



# REVIEW: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (INGOs)

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland





The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Unit for Human Rights Policy, has commissioned this report, providing oversight and editing. The opinions and conclusions appearing in the report do not necessarily represent the position of the Finnish Government.

2020 Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Title: Review: Human Rights Advocacy of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)

ISBN 978-952-281-667-2 (pdf)

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Layout: Sami Saukko, Grano Oy, Helsinki 2020

Cover picture: Artwork by Otávio Roth, “Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos”

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### Abbreviations and acronyms

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CERO	Consortium of Ethiopian Rights Organizations
CESR	Centre on Economic and Social Rights

CIVICUS	Global Alliance of civil society organizations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.
COHOM	Working Party on Human Rights (for the Council of European Union)
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Action Committee
DD	DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
DPO	Disabled Peoples' Organization
ESC	Economic, Social and Cultural rights
EU	European Union
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GLAD	Global Action on Disability
HQ	Head Quarters
HR	Human Rights
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IDA	International Disability Alliance
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – ILGA World
INGO	International non-governmental organizations
IRCT	International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (of Finland)
MRG	Minority Rights Group
NOK	Norwegian Crowns
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NY	New York
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PANT	Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and equality, Transparency
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SoMe	Social Media
SP	Strategic Partnership
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TB	Treaty Bodies
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
UNPRPD	UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WFDB	World Federation of the Deafblind
YWCA	World Young Women's Christian Association

## FOREWORD

Supporting and strengthening civil society is an important means to promote Finland's foreign policy objectives and the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Finland stresses a human rights based approach to foreign and security policy, including development policy. This is why we focus particularly on interventions that are potentially human rights transformative, presenting unique approaches and new solutions to persistent human rights challenges. The current review explores the role and significance of advocacy in promoting and protecting human rights.

The review analyzes the work of a few of the International Non-Governmental Organizations that Finland has been funding in past years. These organizations continue to work with and for human rights defenders on the ground. Their advocacy work aims to end all, including systemic, violations of human rights, and to ensure that silenced voices are heard. The review presents the dynamic and varied ways these organizations are advocating, often through publications and silent outreach, interventions at human rights forums, and are collaborating with various stakeholders through innovative alliances and networks.

While the work for the review began before the coronavirus outbreak, it seems that the pandemic has brought into public view, and given rise to public discussion about, the importance of political and financial support for promoting and protecting human rights. The pandemic and the global response are at a critical juncture. Millions of people worldwide have been and are being denied their rights in what UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called a 'human rights crisis'. Discrimination, denial of services, violence and human rights violations against the most vulnerable people in the face of the crisis, including persons with disabilities, rural women, prisoners, minorities and indigenous peoples are widely reported. This review comes at an opportune moment to reflect on realizing human rights as an imperative for sustainable development, on the one hand, and for building resilience for future crises, on the other.

We live amidst growing contestation over multilateralism and the rule of law. The coronavirus pandemic could give us an opportunity to reshape policies – to ensure that people in all corners of the world can voice their concerns, challenge injustices, and hold decision-makers accountable. Gender equality, supporting civic space, and addressing the gaps between those who are included and excluded are critical. Rights-based policies and laws, shaped through the notion of dignity and inclusion are essential. Likewise, collective and individual courage is essential. The review at hand suggests that these International Non-Governmental Organizations, in particular through their advocacy work, are making a significant contribution.

We wish to thank the organizations covered in this review for their brave and tireless work for human rights and those defending them.

On behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs,

Johanna Sumuvuori  
State Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Director, Unit for Human Rights Policy

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The purpose of the review was to assess the relevance and effectiveness of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in supporting the human rights objectives of Finland's development policy. Special emphasis was placed on how INGOs tackle barriers to realization of human rights through advocacy. While the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has a vast number of INGO partners, a selection of nine INGOs funded by the Unit for Human Rights Policy in 2015-2018 were reviewed.<sup>1</sup> The executive summary will focus on general issues, but the main report makes elaborate use of case stories and Annex 4 contains brief assessments of each of the nine organizations.

Finland's development policy, which now has a clear reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) policy, the Human Rights policy and the guidance note for the Human Rights Based Approach have been the basis against which the interventions were assessed. The review was formally a desk review but visits to most organizations took place.

## Organizational diversity

The nine organizations are very diverse in mandates, capacity and organizational structures. Some are large organizations with a global outreach and broad mandates and priorities; others are in varying degrees smaller and with mandates that are narrower and more focused on specific groups in marginalized or vulnerable situations. Some are member organizations, and some have regional and/or country offices.

The common denominator is the organizations' foundation in human rights work and their adherence to a Human Rights Based Approach. Seven of the nine have offices in Geneva, the majority being headquartered there because it is the most important hub for human rights work, given the presence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and that the Human Rights Council meets there.

## Relevance

All nine organizations support the policy goals of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and all address the capacities of rights-holder in the short, medium and long terms. The interventions are in line with the Finland's goals of addressing root causes for discrimination, policies and laws, contributing to a human rights transformative application with focus on capacity development and advocacy. Some of the INGOs are particularly visible in advocacy forums, others carry out specialized functions (i.e. research), while yet others provide important voices to persons who are underrepresented at human rights forums. Overall, the nine organizations represent a good mix of visible and committed organizations that carry out advocacy efforts, promote individual and collective human rights and support Finland's foreign and security goals, in particular international human rights and development policy goals.

Combined, the nine organizations cover a broad range of human rights topics related to international human rights norms, promotion of the rule of law and good governance, including protecting civic space and human rights defenders as well as the rights of groups in marginalized and vulnerable positions, in

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<sup>1</sup> World Young Women's Christian Association, ILGA World (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), Minority Rights Group, Center for Economic and Social Rights, International Disability Alliance, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation for Human Rights, DefendDefenders and International Service for Human Rights.

particular those prioritized in Finland's Human Rights policy. This includes both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, the rights of women, the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of sexual and gender minorities, the rights of indigenous peoples, ethnic, religious and linguistic minority communities, and include a number of emerging themes such as business and human rights.

The direct interaction with Finland, either with the MFA or diplomatic missions, vary. There are several examples of direct and positive engagements between MFA and the organizations around themes of common interest, e.g. country-specific human rights issues, seminars, formulation of policy positions and recently in relation to the Finnish presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). In addition, there are examples of embassies cooperating with INGOs in terms of opening events, workshops etc. However, in some countries the collaboration could be further strengthened. Finland's contribution to various INGO activities or material outputs is not always visible, in some cases for strategic reasons. Although there are clear linkages between country strategies and INGOs' advocacy work and country level interventions, the linkages between the INGOs work with human rights and Finland's development policies (country strategies, human rights policy) could be more explicit and strengthened.

It is a striking feature that some of the most impressive higher-level effects<sup>2</sup> have come about after many years of engagement, coupled with windows of opportunity arising, following societal or political developments. Examples include the passing of an act on Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence in Eswatini, the India Supreme Court's decision to decriminalize same-sex relationships (a ruling that may be followed up in other Commonwealth countries) and a Model Law for protection of Human Rights Defenders being contextualized and used by specific countries. These effects came about after periods of standstill, which could have prompted a 'not-relevant' verdict and a discontinuation. It shows that a consistent, long-term engagement often provides the basis for the most lasting effect.

