

# TOWARDS A NEW ECOLOGY FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT



Lessons from the Ford Foundation's  
Strengthening Human Rights  
Worldwide global initiative  
**NOVEMBER 2017**

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BARBARA KLUGMAN CONCEPTS

# Contents



Introduction .....	i
Key lessons for the human rights field .....	ii
The Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative – A Learning Review 01	
Building an equitable human rights movement .....	07
Enhancing the movement’s impact on the global human rights system .....	18
Naming and shaming the private sector .....	28
Engaging social media .....	32
Shifting funding approaches towards a more equitable ecology .....	37
A last word .....	44

## APPENDIX

The Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative .....	47
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	50
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PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS .....	50
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**Note:** This report reflects the analysis of the Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide Learning Review Team and not necessarily of the Ford Foundation or the grantees of the initiative.

This is an interactive PDF which allows easy navigation between this contents page and the document chapters by clicking on the titles. In addition, each page features a control panel:



Click to return to Contents page



Click to go to next chapter



Click to return to previous chapter



# Introduction

In 2012 the Ford Foundation initiated the \$54 million **Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide** global initiative (SHRW) which funded seven human rights groups from the Global South and seven International NGOs headquartered in the Global North.

It aimed to further catalyze efforts underway to strengthen the perceived legitimacy and influence of local movements on global agendas and strategies and thereby create a human rights ecosystem relevant to meet the challenges of the changing global context, most notably the growth in political importance of emerging powers and declining moral valence of the West, and increased geo-political significance of regions.

In 2016, it commissioned a ‘Learning Review’ of this initiative in order to generate insights for the field. The review team was tasked to assess if and how well the SHRW contributed towards

- enhancing southern participation and shifting north-south power relations in the global human rights movement;
- shifts in debates, discourses, mechanisms, policies or practices of international or regional bodies or national mechanisms /legal systems; and

The Review also asked what funding approaches best support the efforts of NGOs and networks in the Global South to influence the human rights movement and of international NGOs to facilitate this.

This report presents some of the key findings of the Review using examples from the efforts of the SHRW grantees for illustration. This section of ‘key lessons’ draws out the major lessons for the field that emerged from the Learning Review.



# Key lessons for the human rights field

## The conditions that enable international influence of Global South groups

The Learning Review of the Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative found that human rights groups from the Global South<sup>1</sup> brought new understandings into the movement internationally, and sought new remedies. What enabled this?

**Independent core funding to use nationally OR internationally** is what gave them the stability, autonomy and flexibility to introduce **new agendas** to the movement. These enabled them to

- **create their own collaborations** rather than waiting to be invited into venues or processes
- **initiate evidence-gathering and analysis** on issues they consider critical with whichever partners in other countries or among international NGOs or academics or others that they believe will bring key insights or expertise
- **shape their strategic arguments**, based on this evidence, in ways and languages that resonate with those they are targeting; including, where needed, to articulate their issues in terms that are meaningful outside of their own context;
- **choose which individuals or institutions** will be most strategic to target to address their own issues, whether at local, national, regional or international levels
- **identify what of their experiences could be useful for others globally** and at what venues or through what processes to engage others.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this initiative did not include national groups in the Global North (except as members of international NGOs) but the Review Team considers it likely that their findings may apply to national groups in other parts of the globe as they too are usually assumed to have only a national ambit, and are funded accordingly and relate similarly to international NGOs.

## Roles of international NGOs that support an effective ecosystem

Despite the inequitable, hierarchical and inefficient resource distribution and dynamics of the human rights movement, some INGOs in this initiative demonstrated effective ways of supporting the development of a more equitable and efficient movement ecology. They:

- **use their brands or platforms in support** of local and national initiatives;
- **limit their use of resources** by structuring themselves to add value to existing local resources rather than duplicating local staff and infrastructure capacities
- **operate as membership-based organizations** with democratic governance so that members from all part of the globe influence their framing of issues and priorities for action
- **collaborate in conceptualizing** potential forums, research agendas, publications, policy think-tanks or other spaces so that their agendas and processes are routinely and automatically shaped with and include people from national level
- **include Global South and national groups in governance** of INGOs and of any coalitions, campaigns or other initiatives aiming to address issues relevant to these groups

**National and international NGOs to:**

- **support constituencies in self-organizing** so that they become independent financially and can use their voices independently
- **routinely establish alliances** and other forms of collaboration to maximize the power of the movement

The Learning Review found that INGOs in this initiative had found ways to add value to the work of national groups, without removing the agency of those groups in shaping agendas and strategies.



However, in the perspectives and experience of the international experts interviewed and surveyed for this review, in general international NGOs continue to control agendas and spaces of the human rights movement despite the urgent need for stronger and demonstrably independent southern and national participants who are perceived as more legitimate players particularly in countries and regions that are arguing that human rights are a western construct. This view is supported by evidence that the vast majority of funding for human rights advocacy goes to international NGOs in the West, and by a network analysis undertaken in this Review which showed that while groups from the Global South had significantly increased their importance in the network surveyed, large INGOs, in particular Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch remain entirely dominant in the space.

## Funding a more effective and equitable human rights movement

Funders can translate the lessons above directly into how they think about and support national as well as regional and international advocacy. In addition, in planning new funding initiatives, funders should ensure that

- **their own regional offices or staff are co-producers** of any initiative that will involve grantees in their regions
- **intended grantees participate in framing** the theory of change and markers of progress that will be used to evaluate success;
- **substantial time is allocated** for building of trust among any groups that may be working together for the first time; and any intended outcomes are realistic to the time-frame of the initiative;
- **the mix of grantees ensures diverse capacities** and relationships in order to maximize impact;
- **collaborations between a grantee and others in the field are rewarded** rather than anointing an individual grantee with a role or funds that may undermine existing or potential collaborations or that may reward grantees who attribute changes to themselves rather than recognizing contributions of multiple groups;
- **all grantees can take initiative** rather than vesting power in traditional relationships between INGOs and local groups;
- **national groups can use their funds to target any level of the system.** Opportunities are lost when funders separate ‘national’ from ‘international’ work and limit national groups’ funding to national borders. This approach prevents national groups from using whatever platforms are most strategic at any moment in time and from sharing their expertise with groups in other countries facing similar challenges;
- **ethics and transparency** are the basis of any collective engagement the initiative requires between grantees, and between grantees and funders;
- **a developmental evaluation approach** is implemented from the start, so that grantees and the funder are in an ongoing and collective process of sense-making, learning and strengthening the work.

The extent to which the funder supports a mix of grantees that together are well positioned at different levels of the system that the initiative intends to influence, and have a complementary set of goals and strategies, the greater the chances of gaining traction. The clearer and the more collaboratively-produced the goals of the initiative the greater likelihood of success. Where an initiative aims to shift dynamics in a field or movement, the funder will need to include engagement with other funders as a key dimension of its strategy, since field-building and field-shifting take a long time and substantial resources.

# The Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative – A Learning Review

In 2012 the Ford Foundation initiated the \$54million Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative (SHRW) which funded seven human rights groups from the Global South (Cohort 1) and seven International NGOs headquartered in the Global North (Cohort 2).

## COHORT 1

**CELS**

THE CENTER FOR LEGAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES / ARGENTINA

**Conectas, Brazil****Dejusticia, Colombia****Forum-Asia**

ASIAN FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT, THAILAND

**KHRC**

KENYA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, KENYA

**LRC**

LEGAL RESOURCES CENTRE, SOUTH AFRICA

**Justiça Global / Brazil**

[THIS WAS DISCONTINUED AFTER THE FIRST GRANT.]

**AWID**

THE ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT, CANADA

**BHRRC**

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTRE, UK

**Crisis Action, UK****ESCR-Net**

THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, US

**FIDH**

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, FRANCE

**Global Witness, UK****INCLO**

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF CIVIL LIBERTIES ORGANIZATION, REGISTERED IN SWITZERLAND WITH ITS SECRETARIAT HOSTED BY CELS IN ARGENTINA

## COHORT 2



It also supported Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International's decentralization process plus communications groups – openGlobalRights, Skylight and Witness – and the Human Rights Funders Network.

Martin Abregu, Ford Foundation Vice-President who initiated the SRHW explained its rationale:

“Ten years after 9/11, it was clear that the world had changed a lot and that more change was coming there were some signals of an increasingly multipolar world. Those were the years that there was a lot of talking about Emerging Powers. And the global order was showing a dramatic shift in the way the US engaged around the globe especially around the promotion of democracy and human rights, losing credibility across the board. ... at the same time, the human rights system itself was facing another big challenge: the shift from standard setting to enforcement, which was identified as a key challenge as early as 1993 during the Vienna conference, was moving slower than expected and desired. In this sense, the contribution of the international human rights system and movement to making human rights a reality for millions of people around the world was still a promise yet to be fulfilled –and one that many people were feeling increasingly frustrated about. So, we asked ourselves a question: what can we do to contribute to building a 21st century human rights system that would be able to better adjust to a world that was moving toward increased multipolarity and was lacking a willing and legitimate human rights champion, and that at the same time would be able to do a better job at enforcing and implementing international human rights standards? ... In order to achieve this vision, we decided to focus on our historical ally: the human rights movement, and our “theory of change” was that the international human rights movement needed to adjust to this new global order to make human rights a reality for millions around the globe. Our tentative answer, combining both challenges, was to build upon ongoing changes in this movement, which has been evolving for many years. If the international human rights movement was originally built as moving from the national level to the international arena aiming for a sort of boomerang effect at the domestic level, the opportunity now was to shift the focus from the global level to the national level in order to have an impact back in the international human rights system. In this context, we wanted to invest on the reverse feedback loop, with the same kind of boomerang effect but in this case to have an impact at the global level by focusing on a sort of “enforcement from below” through a more multipolar approach.”

In 2016, it commissioned a ‘Learning Review’ of this initiative in order to generate insights for the field. This report presents some of the key findings of the Review using examples from the efforts of the SHRW grantees for illustration.

## THE LEARNING REVIEW’S QUESTIONS

- **how well did the initiative contribute to**
  - enhancing **southern participation** and shifting north-south power relations in the global human rights movement;
  - shifts in **debates, discourses, mechanisms, policies or practices** of international or regional bodies or national mechanisms /legal systems; and
- **what funding approaches best support the efforts of NGOs and networks** in the Global South to influence the human rights movement and of international NGOs to facilitate this.

(See Appendix for further details of the initiative and the learning review process.)

# Locating Human Rights Today

**Participants in this review, be they human rights defenders, funders or researchers, or whether from the Global South or North, all largely concur in their reading of the shifting human rights terrain.**



Great strides have been made in setting international human rights standards but the gap between these and the ability to use them to protect vulnerable and marginalized communities remains a major challenge. The language of rights has achieved salience, and numerous human rights organizations have emerged articulating a wide range of issues at various levels. Since the global UN Conferences of the 1990s, a wide range of organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and membership-based organizations representing diverse constituencies, have become actively involved in engaging regional and international human rights bodies whereas previously this terrain had mostly belonged to international NGOs (INGOs). However, the ecology of the human rights movement remains divided with INGOs based in the West still managing most of the processes of engagement by national groups in international spaces and few national and Global South groups playing independent roles in influencing the international terrain. The majority of funding for human rights work comes from philanthropic institutions in the US and Europe, and most of the funds for global work go to International NGOs headquartered in the West.

From around 2008 the shift towards seeing emerging powers in Latin America, Asia and Africa not only as an economic force but as a political platform appeared to provide new opportunities to the human rights movement, based on the belief that they would lay claim to human rights and become its proponents globally, particularly in light of shifts to the right among some governments in the West and declining economic dependence by many 'developing' countries on Western



governments. In reality, emerging powers have not moved into this role. Indeed, many governments in both the Global North and South have further entrenched their interest in national sovereignty and favored regional alliances often overriding the universality of human rights. At the same time, human rights abuses on the ground frequently stem from global forces, in particular from multi-national corporations, global surveillance systems and right-wing narratives of ‘them’ and ‘us’ that rapidly move across countries and cultures as social media shapes discourses globally. Both the discourse and belief in ‘the war on terror’ are being used as justification for further controls over human rights organizations and defenders. The human rights movement is also confronted with developing its responses to the debate on climate change and on migration including increasing xenophobic discourses and actions.

“The rise of nationalism and populism accompanied by exclusionary politics and “othering” has seen the “othering” of the human rights movement itself. Accompanying these trends are targeted attempts to close the space within which civil society operates in the North and the South.

NICOLETTE NAYLOR, FORD FOUNDATION



Respondents to the survey, as well as those interviewed emphasized how in this context, the traditional models of INGOs naming and shaming national governments, has slowly lost its traction. This dynamic is deepening the awareness of many human rights practitioners – INGOs and national and international social movements, NGOs and funders – of the need to broaden and deepen efforts to mobilize and organize for human rights from the ground upwards. In fact, local communities use human rights discourses across the globe:

In Swahili, “haki yetu” means “our rights”. Normally people ask, “Is that haki yetu situation?” Large sections of the public mobilize themselves on issues because it is their right.

GEORGE KEGORO, KHRC

However, these claims for rights do not mean that people globally are aware of and able to use the treaties and mechanisms of the human rights system, so that ‘system’ needs to be brought into closer conversation with local struggles so that local people can use it effectively, especially as governments across the globe tighten controls over human rights organizations and defenders.

