



**DREAMROOT**  
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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**PERMISSION TO DREAM**





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# EXECUTIVE LETTER

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In 2023, DreamRoot Leadership Institute (DreamRoot) empowered 160 local leaders across seven countries, impacting well over 1,700 students and their families in more than 24 communities. These are remarkable metrics, but what is more important is to remember that behind each of these numbers are people. Individuals whose lives have immeasurable value and are forever impacted, creating a ripple effect of change.

DreamRoot local leaders foster healing, growth, and development through mentoring, training, and life-changing opportunities, which are transforming territories and generations. This is what changing history looks like. A small initiative can indeed turn into global solutions.

As we build on our successes together, these small initiatives are growing and multiplying. Each leader is making progress in their communities. Reflecting on all of this, I am reminded of the importance of not despising humble beginnings. Even for DreamRoot, as a young organization, what has been accomplished thus far is inspiring. It points to even more of what is possible, as we link arms across communities and nations to make the seemingly impossible a reality.

May we each approach our work with urgency, excellence, and a focus on people. It is our privilege and responsibility to partner with others so people can rise out of injustice to live a life of dignity, safety, health and contribute their brilliance to the world. The impact outlined in this document showcases that dreams nurtured can bloom into life-altering outcomes. It is a reminder that true growth, development, and progress are rooted in the dedication to show up, connect, and plant the seeds of hope.

Beyond just an impact report, in these pages are a living testimony to the extraordinary potential within every individual and community, waiting to be realized through vision, presence, and unwavering persistence. The most significant change DreamRoot initiates is not just tangible infrastructure, training programs, or even mobilizing leaders, it is the transformation of mindsets that result in lasting change, a shift from survival to aspiration, from isolation to collaboration. Community members who once dreamed of leaving their communities due to lack of opportunities are now actively participating in its development.

We extend our gratitude to our supporters and investors for standing with us, encouraging us to dream bigger and go further. DreamRoot will continue to connect, train, and activate local leaders around the world in developing themselves, their initiatives, and those around them, because we know that when they do, it changes everything.

**Amy Passos**  
Executive Director and Chairperson





# BY THE NUMBERS

DreamRoot partnered with over 160 local leaders in seven countries serving 24+ communities, to reaching over 1,700 students and their families.

## Our work included:

### 300

hours of DreamRoot training and coaching to local leaders.

### 1,760+

new leadership connections made through DreamRoot events.

### 9,000+

hours of local leader programming provided to community members.

### 16

capacity-building events hosted resulting in six community members gaining formal employment and one launching a business.

### 35

community members employed in educational program delivery and infrastructure projects.