The results achieved show that many of the INGOs have had a role of building the capacity of rights-holders, both through their participation at international level, and by supporting their capacity at regional and national level.

'Staying relevant' is a critical discussion as human rights are under attack and new themes with human rights relevance are emerging. Terrorism, migration, climate change and corruption are examples of this, as is the rapidly emerging field of responsible business conduct. At the same time there are themes, such as torture that remain critical, yet often underfunded globally. It is the opinion of the Review Team that civic and political rights remain highly relevant as they in many cases are prerequisites for meeting economic, social and cultural rights and they are indeed prerequisites to ensure an enabling environment for civil society (avoiding 'shrinking civic space'). This does not preclude that emerging themes are given more prominence. It is however important that strategic shifts be made with a long-term and holistic perspective, as Finland has done regarding other topics.<sup>3</sup>

## Effectiveness in terms of capacity and results (impact)

The capacity of the organizations varies considerably, as staff numbers suggest. These range from the smallest of the reviewed organizations, which has 13 staff, to the largest, which has around 100 staff.

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<sup>2</sup> The Review Team has found it useful to discuss outcome and impact with a point of departure in the amended DAC definition, which refers to 'significant higher-level effects' as distinct from outputs, which can be easily measured and attributed.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in the 2019 call for proposals, Finland stressed climate change as a cross-cutting issue. Corruption has likewise been addressed and Transparency International was funded 2018-2019. Also, Finland has for some time with increased emphasis addressed business and human rights topics. Shifts are taking place. However, it is important to clearly assess priorities when Finland's human rights report will be produced in 2020.

This obviously has a bearing on the outreach, the methodologies, their leverage, and the sophistication in reporting, measuring of results and learning.

The organizations' mandates are to advocate for the advancement of human rights structurally at national and international level as well as specifically protecting and ensuring the rights of human rights defenders. As such, their advocacy strategies are embedded in their mandates. Depending on capacity, they entertain a broad range of methods including not least capacity building/joint engagement with partners organizations, bringing representatives of marginalized groups to international forums and to meet relevant UN persons; preparing legal analysis and briefs to have a well-founded platform to argue from, linking international with national law; documenting human rights practises and offences to provide a factual baseline; dialogue and confidential talks with decision-makers and stakeholders; court cases in support of human rights defenders and communities; public campaigning using traditional media and, increasingly, social media. Evidence (documentation studied including external evaluations and feed-back from external stakeholders) suggests that the organizations master their advocacy at the (different) levels they operate at and that they are operating in a highly professional and credible manner.

Some organizations have very convincing formats for reporting and documenting results, others could strengthen their documentation regarding the results of advocacy interventions, which often tend to be output-oriented rather than at outcome/impact level. This is to a high degree related to the above-mentioned different levels of capacity that should be considered. The tendency to focus on 'outputs' is also related to the 2-3-year horizon of the project period, which limits the possibility for documenting long-term effects and changes at an overall policy level. Important outputs are, for example, people trained, workshops conducted, people freed, individual cases pursued, legal analysis prepared and documentation / evidence provided and published.

Several organizations have gender-disaggregated indicators and results and this should be 'a must' when at all possible due to the nature of the intervention, whether at output, outcome or impact level. Finland is already taking this issue serious as this was a requirement from all applicant in the call organised in 2019 (data disaggregated by sex, gender and disability). Strengthening the 'gender lens' more generally may also lead to relevant, new avenues when seeking to protect and fulfil the rights of girls and women but also in addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

The Review Team has been inspired by the amended DAC definitions published in December 2019. The new definitions distinguish between outputs and 'significant higher-level effects' which combines outcome and impact. If this is linked to the different support modalities, primarily project support and core support, a logical distinction would be to report on output results when receiving project support and also to report on progress/efforts made towards significant higher-level effects when receiving longer term project support or core support.

## **Efficiency and sustainability**

The organizations mainly receive project and not core support. The report presents pros and cons of using one or the other modality, but generally, the Review Team considers that core support is a more efficient modality which can be put to greater use by Finland especially with reference to organizations, which have a solid track record with Finland and other (Nordic) donors. It would improve the possibility for long-term planning, continuity, setting strategic goals and having a stronger alignment between the organizations' strategic plans and the support received from donors. Human rights work needs a long-term strategic engagement and it may free resources in both organizations and at the MFA to prioritize strategic dialogue and cooperation rather than spending resources on project administration and monitoring.

‘Coherence’ is an addition to the Development Action Committee (DAC) criteria and relevant to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of this review. The HRCnet<sup>4</sup> in Geneva is an example of a key forum to ensure cooperation, division of work and coherence in some of the INGOs’ work, avoiding overlap and using the different strengths of the organizations. However, some of the INGOs also work together on specific cases. Coherence will also relate to the donors’ own interventions, which may strengthen the overall effort. An important observation and caveat was made by one organization, noting that donors’ involvement can lead to the advocacy of national organizations being jeopardized or accused of promoting ‘Western values’ as opposed to national values. With that in mind, it is relevant to consider further strategic cooperation and dialogue, as argued in the foregoing. Likewise, it is important to continue to empower local and regional civil society stakeholders and voices.

All INGOs depend on donor support and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. The relevant approach is to strive for donor diversity and avoid a high level of dependence on any one donor, and if possible, build a solid reserve fund to avoid that interventions cease when applications fail.

It is noted that the capacity building efforts in the Global South provides a lasting effect as partners and beneficiaries can utilize and pass on the knowledge and expertise gained, and this work is a key component in aiming at sustainability.

Ten recommendations have been formulated based on the Review. The full formulation of these are presented in the chapter ‘Conclusions’.

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<sup>4</sup> The HRCnet is a platform of NGOs in Geneva established in 2006 to enhance NGO engagement with the Human Rights Council and to strengthen the Council’s impact and influence on the ground.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Finland channels official development assistance through thematic (project) or core support to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). In accordance with the government resolution, the INGOs receiving support are those considered to be the best suited for promoting the human rights objectives of Finland's development policy. This support is administered by numerous units of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, especially the Unit for Human Rights Policy and the Department for Development Policy's Unit for Civil Society. It is important to note that various organizations promoting human rights and an enabling space for civil society are funded through the Unit for Civil Society and other Units at the MFA. These were not included, while their work remains highly relevant to the scope and content of the review. Further, INGOs funded from 2019 or 2020 by the Unit for Human Rights Policy were omitted, in order to ensure that the scope of the review remains narrow and allows for more in depth assessment on an organizational level.

In 2019, the Unit for Human Rights Policy prepared the Terms of Reference (ToR) for a Review of the Human Rights Advocacy of INGOs supported by Finland. The objectives of this review were *“to assess the relevance and effectiveness of INGOs in supporting the human rights objectives of Finland's development policy, by reviewing INGOs' national, regional and international impact.”* The specific objectives were to assess

- i) the relevance of Finland's INGO-cooperation;
- ii) the appropriateness and feasibility of INGOs' human rights work as part of Finnish policy and dialogue;
- iii) the impact and effectiveness (results) achieved by the cooperation, as far as these can be determined; and iv) to assess Finland's approach to INGO-partnership in comparison to other countries.