“For me, the human rights movement is much bigger than our organizations. While this grant is focused on a smaller group of people who work professionally on international human rights, we increasingly need to see ourselves as part of a wider ecosystem of activism – if you see what has happened with women’s marches and people’s protests around the world, of course we are part of it but not necessarily the core of it. It’s becoming much bigger.

SALIL SHETTY, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Some have reflected on how the inequities within the movement mean they are not well positioned for impact. Groups working locally and nationally have to be able to think and strategize in a global context without having the requisite resources – funds, links to media and to those with international power; INGOs have to stop framing the issues without engaging with perspectives and strategies of local groups, and have to recognize that their voices may no longer hold most caché among governments and the public at large. Overall the human rights movement has to more explicitly identify how to maximize the value of all players, from local to international levels. This is a work in progress that has only just begun.



## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Arguably the human rights field comprises all players. For the purposes of this report, the term ‘system’ is used to refer to any activities or goals pertaining to governments, whether local, national, regional or international. ‘Movement’ is used to refer to civil society groups promoting human rights, including non-profits of any kind, human rights funders, academic institutions, organized constituencies, communities and movements at all levels – local to global, including supportive academia and funders.

## A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The Reviews methods included document reviews, interviews, an experts survey, network analysis and outcomes harvesting, and are described in detail in Appendix 1.

**GRANTEE ENGAGEMENT:** The Review Team engaged grantees throughout the process including in relation to the Review questions and methodology, outcomes, a convening and inputs on the findings.

**INTERVIEWS:** The Review Team conducted interviews with 69 people in 40 interviews including representatives of the grantees; other leading Human Right organizations; experts and Ford Foundation staff.

**SURVEY OF EXPERTS:** completed by 23 funders and 14 additional experts from the Global North and South.

**SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS:** of the SHRW grantees, five additional grantees of the Ford Foundation human rights global portfolio as well as 13 ‘matched’ groups.

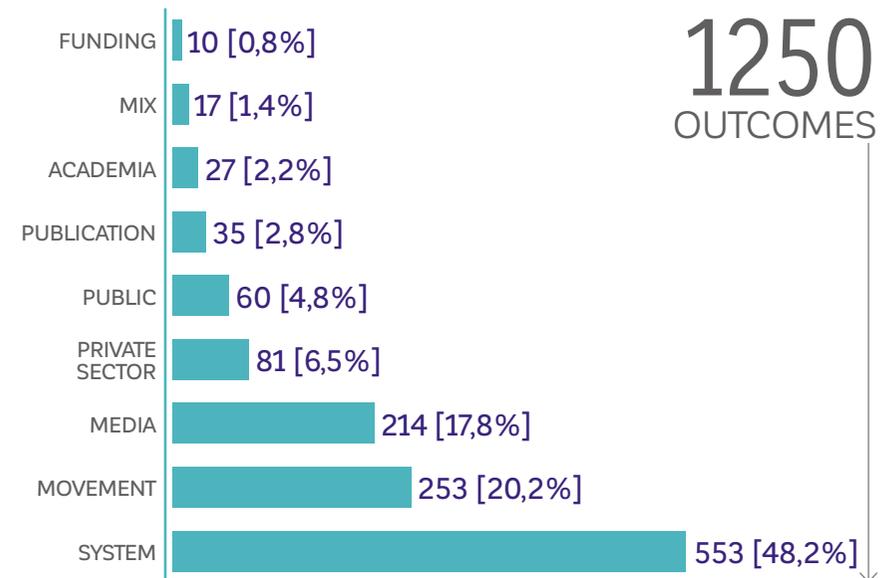
**CASE STUDIES:** of one process through which each grantee influenced the movement and / or the system to explore and illustrate the dynamics of influence

**OUTCOMES HARVESTING:** The review captured outcomes from grantee reports to the Ford Foundation with the goal of covering 2014-2016. An “outcome” is defined as “Change in the behaviour, relationships, actions, activities, policies or practices of one or more societal actors” (Wilson-Grau & Britt, 2012). It is not an activity undertaken by the organization being reviewed (which in this review is termed ‘contribution’), but rather a change made by someone that the organization influenced, whether directly or indirectly.



The Learning Review harvested 1250 outcomes from grantee reports. Figure 1 indicates the proportions of outcomes in diverse spheres that grantees contributed towards influencing.

FIGURE 1: NUMBERS OF OUTCOMES IN EACH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



The outcomes relate to a wide range of issues summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1: THEMES OF OUTCOMES INFLUENCED BY GRANTEES

THEMES OF OUTCOMES	#	%
Closing spaces	274	22%
Business	228	18%
Politics	131	10%
Transitional Justice	124	10%
ESCR	118	9%
Internal organizational	81	6%
Finance	56	4%
Women	48	4%
Drugs	41	3%
Funding	36	3%
Migration	34	3%
Indigenous Peoples	33	3%
SOGI	15	1%
Marginalized populations	11	1%
Culture	20	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>100%</b>





# Building an equitable human rights movement

# Context informing the needs of the human rights movement

Globalization means that the daily lives of people all over the world are impacted by decisions and practices not only of their own governments, private sector and cultural institutions and norms but of transnational companies and governments other than their own.

For this reason, even human rights groups that have a local focus need to understand global forces at play and what kinds of strategies may be most effective in influencing them. Their own experiences may help others facing similar challenges. Effectiveness from local to international levels requires spaces in which organizations and individuals in the human rights movement can bring issues, evidence, experience into the broader movement, and can learn from others. This begs questions about how the movement can improve its ability to learn and share, given the continued massively disproportionate location of resources (funds, access to libraries, knowledge production, in relationships to media, to internationally influential decision-makers among others) in organizations, particularly international organizations, in the Global North.

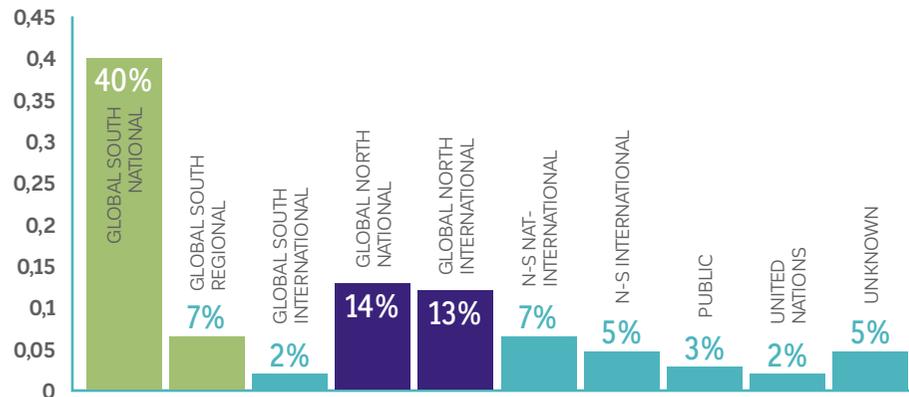


# Influencing the Human Rights Movement from the Global South

## Global South groups having global impact

In Figure 2 below, the green bars indicate that almost half (49%) of all the 290 movement-related outcomes harvested in this Review are achieved by actors from the Global South, roughly 30% by actors from the Global North (in purple) and a further 14% are a mix of the two. Breaking this down further, it also shows the preponderance of southern national actors influenced by grantees of this initiative who are creating outcomes thus validating the initiative's hypothesis that it is possible to strengthen the agency and voice of the Global South in influencing the human rights movement.

FIGURE 2: REGIONAL LOCATION OF ACTORS INFLUENCING THE MOVEMENT, BY COHORT

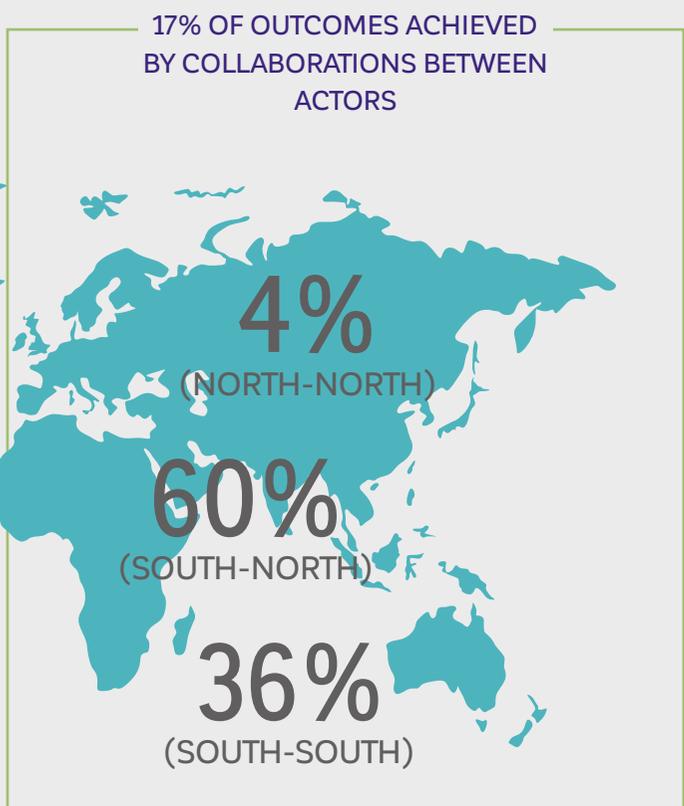
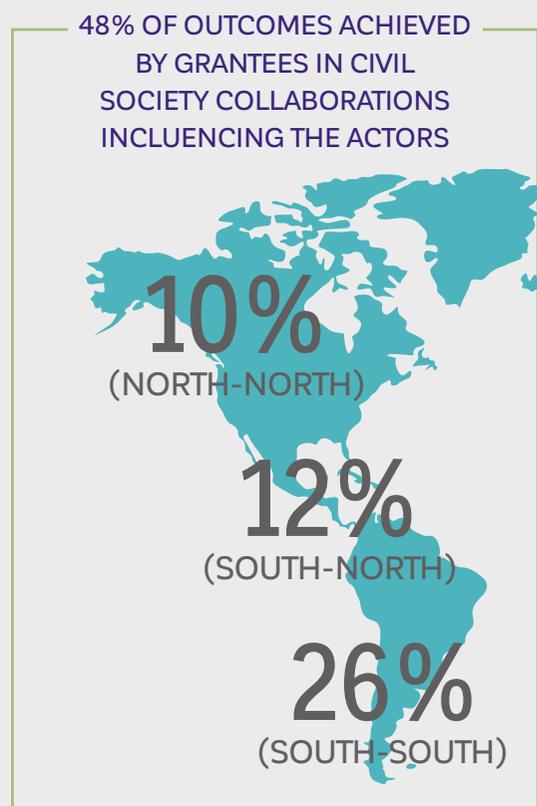


Comparing by cohort (below), one sees that both cohorts are predominantly contributing towards Global South actors influencing the human rights movement. Cohort 1's movement outcomes include a larger proportion of Global North actors than Cohort 2, which has a larger proportion of its movement outcomes being delivered by members of the public.

TABLE 2: CONTRIBUTION OF EACH COHORT TO INFLUENCING ACTORS IN DIFFERENT GLOBAL REGIONS

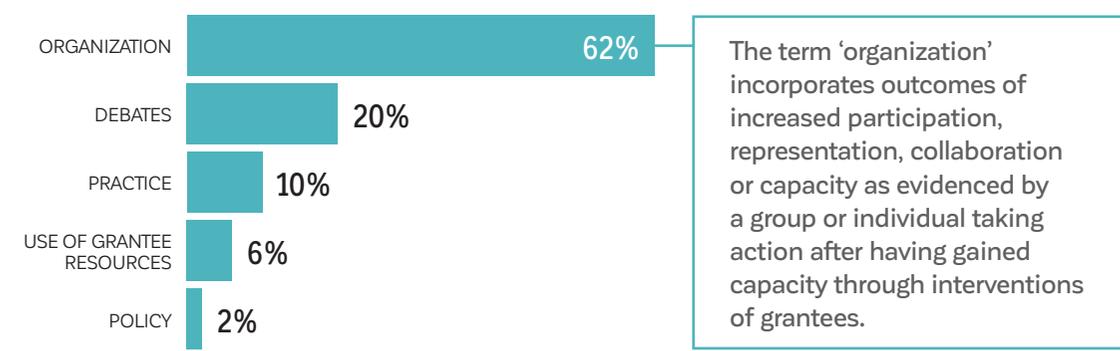
MOVEMENT OUTCOMES BY ACTORS FROM:	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Global South	48.8%	52.8%
Global North	33.7%	21.1%
Mix	13.3%	15.4%
UN	3.0%	0.0%
Unknown	1.2%	3.3%
Public	0.0%	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

These figures suggest that in this initiative, there is substantial commitment to collaboration, with grantees from the Global South being somewhat more oriented towards collaborations. In a further 4% of outcomes grantees collaborate directly with people in the UN to influence others. The right hand box illustrates that outcomes frequently result from collaborations between actors, reinforcing the importance of building relationships across continental divides.



THE PROPORTIONS OF TYPES OF CHANGES GRANTEES INFLUENCED IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT ARE IN FIGURE 3 BELOW:

FIGURE 3: 'MOVEMENT' OUTCOMES INFLUENCED BY SHRW GRANTEES



## Producing and disseminating knowledge in the Global South

Global South groups are playing an increasing role in generating knowledge and perspectives from the Global South, as well as supporting transnational learning between groups from the Global South.