# 2023

# WHO WE ARE



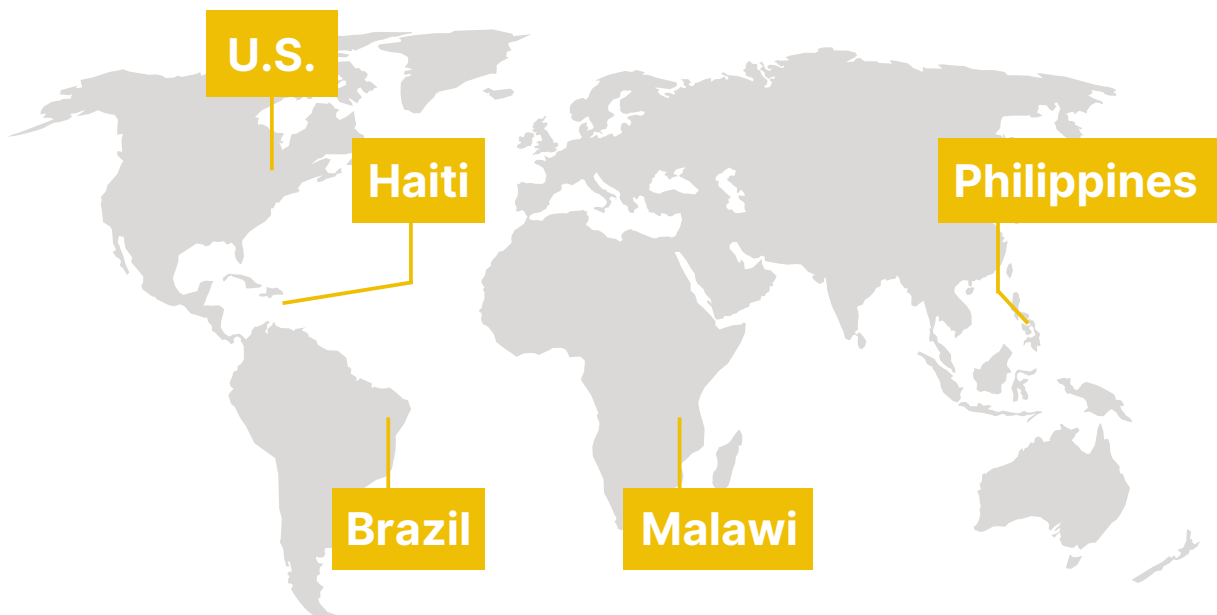
## Mission

DreamRoot Leadership Institute (DreamRoot) is on a mission to release the potential of leaders in underserved communities to reverse the cycles of poverty and promote the well-being of every member of society.

## Vision

To see every person, regardless of their life's circumstances, be given the opportunity to realize and achieve their dreams; where they are living out their fullest potential and all of society advances as a result.

# COMMUNITIES IMPACTED



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL

DreamRoot, an international training and development organization, empowers local leaders to solve many of their own challenges and raise up others to do the same. Through a combination of training, coaching, seed investment and networking, we collaborate with them to lead transformative initiatives, fostering sustainable social and economic growth within their communities, creating a powerful ripple effect.

DreamRoot’s leadership development model involves **identifying** proven leaders and high-potential change makers within underserved communities and **equipping** them with the training, coaching, resources, and networks they need to **launch** local initiatives that will have a social and economic impact and will **multiply** leaders to sustain and expand operations.

IDENTIFY

EQUIP

LAUNCH

MULTIPLY

## FOCUS AREAS

DreamRoot’s core focus areas – youth and education, entrepreneurship and economic development, community capacity-building, and equity and inclusion – are foundational to building a thriving society.



# Youth & Education

Education is a key driver for development and a powerful equalizer. This is why DreamRoot is dedicated to tackling barriers to education and advancing access to quality programming. We collaborate with local leaders to launch, fortify and expand educational programs to underprivileged students.

The **tutoring programs** implemented in Haiti and Brazil resulted in improved learning outcomes for **308 students**. Seven young adult **graduates were employed**, and **23 teachers** honed their facilitation skills through the tutoring program.

Illiterate children who have fallen through the cracks in school are **learning to read** at the Sertão DreamRoot Training Center

DreamRoot is making **jiu-jitsu programming** accessible to over **343 underprivileged youth** throughout Brazil where they gain mentorship, accountability and training in life skills.

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**“The most impact you can have in someone’s life is giving them access to education.”**

**- Rose**

**DreamRoot Local Leader, Haiti**



# 664

**children and youth actively participate in local-leader educational and sports programs, directly reinforcing their learning and improving grades.**

Youth are gaining a vision for their future through **career fairs** at the Arte Suave DreamRoot Training Center.

**Seed investment** has included over **50 children's books** in French delivered to a trauma healing team in the Republic of Congo and educational toys delivered to schools in Liberia and Brazil. Plus, a printer to a school in Haiti, allowing the administration to supply needed course materials to families for a fraction of the cost.



## ACADEMIC SUCCESS AT ARTE SUAVE DREAMROOT TRAINING CENTER

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At the Arte Suave DreamRoot Training Center, all **120 jiu-jitsu students** seamlessly advanced to the next grade without "recuperação," like summer school—an improvement from 63 who attended recuperação the prior year.

The remarkable **100% pass rate** underscores the coaching team's

commitment and the program's support. Regular check-ins, homework monitoring, and proactive assistance reach students needing extra help. The program's discipline and the experience of being part of a caring community are powerful contributors to this success.



## SUMMER CAMP: A LIFELINE FOR STUDENTS

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The fun five-week summer camp in Haiti provided educational games and daily meals for **125 students** grades 1-7, **employing 10 camp staff**.

For students facing challenges at home, these camps serve as a lifeline, providing not only educational support, preparing them for the upcoming school year, but also nourishment and positive guidance.





## BEYOND ACADEMICS: SPORTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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**Six students were sponsored** from the Sertão DreamRoot Training Center to attend their first jiu-jitsu competition and trip outside of their village. The experience, including a trip to the mall and movie theater where they enjoyed their first elevator and escalator ride.

