baur stepped down as found-

ing chair but remained involved as a ComCom member. Dbl's Information Officer, Irina Moiseeva, has taken over as chair effective April 2025.

A huge thank you to everyone involved for all their hard work, creativity and enthusiasm in support of Dbl Communication. This also includes the ever-growing group of Dbl Communication Ambassadors around the world, who are ensuring that Dbl Communication is widely spread. Special thanks go to Dbl's Information Officer, Irina Moiseeva, and her team in Russia, and to DeafBlind Ontario in Canada, who continued to act as backup to the Information Officer.

Members

We are delighted to report that individual membership figures continued to rise in 2025. By the cut-off date in mid-April 2026, 1,872 members had been registered. This represents a significant increase of 15.7% compared with the previous year.



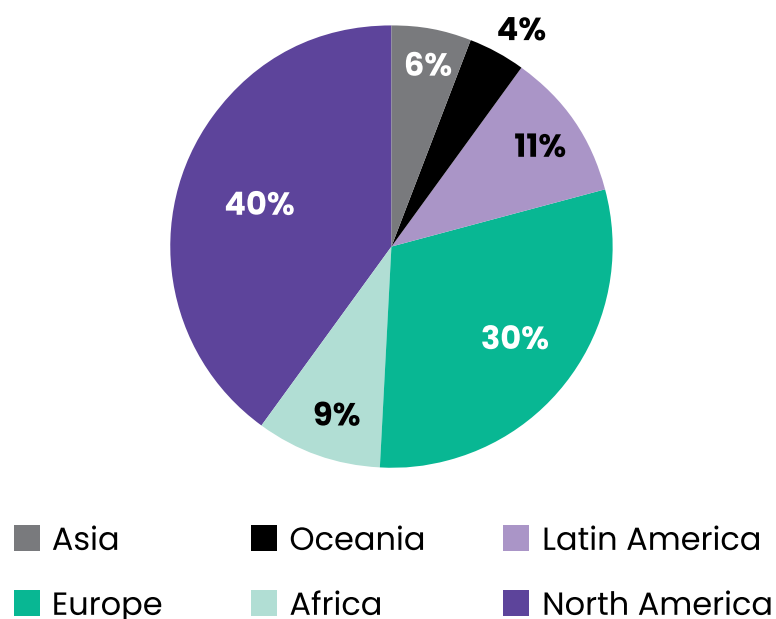
However, these figures should be treated with caution. There are undoubtedly some entries among them that are no longer up to date. This makes the reorganisation of the data collection – which we will discuss in the section about the third objective area – all the more important.

With the growing number of individual members, individual diversity is undoubtedly increasing as well. For the time being, however, we cannot say much about this due to a lack of data. As for geographical origin, diversity has actually decreased slightly compared to last year. Although members have joined in all regions, the strongest growth in absolute numbers has been in Europe and North America – the regions that were already the most strongly represented.

Nevertheless, relative to the regional membership figures, individual membership has increased



most significantly in Asia and Oceania. The former is likely also influenced by the Regional Conference in Nepal. This effect of regional conferences was previously also evident at the first Dbl Africa Conference.



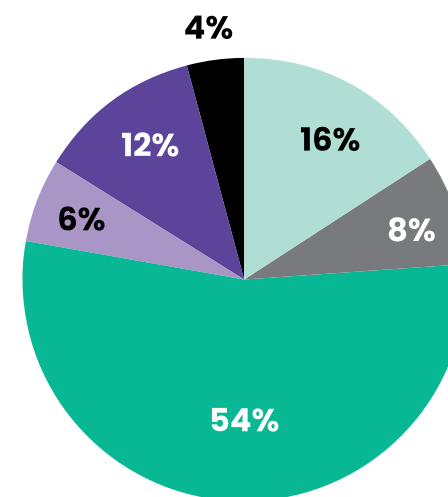
According to data from mid-April 2026, the number of organisational members has fallen slightly – due to a decline in mini-corporate members from low- and low-middle-income countries. On closer inspection, however, this appears to be more of an artefact. In fact, the data is missing mini-corporate members from politically very difficult contexts and/or facing significant financial difficulties, some of whom were very likely unreachable for this very reason. Mini-corporate membership is available exclusively to organisations in low- or lower-middle-income countries and is often sponsored by other organisational members, for which we are very grateful.

Following the necessary adjustment of the data, the total number of member organisations has risen slightly to 73, with the number of large corporate members remaining unchanged, whilst the number of small corporate members has increased slightly. This represents an overall slight increase of 2.8% compared with the previous year.