Southern NGOs in the SHRW initiative are challenging the pattern in which knowledge production and validation is done predominantly by human rights NGOs and academics in the Global North.

**Dejusticia** runs a program promoting ‘action-research’ where it hosts human rights defenders from countries in the Global South (80 thus far) offering training and support in research methods, writing and advocacy.

**Conectas** produces the biannual **SUR** human rights journal – the only international human rights journal publishing in English and Spanish. It actively seeks to cover issues and experiences pertinent in the Global South by authors from the Global South. A comparison of the location of first authors in the articles of the last three editions of SUR relative to *Human Rights Practice* published by Oxford University Press and *Human Rights Quarterly* published by The Johns Hopkins University Press, two of the main international human rights journals, shows SUR had contributions from 37 authors from the Global South and 16 Global North first authors, whilst *Human Rights Practice* had four from the Global South and 25 from the Global North and *Human Rights Quarterly* had two from the Global South and 43 from the Global North.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Nationality of authors is not presented in all journals, so the Review Team has done its best to ascertain this from online searches.



## Fostering South-South collaborations

Greater South-South collaboration has been singled out by all grantees, both those based in the Global South and those in the Global North, as critical to ensuring the survival of the human rights movement and its ability to respond to the real needs of the communities that these organisations work with or represent. Of all movement outcomes, 47% (119) are done by actors collaborating with each other. 36% of these (43) are South-South collaborations of which all but 8 are influenced by Cohort 1 of Southern groups. This suggests that organizations from the Global South are better positioned or more oriented towards fostering South-South collaboration among others influencing the movement.

## Building capacity of activists from the south

Forum-Asia has initiated a seven-day *Global Advocacy Learning Program on Human Rights and Development* with fellowships for participants from their member organizations and other strong applicants without financial resources.

## Avoiding becoming gate-keepers

As more national groups and groups from the Global South operate in the global field they face the same challenges facing INGOs – that their professionalization may make them gatekeepers keeping out the perspectives, or understanding of the problem and possible solutions of less well-resourced social movements, communities or constituencies. NGOs need to build into their ways of working processes that listen and hold themselves to account.

## THE MANDELA RULES – FROM LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS

As the prison population rises in Argentina, so do the cases of inmate-deaths, torture, and abuse. Despite a 2005 Supreme Court ruling that set the UN Standard Minimum Rules (SMRs) as the benchmark for detention conditions, grave structural problems remain, including the illegal detention of people in police stations. CELS worked intensively with family of inmates to gather evidence and shape responses. It helped bring about this high court ruling and later participated in the process to update and revise the Rules, working with partners in Brazil, Uruguay and the US and lobbying the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to make changes that reflected on-the-ground realities in Latin American places of detention. In December 2015, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the revised SMRs, dubbing them the Nelson Mandela Rules. CELS continues to keep up the pressure, urging States to implement these standards.

“ We recognize that when groups like ours take on international work, they run the risk of losing credibility at the national level. But we view CELS as a national organization with a regional perspective and global voice. ”

GASTÓN CHILLIER, CELS

## For national groups to make an impact globally they need independent resources

### THEY NEED THESE IN ORDER TO

#### IDENTIFY

what experiences they can usefully share with others globally

#### CHOOSE

which individuals or institutions will be most strategic to target to address their own issues, whether at local, national, regional or international levels

#### LEARN

from the experience of others tackling similar problems caused by the same or similar institutions

#### GATHER

the evidence and shape their arguments in ways and languages that resonate with those they are targeting

# Shifting international NGOs' ways of working

The Learning Review found that some INGOs in this initiative had found ways to add value to the work of national groups, without removing the agency of those groups in shaping agendas and strategies. They demonstrated a very different *modus operandi* from that of the traditional relationships between INGOs and national or local groups.

At times the issue is less about effectiveness and more about the ethics of the movement in so far as INGOs can continue to be relatively effective in achieving their goals but not effective in strengthening local agency and control over strategy and action.

For example, INGOs can gain information and use it effectively to hold decision-makers accountable; they can even facilitate access of local or national individuals to decision-makers on their issues, without contributing to changing the overall ecology and inequitable power relations of the human rights movement. INGOs might achieve their own goals without seeking meaningful participation from groups on the ground to influence where the INGOs work, on what issues, or on how they frame these issues.

They continue to consume most of the world's funding resources for human rights work. In addition, as a number of INGOs either move their head offices to the Global South, or decentralize their ways of working, there is the danger of displacing local groups or drawing away funding that these groups are just beginning to learn to raise from local citizens. However, some INGOs in this initiative demonstrated effective ways of supporting the development of a more equitable and efficient movement ecology through the approaches described here.

## Building trust and transparency over time is key to equitable collaboration

INGOs need to build relationships with local groups through ongoing collaborations that are based on trust and transparency, making meaning together rather than through a horizontal relationship using Southern 'voices' to achieve their own goals. This requires both collective action and reflection. It requires INGOs to respect local perspectives and not to let large bureaucracies or distant operations and communications teams to undermine effective collaborations.

It is not possible or appropriate for every group to try to be the gatherer of evidence, the builder of media relationships, the developer of tools. By working in deep synergy with local groups from different parts of the world, INGOs can bring added value. The SHRW global initiative does, however, provide illustrative examples of other ways of working that shift power and voice in the movement, including different forms of organizing.

“ I can see differences in the histories and approaches of organizations, grassroots groups and social movements coming from the north and the south. Latin America and Asia have strong traditions of social movement mobilization, and US and European groups are learning from them. In the Detroit case of some 30,000 families facing cutoffs of water and sanitation, African and Latin American lawyers joined an amicus intervention in the legal case. I think it is encouraging to see lawyers and fellow grassroots leaders from other countries working with grassroots groups in Detroit in a moment of economic crisis and rising of conservative policies. I believe it's important to strengthen connections for sharing experience and practice, as well as building collective action.

CHRIS GROVE, ESCR-NET

## INGOs structuring themselves to use less resources

BY WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO LEVERAGE ALL GROUPS' CAPACITIES, INGOS CAN CONSUME LESS RESOURCES AND BE EMPOWERING.

The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)'s organizational structure is 18 regional researchers based in Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Myanmar, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa and Ukraine, either working from home or embedded in offices of local groups, supported by 13 staff in London, and 5 in the US.

They invite their local partners to participate in interviews of potential staff in their regions, an indicator of their commitment to ensuring that their staff understand local or regional context and bring in specialist skills that partners believe will add value to their work on business and human rights.

Working with researchers on the ground in every region of the world, the BHRRC tracks and publicizes companies' human rights impacts which gives local groups access to globally recognized accountability mechanisms BHRRC has established. For example, when a partner, the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALs), in Johannesburg, filed a complaint on behalf of SikhaleSonke (Women of Marikana) against the company Lonmin with the International Finance Corporation (IFC – a member of the World Bank Group), and against the IFC itself for not monitoring Lonmin's practices, CALs published the complaint on its website and asked the BHRRC to put it on their website. BHRRC then asked Lonmin to respond which it did. BHRRC's mechanism, in which they not only ask companies to respond, but publish names of companies that refuse to respond served as a resource in support of the women on whose behalf CALs pressed the complaint.

## Democratic membership-based organizations (MBOs) enabling movement equity

Membership-based INGOs can be an effective organizational mechanism for movement equity if they are transparent and legally accountable to their members and can increase their ability to listen and learn from local levels.

“ We are now gathering 184 member-organizations working in more than 100 countries, previous to the grant it would be something like 166 member-organizations working in less than 100 countries. We also started to work with a broader line of subjects including environmental issues. In some way FIDH is a platform for the work of these member organizations. Maybe this is our biggest contribution to the field.”

ANTOINE BERNARD, FORMERLY FIDH

### MEMBERSHIP AS A MECHANISM FOR COLLECTIVELY SHAPING INPUTS TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

Forum-Asia has been playing a key role in various joint advocacy efforts in engaging the ASEAN<sup>3</sup> and pushing for the establishment of the ASEAN’s human rights mechanisms. As the co-convenor of the Solidarity for Asian Peoples’ Advocacies (SAPA) Task Force on ASEAN and Human Rights, Forum-Asia works together with its members and other of SAPA’s task forces to ensure greater space for meaningful engagement between civil society and the ASEAN in the annual civil society forum ACSC/APF (ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN Peoples’ Forum) monitoring the performance of and producing an annual assessment report of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

<sup>3</sup> Association of Southeast Asian Nations



MBOs can organize into networks which are neither national nor international, neither ‘northern’ nor ‘southern’; which mix national and international groups and develop a mode of work that explicitly recognizes that greater effectiveness lies in collaboration.

### ESCR-NET BRINGING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS INTO STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS

From 15-19 November 2016 ESCR-Net held its Global Strategy Meeting bringing together more than 140 social movements and civil society organizations and advocates from 40 countries to strengthen collaborations in challenging global systems that perpetuate inequality, impoverishment and dispossession. The meeting question was “What transformative, collective action will ESCR-Net undertake to realize Economic, Social and Cultural Rights over the next five years, responsive to global conditions?” The planning committee included groups from North and South, including two from this initiative, LRC and CELS. It began with a ‘social movement only’ day, using interpreters to ensure that these participants could jointly prepare the issues and goals they wanted to engage the broader movement in. See [escr-net.org](http://escr-net.org)



## INGOs using their resources to support constituencies in self-organizing

### SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHRDS MENA COALITION

**Contribution:** In March 2015, AWID provided key support including resource mobilization for a meeting to consolidate an organization of women’s human rights defenders in MENA.

**Outcome:** That same month, the Women Human Rights Defenders Middle East and North Africa (WHRD MENA) Coalition was officially launched. (AWID # 32)

### INGOs deliberately sharing power with other groups

**Conectas** hosts the International Human Rights Colloquium which specifically aims to create a space for human rights groups from the Global South to learn with and from each other. Over the period of this initiative, Conectas has leveraged relationships built in the initiative to diminish its own power and control over the agenda and decisions regarding participants of this Colloquium by inviting groups from other parts of the world to co-host the 14th Annual International Human Rights Colloquium in São Paulo, Brazil from 25-29 May 2015, including KontraS from Indonesia and, from this initiative, the Legal Resources Centre and CELS. Drawing on this experiment of co-hosting the event, Conectas is shifting its approach going forward “to guarantee a more innovative and inclusive process, the event will now be held every two years and will be preceded by a series of regional preparatory meetings.” (conectas.org), an indication of the ongoing impact of this initiative in strengthening the influence of Conectas and its allies on the human rights movement.

# Maximizing diverse capacities through formal alliances

In terms of organizational forms, alliances offer the opportunity to fully draw on all participants’ capacities and relationships irrespective of locality. The SHRW grantees from both Cohorts engaged in a wide range of collaborations and alliances which leveraged the different capacities of each group.

All groups’ interests benefit from such collaborations. That said, alliances are not new. The difference in the SHRW initiative, and its contribution to a more equitable ecology is that Global South groups could make their own choices, with their own resources, as to which alliances are worth engaging in and in what ways. The marker of progress towards an equitable ecology is local and national groups no longer having to wait to be invited in. Indeed, they did also create their own spaces for alliance-building and coalitions. They also enabled groups to afford investing in the time needed to effectively involve social movements.



## LEVERAGING ACCOUNTABILITY TO CLIENTS INTO INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

At the international level the **Legal Resources Centre** worked with two existing alliances focusing on the UN Treaty on Transnational Corporations – The Treaty Alliance, a broad alliance of organizations across the world who believe there should be a treaty on transnational corporations; and The Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power, also sometimes called ‘The People’s Treaty’, which focuses on bringing community voices into the process. It has a very strong Latin American presence but increasingly one in Southern Africa. Given that the LRC is a client-based organization, it did a lot of work on the Peoples Treaty Campaign, including being involved in a triple tribunal in Swaziland in 2015.

Making sure that alliances with a mix of professionalized international and national NGOs and community or social movement representatives fully recognize the latter groups’ skills and experience is key to shifting the ecology.

This can be done by having a ‘pre-meeting’, with translation, to analyze their situations and build cross-country and cross-regional understanding and strategies before engaging in strategic learning and planning with NGOs and INGOs in the movement as illustrated in the ESCR-Net example above.



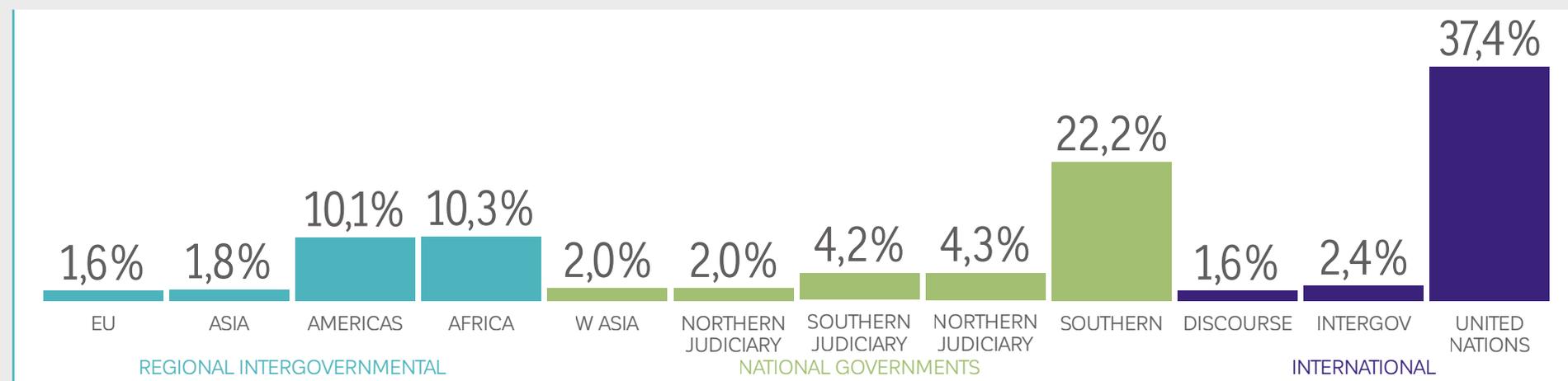
# Enhancing the movement's impact on the global human rights system

# Context informing ways of challenging the system

Globalization results in a situation where the abrogation of human rights of two people in different parts of the world may be caused by a single transnational corporation or government, based elsewhere in the world.