The trip was not just about winning medals; it was about igniting a belief in oneself and embracing the vision of possibility. The kids' trip was more than a day out; it was exposure to a world they had never imagined and igniting possibilities.

**Watch the weekend's highlight video!**



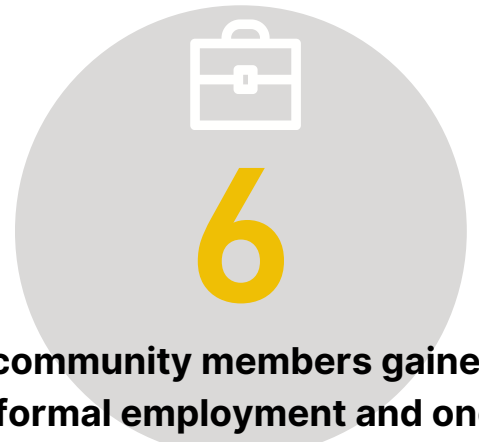
# Entrepreneurship &

# Economic Development

Work is crucial for dignity in development, and a market-based economy stands as one of the most effective tools in reducing global poverty.

DreamRoot Training Centers act as entrepreneurial hubs and training facilities, empowering individuals to learn and utilize their skills, talents, and abilities to contribute to create positive social impact and community prosperity.

We host capacity-building workshops throughout the year covering vocational training, career fairs, and work authorization assistance. In 2023 this work directly resulted in **six community members gaining formal employment**, including **one launching a new business** within their community.



**community members gained formal employment and one launched a new business.**



**local community members employed in educational program delivery and infrastructure development projects.**

## BEYOND SERVICE: THE IMPACTFUL JOURNEY WITH MR. ROBSON

During our trips to Brazil, we partner with locals like Mr. Robson, a retired military officer turned entrepreneur providing transportation services.

Beyond service, he has become a team member and friend, co-creating and enhancing Brazil Cross-Cultural Exchange trips.

His commitment to excellence and integrity led to remarkable business growth. Beginning with a leased van, Mr. Robson was soon able to purchase and then pay off his own van. He followed this by undertaking significant upgrades.

In 2023, he sold his original van to purchase a larger, upgraded one with luxury seats and even more space, for groups like ours to bring extra suitcases filled with donations. What's more, Mr. Robson was able to sell his van to a budding



entrepreneur, paving the way for another to make a living in the private group driving business.

Mr. Robson has not only grown his business and contributed to economic growth for others, but expanded the impact building bridges between the U.S. and Brazil.



## FUELING GROWTH THROUGH JIU-JITSU

DreamRoot's seed investment of mats helped to launch a new jiu-jitsu academy in Alagoas, Brazil as a sustainable business offering accessible programming.

Local community members' memberships fund free training for lower-income students and create job opportunities. These new mats expanded the training space, enhancing the learning experience and unlocking exciting possibilities.

DreamRoot remains dedicated to fostering positive change through strategic investments. 11

# Community

## Capacity-Building

The DreamRoot Training Centers serve as vital community hubs, offering safe and accessible spaces for learning, connection, and mentorship.

Capacity-building events, educational and sports programming, entrepreneurial incubators, and leadership development workshops have become regular affairs. These spaces foster unity, bridging the gap between generations and socio-economic classes and building a support network and foundations for progress for the entire community.

In 2023, DreamRoot **coordinated 16 capacity-building events**, including public health and mental health workshops, career fairs, legal services for work permits, resume writing assistance, and vocational training.

Additionally, **12 people attended counseling sessions** with a licensed therapist, and free haircuts and food donations were distributed to families in need.



## FROM POVERTY TO PROGRESS: THE REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION OF A BRAZILIAN VILLAGE

In a once-neglected village near São José da Tapera, DreamRoot local leaders' unwavering commitment is rewriting a narrative of poverty and isolation. The mentoring programming and mentorship at the Sertão DreamRoot Training Center is transforming mindsets, shifting from survival to aspiration.

Surrounding communities and the local government have taken notice, investing in infrastructure, linking roads, and providing electricity. This transformation goes beyond mere infrastructure; it represents a profound change in the village's position within society. Connecting community members not just physically, but also socially and economically. It is blossoming into a thriving community where upward mobility, quality of life, and the pursuit of dreams are attainable.

This is a testimony of how a small group of individuals, fueled by a vision of change, undergirded by commitment and a love for people, ignited development that radiates beyond their village, reaching neighboring towns and even the local government.