The organizations under review are those, which have received support in the 2015-2018 period, as follows:

- Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)
- DefendDefenders, East and Horn of Africa (DD)
- International Commission on Jurists (ICJ)
- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World)
- International Service of Human Rights (ISHR)
- Minority Rights Group (MRG)
- World Young Women's Christian Association (WYWCA)

Annex 4 provides detailed profiles and analysis of each of the organizations reviewed.

The following methods were used in order to collect information:

- Desk review of applications, reports and background material. An assessment grid was used to ensure that all INGOs were reviewed according to the questions posed in the TOR.
- Informed list of questions, tailor-made for each INGO.
- Interviews (Skype or face-to-face).

The Review Team interviewed six organizations headquartered in Geneva, had exchanges with the remaining three and a few interviews were carried out with target group/rights holders and staff in the field. The Review Team triangulated information provided by INGOs with key informants at the United Nations (UN),

the European Union (EU), the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and other international NGOs and human rights specialists, as well as Norad and Danida staff members.

The present document is formally a “Desk Review” and can therefore not claim to have verified all the INGOs key contributions related to outcomes and impact in the field. It can, however, register the extent to which each of the organizations presented such information with underlying evidence and references, much as it was possible to confirm (or adjust) these based on information from other sources.

This Report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 focuses on the relevance of the support to the human rights policy goals of MFA; Chapter 3 presents effectiveness in terms of the INGO’s capacity to carry out advocacy work; Chapter 4 includes findings on effectiveness in terms of results and impact; Chapter 5 is about efficiency and looks into how INGOs promote interplay between local, regional and global level, as well as the sustainability of the interventions. Finally, Chapters 6 and 7 discuss cross-cutting considerations, lessons learnt and offers some conclusions and recommendations.

It should be noted that the concepts of “relevance”, “effectiveness”; “efficiency” and “impact” are used in accordance with the content outlined in the Terms of Reference and are explained in each of the chapters. In general, the use is consistent with the DAC definitions, and reference is made to the amended DAC definitions published in December 2019. As there was not provision in the budget for field work, the Terms of Reference did not call for efficiency assessments regarding inputs versus outputs.

The findings and conclusions in this Report are those of the Review Team and may not necessarily be shared by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland or the INGOs reviewed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In the main report, the most illustrative cases and other information relevant to the ToR have been selected. Hence, not all INGOs are equally visible in the main report, but all INGO are well covered in the separate INGO annexes.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Finland is, through its current government programme of Ministry of State Sanna Marin strongly committed to human rights: *“the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, democracy, peace, freedom, tolerance and equality in all international activities forms the central element of the value base on which Finland’s foreign and security policy rests.”*

The objectives of Finland’s INGOs cooperation are as follows:

- To achieve the goals of Finland’s development cooperation policy
- To reach the organizations’ specific objectives
- To strengthen developing countries’ civil societies and democracies
- To bring about greater synergy between different stakeholders

While these are the core objectives (Especially as funded through KE030, the Unit for Civil Society) the INGOs funded by the Human Rights Policy Unit are specifically selected for their earlier achievements in terms of human rights advocacy and their alignment with Finnish international human rights policy objectives.

Support to civil society is in the guidelines for civil society support highlighted as a policy goal and as a means to reach other goals. The human rights’ policy, which is currently being updated, has specific priorities such as women’s rights, the rights of persons with disabilities (PWD), the rights of sexual and gender minorities and the rights of indigenous peoples. Issues such as human rights defenders, impunity against gross human rights violations, non-discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights have been priority themes of the funding calls arranged by the Unit for Human Rights Policy in recent years. Special emphasis of this review is how INGOs tackle barriers to realization of human rights through advocacy.

When discussing human rights advocacy, the main forums at international level are the United Nations (UN), including the UN Human Rights Council, the Special Procedure system, the Treaty Body system, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as well as regional systems, such as the African Human Rights system. In addition, national or regional advocacy can be carried out by INGOs or national stakeholders affiliated or related to them. The synergy between these levels is an expected objective of Finland’s support.

The main period selected for the review is 2015-2018, although more recent information has been included in some cases to reflect the development of results and potential outcome/impact. It is clear that the possibility for successful advocacy may depend on the particular context and year, as well as overall trends. For example, in recent years the UN General Assembly’s funding to the entire OHCHR “has not kept pace” with the steady increase in the work done by the Treaty Bodies; needless to say, without adequate resources<sup>6</sup> there is the risk that advocacy aimed at the UN may see fewer results.

Likewise, as has occurred in some cases described in this Report, there are authoritarian regimes that neglect their duty to follow up on recommendations or to engage in dialogue within the framework of the UN. This too may lead to diminishing results in the short term. In addition, the general worldwide tendency

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<sup>6</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/10/1049301>

of a shrinking space for civil society<sup>7</sup> makes it more difficult for national organizations related to INGOs to use the results of human rights advocacy undertaken at international level.

Apart from this, the success of advocacy efforts also depends on the degree of consensus existing around a particular human rights topic. Few governments are eager to be criticised for lack of attention to human rights, but there seems to be an overall, formal consensus on the importance of promoting the rights of certain groups, such as persons with disabilities. On the other hand, consensus regarding the rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity is much weaker, which makes advocacy work on the matter difficult.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://oecd-development-matters.org/2019/06/18/civic-space-is-shrinking-yet-civil-society-is-not-the-enemy/> “In stark contrast to the ambition of the SDGs, findings from the CIVICUS Monitor show that the human rights defenders facing the strongest barriers are those defending the rights of traditionally excluded groups. Often these barriers are set up by governments and other powerful vested interests, such as multinational corporate entities.”

### 3. RELEVANCE OF THE INTERVENTION

This chapter focuses on the extent to which advocacy efforts related to human rights are supporting Finland's international human rights and development policy goals. Apart from the development goals for INGOs described in the foregoing, reference will also be made to the goals set forth in Finland's overall policies.<sup>8</sup>

At an overall level, Finland supports human rights interventions that are transformative and progressive, including strengthening of capacities as a critical element of this INGO work, as well as advancing the human rights. The interventions try to tackle the root causes, change laws and policies. The Review Team notes that the interventions in this report are indeed focused on such, broader, transformative changes. Likewise, the INGOs are supported in strengthening their capacity to carry the activities out.

Finland's human rights-based approach refers, as does that of other countries, to human rights principles including PANT: Participation (of individuals and groups on issues relevant to them); accountability (among authorities and the people; the state is accountable for respecting and complying with the human rights they have committed to); non-discrimination and equality (all human beings are entitled to the their rights, regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, ethnicity, political beliefs, and so on) and transparency (access to information, freedom of expression and openness in decision-making). Reference will also be made to whether the interventions have been pertinent to the partner's and target group's needs (rights-holders).