For this reason, human rights groups need to target whatever part of the 'system' – that is policies, practices or perspectives of governments, whether local or national, and regional or international intergovernmental bodies – that is responsible for the problem they are addressing, or is well positioned to influence those who are responsible. The experience of this initiative has demonstrated that to move an agenda, there frequently need to be flows of strategies between local, national, regional and global. The figure below shows that while most outcomes aiming to influence the system targeted the UN, almost as many aimed to influence national governments and a further quarter aimed to influence regional institutions.

FIGURE 4: WHICH PART OF THE 'SYSTEM' ACTORS ARE INFLUENCING



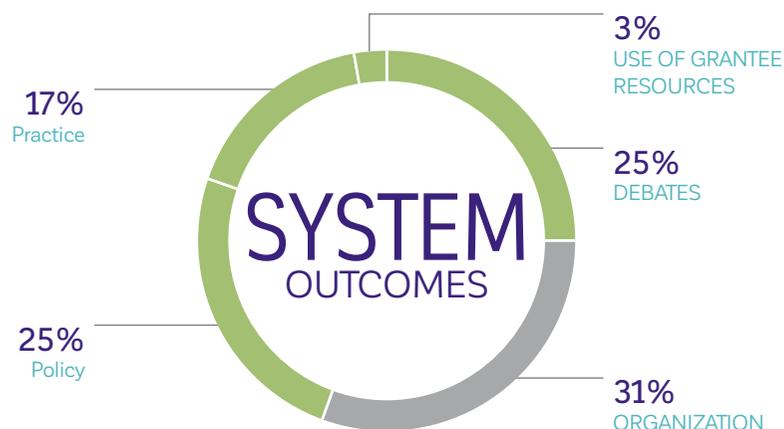
The table below shows that Cohort 2 grantees influenced actors in the Global North, Global South and the UN in roughly equal proportions. In contrast, most actors in outcomes influenced by Cohort 1 are from the Global South, a quarter from the UN, some from a mix of regions and very few from the Global North.

TABLE 3: REGIONAL LOCATION OF ACTORS INFLUENCING THE SYSTEM, BY COHORT

SYSTEM OUTCOMES BY ACTORS FROM:	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Global South	54.7%	35.0%
UN	25.8%	27.0%
Mix	14.5%	6.3%
Global North	4.7%	31.2%
Unknown	0.3%	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The proportions of types of changes grantees influenced in the human rights system are in the figure below.

FIGURE 5: 'SYSTEM OUTCOMES' INFLUENCED BY SHRW GRANTEEES



Almost a third of systems outcomes refer to increased organizational capacities by groups to engage the system. A quarter of all systems outcomes relate to influencing debates, that is they indicate increased visibility and discourse on issues; another quarter involve having influenced policy outcomes of different kinds including court rulings ('precedent'), policies or mechanisms. A significant proportion involve having influenced practice including one-off actions, use of methodologies, or processes.

## Recognizing the strategic value of diversity for system influence

### Moving from verticality to collaboration – from a ladder to a mosaic

Respondents in this Review repeatedly reiterated that the historical divides in which some groups' ambit is defined as 'national', others as 'regional' and yet others as 'international' does not make strategic sense. Rather, issues should determine strategy.

“ Human rights issues cannot be enclosed in boxes, under national or international labels. They usually start locally and then, depending on their nature, develop at national, regional or international levels. With today's high level of communications, all levels merge and remedies to abuses stem both from local and international pressures.

MALAK POPOVIC, CONECTAS

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## Shifting from a ladder to a mosaic

interviewees' and survey respondents' perspectives suggested that the international human rights movement is better understood and operationalized as a mosaic of diverse groups with diverse contributions rather than a ladder in which abuses happen at local level and are fed 'upwards' to be address by INGOs at international level. Only in situations where taking litigation to the international level requires the exhausting of local remedies does the 'ladder' approach apply. In most other circumstances where to target advocacy is a matter of strategy as is the question of who is best placed to move an agenda.

“ The characteristics of an organization should not be decided on the basis of its zip code location. ”

OSCAR VILHENA, CONECTAS



## EACH PARTNER CONTRIBUTES TO THE WHOLE

The initiative of **INCLO** to draw on the national locations of its members to build a global evidence base on the use of “non-lethal weapons” to control protests illustrates the power of alliance-building between groups working at local and national levels. Its report produced in partnership with Physicians for Human Rights as well as civil liberties and national human rights member organizations in Africa, Latin America and Asia, *Lethal in Disguise: The health consequences of crowd-control weapons* is being used by these groups for both building a wider base of support to challenge the use of dangerous weapons against protesters and for advocating at national and international levels for government and private sector accountability. INCLO’s members, in turn, have done this research through deep engagement with local groups involved in and affected by use of such weapons. The work in this report has been used by INCLO members to advocate for international standards on policing of social protests at the regional and international level.

Globalization makes it impossible for every national human rights activist organization, let alone for every affected individual or community, to have the knowledge and networks to realize their rights. So, collaboration is a critical dynamic in effective human rights activism.

## INGOs creating spaces others can use

INGOs are frequently well positioned to influence international powers.

“ Our focus isn’t exclusively or even primarily on human rights abuses or environmental abuses that are taking place at the hands of people operating in the South but rather looking at the ways in which the banks, the financial institutions, the politicians, and the multinational corporations in the global north, are playing a key role in driving the kind of natural resource exploitation and related abuses we are concerned about. As an organization based in the global north, we pay a lot of attention to our part in the problem, which is a key differentiator in terms of how we understand our role as a Global North player.

GILLIAN CALDWELL, GLOBAL WITNESS

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### INGOs can offer access to platforms and collaborate in developing mechanisms that extend local and regional groups' reach.

#### Online portal for advocacy and research

In August 2016, HURIDOCS, a conglomerate of human rights organizations seeking to manage and exchange relevant human rights information benefiting each other's work entered into a partnership with **Forum-Asia**. Together they have developed an online portal for advocacy and research that monitors the Asian states' performance on human rights at UN HRC.

#### An abuse documentation checklist

With **ESCR-Net**, **BHRC** developed an abuse documentation checklist, which went viral – for instance over 100 communities have used it in Mexico to prepare their cases for the visit of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

## Global South groups influencing the system at multiple levels

The Ford Foundation initiated the SHRW because it recognized that the changing world order required a human rights ecosystem that was fit for purpose. Its inclusion of national, regional and international NGOs in the SHRW global initiative reflects its interest in the roles played by all of these groups in this new ecosystem.

### National organizations influencing agendas of international bodies

Given the general loss of moral valence of the West, it is more important than ever that human rights groups from other parts of the world strengthen further their ability to influence their own and other governments and regional institutions, and social movements.

“ Big names are still operating through a North South dynamic which is not congruent with the rights challenges in our world today and gaining legitimacy from Western governmental backers. Rights organizations cannot tie legitimacy to state agency without losing legitimacy themselves. The rights movement needs to emerge in new global powers from a new base of legitimacy that is indigenous to non-Western cultures. ”

LISA JORDAN, SENIOR PHILANTHROPY EXECUTIVE

That many of the groups in this initiative have been invited into governmental, NGO and academic decision-making spaces at national, regional and global levels is an indication of the possibility of the emergence of powerful voices for human rights outside of a Western ambit. However, it is being achieved with access to resources from this initiative that are not usually available to groups in the Global South.



## AGENDA-SETTING: A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO DRUG POLICY

**CELS** led a joint initiative with 16 other organizations to request the first regional hearing on drug policies at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in March 2014, explicitly linking drug regulation with human rights problems. The report *The Impact of Drug Policy on Human Rights* was presented to universities, social organizations, UN agencies, regional and sub-regional mechanisms in 10 cities. CELS strengthened existing collaborations and added new ones with universities in Europe and Latin America. It strengthened relationships with researchers analyzing militarization in the 'war on drugs'. CELS also pushed for wider debate on the problem, amplifying its regional achievements. In April 2016, the UN General Assembly had a Special Session on 'the world drug problem'. CELS advocated to the Human Rights Council, which passed its first resolution on drug policy in 2015, and to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which drew on the expertise of CELS and its partners to draft a study on the world drug problem's impact on human rights. They also participated in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). They alerted CEDAW and the UN Working Group on discrimination against women to the dramatic ways in which women's rights are being affected by drug trafficking and drug policies. As a member of the Human Rights Council Network (HRC-Net) CELS made a presentation to the UN Secretary-General. Through this work CELS forged alliances with and inserted a human rights perspective into the work of the international drug policy reform movement, joining the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) and became an active participant in the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC) and the New York NGO Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC) which enabled it to influence conversations with UN Agencies.

Source: *Building a human rights framework for drug policies, CELS Case Study, June 2017.*

Some groups have also set up offices in cities where they focus a lot of their UN advocacy.

In general, Global South groups find that having their own people, for example in Geneva, gives them greater strategic leverage than relying on collaborations with INGO staff in those spaces. **Forum-Asia's** experience is that having an office also increases the perceived legitimacy of such groups, by government delegates and even INGOs.

**CELS** and **Conectas** pooled resources to contract an individual to represent the interests of their constituencies which has helped them raise local issues in real time linking local and international actions simultaneously, while saving on costs of running an office.

Whilst this model increases the legitimacy and power of Global South organizations vis-à-vis international institutions, it also devours resources. Moreover, does internationalization mean working at international forums? As described below working at the regional level and also influencing foreign policies of their own governments may be more strategic and cost effective in the longer run.

## Global South groups influencing their own governments' foreign policies

Some groups are effectively influencing their governments' foreign policy; the case of Brazil having institutionalized foreign policy accountability provides a replicable model.

### INSTITUTIONALIZING CIVIL SOCIETY INPUT INTO NATIONAL FOREIGN POLICY

In 2006, **Conectas** influenced the establishment of the Brazilian Committee on Human Rights and Foreign Policy at the House of Representatives, sponsored by the Commission on Human Rights and Minorities. It comprises representatives of parliament, civil society organizations and governmental officers. They define their agenda each year by assessing key issues on the international agenda where Brazil's own policies or experience can be leveraged to influence other countries or the regional and international bodies' perspectives.

## Global South groups supporting efforts that influence other national governments

In the traditional human rights ecology, national groups advocate to their own governments, INGOs advocate to other governments. Outcomes of the SHRW global initiative that target national governments are roughly equally divided between the two cohorts of the initiative. The review demonstrates that Global South groups, including national human rights groups, can support activists to challenge the system in other countries without the aid of INGO intermediaries.

The **Legal Resources Centre (LRC)** responded to the concerns of school children and parents about the poor quality of their education in South Africa. *“Story-listening – for people in communities to deal with their own trauma. We do this at the point of engagement with communities, gathering stories, gathering witness.”* On behalf of Tripartite Steering Committee and the Governing Body of Masivuyiswe Secondary School<sup>2</sup>, LRC successfully litigated for the provision of scholar transport for students. LRC shared this experience of using litigation to ensure that governments give effect to the right to education with human rights groups working on education from India,



Kenya, and Uganda. In Hungary, LRC assisted local human rights organizations to strategize and provided them with resources in support of their litigation related to right to education. The LRC was granted leave to intervene as an amicus in the case of *Amanda Kosa v Hungary*; a case before the European Court of Human Rights involving the possible infringement of the right to education as a result of the removal of scholar transport for a group of Roma children. The complaint against the government of Hungary focused on the cancellation of public scholar transport to an integrated school in Nyiregyhaza, Hungary. The effect of the cancellation was to force a group of largely Roma children to attend a segregated school nearby instead.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tripartite Steering Committee was a body formed by the concerned parties involved at three different schools who had decided to work together and approached the LRC jointly*

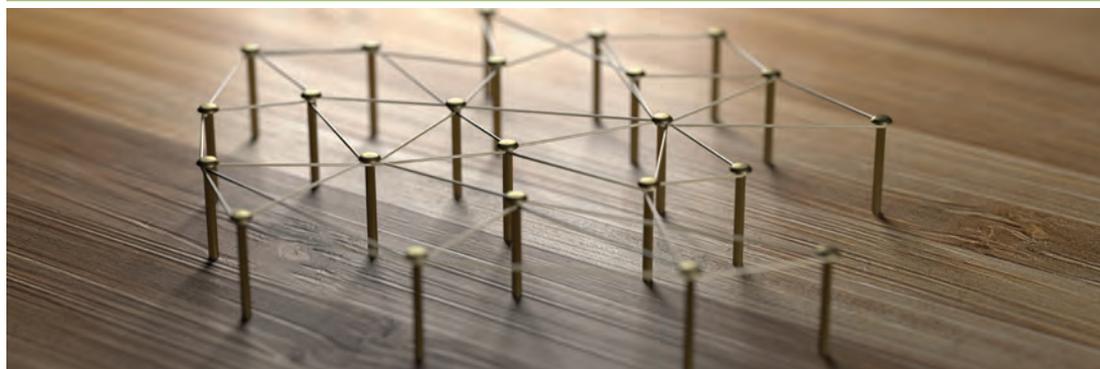
# Recognizing the geo-political importance of regional inter-governmental spaces

Regional institutions are gaining increasing geo-political importance and need the ongoing attention of human rights groups. Often states accuse the international human rights system of having a Western bias and failing to understand the local context.