## SEEDS OF IMPACT THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

**Haiti Schoolyard Buildout:** DreamRoot completed a transformative schoolyard buildout in Haiti, led by local leaders Rose and David, benefiting over 308 students. The project, executed by 17 local workers, turned a once rocky space into a safe, vibrant area for play and community activities. The enhanced space accommodates sports programs, events, and celebrations, fostering a more engaging educational environment.

**Training Center Construction:** In Brazil, DreamRoot's seed funding supported the i35 Hope Project Center construction, now serving 35 children and 150 other community members in an impoverished village in Pernambuco. The center's diverse programs emphasize family involvement, education, sports, and abuse prevention. The center is already bringing life and hope to the community.



**construction projects completed.**

# Equity & Inclusion

Persistent high levels of inequality pose obstacles to successful development. At DreamRoot, our programs are designed with a deliberate focus on inclusivity, accessible programs and networking at every stage.

Further, DreamRoot Training Centers are located within the communities, creating an accessible and welcome space for all to participate and contribute. Alongside educational and extra-curricular programs, the centers distributed food donations to 325 people throughout the year.

**Trauma-Informed Self-Defense.** In 2024, DreamRoot developed a trauma-informed self-defense program that is now being used by **24 local leaders** who serve over **400 survivors** of sexual abuse in more than seven communities in Brazil.



**marginalized local leaders sponsored to attend leadership development training events.**



**new DreamRoot leadership training programs created and one online leadership platform developed.**



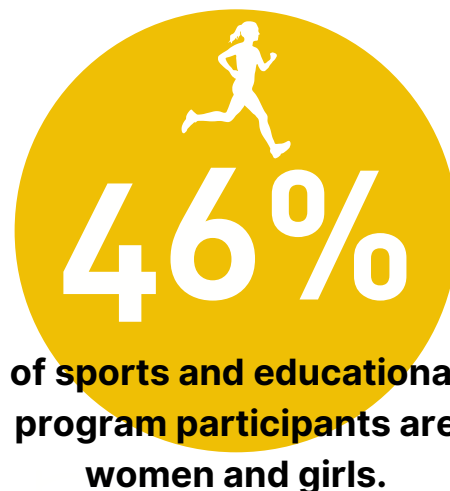
**jiu jitsu uniforms plus cloths and educational toys donated to students in need throughout Brazil, Liberia, and Congo.**

## AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITIES

Championing the rights and involving women in all aspects of society, has been shown to prevent conflict, accelerate community development and prevent conflict.

All of DreamRoot programs actively promotes women and girls' involvement in program participation and engagement in program leadership, design and facilitation. Further, we address the unique needs and challenges this population faces within the communities.

- Hosted **four** educational and celebratory women's events.
- Coordinated therapy sessions for **10** victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.
- Local leaders hosted **weekly** women's jiu-jitsu classes throughout the year.
- **Five** women have developed and are leading jiu-jitsu programs.



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No matter the challenges or limitations we face, we are here to support and teach the children of our community.

- Ingrid  
DreamRoot Local Leader, Brazil

## NETWORKING AND EXCHANGE: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SERVING LEADERS

A robust and diverse network is crucial for upward mobility and impactful change. We're not meant to navigate this journey alone. Sadly, those in lower socio-economic brackets often lack access to such networks, limiting their reach and contributions to valuable resources and opportunities.

DreamRoot addresses this gap across all our programs, recognizing the profound impact that connections have on breaking down barriers and fostering growth for individuals and communities alike.



## LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN THE AMAZON

In the Amazon, DreamRoot contributed to a transformative conference for 50 indigenous leaders. Training emphasized integrity and unity in running organizations, building essential relationships.

Emphasizing relationship building, our trip included sharing meals and visiting leaders' initiatives, including schools, deepened connections. Having returned multiple times has allowed us build to relationships and to witness the tangible impact. Testimonies reveal improvements, such as cross-collaboration with other local leaders in serving their communities.





# Keeping the **Conversation** Going



## **CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE TRIP**

We organized a cross-cultural exchange trip to Brazil, welcoming **11 U.S. participants**. It was a fun adventure of connection and community building, exploring sights, trying new foods, and training jiu-jitsu.

**53 DreamRoot local leaders** from across three states and nine different community initiatives in Brazil joined us in Recife for a weekend of festivities and networking.