The chapter is structured according to the following topics: i) overall relevance to Finnish human rights policy goals and partner needs; ii) prioritized themes; iii) connection with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, representations and embassies; iv) overall findings regarding the relationship between INGOs and Finland's Country Strategies.

#### 3.1. Overall relevance

All nine INGOs' advocacy benefits and supports Finland's policy goals. Each has carried out interventions relevant to the Finnish development policy at international level and linking up to activities at national level as evidenced by the examples given below. There is a clear reference to the PANT principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Transparency) reflecting that a human rights-based approach has been adopted. 'Transparency' is special in the sense that working with and protecting HRDs in safe houses must often by definition be clandestine operations.

The mandates of the different organizations have clear references to Finnish development priorities. They work to strengthen civil society in the Global South, including withstanding the heavy pressure on civil society space (refer CIVICUS' Monitor, 'Tracking civic space'), and are focused on Finnish priority groups like for example: Human Rights defenders (ISHR, ICJ, FIDH, DefendDefenders), the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs - IDA), rights for persons regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity (ILGA and ICJ).

**ICJ's, ISHR's and FIDH's** work relates mainly to Finland's prioritizing that societies should become more democratic, function better and ensure compliance with the rights and status of women. In the case of

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<sup>8</sup> MFA material, including Finland's Development Policy as set forth in the document titled "One World, Common Future: Towards Sustainable Development," (2016); the guidance note titled "Human Rights-Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation" (2015); Finland's CSO policy (guidelines for civil society in development cooperation) (2017).

ISHR, an evaluation has indicated that “*there was virtually unanimous agreement among interlocutors that ISHR’s strategy and programme are relevant to the needs of human rights defenders*”. As for ICJ, the mid-term evaluation by Rightshouse (July 2018) concluded that Finnish support is “*highly relevant from a needs perspective as well as in relation to the SDGs and ICJ’s own strategies*”. FIDH’s focus is on freedom, equality and accountability and women’s rights is a priority area. FIDH has a long track record for engaging multinational companies on human rights issues and an external evaluation in this regard was very positive.

**MRG’s** advocacy work furthers the Finnish policy goals, especially as regards cross-cutting themes. MRG promotes advocacy and works with minorities and indigenous peoples through programmes and projects that target women or specific “*minorities within minorities*”. According to the documentation available, MRG is able to work in a complex operational environment in which a number of political and socio-cultural factors must receive attention.

The **CESR** project proposal to MFA in April 2014 explicitly states that the organization “*seeks to contribute to the objectives outlined in Finland’s Human Rights Strategy with regard to promoting effective implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, and increasing the accountability, transparency and operational capacity of governments to make the enjoyment of all human rights an integral part of development.*” In practice, CESR works with partners in the Global South on human rights advocacy, including tax justice, joint submissions to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on the human rights impact of government policies. A specific example from Egypt is described in this Report.

The **WYWCA’s** advocacy focus on women’s sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) as well as women’s economic empowerment is also in line with Finnish priorities. The access by women to UN forums is also promoted, as per the Finnish priority placed on ‘participation’. WYWCA’s office in headquarters (HQ) promotes, through the Finnish support, that in three regions, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, young women champions from 30+ countries are trained on leadership skills and advocacy with explicit focus on women’s SRHR. Finland is hereby giving a voice to young women, at international and national level.

The Review Team also interviewed previous and current MFA staff, including from the Unit for Human Rights Policy; in charge of INGO and civil society cooperation and development policy advisers.<sup>9</sup> Overall, key MFA staff consider that the INGO advocacy is significant and relevant for Finland’s foreign policy in general and human rights priorities in particular. Information related to specific topics is included in the relevant sections of this Report.

## 3.2. Prioritized themes

### Gender and Equity<sup>10</sup>

All INGOs have, to a varying degree, carried out work focusing on gender equity and present relevant cases in this regard, and most of them have had gender-specific targets. WYWCA focused directly on promoting women’s participation in advocacy at the UN and Human Rights Council, but there have also been concrete activities regarding the promotion of sexual and reproductive health on the ground. In the case of ICJ, the organization prioritizes women as a target group and ICJ reported (2017) on a new “*Practitioner’s Guide on Reparation for Gender-based Violence in Transitional Justice Activity*”, intended to better equip

<sup>9</sup> The specific units and persons interviewed are included in Annex 7.

<sup>10</sup> The Review Team is aware that gender equity also includes the rights of LGBTI persons and ideally a gender approach should embrace beyond the gender binary (male-female). However, following Finland’s priorities, the team has a section on the rights of persons regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

justice sector actors and civil society so they are in a position to provide remedy, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence to victims of gender-based violence. Likewise, ISHR and FIDH have a strong focus on promotion of women human rights defenders.

Some organizations, including DD, report gender-aggregated figures. Male human rights defenders (HRDs) still outnumber females, which may or may not reflect that HRDs are predominantly male.<sup>11</sup> An independent evaluation of DD (carried out by “Out of the Box – Kenya”) from 2018 indicates, however, that there is a “*need to develop a clear strategy or support for women HRDs*”. During an interview with DD in November 2019, the organization indicated that it is preparing a new gender mainstreaming plan and a policy for gender equity which attempts to focus even more on both women’s and men’s needs.

## **Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**IDA** supports the fulfilment of the rights of people in vulnerable situations and persons with disabilities (PWDs). These are explicitly mentioned in Finland’s development policy – particularly with reference to the UNHCR and the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). The Finnish Guidance Note to a Human Rights-Based Approach refers to PWDs, and non-discrimination and participation are promoted at national forums at which there is discussion on the CRPD at the UN Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) itself. IDA supports national organizations in the preparation of shadow reports to ensure improved data and information on how the governments implement the CRPD thus promoting accountability.

A Development Policy Adviser in the MFA noted that the work funded by IDA is among the interventions with a strategic perspective and had significant links to the global work by the Global Action on Disability (GLAD)<sup>12</sup> network which gives donors ample opportunity to jointly work for the rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is a good avenue of influence also for Finland, especially as this brings a strong platform for a multitude of actors to work together. Such a platform is considered to be a powerful tool for joint advocacy.

**Minority Rights Group (MRG)** has also focused actions directed towards PWDs within the context of its projects (as mentioned, often as a minority within other groups receiving support, such as indigenous peoples). The relevance of MRG can be illustrated by the online multi-media format for their information packs, which are titled “*Life at the margins: The challenges of multiple discrimination*”. Among the six thematic sub-pages are “*Disability – case study on Dalits with disabilities in India.*”<sup>13</sup>

## **Rights for all persons regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)**

Several of the organizations have an explicit focus on rights related to SOGI. For example, MRG has a particular focus on advocacy for SOGI rights in its international work, as can be seen among the examples given in Chapter 4, The ICJ has carried out specialized legal work to promote advocacy for decriminalization and changes in laws that prohibit a free choice of SOGI. That said, ILGA is the organization with the most comprehensive work on this issue.

11 It should be said that some of the male human rights defenders may defend women as well, as the Special Rapporteur for this area has defined women human rights defenders to represent any sex, as long as they work in defence of women’s human rights.