We are also unable to say much about the diversity of our organisational members due to a lack of data. However, their geographical diversity has increased slightly. As before, Dbl has the largest number of organisational members in Europe. However, the proportion of member organisations in Asia, Latin America and North America has increased slightly compared with the previous year.

Incidentally, when it comes to the Global South, the option of a mini-corporate membership is particularly important for the geographical diversity of member organisations. It continued to be used predominantly by organisations in Africa, which, in the corrected dataset, account for 78.6% of these organisational members.



Africa Asia Europe
Latin America North America Oceania

Key objective #3: **Clear progress in becoming more inclusive, participative and relevant**

Dbl's Core Identity: Connect to Act!

The major development in this objective area concerns the further evolution of our structures and processes. This process has also shown that further steps will be required. A thorough review of our constitution is planned for the next four-year Board term, starting in September 2027.

In 2025, a new committee was set up to further promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEICom). Following a criteria-based selection process based on the Terms of Reference (ToR), the following initial committee members were selected from 13 expressions of interest: Agnes Pius Kivike (Tanzania), Basem Abdel Ghaffar (UAE), Harriet Malichi (Zambia), Sini Thomas (India), Steve Rose (Australia). According to the ToR, the Dbl President and the Dbl Governance Officer, Roxanna Spruyt, were designated as members. In the meantime, Agnes Kivike has left and two new members from Brazil have been welcomed in her place: Laura Ancilotto and Shirley Rodrigues Maia.





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In 2025, DEICom developed a specific data concept designed to collect DEI-related Dbl data, thereby guiding further progress towards diversity, equity and inclusion. The DEI data framework, together with other developments – such as an annual review of data on membership, the Board, standing committees and Network leadership, as well as the introduction of due diligence questions – has led to a reorganisation of our data collection. To this end, Google Forms are now being used, which are securely stored in the Dbl Workspace. The implementation took place in early 2026. The Governance officer, the treasurer, Esther van Dijk, and the secretariat with Cathy Proll and Lindsay Blasdel in particular, were incredibly dedicated to ensuring this.

DEICom made also recommendations for the next Dbl Regional Conference, the organisation of the next Dbl election, the allocation of seats on the Board, and the structure and procedures relating to the Dbl Awards. All of this has been very well received by the Management Committee, the Board and the Chair of the next Awards Committee, and is or will be taken into account in the forthcoming awards and election processes.

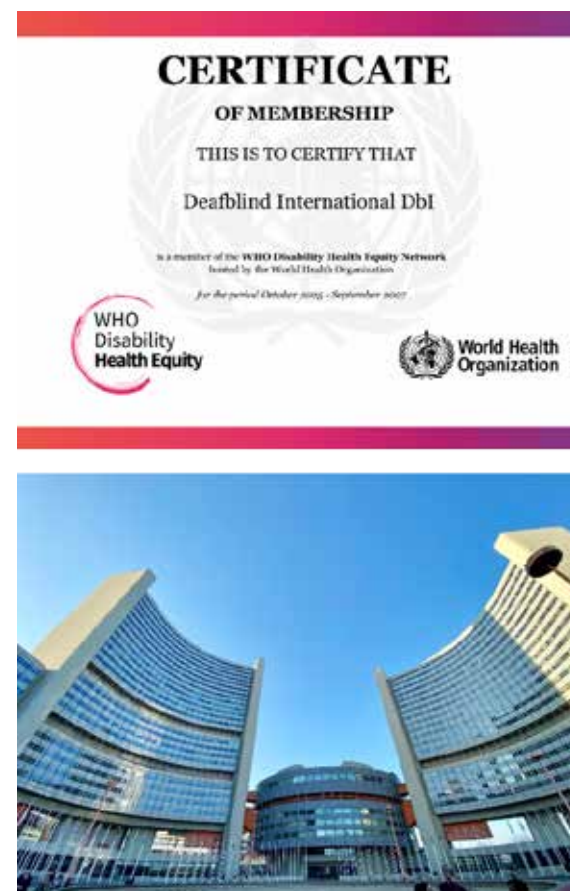
Since 2025, Dbl therefore has four standing committees: The Management Committee ManCom, the Communication Com-

mittee ComCom, the Fundraising Committee FundCom and the DEI Committee DEICom.

Thanks to the Governance Officer's tremendous commitment, Dbl also has a revised Management Handbook since 2025, which is now continuously updated. Furthermore, Dbl now has a comprehensive data protection policy based on the European Union's gold standard in this area – in keeping with Dbl's headquarters in the Netherlands. This latest introduction was also linked, amongst other things, to new consent forms for photos and videos on our communication channels.

Other important governance measures have been implemented or are due to be implemented in 2026, having been prepared in 2025. These relate to the upcoming Dbl elections and the evaluation processes for the Board and standing committees.