For this reason, human rights groups based in the Global South are increasingly focusing work at the regional level, to bring greater pressure on their governments without making themselves vulnerable to accusations of bias or external (Western) pressure. At the UN forums, regional blocks tend to take common positions and therefore it is also important to work at regional forums such as the African Union to influence the policies it will take at international forums. The third highest proportion of system outcomes focus on influencing regional intergovernmental human rights institutions in Africa and the Americas – 113 (20.4%), with another 3.4% covering regional entities elsewhere. Three quarters of regional actors in the system outcomes are influenced by Cohort 1 showing that Global South are giving particular attention to the regional level.

## THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS – FROM RULING TO IMPLEMENTATION

A landmark ruling in 2010 by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) condemning the expulsion of the Endorois people from their land in Kenya was heralded as a major victory for indigenous peoples across Africa. But seven years on, the Kenyan government has failed to implement the decisions of the court. **The Kenyan Human Rights Commission** (KHRC), in partnership with the lead litigants, Minority Rights Group International (MRG), as well as the Economic Social and Cultural Rights Network (**ESCR-Net**) Strategic Litigation Working Group, joined hands with the community representatives, the Endorois Welfare Council (EWC), to keep up the pressure. In September 2014, the government finally heeded their calls and President Uhuru Kenyatta established a Taskforce to work on the implementation of the ACHPR ruling. Through joint strategic planning, workshops to share comparative experience and expertise from the Global South that have concurrently advanced the participation and leadership of Endorois women, and sustained advocacy both domestically and at ACHPR, they continue to fight to convert the court's decision into tangible justice for the Endorois.



## SAVING THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

In September 2015, CELS, Dejusticia, the Fundación para el Debido Proceso (DPLF), Fundar - Centro de Análisis e Investigación, Conectas Direitos Humanos and the Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL) convened to discuss the weakening of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), whose existence was under threat as a result of insufficient funding. They lobbied member governments to meet and address this issue. The same month, members of the IACHR, the Inter-American Court and other key actors of the Inter-American Human Rights System met in Mexico City to discuss the upcoming challenges for the IACHR.

In 2016, Dejusticia's team prepared two chapters and assumed the editorial coordination of a publication on the Inter American System of Human Rights prepared together with CELS, Conectas, Fundar and DPLF (Due Process of Law Foundation - Washington DC). The resulting book was published in English and Spanish: [http://www.dplf.org/sites/default/files/challenges\\_iachs\\_final\\_web\\_08232016pdf.pdf](http://www.dplf.org/sites/default/files/challenges_iachs_final_web_08232016pdf.pdf) In 2016, the IACHR did not suffer a cut in its functions in the reform process. Moreover, one of the main recommendations (the need for a consultation in the strategic planning process of the IACHR) has been advanced by the IACHR since 2016.



At the same time, given that most resources to support human rights work remain in the West, Europe in particular remains an essential focus for activism. By allying with other networks, FIDH and Frontline ensured that the framing of their bid and its potential for reach was expanded.

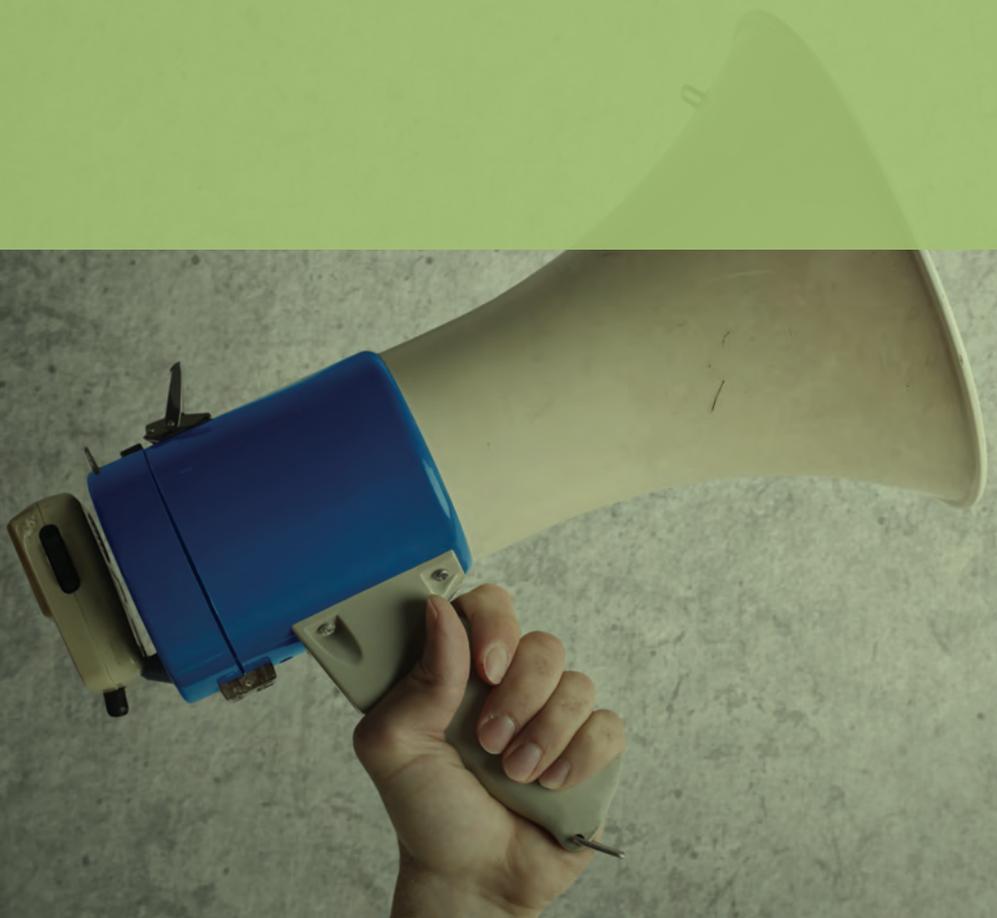
## MOBILIZING ORGANIZATIONS AND EVIDENCE TO INFLUENCE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in every region of the world continue to face reprisals because of their non-violent work. They are harassed, persecuted, criminalized and stigmatized. Since 2010, **FIDH**, a federation made up of 184 member organizations from 112 countries, has led calls for EU support to HRDs to be flexible, adaptable and global. As a result, the EC committed 15 million Euros over 36 months to provide protection to HRDs, and a call for proposals was launched in 2015. In collaboration with Frontline Defenders, FIDH reached out to a group of 10 other civil society organizations, including two from the SHRW initiative – ESCR-Net and Forum-Asia – to respond to the call, and succeeded in obtaining the funding. ProtectDefenders.EU was launched that same year, including a 24 / 7 hotline; the disbursement of emergency funds; and the relocation of HRDs at risk in third countries. In its first year, it disbursed 331 emergency grants in 64 countries, temporarily relocated 149 individuals at risk and trained over 1300 defenders to better manage security issues.

Sources: FIDH, Case Study ProtectDefenders.EU and First Year of Support, Protectdefenders.eu, November 2016



# Naming and shaming the private sector



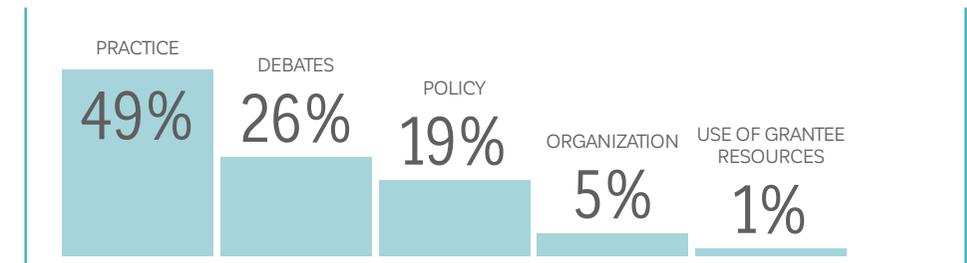
## Context requiring local to global strategizing

The power and reach of global business continues to grow. In 1970 there were 7000 multinational firms; by 2008 there were 82,000 multinationals, with 820,000 foreign affiliates – plus hundreds of millions of national/local companies.

Local, national and regional NGOs, as well as INGOs are increasingly turning their attention to abuses by the private sector and finding that joint work maximizes each of their contributions.

Figure 1 shows that 7% (81 of the 1250) outcomes harvested are targeting the private sector directly. Almost 60% of actors in these outcomes are from the Global North which is not surprising given those most likely to influence transnational corporations are themselves located in the north. As illustrated in Figure 5 below, a fifth of these outcomes are shifts in policy and a further half are shifts in practice. This is an exceptional outcome showing the effectiveness of grantees in the initiative in influencing the actions of the private sector. A quarter are shifts in debates – that is visibility and discourse on the issues.

FIGURE 6: TYPES OF OUTCOMES TARGETING THE PRIVATE SECTOR



# Integrating national and international strategies

Transnational companies may want to be seen to be following international standards. As a result, mechanisms established by INGOs to rate and publicize corporate compliance appear to be effective.

“

Rather than thinking of regulation as a single government issue, we should think about regulatory networks. Leading companies are involved in self-regulation and leading regulation. Coke made a big deal about zero tolerance on land grabbing, but makes no effort to influence others, so one can't rely on self-regulation – one has to make networks of regulating groups. Regulation only works when enforced, when vulnerable groups know their rights.

PHIL BLOOMER, BHRRRC

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## SECURING WORKERS' RIGHTS IN MYANMAR

When the Myanmar government proposed a minimum wage in June 2015, at least 90 factories threatened to close down if the proposed minimum wage was approved. The **Business and Human Rights Resource Centre's** approach to five major international brands sourcing from Myanmar showed an entirely different position and immediately countered the factory owners' statements: all of them expressed support for setting a minimum wage and the development of an effective minimum wage-setting mechanism. The initial pushback from factory owners did not gain ground, and the proposed minimum wage was later approved. Workers continue to struggle to ensure that the minimum wage level meets living requirements and is properly implemented.

The national and the international have to be worked together. Through collaborations between groups in diverse countries, evidence can be built of global trends. Whilst local, national and regional NGOs in the global South are increasingly turning their attention to abuses by the private sector, they often struggle to find the leverage points for a multinational company that is committing abuses.

## DRAWING ON LOCAL GROUPS' EXPERIENCE TO BUILD A GLOBAL CASE

Working with researchers on the ground in every region of the world, the **Business and Human Rights Resource Centre** (BHRRC) tracks and publicizes companies' human rights impacts. Its report on the coal industry in India, Colombia, South Africa, and Egypt, *Digging Deeper*, co-written with **Dejusticia**, was instrumental in giving a Global South-based view of the sometimes-devastating consequences of extractives industries in time to use it for advocacy at the (Conference of the Parties) on Climate Change in 2015. Groups are also using the findings in diverse forums. For example, in a Constitutional Court Case in Colombia taken by Wayuu indigenous groups and Afro descendant leaders, the court ruled that Cerrejon coal cannot continue its works to deviate the Bruno stream which residents in this desert zone alleged would impact their water sources.

# Influencing national governments through international governance mechanisms

A further 153 (12%) of all outcomes aim to influence the private sector through mechanisms outside of the private sector itself. The example below illustrates how groups can influence government policy to hold the private sector accountable.

## USING INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS TO INFLUENCE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES

According to a 12-month investigation conducted in 2015 by **Global Witness**, up to \$31 billion worth of jade was produced in northern Myanmar in 2014. Rather than benefitting the people of Kachin, the precious stone is causing untold suffering. Controlled by powerful military figures, crony companies and men with guns, the multi-billion dollar trade is helping fund armed conflict and has driven 100,000 people from their homes in just the last few years. At the international level, Global Witness has lobbied to tackle the problem of hidden company ownership. This culminated in a breakthrough in 2016, when the global transparency initiative which promotes good governance of natural resources – the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(EITI\)](#) – agreed to make beneficial ownership transparency an obligation on all 51 member countries. In Myanmar, Global Witness continues to work with national civil society members of the EITI, including the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA), to take the fight against hidden company ownership forward.