12 GLAD is a coordination body of bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies, the private sector and foundations working to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international development and humanitarian action.

13 The other five thematic issues show MRG’s connection with many of Finland’s prioritized themes 1) Children and young people - case study on Endorois youth in Kenya; 2) Age – photo story on minority and indigenous older people; 3) Poverty and livelihoods - case study on indigenous livelihoods in the Philippines; 4) Women - case study on indigenous women in Mexico; and 5) Sexual orientation and gender identity – in a film: The Manu project in New Zealand. For more, see <http://stories.minorityrights.org/lifeatthemargins/>

Because of its mandate, ILGA promotes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) rights and are considered to be a very representative structure, incorporating demands from a comprehensive world-wide network of member organizations. ILGA activities benefit MFA policy goals, since they are undertaken in support of equality and non-discrimination. The MFA makes explicit reference to everyone being entitled to their rights regardless of “*sexual orientation and gender identity*”.<sup>14</sup>

Since 2013 support to ILGA has been provided under the heading ‘Human Rights, Democracy and Empowerment’, which focuses on the creation of four ILGA regional offices in the Global South. The initial support served to promote the cross-cutting objectives ‘Elimination of Discrimination’ and ‘Greater Openness and Inclusion’. These are part of the Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan of the Foreign Service of Finland (2013-2015) and involve actions such as strengthening international acceptance of the interpretation that the concept of discrimination includes discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and promotes efforts to define objectives for realising the rights of transgender and intersex people.

### **Indigenous peoples’ rights**

The rights of indigenous peoples are promoted through advocacy by MRG, especially at international level, where MRG is considered “crucial” by interviewed stakeholders in Geneva when discussing e.g. HRC resolutions on this topic. With Finnish support, IDA has also begun work to further prioritize indigenous PWDs’ rights. MRG has specific programmes targeting minority and indigenous activists, including persons with disabilities within these communities. Examples of these actions are presented in the Chapter 5.

FIDH and ICJ have also worked with indigenous communities which are evicted from their ancestral land (refer Chile case in Annex 4).

### **Human rights defenders**

Many of the INGOs funded by Finland are strongly oriented towards human rights defenders’ work. Finland has had human rights defenders as one of its core human rights policy priorities over a long time. During the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2019, human rights defenders was chosen a theme of one of the Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)’s working group meeting held in Helsinki in October 2019.<sup>15</sup>

The findings by Amnesty International seem very relevant for the entire EU but also for Finland when it comes to discussing the human rights advocacy of INGOs. The report notes that EU countries are not using the full spectre of advocacy tools in their possession when it comes to the protection of human rights defenders. It stresses that trial observation, for instance, could be carried out in a more strategic way. It would be important that Finland also (including in its country strategies and embassies’ work etc.) is able to value INGOs as a useful avenue for advocacy, through the information that can be gained at country level.

Core funding would potentially be an important way to ensure more funding for the INGOs to focus on developing their advocacy tools (opposed to project funding which leaves less resources for such work). This issue will be discussed further throughout this report.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs: HRBA in Finland’s Development Cooperation, 2015, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> A recent report by Amnesty was presented in the meeting:  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IOR6009952019ENGLISH.PDF>

The Amnesty International report recommends for the EU improving existing action to support and protect HRDs; moving beyond established policies and practices to a more adaptive and innovative approach to support and protect HRDs. These recommendations are very valid also for Finland and it might be important to consider how the INGO work best could support Finland in this endeavour.

### 3.3. Connection with MFA, representations and embassies

As for the connection with Finnish representatives and embassies, it should be said that some of the INGOs do not have a mandate to work at national level (e.g. IDA<sup>16</sup>), while others are active in countries which are not priority countries for Finland. Therefore, it is not possible to affirm that their advocacy efforts “support the goals of the Embassies” in Finnish priority countries. Notwithstanding, many of the INGOs do in fact have contact/work with the embassies and Finnish government representatives in other forums, as explained below and in the organization profiles.

ICJ considers that in general it has good links with Finnish embassies, as well as at the Geneva level. Several examples of interaction were cited, including regular contacts with embassies in Yangon, Kathmandu, Bangkok and contacts during missions in Russia, Serbia and Turkey. Other interactions include the ambassador to Thailand speaking at ICJ regional training events and ICJ participation at roundtables in Brussels. ISHR provided advice under the Finnish EU Presidency when a Business and Human Rights conference was held (December 2019).

CESR mentions that the Finnish MFA has been a valuable ally in its willingness to push the boundaries of human rights and development advocacy, addressing critical emerging issues that other bilateral donors have yet to engage with. These include the role of tax policies in realizing rights and financing development, the need to explore new approaches to social protection, and the need to combat intersecting inequalities based both on social factors. As an example, CESR states that the organization was invited by the Finnish MFA to lead a seminar with MFA staff, Finnish civil society actors and other stakeholders on Tax and Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) rights in May 2019.

### 3.4. Overall findings regarding INGOs and Finland’s Country Strategies

The Review Team has revised information from a sample of INGO projects related to three of Finland’s priority countries, namely Nepal, Myanmar and Tanzania. Cases include projects carried out by IDA, ILGA, MRG and WYWCA relevant to the Finland’s Country Strategy for Nepal. Likewise, projects from FIDH, ICJ and WYWCA in Myanmar have been selected. Finally, five cases in Tanzania have been selected, namely projects carried out by DefendDefenders, IDA, ILGA, MRGA and WYWCA.

One example is that MRG is well in line with Finland’s country strategies. For example, the Finnish [Tanzania Country Strategy 2016-2019](#) has as one of the expected results “Improved performance of the public sector”, including underlying indicators regarding (i) improved leadership and (ii) improved capacities of civil society to hold the government accountable. [MRGs work in Tanzania](#) directly contributes to this. DD’s work with human rights defenders (HRD) include several of Finland’s priority countries (e.g. the Tanzanian case, discussed in chapter 5), and the work is very much in line with the Finnish priority regarding “improved capacities to hold government accountable” as well as the focus on “democracy and human rights” (p. 20 in the Country Strategy). Having said that, it is also true that each of the Country Strategies

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<sup>16</sup> IDA’s role is to advocate for inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities at UN and global level as well as providing capacity building trainings for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. However, IDA is increasingly developing operations at the national and local level.

could have a more explicit focus on human rights issues. A detailed assessment is, however, outside the scope of this assignment.

Annex 6 contains detailed information that explains briefly Finland's Country Strategy for each country and the activities that some of the INGOs supported by Finland carry out in these countries. Likewise, an assessment is made regarding the relevance of the INGO-cooperation, as reflected in MFA's country strategies.

The country strategies and programmes have sometimes been referred to in the INGO application and selection procedure (such as the statements by the development advisers at the MFA), however the advocacy and programming work of these INGOs are clearly not a deciding factor in these selections. This is, in practice, made more difficult by the fact that there often are many countries in a proposal, some of which might be in Finland's long-term development partner countries, but not all.

