



Human Rights
Funders Network



Mapping the Money: A Changing Landscape of Human Rights Funding

February 14, 2018

Ten Strategic Recommendations for Funders

1. Human rights must become tangible at the local level. We must invest in work to help everyday people see what human rights means in relation to their own lives. It is critical to develop mechanisms to get money to the local level.
2. We have to help our grantee partners find their footing in this moment and expand leadership and capacity. “Sitting on our resources at a moment when the world is burning is unacceptable.”
3. We must be more proactive in our funding to support our grantees to both manage and mitigate backlash before it reaches critical levels.
4. In this moment, what we *don't* say—as funders—matters. Our silence can stop the organizations we believe in from speaking up and acting out. “This is not a time for hesitancy.” Our communities are under attack.
5. We can use data to be more strategic in our grantmaking and more collaborative with our peers.
6. Data can build community and evidence in analyzing our collective funding.
7. As human rights activists and funders, we should diversify strategies that we use and support.
8. There is still a critical role for research, particularly in understanding the complexity of the challenges we are dealing with as a movement and how to combat delegitimizing narratives. For example, public opinion research is crucial to inform messaging.
9. Smaller strategic shifts can lay the groundwork for larger strategic shifts by fostering hard conversations with lower risks/costs and by allowing space for experimentation/pilots. This can be particularly useful when leadership or constituents are not yet supportive of these shifts.
10. Data presents an opportunity to hear directly from people and communities we serve.

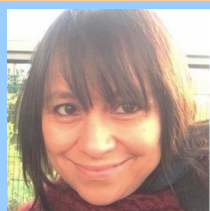


In Their Own Words



As Victoria Dunning, now at the Ford Foundation, taught me long ago, “In our efforts, we should accept no stories without numbers and no numbers without stories.”

**–Caitlin Stanton, Director of Partnerships
Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights**



I am currently working on bringing local philanthropies together with green philanthropies. Every issue has a success story at the local level. Mobilization across movements must bring the local together with the global.

**–Ana María Enriquez, Coordinator
Women Territory & Climate Justice Latin American Grantmakers**



One of the internal critiques we have as human rights advocates is that professionalization and emphasis on legal tools has separated human rights advocates from people in movements who are mobilizing. This brings to mind a story of a human rights organization in Barcelona writing a report in their office about austerity. At that moment, a loud march passes by outside. Their first instinct was to close the window and focus on how to frame this report. In the meantime, this was a march about austerity literally outside their window. So they went out into the streets to join the march.

–Claret Vargas, Researcher and Director of Internationalization, Dejusticia



There was a moment in the marriage equality movement when we knew we were going to win. There was a feeling of “enough” at the grassroots level; people were showing up at town halls saying “we’re going to get married.” And of course those of us involved were trying to prepare folks for press interviews and were worrying if they were going to say the right thing. But at some point we had to say, “Let it go. Let it rip.” By the thirteenth state, we knew it was inevitable. Unstoppable.

–Tim Sweeney, Advisor, Pride Foundation



The *Advancing Human Rights* research reflects our collective power as human rights funders. “The almost 11 billion dollars [mapped over five years] is *us*, our networks, our funding community.” In addition to illuminating the current state of human rights funding, the research can help funders think about how we can do better: “When we think about the future, it’s not about getting back to the status quo, but having a vision for how to take it beyond just reclaiming what we feel we’ve lost.”

–Jenna Capeci, Deputy Director, Human Rights Funders Network



We as human rights funders know that wins do not happen out of thin air but are the outcome of ongoing coordination, strategy discussions, and people putting themselves in danger long before the rest of the world knows what’s happening. The story of Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement reminds us of two truths: 1) planning, training, and data matter, but at the end of the day, they are to reinforce our gut instincts about the reality on the ground; 2) with great gains come backlash.

–Eric Ward, Executive Director, Western States Center

Understanding the Trends

- Human Rights Funders Network and Foundation Center's [Advancing Human Rights](#) research found that [5% of all philanthropic funding goes to human rights](#).
- Thanks to HRFN's expanding global network and partnerships with Ariadne and Prospera, we have seen a remarkable increase in the representation of funders from outside of the United States: this number increased 63% from 2011-2015.
- Key funding shifts:
 - Overall funding for human rights and social justice increased by 45%.
 - Funding for [Environmental and Resource Rights](#) more than doubled.
 - Funding for [Latin America and Mexico](#) decreased by 12%.
 - Funding for the rights of [People with Disabilities](#) decreased by 23%.
 - Funding for strategies such as [Grassroots Organizing](#) and [Litigation and Legal Aid](#) nearly quadrupled. [Public Engagement and Awareness-Raising](#) more than doubled. [Research and Documentation](#) decreased by 19%.



Reflecting on the Trends

- It is disappointing to see the human rights community moving funds from Latin America when there are critical political and economic challenges. A focus on countries with highest levels of poverty ignores the fact that Latin America has the highest rate of inequalities.
- With respect to the 2013 increase in funding to environmental and resource rights, I question why it took so long for funders to respond to the socioeconomic context that was increasingly relevant in the 1990s? We're now playing catch-up.
- The disability rights movement demonstrated that a rights-based treaty can make a difference at global, national and local levels. Disabled persons organizations have successfully advocated for 64 national laws and legislative changes since the treaty's adoption.
- Disaggregating data has been key to getting people with disabilities into decision-making spaces. Our numbers are small, but we've done so much with so few resources.
- The decrease in funding for research and documentation seems like a reaction to the reality of what works. You would not be surprising anybody in the human rights movement if you say the "Name and Shame" traditional reports are not as effective as they used to be. There are larger trends that delegitimize the human rights discourse. That said, we should be expanding funding of other approaches to advocacy and diversifying our tools. How do we stop writing like lawyers and instead write an op-ed that will inspire people?



Civil Marriage Collaborative – A Success Story of Funder Collaboration

- Fourteen foundations pooled and leveraged funding. We invested in public opinion research and explicitly focused on state efforts.
- The LGBT movement did not have the capacity to respond to the multi-state backlash. Funders brought movement leaders and funders together to develop a twenty-year strategy. Funders committed to resourcing it. It was challenging for all of us to “put all of our cards on the table” but critical to developing a shared strategy that articulated the specific roles and contributions for different movement actors and funders.
- Evaluate the inevitable setbacks, learn from them, and embrace the concept of “losing forward,” using each effort to put grantees and advocates in a better position to win the next battle.

Read more: [Hearts & Minds: The untold story of how philanthropy and the Civil Marriage Collaborative helped America embrace marriage equality](#)

Watch the Videos (case-sensitive password: AHR2018)

- [Welcome & Overview of the Findings](#)
- [Morning Session: Where Have We Been?](#)
 - Introduction of Part 1 by Caitlin Stanton 0:00-2:55
 - Tim Sweeney 2:55-21:05
 - Introduction of Part 2 by Caitlin Stanton 21:05-26:00
 - Ana María Enriquez 26:00-35:12
 - Yumi Sera 35:12-41:55
 - Claret Vargas 41:55-50:17
 - Questions with four panelists 50:17-1:29:41
- [Keynote: Eric Ward](#)
- [Workshop: Mapping The Money For Your Work](#)
- [Afternoon Session: Where Are We Going?](#)
 - Introduction by Lesley Carson: 0:00-3:00
 - Leila Hessini 3:00-14:35
 - Regan Pritzker 14:35-22:06
 - Alex Wang 22:06-30:57
 - Closing by Mona Chun and Lauren Bradford 30:57-34:12