# Engaging social media

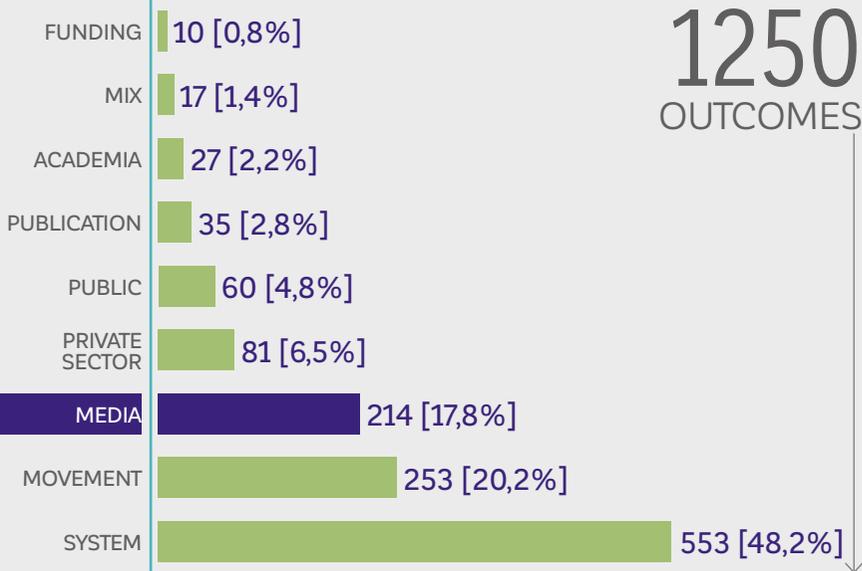
# Context increasing the need for social media in advocacy

Social media provides the narrative context within which political action is being shaped. Both the human rights movement and system are located in a world in which narratives are being negotiated through social media, hence any strategies of influence need to actively engage in struggles around discourse.

“ There is a lot of learning to be done as a human rights community. Fundamentalists, extremists and the far right have simplified and strengthened the appeal of their call to action to attract and motivate people while the human rights community tends to distance itself from the lives of every day people by using technical language. ”  
GILLIAN CALDWELL, GLOBAL WITNESS

# Embedding and funding communications strategies within overall advocacy strategies

Figure 1 shows that a full 17% (214) of the 1250 outcomes harvested relate to media uptake of grantee agendas and a further 3% (35) to others publishing grantee content and hence giving it visibility.



There's a high degree of sophistication required to leverage social media and links to mainstream media, in ways that move forward one's overall agenda. For this reason, 'embeddedness' is essential. For example, Global Witness locates a communications person in each of their programs in order to fully integrate their communications strategies.

To impact global discourse human rights groups have to invest in understanding it and need the language and time resources to understand its dynamics and build the necessary relationships. For this reason, some groups only focus on their national audiences, expecting others to pick up stories for the international level.

“ Our main audience is Brazilian so if we started to talk about Iraq it would seem crazy. Connecting local to global has to make sense, for example Favelas to Black Lives Matter. Although we can talk about such international issues, it is difficult for us to talk to a global audience. ”

JUANA KWEITEL, CONECTAS

Where local or national groups do not have the resources and relationships, INGOs with an orientation towards supporting the movement's efforts can be effective intermediaries.

“ We were able to quickly establish a benchmark on business and what they are doing – to give a reputation reward for companies taking action, and a reputation risk for the other companies. ”

PHIL BLOOMER, BHRC

“ We play a bridging function between our local partners in Brazil and 'international' media. We hire and work with people locally in regions who are social media experts and put out material regionally. ... it's all about the narrative; it's a lot about the volume of stories that are happening and how to make sure the right stories get through, so a lot is about curation and what narratives people see – ensuring a high diversity of stories. ”

YVETTE ALBERDINGK THIJM, WITNESS

## ADVOCATING FOR A UN PEACEKEEPING MISSION TO STOP 'ETHNIC CLEANSING' IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Central African Republic (CAR) was on the brink of genocide after a coup in March 2013. **Crisis Action** mobilized an emergency response coalition to call for the UN to dispatch a peacekeeping force to stop the bloodshed. *They supported an inter-faith delegation of the CAR's religious leaders to visit the UN Security Council, Ban Ki Moon, and the French President, among others. To back-up this strategy they supported these leaders to write a letter to the UN Security Council and joint opinion pieces in Le Monde and the Washington Post and to appear in Time Magazine and CNN's Amanpour program. The UK, France and EU subsequently pledged over \$20m in aid to provide food, medical supplies, clean water and sanitation. In April 2014, the UN Security Council agreed to dispatch a peacekeeping force in a UN resolution that specifically paid tribute to the role of the country's faith leaders in preventing violence.*

## Building multilingualism

One of the most critical resources for influencing global targets and narratives is multilingual capacities. A number of grantees in the SHRW invested in broadening their language capacities among staff and on their websites. See [fidh.org](http://fidh.org) which operates in five languages, [business-humanrights.org](http://business-humanrights.org) which operates in nine languages.

While Latin American grantees have increased their English capacities, African and Asian grantees have not added Spanish or Portuguese to their repertoire. The language divide will remain a challenge for the human rights movement and it is not fully taken into account by grantees or donors.



# Rethinking traditional assumptions regarding both legacy and new media impact

## Challenging the idea that only INGOs can legitimately comment on the globe

The conventional wisdom is that only international NGOs are a legitimate voice for speaking about issues across the globe. Indeed, the second cohort of grantees in the SHRW initiative generally had greater influence on media responses and coverage of issues, reinforcing the perspective that they have built a high level of social capital, including in their relationships to media. Cohort 1 gave less attention and had less impact on the media.

“

As we all know, universities and research centers and even NGOs in the Global North – in the US and Europe – tend to be dominant in terms of their influence, in terms of how many quotes they get in newspapers or journals. This is to the detriment of the impact and efficacy of human rights ideas, because they tend to be seen, those ideas, as less legitimate and less rooted in local realities. One lesson we’ve derived is that idea production and dissemination is an asymmetrical process, and thus we are developing communication initiatives and transnational collaborations to mitigate this inequality.

CÉSAR RODRÍGUEZ GARAVITO, DEJUSTICIA

”

## Recognizing that ‘international media’ may not always be the appropriate target

While human rights groups gain legitimacy in the eyes of funders from coverage in media that is perceived as the international media, such as The New York Times, or the BBC, this may not be whom their strategy needs to target. In some cases media coverage aims to reach a decision-maker at national level who will not be reading an ‘international paper’ or it is aiming to reach affected constituencies as the two comments below attest.

“The enchantment with social media has made us lose sight of how our audiences receive information – in South Africa people listen to radio, so one needs a more considered view of communications; opinion pieces in community-based journals should not play second fiddle to international outlets.

JANET LOVE, LEGAL RESOURCES CENTRE

On the other hand, even in less developed countries social media is becoming critical to human rights strategies.

“We recently produced a piece on the jade industry in Myanmar — a video with story-driven interviews on the ground about the experience of communities whose land was confiscated. Hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar downloaded it in the first few days – it substantiated what they already know and understand but could not prove about who was reaping the benefits of the 31 billion dollar industry. We also created a new open-source platform that can recognize if you’re in a high or low bandwidth terrain and this makes it more accessible to people accessing our media on tablets or mobile devices.

GILLIAN CALDWELL, GLOBAL WITNESS

## ‘Netizens’ changing the ecology of the movement

While many more traditional players in the human rights movement haven’t grasped the changes around us to be inclusive of new voices and spaces, these are making themselves felt anyway. The meanings of ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ have less valence when any group, effectively skilled and resourced, can influence global narratives through social media

Netizens, artists, journalists, bloggers and others have joined the ranks of the human rights movement, and, in doing so, have contributed to diversifying it well beyond its traditional areas and forms of action.

NARRATIVE REPORT, CONECTAS

## Wide-ranging publics taking a stand through social media

### Global Witness’ contribution:

In April 2015, **Global Witness** launched a joint petition with NGO partners, including Walk Free and Christian Aid, to encourage the public to call on the EU to show leadership in the fight to end the unacceptable abuses fueled by conflict minerals.

**Outcome:** In 2015, over 200,000 people sent messages to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) – citizens in every single EU country took action and every single MEP was contacted. (Global Witness #10)

### AWID’s contribution:

In 2014 **AWID** produced an Alert on WHRDs at risk of violence in El Salvador, in collaboration with LAS 17 Campaign led by Salvadoran feminists and human rights organizations.

**Outcome:** In support of the El Salvador Alert, more than 400 AWID members from 75 countries signed an international petition presented by the Salvadoran organization Agrupacion Ciudadana to the Salvadoran government to give pardons to 17 women facing prison terms under anti-abortion laws for birth complications. (AWID #84) In February 2015, the Salvadoran government released one of the 17 women from El Salvador facing prison terms under anti-abortion laws for birth complications. (AWID #85)



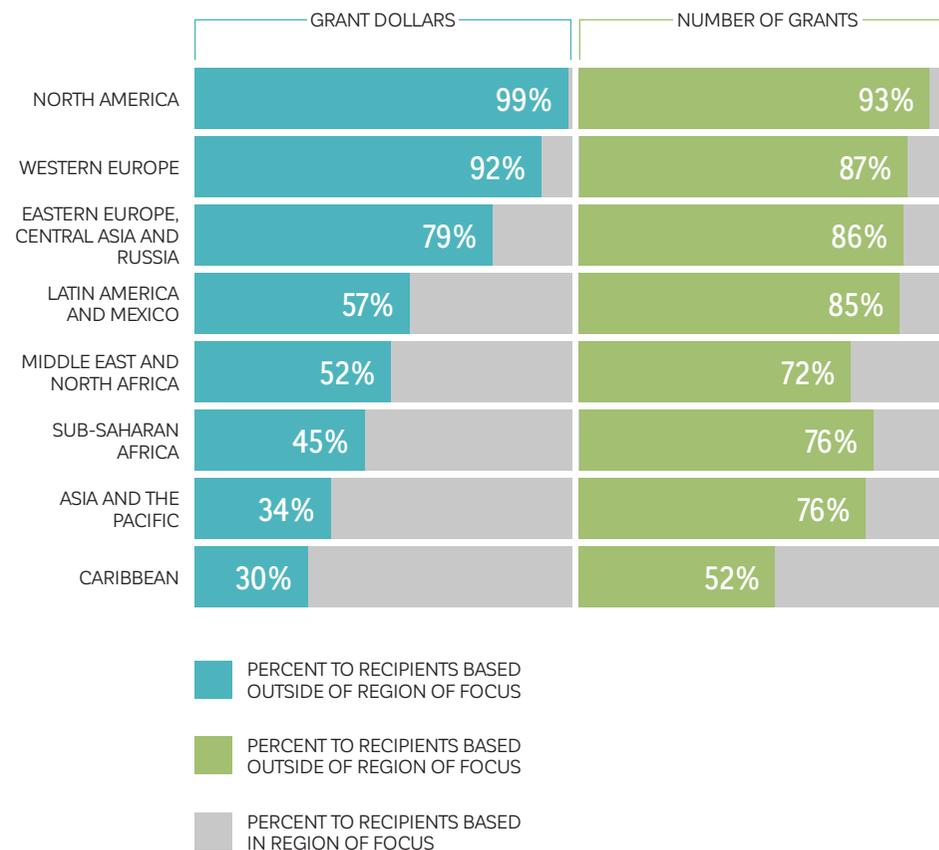
Shifting funding approaches  
towards a more equitable ecology

# Context: funders mostly in the West funding the West

The funding terrain for human rights activism is fundamentally inequitable. The majority of funds come from the West and go to the West, even for use elsewhere in the world.

The International Human Rights Funders Network and Foundation Center 2014 data on where IHRFG, Ariadne and Prospera members (human rights funders) funding goes shows that whereas human rights groups in North America and Europe are funded to work in their countries, large proportions of funds for work elsewhere go to organizations based outside the regions concerned:

FIGURE 7: HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDING TO RECIPIENTS BASED IN THE REGION



Source: Foundation Centre 2017. Figures based on grants awarded by 729 foundations located in 50 countries.



While there has been an increase in funders supporting social movements and human rights NGOs in the Global South, most of these are also dependent on funders in the Global North. From the same data that was reported to the Foundation Center, of all the funding that went to the Global South for human rights work, only 3% of the total amount given to Global South groups for human rights work explicitly enables them to conduct activities in ‘Global Programs’, North America and Western Europe.<sup>6</sup> Both the funders who responded to this Review’s survey and those interviewed critiqued the reality that from the perspective of most human rights funders, it remains appropriate for Western INGOs to work ‘on’ the human rights issues of the Global South. It is possible that groups receiving these funds give substantial emphasis to partnerships, but it is still they who decide where to focus their energy, and those living with human rights abuses seldom have the resources to shape the global strategies that may be needed to address their issues. In addition, a managerial approach frequently requires human rights groups to predict their results in an unpredictable world.

Related to this, funder discomfort with core support prevents institutional resilience of human rights groups.

“ funders who want it all – they want grantees to fix their business model, become more transparent, build constituencies, but without supporting them or giving them the time to do this – or accepting that in some cases it just might not be possible.  
POONAM JOSHI, HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERT ”

The review identified some approaches that could significantly strengthen the capacities of the human rights movement to operate effectively in the changing global context.

<sup>6</sup>1% was designated for ‘Global Programs’ plus 1.6% to be used by groups in the south to work in North America, plus 0.4% to conduct activities in Europe

# Core funding providing stability, autonomy and flexibility to Global South groups

Having a commitment of core funding for a long period gives human rights groups from the Global South the stability, autonomy and flexibility they needed to develop longer-term processes and agendas even while continuing to respond to crises.

Ford Foundation committed core funding for five years which allowed Global South groups to shape their own agendas based on their engagement on the ground, rather than only being able to influence the movement or system when INGOs invited them to the table.