There are clear linkages between country strategies and INGOs' advocacy work and country level interventions. There are several examples of embassies cooperating with INGOs in terms of opening events, workshops etc. However, in some countries the collaboration could be further strengthened. Every Finnish ambassador presents on a regular basis their strategic plan to the MFA, in conjunction with which human rights are also discussed. It is often mentioned that the advocacy efforts of INGOs are much appreciated by embassies. The INGO advocacy work is of particular importance as the local cooperation funds (PYM), through which also grassroots human rights work often was funded - have decreased very much in recent years.

The reports produced by INGOs are of importance from an advocacy perspective and feed into Finland's engagement of human rights (such as the UPR process), however, this seems to be more on a sporadic basis rather than systematic.

This report recommends to discuss how to take into account / strengthen potential synergies between all of the Finnish funded operations at the country level.

In the discussions about renewing the country strategy approach it has been noted that it would be important that key human rights issues would be identified when country strategies are developed. This way the INGO application and selection process could better feed into this work.

One of the Development Policy Adviser noted that it would be important that the Embassies, and even the Foreign Ministry officials in general, would "use" the INGOs more strategically, as lack of time often prevents civil servants from deepening their understanding of the work of these actors and perhaps seeing the value added or potential for cooperation. There are plans to further increase funding for work in the sphere of Rule of Law in the MFA, and it may be worth strengthening the synergies in relation to INGO-cooperation.

## 4. EFFECTIVENESS IN TERMS OF CAPACITY

This chapter focuses on the extent to which INGOs have sufficient capacity for advocacy work, including a documented and systematic approach to advocacy.

**Overall**, most INGOs receiving Finnish support are considered to have a high degree of capacity to carry out advocacy, in particular organizations such as ISHR, ICJ, FIDH, ILGA, MRG and IDA. Most INGOs have specialized staff, although some have relatively more and others only a few (IDA, DD, CESR). Geneva is the hub for human rights advocacy and four organizations are headquartered there, while FIDH has its HQ in Paris, IDA has offices in both New York and Geneva, and DD in Kampala (all three with small Geneva offices though).

In Geneva, external stakeholders (e.g. the EU representation) confirmed that almost all organizations were very visible, covering the topic they specialize in. They are, in most cases, considered credible or highly credible. They are also considered to have very relevant contacts at national and local levels.

**Advocacy strategies** are in most cases part of the overall strategic plan. Most organizations target the HRC and UPR processes, the UN Treaty Bodies (e.g. Committees for Conventions such as CRPD, CEDAW, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx>) or the special rapporteurs. For those organizations who work with women's rights, PWDs and indigenous peoples, the focus is on compliance with UN Conventions or the fulfilment of UPR recommendations. Several organizations also work with the African human rights system, especially DD. Public campaigns and awareness raising are used to influence decisions on HR. The organizations generally entertain a mix, sometimes working more quietly, engaging key stakeholders, at other times campaigning vociferous publicly or campaigning with more specific audiences. Often the campaigning is evidence-based and linked to research and documentation.

As for the **approach to advocacy**, the organizations use the aforementioned forums to present positions for the content of HRC resolutions, provide input in the form of reports, including shadow reports promoted at national level and to support positions taken by other organizations. Advocacy proposals are in most cases prepared with input/engagement from national stakeholders.

Several INGOs have a strong capacity to prepare relevant **documentation and research**, which serve as inputs for key informants. This is especially true of ICJ, ISHR, FIDH, ILGA, IDA and DD. WYWCA is a slightly different organization, with young women and activists legitimizing its status.

*Box 1 Resources assigned to capacity*

<b>INGO</b>	<b>RESOURCES, APPROACHES AND KEY TARGETS REGARDING ADVOCACY</b>
<b>ICJ</b>	<p>ICJ works at international level (Geneva, Brussels) and engages with the HRC, including in the UPR processes. Work at the national/regional level is implemented by the national/regional offices with focus countries including Myanmar, Cambodia, Nepal, Venezuela, Tajikistan and Eswatini.</p> <p>ICJ has approximately 100 staff, of which 20 are based in Geneva and focus on policy, communication, administration/finance/donor relations and coordination, while the remaining 80 are distributed over 12 offices at national and regional levels. Sixty (60) commissioners work pro bono for ICJ, having been elected for three-year periods, and can often be important to provide access, legitimacy and analysis.</p> <p>ICJ's approach to advocacy can be summarized under five headings, namely strategic litigation, trial observations, defending HRDs, advocacy engagement with international mechanisms and capacity building. ICJ makes use of legal analysis and research, tools also used by other stakeholders. Instruments include targeted actions such as briefing papers, press releases, third party interventions, capacity-building training sessions, preparing training manuals, consultations with key stakeholders, research, specialized reports, briefing notes and peer-to-peer interaction/judicial dialogue.</p> <p>The ICJ approach includes a communications strategy that is primarily focused on the judiciary communities. A current example is the ICC case against Myanmar, in which ICJ is providing weekly briefings to diplomats but is not seen before the cameras. That said, ICJ does orchestrate media attention and has since 2012 been 'catching up at a fast rate' on communications to broader audiences, using Facebook and other social media. ICJ has one full-time position and two half-time positions working with media and communication.</p>
<b>ISHR</b>	<p>ISHR has 20 staff in Geneva, 3 in New York, 1 in Abidjan and remote coverage of Brussels and London. This capacity is complemented by internships and by cooperating with pro bono lawyers. ISHR has taken on board a recommendation about not overstressing and planning every minute of the staff's time to allow space for urgent matters which are certain to emerge in the course of the year. The aforementioned number of staff includes an increase of 3 or 4 persons, which has eased work pressure somewhat.</p> <p>Further, the ISHR modus operandi is to work with partners and build national coalitions to ensure local ownership and capacity. Being the secretariat for the HRC network bears witness to ISHR's central position and reputation for being the bridge between the international and national (grassroots) level. ISHR provides strategic advice and support for HRDs and civil society to engage with the HRC and UPR processes. One example is that ISHR worked with both local and international NGOs to successfully push the UN HRC to address the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Burundi and prevent further atrocities. This contributed to the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry on Burundi through resolution 33/24 of 30 September 2016.</p> <p>External evaluations speak highly about ISHR's capacity, describing ISHR as 'efficient, swift and indispensable' (Bread for the World, 2019); 'ISHR has a strong culture for monitoring and evaluation' and 'ISHR is a highly efficient organization and (interlocutors) underscored their respect for all that the organization accomplishes with relatively few resources, including a small staff' (MFA Norway, 2017).</p>