A huge thank you to everyone involved for these fantastic developments – and a special mention to Roxanna Spruyt, who has been essential in establishing this new and significant role for governance at Dbl.



Collaboration with the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB)



From left to right: Sanja Tarczay, president of the World Federation of the Deafblind, Mirko Baur, president of the Deafblind International and Mellen Marucha, the Senior Programs Coordinator from Sense International Kenya. Zero Project Conference in Vienna.

Our collaborations are also central to the third objective area, particularly those with the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB). Of particular importance were the preparations for the first joint World Conference, which will take place from 19 to 23 July 2027 in Davos, Switzerland.

Following a series of rather informal exchange meetings involving a wide range of participants, the two formal com-



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mittees were established in 2025: the Planning Committee and the Programme Committee. Both committees are composed of an equal number of representatives from Dbl and WFDB respectively, and both are international in nature, although a strong presence of Swiss organisations was also considered important on the Planning Committee.

The members of the Planning Committee were: Mirko Baur & Riku Virtanen (Co-Chairs); Anne Schoone & Trees van Nunen (shared seat); Esther van Dijk; Ezekiel Kumwenda; Lucía D'Arino & Dijana Adzic (shared seat); Mäde Müller; Samuel Valencia; Sara Kiener; Vanessa (Ness) Vlajkovic. And for the Programme Committee: Saskia Damen & Sricamalan Pathmanathan (Co-Chairs); Annmarie Watharow; Lisa Jacobs; Lucía D'Arino & Dijana Adzic (shared seat); Moira Dunsmore; Pawlos Kasu; Sachin Rizal; Shrutilata Singh; Wilson Masinza. A huge thank you to everyone for all the brilliant

ideas, discussions and solutions, and for your drive and passion for the World Conference!

Both committees have worked with tremendous dedication. By the end of the year, for example, the conference budget and framework had been finalised, and the call for abstracts was issued as early as March 2026. By the end of 2025, a substantial number of sponsors had also been secured. The main sponsors to date are: Tanne, the Swiss Foundation for People with Deafblindness, supporting the World Conference with CHF 75,000; SNAB, the Swiss National Association of and for the Blind, with CHF 50,000; and the Italian Lega del filo d'oro with CHF 30,000. Dbl is immensely grateful for this wonderful support!

Thanks to the close collaboration of Dbl and WFDB in preparation for the World Conference, everyone involved has consistently had the opportunity to learn a great deal from one another – which, in turn, has been a constant source of motivation.

Other Important Partners

Of course, there were other important partners in 2025 as well.

The most significant positive development was undoubtedly the granting of special consultative status to Dbl within the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July 2025. In addition, during the second half of the year, Dbl also became a member of the newly formed Health Equity Network of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Here, Dbl is primarily represented by Walter Wittich, whilst the President otherwise represents Dbl at the UN.

Our collaboration with the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) was revitalised in 2025 through our participation in three IDDC task groups. Dbl is primarily represented within the IDDC by our Vice-President Mary Maragia, who is a member of two task groups. Meredith Prain, the

other Vice-President, has taken over the third task group from the President at the start of 2026. She continued to be very active as a leading figure in the International Communication Rights Alliance (ICRA) that is also connected with the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). A very big thank you to both of them!

Just as collaborations can emerge or deepen, they can also be scaled back or, at least for the time being, brought to a halt. This was the case in September 2025 with our collaboration with the global body of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), whilst our regional cooperation continues. We are taking the time to reflect. At a later stage, we can reassess whether our values align and whether it would be a good partnership again.

An Essential Requirement: Financial and Volunteer Support for Dbl in 2025

When it comes to financial and other support for Dbl, the Fundraising Committee (FundCom) plays a central role. Like the other standing committees, it has been enormously committed to Dbl in 2025.

Among other things, important new funding process guidelines have been developed. They define clearly and realistically how Dbl engages in funding opportunities, clarifying when Dbl acts as a facilitator versus a formal applicant and how responsibilities are distributed between local partners, regions, and Dbl leadership. The goal of the guidelines is to enable access to funding while protecting Dbl's credibility, capacity, and governance standards. The guidelines were recently approved by the Board. Alex Bizzarri and Nikki Morris, together with the President, have been particularly committed to their development, and we therefore extend our heartfelt thanks to them.

Incidentally, the FundCom also ensured that the donor stewardship procedures were revised and that the Donor Badge was provided for 2026. Furthermore, on the FundCom's initiative, a trial scheme for re-





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Recording the hours of volunteer engagement was adopted and launched in early 2026. This allows us to highlight the fact that Dbl is primarily based on voluntary work – for example, in future annual reports or in applications for funding opportunities.