Key institutions need core support which enables them both to ensure they are institutionally sustainable and to take advantage of unexpected windows of opportunity to even create these when urgent action is needed

We need to balance making waves with surfing the waves that present themselves to us.  
LUCIA NADER – INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST, FORMER CONECTAS DIRECTOR

## National groups from the Global North or South needing funds for international work

All groups working predominantly nationally, whether in the Global North or Global South need to be able to use their core funding for international work.

The quality of activism will always be enhanced if groups are able to learn from the experience and strategies of others in different and similar contexts, which means that those doing innovative work should be sharing it globally, and those looking for ideas need to be able to access them.

In context of globalization many challenges need addressing beyond the national state, and impact will be enhanced if groups working on similar issues with the same or similar perpetrators can build an evidence base together and strategize together, including as to when and how to use regional or international instruments of the human rights movement or of INGOs.

Funding international networks or resource centers that can facilitate these collective spaces is an effective strategy if the networks work in an accountable manner, but should not take the place of enabling local and national groups to seek the partners they want on their issues at the times that they need them, and to resource such interactions.

The amounts of money needed by human rights groups for 'internationalizing' the work of Southern human rights groups depends on their goals, in particular if these are long term or one-off interventions. Deciding on a set amount of money for all grantees globally does not take into account a) the different value of the US\$ in different countries and b) that the amount of funds needed to develop a new and long-term institutional initiative for the human rights movement (such as an annual conference, or a journal or a training program) or to engage the system (such as having a staff member located in Geneva) are quite different from the funds needed for a single event bringing the movement together to strategize on how to address an immediate crisis, or a topic-specific intervention at one moment in time, such as putting pressure on a set of governments to take action or not take action at a regional human rights body. That said, the latter type of work is also most likely to be successful if relationships have been built over time.



# Planning a funding strategy to increase equity in the ecology of the movement

A funding strategy aimed at increasing equity in the ecology of the human rights movement needs to have:

- social determinants of inequity** including gender, race and class, addressed in the internal staff composition, leadership and organizational culture of the grantees
- a clear theory of change** that has been developed and negotiated with the participating grantees
- signs of progress** must be agreed on among all grantees, and how they will report on these – if a funder’s strategy is not explicit, any evaluation of that strategy may find that the funders’ goals and theory of change are different from those of each of the groups funded under the initiative
- bonds of trust** among groups with similar goals but a mix of capacities and locations; trust can be deliberately built over time through collaborations and collective reflection
- mutually reinforcing networks** that cross social movement / NGO / INGO divides and North / South divides
- attention to leadership shifts** so that if key actors in any grantee or the funder move on, then those coming in are oriented towards the initiative

**institutional capacity strengthening**  
through contracting technical support services that grantees need; enabling grantees some say over terms of reference and choice of consultants. Giving grants to tech support groups is less likely to ensure targeted support.

**time and money**  
realistically understood bearing in mind the scope of the goals, the complexity of the context and the extent to which participating groups are implementing joint or individual strategies to achieve one or many objectives

**ability to share funds**  
so that grantees can bring in other groups which may not have the necessary resources

**ethical ways of working**  
need to be assessed in relation to international organizations or networks funded, in particular as to whether their work is driven from the bottom up or top down, and to how their relationships are built and sustained with both national NGOs and social movements. An INGO may be excellent at achieving its own goals, but may not be doing so in ways that add value to or enhance the capacities of groups at national or local levels to engage the global space except on their own local issues. It may be expanding its footprint, but not internationalizing the movement. Of course, similarly, some national groups may be focused only on their own contribution whereas others may be effective networkers and enablers



# Changing the inequitable ecology of a field will not happen in five years

## Ensuring the funding strategy enhances existing capacities and ways of working

The best way to operationalize a funding strategy in one part of the world may not resonate with another because of different levels of capacity and diverse cultures of organizing. Hence, irrespective of the location of the funder, substantial energy needs to go into the build up towards the funding initiative, with substantive local consultations and as far as possible, co-creation of the theory of change with the groups that become grantees.

There may be many groups already pursuing the goal that the funding initiative aims to enhance. The funder needs to be careful not to anoint one group thereby interfering with the ecology in the country or region and should rather explore ways of making funds available to those already moving the needle on the issue, such as, in addition to their core funding, the funder (or an existing network of the key groups) holding a pot of funds that any groups can apply to for collective strategizing and action or for implementing a very focused strategy.

This may have implications for the internal processes of decision-making within a funding institution. Where an institution has staff or consultants located in parts of the world from which grantees will be included, ensuring that they can shape the institution's thinking alongside those in the head office is essential.

Challenging inequities, even in a field of people committed to human rights, takes time. Even as the largest international human rights NGOs are decentralizing or moving headquarters to the south, this is not shifting the balance of power. While we see a significant increase in influence of national and Global South groups, including through SHRW support, this is a process and requires sustained resourcing of a wide range of groups in order to shift the ecology.

In the SHRW initiative, what is striking is how all the groups funded, but especially the first cohort of groups from the Global South increased their collaborations with each other over this period, including collaborative litigation. The importance of some of those groups significantly shifted not only among this group of grantees, but even in the whole group with which the Review conducted a network analysis, most particularly Conectas, the only officially 'international' organization among the Global South groups.

But the importance of some national groups, notably Dejusticia for research and both CELS and Lawyers for Human Rights (not in the SHRW initiative) for litigation, also increased. However, the situation remains that both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were and continued to remain important for information sharing, and Amnesty International continued to remain important for all other forms of collaboration (advocacy, legal cases, seeking advice, and somewhat for research) as did other international NGOs in the SHRW initiative, FIDH and ESCR-Net in particular.

**An initiative to substantially shift the power dynamics within the human rights movement, and therefore its impact on the system globally, would require on the funding side,**

- the building of commitment among the major human rights funders in the West, and at least some agreement on a theory of change, assumptions and related strategies;
- well strategized and ongoing efforts to identify and support philanthropies in the rest of the world to fund human rights work;
- careful attention to what appears to be working in order to foster such strategies rather than assuming that once started they will continue – hence the difficulty of a set time-frame such as five years;

**An initiative to do so would require explicit funding support for, on the grantees' side,**

- ongoing reflective practice within and across the groups involved, at minimum in relation to their specific goals. For example those aiming to foster some accountability for human rights policies and practices among the BRICS would need spaces for joint strategizing, reflection and learning both at national level, and then across these countries; those aiming to strengthen the role of activist researchers in the Global South would need to collectively set realistic goals on what influencing knowledge production and the 'internationalizing' of Southern knowledge could look like, and then construct spaces for joint strategizing, reflection and learning

**This suggests the value of a developmental evaluation approach** where any such initiatives are supported by evaluators deeply cognizant of the values of the field, but able to play the role of 'critical friend' to these initiatives, gathering information and insights from those within and outside of the initiatives to support them in making the greatest possible impact. Summative evaluations, especially when an initiative is ending are too late to be particularly helpful to those doing the work.





# A last word

# A last word

**The Learning Review of the Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative has surfaced a wide range of innovative processes that give pointers as to how the international human rights movement is and can further shift its ways of working such that its issues and champions more closely reflect the diversity of experiences across the globe and are well positioned to leverage their expertise at multiple levels and strengthen enforcement from below.**

Participants in this review describe a social, political and economic context emphasizing national sovereignty, regional specificity and popular cultures of 'othering' in response to the growing inequities associated with globalization. They argue that governments in the West have lost their moral valance as arbiters of human rights but no other governments have taken up responsibility for promoting the universality of human rights and the institutions which promote and protect these. For this reason, it is particularly important that human rights groups with local and regional legitimacy are ever present, pushing the issues and holding governments and non-state actors to account nationally, regionally and internationally.

The initiative has demonstrated that with core funding for an extended period of time, national human rights organizations that would otherwise be dependent on INGOs to access others in the movement or decision-makers they need to influence, can shape their own agendas, learning and advocacy partnerships and modes of influencing decision-makers. Their experiences demonstrate that ways of understanding human rights challenges at local level and innovative strategies to address these can directly contribute towards new ways of understanding and addressing the issues internationally. Hence, the division of human rights strategies into local or global does not deliver the best possible results. All human rights groups need to be able to work out who to target at what levels in order to achieve

the strongest results. In addition, the ability of such groups to share their expertise globally strengthens opportunities for effective action for human rights in sites far beyond the countries where such human rights groups are based.

The initiative has demonstrated the value of roles played by INGOs (irrespective of their location in Global North or South) when they operate democratically and inclusively in creating spaces in the human rights movement for individuals and groups across diverse issues and ways of working to jointly shape agendas, strategize and take action. It has also shown that collective sense-making ensures initiatives are more resonant with the field as whole and have more diverse advocates able to leverage influence in diverse sites.

It has demonstrated that INGOs are frequently well positioned by their relationships to seats of power (intergovernmental, private sector and funders), to high profile media and by their mandates, to create tools and mechanisms that are useful across diverse contexts. These serve as a resource to groups all over the world. When INGOs consciously use this in service to communities, constituencies and the NGOs that work closely with them at national levels, very powerful strategic alliances can be built, enhancing the chances of making an impact.

Indeed, the initiative has shown that collaborations are the modus operandi of the human rights movement and need to be fostered. It has demonstrated that these ways of working strengthen the ability of all human rights groups in the ecology to gather evidence and accurately interpret the dynamics of the current political context, similarities and differences across countries and regions. This ensures that their goals when advocating at national, regional or international levels for new mechanisms, policies or their implementation, take account of this complexity and diversity and that they can leverage their diverse positionings to target multiple players at multiple levels thereby increasing the pressure for change. What makes this a 'new architecture' is the increased power of social movements and groups working nationally to influence the movement's agendas.



#### STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE GREENTREE, JULY 2017

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It is for these reasons the Review Team proposed that whereas the movement was initially structured as a ladder with INGOs at the top drawing information from communities and national NGOs at the bottom, it is moving towards being more like a mosaic with diverse capacities that when working together make a compelling picture and have greater impact.

This has implications for funding strategies as it indicates that while funders can continue to focus on the work of INGOs, there may be more to gain by funding a mixed range of groups working on any issue, to maximize the value that each brings, including not only international and national human rights NGOs but the organized constituencies and movements challenging human rights abuses on the ground. Other lessons for funders from the review are the value of providing long term core funding to groups working for human rights so that they can develop the necessary institutional infrastructure and respond to immediate needs even while operating long-term strategies for change.

They also reinforce that goals as broad as shifting the ecology of a movement need much longer than five years to achieve. They beg questions about focus – that if the funder’s assumptions are well considered and explicit and choice of grantees reflect those assumptions, there is probably a higher chance of seeing focused results. Most particularly, if a group of grantees are part of an initiative with a particular goal, they need to be part of the process of shaping the theory of change, strategizing how to achieve that goal and what kinds of outcomes will be signs of progress – what will substantial success look like? Partial success? This is a conversation that should start when an initiative is conceptualized and continue throughout, so that the expertise of all parties can be brought to bear in assessing the implications of shifting contexts, what is working well and what could be further fostered.

# Appendix: The Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide global initiative

This report draws on lessons from one of the Ford Foundation's efforts to shift the ecology of the human rights movement and strengthen the movement's capacities to tackle the shifting political and economic context.

The global portfolio seeks to address an overarching problem: the structure of the human rights movement is outdated, a vestige of the origins of the movement during the Cold War and its development in the post-Cold War period. If the movement is going to thrive into the 21st Century and continue to be effective, the "social movement architecture" (to use the term used during strategy development) needs to adjust to a new context.

The theory of change for the portfolio is essentially the following: civil society actors (NGOs) who are closest to the problem (violations of human rights) bring a vital perspective to the international human rights movement (IHRM). By strengthening these national-level actors' agenda-setting power and by diversifying the IHRM in terms of global south/north representation, the movement will be stronger and better able to adapt to the changing context of the 21st Century. This is because (1) diversification of the IHRM will bring vital and valuable perspectives on substance and strategy from national-level global south groups; (2) the IHRM will be more capable of achieving implementation of rights on the ground by leveraging the "international" to the service of the "local"; (3) widely "owned" (and therefore stronger) by fostering a more globalized and geographically diverse constituency;

(4) the movement will be able to respond more quickly to problems 'on the ground' because national-level NGOs will be able to channel grievance and concern into the movement (and onto the movement 'agenda') more effectively; (5) the movement will tend to have deeper connections with local actors and sectors, including poor people's movements, grassroots organizations, and domestic movements including labor, environmental, and protest movements; (6) while the movement will have deeper connections 'downwards' into society, the channels 'upwards' (to the formal international human rights system) will also be enhanced; (7) the movement will increasingly begin to reflect the most pressing needs of people, including poor and marginalized people, since key movement actors will be "closer to the ground"; and (8) diversity of the IHRM (including geographic diversity) is a value in itself that should be aspired to.<sup>7</sup>

In 2012 and 2013 the Ford Foundation invited a range of human rights organizations to apply for two RFPs. The goal of the first, "Investing in a New Era of Global Human Rights Leadership" was "human rights organizations based in the Global South forging expanded, more prominent roles – both regionally and internationally. The organizations ... increased presence **in the international arena** (our emphasis) will shape the future of the field."