<b>FIDH</b>	<p>FIDH has around 90 staff of which 45 are in FIDH’s headquarter is in Paris. There are permanent representations in Brussels, New York, Geneva and in the Hague. Furthermore, there are regional offices, joint offices and representations in Tunisia, Taiwan, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali and Central African Republic. FIDH is a federation of 192 organizations worldwide with a ‘ground to top’ presence: its members are present in 117 countries and FIDH has representations at international fora. FIDH has a long track record for engaging multinational companies.</p> <p>FIDH’s strategic plan for 2017 – 22 focuses on freedom, equality and accountability. FIDH works with decision-makers and actors who can influence decision-makers. Means are missions (fact finding, judicial), reports, advocacy, legal actions, protective and capacity building support for HRD, and support and capacity building of civil society. This approach is translated into seven priority areas which are: i) Support to HRDs ii) A conducive environment for democracy and freedom iii) Women’s rights iv) Sexual orientation and gender identity v) Rights of migrants vi) Fighting impunity vii) Economic actors’ accountability.</p> <p>FIDH is also a leading INGO on engaging multinational companies in human rights issues.</p> <p>FIDH has worked to develop better indicators and revisited the means of verification.</p>
<b>MRG</b>	<p>MRG has approximately 30 staff, of which two are in the Africa Sister Office and ten in European Sister Offices, operating from several countries. The UK-based staff focuses on policy, communication, and administration/finance, as well as project development and partnerships. There are 6 staff on the Legal Cases team. MRG works with minorities and indigenous communities, campaigning for recognition of their rights in the following ways: (i) advocacy and lobbying governments and the United Nations alongside and on behalf of minorities and indigenous peoples; (ii) publishing authoritative publications that are being used by academics, duty bearers and the media; (iii) producing documentary films on a range of issues and countries – from Afro-Colombian miners to religious minorities in Iraq; (iv) pioneering legal cases as a means of advancing the protection of minorities under international law; and (vi) delivering projects in many countries around the world, using methods such as training, street theatre and the arts to effect social change.</p> <p>MRG uses wide variety of advocacy instruments, many of which are well presented their web-site including “Peoples Under Threat Map” and “Minority Stories”, the “Directory” providing an opportunity to explore country and regional status of minorities and indigenous peoples. Instruments include targeted actions like research, briefing papers and specialized reports, press releases and “Minority Voices Newsroom”, third party interventions, capacity building training sessions, preparing training manuals, consultations and interactions with a range of stakeholders.</p>
<b>CESR</b>	<p>CESR works with policy makers and the impacted community on remedies for economic and social rights violations. This is done through meetings and active lobbying carried out with local partners, aiming to bring communities into decision-making processes on major issues that affect their lives. Advocacy is a significant component of the role of all five members of the program team, as well as that of our Communications Manager and my own, as Executive Director.</p> <p>Another advocacy tool is to bring petitions before international and regional bodies that monitor state compliance with economic and social rights. These procedures aim to draw international attention to violations, bolster the work of local activists and help strengthen international standards. CESR also provides evidence in public interest lawsuits. CESR has the capacity to carry out advocacy work even if in practice the extent to which this is done depends on available resources. CESR’s advocacy work is documented and available on its website.</p>

<b>DD</b>	<p>The HQ in Kampala hosts 31 staff and has a small office with one person in Geneva. Advocacy is carried out through meetings at UNHCR and ACHPR, where DD has observer status, as well as at NGO forums held prior to ACHPR meetings. DD is the only African member of the ‘Protect Defenders EU consortium’ (which consists of 12 members). DD is also cooperating with other international stakeholders (ISHR, Amnesty International, etc.). As a preparation for its advocacy efforts, DD does research and prepares position papers, which are used nationally and at HR forums. A new webpage was launched in 2017, but the 2018 evaluation still found that DD could do more to communicate with the wider public. Engaging increasingly in digital safety seems both innovative and highly relevant. Advocacy for the protection of human rights defenders is regional and, to the extent possible, international. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) function at DD has been strengthened by employing a M&amp;E officer in 2018. ‘Lessons learnt’ is part of the annual project reporting and signals an open attitude toward improving the way in which the work is being done. The secretariat is now considered a bridge between the HRD community and international mechanisms. DD has added technology (digital safety) as the 4th priority area and thus as an additional capacity to the current strong focus on advocacy.</p>
<b>IDA</b>	<p>Advocacy cuts across all activities of IDA in link with the mandate. The capacity for advocacy is placed within the IDA Secretariat which is based both in New York and in the advocacy unit of Geneva, with regular involvement of the Board for high-level events. Specialised staff is assigned to the task of advocacy. The Secretariat has 26 positions (some under recruitment), of which six staff members are specifically assigned to advocacy. In New York, a human rights officer promotes the CRPD in her work on UN General Assembly Third Committee resolutions, the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD, as well as all relevant for the mandate the UN functional committees and commissions. In Geneva, staff has been assigned to IDA’s advocacy and DPOs’ engagement towards the UN Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies. The executive director is responsible for coordinating the IDA Secretariat and the IDA advocacy towards the UN System. In particular, he is engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, a Senior Advisor works on the 2030 Agenda and another senior human rights advisor is responsible for advocacy towards inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in the humanitarian action – CRPD article 11. At least 1 more senior person will be recruited in NY in 2020.</p> <p>The advocacy approach includes: 1) recommending changes to policies and practices (e.g. the UN); 2) public input and recommendations; 3) cooperation with government and agencies (UN); 4) contribution to resolutions, charters and programs that are negotiated by member states in the UN or in other international fora. Press releases are being used to a lesser extent (according to the website).</p> <p>Increasingly, IDA is engaged in advocacy towards inclusive development practices through consortium projects with other INGOs where IDA advises on compliance of the programmatic interventions with the CRPD.</p>

<b>ILGA</b>	<p>ILGA has human rights advocacy as part of its overall strategy. A key element is participating in UN forums as follows: (1) giving visibility to and raising support for LGBTI issues globally by conducting advocacy and outreach at the Human Rights Council (HRC). (2) Supporting ILGA member’s work with the government on improving LGBTI human rights in the country within framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), including coordination, providing specific inputs by reaching out and supporting members who wish to make submissions and following up on states’ recommendations. / state compliance with UPR recommendations. This activity is accompanied by workshops aiming to train local activists on how to engage with the UN system. (3) Providing support and guidance to NGOs engaging with the Treaty Bodies, working to ensure LGBTI persons and their human rights are taken into account and protected.</p> <p>Apart from participating in UN forums, advocacy strategies include providing advocacy tools, information and guidance on lobbying at the UN. Some of the publications are commented on below by the OHCHR. In addition, there is capacity-building and training with a strong advocacy component of regional LGBTI communities and support to advocacy at national level. ILGA promotes changes to laws in countries that criminalize, persecute and/or discriminate against LGBTI people. This is done through the engagement of local LGBTI organizations and activists in the UPR process.</p> <p>ILGA World has its HQ and Secretariat in Geneva and 11 full-time staff, of which about half are dedicated exclusively to advocacy purposes. According to other stakeholders, ILGA World has a strong advocacy capacity and engages with many other networks when it is opportune to do so.</p>
<b>WYWCA</b>	<p>WYWCA’s core activity is to advocate at regional and global level to influence policies, regulations and norms that obstruct the rights and leadership potential of women, young women and girls. In addition, local advocacy is conducted by the local, national YWCAs. Through the global work, WYWCA provide a strategic framework, capacity building, access to networks and platforms, tools, peer support, mentoring, co-creation, amplification and dissemination of advocacy campaigns or messages. WYWCA is based in Geneva with 12 permanent staff members (including General Secretary, Lead-Global Programming and Impact and Lead- Global Engagement and Strategic Communications) providing a range of technical assistance and capacity-building services to member associations affiliated to the global WYWCA movement. Within the WYWCA Secretariat there is at least one specialized staff assigned to advocacy (Leadership and Advocacy Specialist). Advocacy is considered to be both programmatic and process based and so, out of the 12 staff members, two teams, each comprising of 3 individuals work on this. The advocacy centres on promoting women’s equality and rights towards governments, UN system, other international/regional bodies and processes is carried out by WYWCA, with the support of national YWCA members where appropriate.</p> <p>Additionally, the current project has a strong capacity building and advocacy component. Three Regional Learning and Training Institutes - one in each of the three project regions, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe - trained over 50 young women champions from 30+ countries on leadership skills, practical and solution oriented advocacy, promoting and championing human rights and on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. <i>Source: Documentation from the INGOs and interviews.</i></p>