U.S. attendees learned to play dominos, picked up Portuguese phrases, and heard incredible stories from our Brazilian friends.

We also hosted a Children's Day community block party at the Arte Saue DreamRoot Training Center for over **100 kids and their families**. It was an evening connecting generations while celebrating the next generation.

## **JIU-JITSU LEADER NETWORK**

DreamRoot rolled out the Jiu-Jitsu Leader Network in English and Portuguese, uniting BJJ leaders for leadership development and program advancement.

Monthly live group sessions bring together leaders from **Asia, Africa, South America and North America**, facilitating purposeful conversations, connections and knowledge sharing.

## **ONLINE LEADERSHIP PLATFORM**

DreamRoot launched a custom private online platform connecting and supporting local leaders, fostering connections, community, and capacity building. Features include a Learning Management System, Private Community Network, live group teachings, and leadership development resources, **scaling and revolutionizing access** to support and services for leaders in underserved communities.



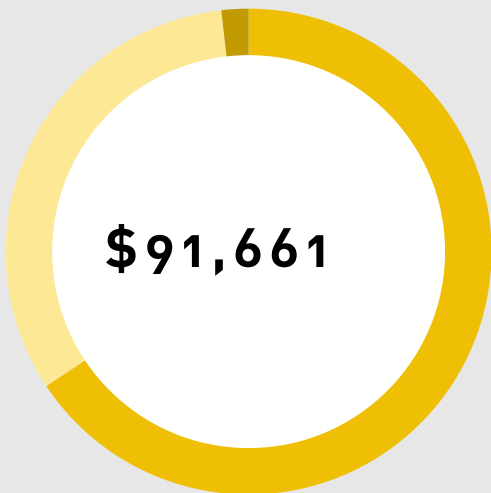
# OUR FINANCIALS



DreamRoot holds itself and their partners and beneficiaries to high standards of excellence, transparency, and accountability.

We believe our time, talents, resources, and influence has been given to us to be cared for in a manner that brings maximum impact for those we serve. We remain intentional in our approach to advancing equity, impact, and positive long-term transformations at the grassroots level.

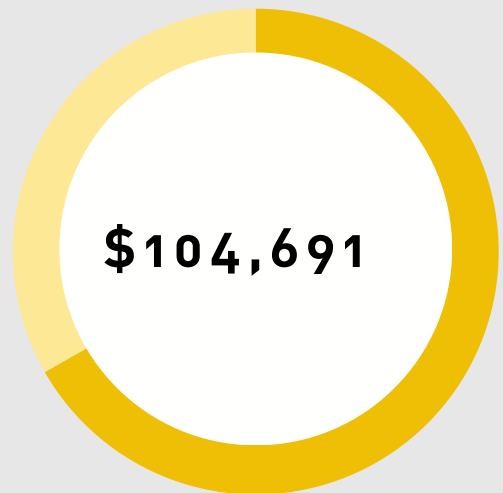
## REVENUE



**\$91,661**

- Individuals 66%
- Corporations 33%
- Other 1%

## EXPENDITURES



**\$104,691**

- Program Costs 67%
- M&G 33%

# OUR TEAM

We are committed to investing in leaders and changemakers in underserved communities, equipping and empowering them to solve local challenges and equipping others to do the same.



**Amy Passos**

Founder &  
Chairperson



**Chris Little**

Board VP



**Kellie Koch**

Board Secretary



**Nathan Park**

Board Treasurer



**Andy Truong**

Board Member



**Jhon Alves**

Brazil Leadership  
Director



**Tony Passos**

Programs Director



**Anthony Annan**

Advisor

# Our Supporters

To our supporters, thank you for the trust you have placed in DreamRoot and its services.

Your compassionate support truly makes a difference! Your investment has had a way for many and has scaled and made learning and sustainable development opportunities available generations.

## Corporate Sponsors

- Onda Brazilian Jiu Jitsu
- Infinite Fighting Concepts
- The Blessing Projects
- Armezzani Jiu-Jitsu Academy
- Team Passos Jiu-Jitsu
- Kitchen Craft Cabinet & Countertops
- Phalanx Facilities Management
- Ariake Japanese Restaurant
- Jiu-Jitsu Mentor
- Data Machines Corp
- Center Avenue Slice
- Lion Heart Jiu-Jitsu



# PERMISSION TO DREAM

DreamRoot Leadership Institute is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. | EIN: 84-2542844



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