The goal of the second, "Towards a New Architecture for the Human Rights," which targeted INGOs, was to "Strengthen the global human rights movement through creative or new forms of global or regional organizing that account for the dynamics of a changing international context." Both RFPs also aimed to "increase the capacity of human rights organizations to engage with governments, particularly emerging southern powers, as well as key non-state<sup>8</sup> actors to develop sound international human rights policy."

<sup>7</sup>Bickford, L., 'Learning Memo: Global portfolio, Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide Initiative', Ford Foundation, 31st October 2014

<sup>8</sup>The phrase regarding 'non-state actors' was added into the second RFP, and its choice of a number of groups targeting the private sector reflects this interest.

Prospective applicants had to show, among other things, “potential to improve the lives of poor and marginalized people through regional or global advocacy.”

**The Foundation selected seven grantees for each cohort, committing to providing \$1m per year each to the first, \$500,000 per year to each for the second, and as of mid-2017, having spent \$54m on the initiative as a whole.**

**The Cohort 1 (selected from the first RFP) are:**

- CELS: The Center for Legal and Social Studies / Argentina
- Conectas, Brazil
- Dejusticia, Colombia
- Forum-Asia: Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Thailand
- KHRC: Kenya Human Rights Commission, Kenya
- LRC: Legal Resources Centre, South Africa
- Justiça Global / Brazil [This was discontinued after the first grant because of shift in organizational leadership which led to a shift in priorities away from ‘internationalization’ as understood by the Ford Foundation.]

**Cohort 2, from the second RFP, are:**

- AWID: The Association for Women’s Rights in Development, Canada
- BHRRC: Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, UK
- Crisis Action, UK
- ESCR-Net: The International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, US
- FIDH: International Federation for Human Rights, France
- Global Witness, UK
- INCLO: International Network of Civil Liberties Organization, registered in Switzerland with its secretariat hosted by CELS in Argentina

The Foundation gave additional grants it believed would enhance the initiative particular through communications including to Witness, Skylight, a number of consultants to engage grantees on their communications, financial management and other organizational capacities, and for the creation of openGlobalRights under the umbrella of the openDemocracy.net platform.

In June 2016, the Ford Foundation issued a Request for Qualifications to conduct a ‘Learning Review’ to look back at what might have been achieved. “Our goal is to

understand what happens when a philanthropic foundation seeks to influence a field of activity by making a concerted effort to do so”.<sup>9</sup> The Foundation selected a proposal from a team created purely for this proposal, with substantial experience in human rights practice, evaluation and communications and located in diverse parts of the Global South, who applied under the auspices of Barbara Klugman Concepts (Pty) Ltd.

**The Review as a whole asked three major questions:**

### QUESTION 1

**How well did the initiative contribute to enhancing southern participation and shifting north-south power relations in the global human rights movement?**

- to nationally-based groups, from the Global South, influencing agenda setting, convening, alliance strengthening of the international human rights movement?
- to fostering south-south collaboration among human rights groups, in particular within this cohort?

### QUESTION 2

**How well did the initiative contribute to shifts in debates, discourses, mechanisms, policies or practices of international or regional bodies or national mechanisms /legal systems**

- How well did these groups influence southern governments to play a greater role in promoting human rights in regional and international policy forums?
- How well do such changes reflect the influence or perspectives of southern human rights groups?

### QUESTION 3

**What funding approaches best support the efforts**

- of NGOs and networks in the Global South to influence the human rights movement?
- and of international NGOs to facilitate this?

<sup>9</sup> Bickford, L., ‘Learning from Grantmaking: The Ford Foundation’s International Human Rights program, 2012-2017,’ 17th February 2017

It must be emphasized that the brief was not to evaluate the work of each grantee in its own terms, but rather to gain insights about the initiative as a whole.

**The Learning Review team used diverse methods to gather information and perspectives from grantees and others including:**

- document reviews
- interviews with 69 people in 40 interviews including representatives of the grantees in the two cohorts, including their Geneva representatives, two from Amnesty International and three from Justiça Global, the organization which received a first grant in this initiative but was discontinued, six representatives of public interest law groups in South Africa, five other experts, as well as five people from Ford Foundation national or regional offices.
- outcomes harvesting from the 13 grantees' reports to the Ford Foundation covering 2014-2016, to the extent that this was possible given that reports began and ended at different times<sup>10</sup>
- a social network analysis including of the SHRW grantees, five additional grantees of the Ford Foundation human rights global portfolio as well as 13 'matched' groups, to identify the nature of and changes in their relationships with each other over time, and whether these were any different from other similar groups
- a survey completed by 23 funders and 14 additional experts from the Global North and South
- case studies of one process through which each grantee influenced the movement and / or the system to explore and illustrate the dynamics of influence

It engaged with the grantees and the Ford Foundation throughout the process, gaining their input regarding the methodologies, process and content, including through a convening in July 2017. It produced a Learning Review Report to the Ford Foundation, shared also with the grantees and other groups in the Foundation's human rights portfolio. This report shares those findings from the review that are relevant to the field as a whole.

<sup>10</sup> *The number and types of outcomes harvested may have been influenced by the fact that Cohort 2 started a year after Cohort 1, although by and large grantees in Cohort 2 continued their existing efforts whereas most groups in Cohort 1 took the first year to gear up to fully implement. The actual numbers of outcomes in each cohort is roughly the same.'*

# Acknowledgements

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# Photographic credits

## COVER

### **Women Marching in Myanmar**

Villagers protest against a copper mine project in front of Lapdaung hill during a visit by Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Sarlengyi township. March, 2013.

Photo © REUTERS/Soe Zeya TunCf

### **Bronze Figurine**

Life Underground is a permanent public artwork created by American sculptor Tom Otterness for the 14th Street

Photo © Paul Currie

### **Learners in the Eastern Cape, SA**

Learners in the Eastern Cape in South Africa have benefitted from the government's commitment to eradicating mud schools following the Legal Resources Centre's successful litigation in 2010 on behalf of the Centre for Child Law and a number of schools.

Photo © Mail & Guardian, 2013

### **Candles for Human Rights Defenders**

Since 2010, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) has led calls for EU support to HRDs to be flexible, adaptable and global. As of May 2017, ProtectDefenders.EU had already recorded 64 deaths; 75 detentions and 343 reported violations against Human Rights Defenders globally.

Photo © Ishara S.KODIKARA/AFP/Getty Images

## CONTENTS

### **The Makonde Community March Against Statelessness**

Originally from Mozambique, the Makonde have lived in Kenya for over eight decades. In October 2016, members of the Ccommunity marched 600km from the coast of Kenya to State House in Nairobi to demand Kenyan citizenship.

Photo © KHRC

## PAGE i

### **Global Action-Researchers Share Ideas**

Participants at the annual Global Action-Research Workshop for Young Human Rights Advocates in Leticia, in the Colombian Amazon discuss issues on environment justice.

Photo © Dejusticia

- PAGE i (cont.) **Rubber Tapper in Liberia**  
 Opa Johnson taps a rubber tree for latex at the Firestone rubber plantation in Liberia. The Firestone Agricultural Workers Union (FAWUL) represents workers like Johnson. He is one of the many tappers that are assigned to trees within the concession areas to gather latex. He has 500 trees assigned to him to be tapped every week.  
 Credit: Solidarity Center/Bill E. Diggs. 2014.
- PAGE iii **Studying a Map**  
 Stock library image
- PAGE 01 **Black Women in Brazil Celebrate their Role in the Fight for Rights**  
 Bruna de Oliveira (left) and Carolina Pires (right), dance on the streets of Bahia to highlight the role of black women in the struggle for the realization of rights at the 13th AWID International Forum. The Forum is a platform to strategize and share new lessons, including on religious fundamentalisms, and brings together activists from different movements across the world.  
 Photo © Antonia Eklund, September 2016
- PAGE 03 **Cambodian Land Rights Defender Faces the Courts**  
 Tep Vanny, prominent Cambodian land rights defender, escorted to Phnom Penh Municipal Court in February 2017.  
 Photo © Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
- PAGE 05 **Girl Pointing to Storyboard**  
 Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights is a global women's fund that protects, strengthens and sustains women and transgender human rights defenders at critical moments.  
 Photo © Urgent Action Fund
- PAGE 06 **Mineworkers in Ukraine**  
 Mineworkers and members of the Independent Trade Union of Miners (NPGU) in Ukraine's Donetsk region  
 Photo © Solidarity Center. 2014  
**Woman Campaigning for Human Rights**  
 Across the world, activists are taking a stand against human rights abuses.  
 Photo © AFP/Reporters Without Borders  
**CCTV Protection**  
 Over-securitized suburbs in Johannesburg separate people from nature and each other, reducing social protection for the wider community.  
 Photo © Paul Currie 2012
- PAGE 08 **Floating Village in Bangkok**  
 A self-built house on the Phra Khanong Canal, Bangkok.  
 Photo © Paul Currie 2012
- PAGE 10 **Sawhoyamaxa Community Celebrate Legal Victory**  
 For more than 20 years, the Sawhoyamaxa Community, which has historically lived in the Paraguayan Chaco, has been fighting for their land back. Lawyer Julia Cabello, who has been representing the Sawhoyamaxa for more than a decade, and Mariana Ayala, a member of the Sawhoyamaxa community, share their joy after President Horacio Cartes approved the restitution of over 14,000 hectares of the Sawhoyamaxa lands in 2014.  
 Photo © Adriana Lugo, Diakonia
- PAGE 11 **Hotel Unions in Sri Lanka Offer Support to Workers**  
 Sri Lanka hotel workers meet with a union shop steward on the beach.  
 Photo © Solidarity Center/Pushpa Kumara
- PAGE 12 **Detainees in Buenos Aires, Argentina**  
 Detainees in the Penal de Villa Urquiza in San Miguel de Tucumán, 1000km from Buenos Aires. The prisoners line up outside their cells for hours whilst authorities search the unit after a fight amongst inmates led to one person's death.  
 Photo © Pablo Toranzo, Unit 2 for adult detainees, Penal de Villa Urquiza, San Miguel de Tucumán, 2015
- PAGE 15 **Endorois Community Members Celebrate AU ruling**  
 Members of the Endorois Community celebrate the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) 2010 ruling to restore their historic land and compensate them.  
 Photo © Andrew Songá/KHRC
- PAGE 16 **Human Rights Colloquium in Brazil Promotes South-South Learning**  
 Since its inception in 2001, the annual Human Rights Colloquium organized by Conectas in Brazil promotes integration between human rights organizations and activists from the Global South.
- PAGE 21 **Muddy Feet and Tin Shack**  
 Stock library image

- PAGE 22 **Crime Has No Political Affiliation**  
Members of the Social Justice Coalition marching to a public meeting in October 2017 where the then Minister of Police Nathi Nhelko was to address the community of Khayelitsha in response to the findings of the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry into policing.  
Photo © Social Justice Coalition
- Learners in the Eastern Cape, SA**  
Learners in the Eastern Cape in South Africa have benefitted from the government's commitment to eradicating mud schools following the Legal Resources Centre's successful litigation in 2010 on behalf of the Centre for Child Law and a number of schools.  
Photo © Mail & Guardian, 2013
- PAGE 27 **Digging for Coal**  
A woman collects discarded coal that is left by mineworkers in the street corners of Arbor community in Mpumalanga, South Africa. A coal company operating in the area has failed to deliver on its promises of water, electricity and livelihood programs.  
Photo © Krizna Gomez, Dejusticia
- PAGE 28 **Jade Mining in Myanmar**  
Locals see few benefits to the multi-billion dollar trade in jade in Myanmar. Here, a team of small-scale miners work with equipment bought from a non-operating mining site. In the background are Takaung and Yarza Htar Ne company sites in the northernmost state of Kachin.  
Photo © Minzayar Oo, October 2016
- PAGE 29 **I Don't Want to Die for Fashion**  
Thousands of garment workers and their Unions rally on the one-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse that killed more than 1,100 garment workers in Bangladesh on 24th April 2014.  
Photo © Solidarity Center/Sifat Sharmin Amita
- PAGE 35 **The Fight for Free Speech**  
Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. However across the world people are thrown into prison – or worse – for speaking out.  
Photo © AFP/Reporters Without Borders
- PAGE 40 **Refugees Fleeing Conflict in CAR**  
Refugees fleeing the conflict in Central African Republic receive aid at the Boyabo Camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A coalition of local religious leaders and human rights organizations were instrumental in mobilizing the UN to dispatch a peacekeeping force to the country.  
Photo © Brian Sokol/PANOS
- PAGE 42 **Anti-Corruption Protestors in Kenya**  
Protestors in Kenya take to the streets of Nairobi in November 2016, demanding that President Uhuru Kenyatta act on corruption or resign. The chairman of the ethics and anti-corruption commission said in early 2016 that the country was losing a third of its state budget – equivalent to about \$6 billion – to corruption every year.  
Photo © KHRC
- PAGE 43 **Forum Asia Gathers Groups from the Region**  
Chalida Tajaroensuk, Director of People's Empowerment Foundation, Thailand, sharing the experience of Thai civil society in engaging with the government of Thailand on its foreign policy positions on human rights at the Asian Civil Society Dialogue on Diplomacy and Human Rights in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (23-24 August 2015)  
Photo © Lorenzo Urbinati, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development
- PAGE 46 **Convening of Ford Foundation Grantees**  
Convening of the SHRW global initiative grantees and other human right groups, as well as Ford Foundation staff to share preliminary findings of the evaluation. New York, July 2017
- All other images are stock library images.