Among FundCom's achievements in 2025 is, of course, its collaboration with the Planning Committee of the World Conference, which led to securing the aforementioned main sponsors and further significant contributions. By the end of the calendar year, the World Conference was financially secured, subject to sufficient numbers of participants.

FundCom was also successful in finding sponsors to cover membership fees that were unaffordable for some mini corporate members in Africa and Latin America. Once again, six larger organisations were secured for this purpose. A big round of applause for them!

Finally, FundCom also expanded and strengthened its ranks in 2025. Keerthi Uthappa from Sense International India has joined the team. A warm welcome to her, and a heartfelt thank you to all FundCom members for their dedication!



2025 Annual Financial Statements

Whilst Dbl relies primarily on voluntary work, sufficient funding is nevertheless essential. This applies on the one hand to fixed expenses, which we have in particular with lump-sum payments for services provided by Sensity for the secretariat, Royal Kentalis for treasury and Yaseneva Poliana for information services. Although the amounts are modest (and correspondingly generous on the part of the organisations involved), they are nevertheless necessary. On the other hand, we need financial resources for our mission, for the activities of our official Networks, for example, or for campaigns, projects and conferences.

So let's take a look at the figures from the 2025 annual financial statements. Once again, we have

achieved a better result than expected: a surplus of 20.774 euros. We naturally had the budgeted expenditure for the Nepal conference. Apart from that, there were no particular issues. For 2025, Dbl had estimated income of 73.000 euros and expenditure of 81.140 euros. In reality, however, Dbl took in 85.706 euros (including grants and donations of 15.382 euros) and spent 64.932 euros, resulting in a surplus of 20.774 euros. In addition to the higher-than-expected income, the Dbl Networks only utilised 51% of their budget. Thus, 2025 was also a very good year for Dbl financially! Below you will find the figures for the last 5 years for comparison. Our reserves and funds have grown to 148.998 euros

Figures Annual Report	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Balance as at January 1	€ 113.532	€ 126.872	€ 125.964	€ 118.570	€ 128.224
Income (fiscal)	€ 61.325	€ 61.725	€ 79.522	€ 82.300	€ 85.706
Expenditures (fiscal)	€ 47.895	€ 62.633	€ 86.916	€ 72.646	€ 64.932
Surplus / deficit (- for the year)	€ 13.340	€ -908	€ -7.394	€ 9.654	€ 20.774
Balance as at December 31 (Reserves and funds)	€ 126.872	€ 125.964	€ 118.570	€ 128.224	€ 148.998

Please go to [this link](#) for our comprehensive Financial Report 2025 including the independent auditor's report.



Grants and Donations 2025

Grant/Donation	Donor	Amount
Refund of not needed Dbl contribution to ICF Core Sets project	Refund	€ 9.143
Sponsor World Conference 2027	DeafBlind Ontario	€ 6.122
PayPal Charity Donations	Diverse Donors	€ 117
TOTAL		€ 15.382



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Organisational Members Sponsored 2025	Sponsored by
Asociacion de Sordociegos de Nicaragua	DeafBlind Ontario, Canada
Kwale School for the Deaf, Unit for the Deafblind, Kenya	DeafBlind Ontario, Canada
NIDA Society, Egypt	Tanne, Switzerland
Society of Deafblind Parents, Nepal	CDBA, Canada
Socieven, Sordociegos de Venezuela	Sensity, Canada
African Federation of the Deafblind (AFDB)	Anonymous
Rwanda Organization of Persons with DeafBlindness (ROPDB)	Anonymous
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia	Anonymous
VIWATA, ViziwiWasioona, Tanzania	Anonymous
Chetana Trust, India	Anonymous



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On behalf of Dbl, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

This also gives us a wonderful opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to Esther van Dijk for her outstanding and dedicated service as Treasurer of the Dbl, and to Peter Drijfhamer for his many years of excellent work as accountant. Esther sadly left Royal Kentalis – and with it her Dbl role – in the first quarter of 2026. Fortunately, Royal Kentalis's commitment to the Treasury has continued seamlessly, with Carine de Waart now taking on the role of Treasurer, continuing to receive significant support from Peter Drijfhamer. A very warm welcome to Carine!

Incidentally, when the current Board's term ends in 2027, the secretariat will also change. Sensity, the Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada, has been delighted to fulfil the Secretariat role over the past seven years. Sensity's focus is to complete the Secretariat handbook which has been a work in progress for the past few years. And they will work closely with the new secretariat to ensure continuity and a smooth transition. The Request for Proposals for this key role at Dbl will be published in the second quarter of 2026. A huge thank you to Cathy Proll and Lindsay Blasdel for their great work in the secretarial role.