As can be seen from the overview, seven (ILGA, ICJ, ISHR, FIDH, IDA, DD, WYWCA) of the nine organizations have offices in Geneva, where advocacy vis-à-vis the UN Treaty Bodies, the UPR processes and the HRC are the main entrances to direct advocacy (including by bringing in guest delegations from pertinent countries). The UN HQ in New York is the other “centre for advocacy” to which these organizations turn. FIDH is reported to have a ‘powerful presence in Brussels’. Some of the bigger organizations have considerable regional presence and capacity in selected regions/countries.

The strategies applied at international level are many and include research, seminars as well as focus on personal meetings and lobbying, especially when issues are particularly sensitive, representations and the opportunity to present the target groups’ opinion through visits to e.g. Geneva. This approach is considered very useful by both EU and UN representatives, as well as by those of countries involved as

bilateral partners, since it provides the possibility to obtain direct, exact information and also contributes to lending the INGOs a high degree of credibility.

For INGOs engaged with the UN system, the key advocacy messages and goals are often very specific, related to either resolutions or documentation and recommendations to particular human rights situations (the law INGOs), or issues regarding disability (IDA) in a particular country (e.g. support to national stakeholders preparing shadow reports). Stakeholders interviewed likewise find the messages delivered professional and relevant, in the sense that data and evidence presented is related to the topics frequently discussed in the HRC/UN forums. This indicates the INGOs' considerable capacity.

## 5. EFFECTIVENESS IN TERMS OF OUTCOME AND IMPACT

### 5.1. Overall effectiveness and outcome

This chapter on effectiveness in terms of outcome and impact focuses on *significant higher-level effects*. It deals with the extent to which INGOs have been able to demonstrate results and impact through their different advocacy activities. The Review Team has found it useful to discuss outcome and impact with a point of departure in the amended DAC definition, which refers to ‘significant higher-level effects’ as distinct from outputs, which can be easily measured and attributed. The organizations’ reports on outputs are tangible and detail people (men/women) trained in regular training sessions or via participation in events, workshops and meetings, HRDs freed from prison or taken to safe houses, training manuals other training tools, fact-finding missions, publications and submissions, etc. These results are important elements in strengthening civil society and good governance. The below is centred on significant high-level effects.

In general, INGO interventions involve i) side events to HRC and UN activities; ii) contributions to statements made at the HRC and engagement with the UN treaty bodies; iii) alternative (shadow) reports (including to the UPR process); iv) research, documentation and specialized publications used for advocacy; v) strategic litigation; vi) meetings to lobby UN actors and UN special rapporteurs, governments, among others; and vii) contributions to development of laws and policies and viii) public campaigning. This chapter includes examples of the human rights advocacy interventions carried out with Finnish funds, but also explains how each of the INGOs report on advocacy and to what extent they contribute to change.

Overall, INGOs have contributed with key data and information that have led to changes in resolutions, statements, laws and practices at several levels. Several INGOs have exerted influence on the concluding observations from Treaty Bodies, thereby providing national members/stakeholders with instruments by which to hold their government accountable. In most cases the ‘contribution’ of the organizations can be verified whereas ‘attribution’ is rarely possible at this level as changes are brought about by complex societal processes involving many stakeholders. The changes at international level can be significant but it will quite often take time before the effect is seen at national level. Likewise, in many cases national law must be implemented or adjusted before it benefits the rights-holders.

Documentation and contribution to important changes: Several INGOs could strengthen the documentation regarding the results of their advocacy interventions. It should be said that the present format from the MFA mainly refers to “summary of results” in general terms and “impact achieved”, so the INGOs have been fulfilling the requirements (although MFA officials note that INGOs have been encouraged to carry out more detailed reporting). The reporting by ISHR is seen by the Review Team as a ‘best practise’ example as the reporting outlines the goals, the expected results, indicators, progress in the last year (targets achieved), the goal for the next year and the means of verification. This approach combines the looking back perspective with a forward-looking perspective. In general, informants rate the contributions by almost all INGOs as very important.

It is a common observation by several INGOs and other stakeholders interviewed that the mode of support is important for the effectiveness. Core support to trusted partners can make the interventions more effective, and one INGO remarked that lack of core funding was ‘the single biggest impediment’ to relevance and effectiveness. That said the same INGO said that Finland’s flexibility was appreciated, allowing a switch in priorities when a window of opportunity emerged. Core support may also include an ‘indicative’ commitment to long term financing which would be important for the organizations’ long-term strategy, engagement and results.

## 5.2. Examples on overall effectiveness and outcome

**ICJ** is also among the organizations with solid documentation and reporting. ICJ has developed a Results-Based Framework, which is part of its overall strategic plan. The project has an M&E plan (Results Monitoring Framework) which is aligned with the overall framework, indicators and data collection methodologies are drawn from this tool. The documentation presented in reports to MFA Finland is very clear and it is easy to follow relevant references to changes which took place in the course of project implementation, information about co-funding from others and development in the focus countries covered by the project. The reports outline the activities undertaken, the capacity building initiatives and how these relate to the defined outputs. ICJ has worked with many different human rights issues; a case is presented under “women’s rights”.

**ISHR.** The available evaluations are very positive in their assessment of ISHR’s work. ISHR is seen as an effective and influential organization which is strengthening the work of human rights defenders by providing training, capacity-building, collaborative advocacy initiatives and access to international and regional mechanisms and policymakers (especially in Africa). The Model Law stands out as an excellent example of how international commitments can be translated and contextualized into impact at national level.

### Box 2 Model Law Case

#### Model law case

In 2016 ISHR launched a Model National Law on the Recognition and Protection of HR defenders. The model law was developed to guide states who wish to implement the UN Declaration on HR Defenders as applied to best practices and was developed in consultation with over 500 defenders from every region and subsequently adopted by leading HR jurists. A law for the protection of HRDs was first developed and adopted in the Ivory Coast and later in Burkina Faso (2017) and Mali (2018), while a range of countries in Africa and Asia are in the process of developing their national policy framework, taking inspiration from the model law, which must be adopted based on each context. Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, commented on ISHR’s Model Law initiative: “*This process has a great deal of momentum, and is generating progress in many countries... ISHR has helped change the debate at national level*”. Source: ISHR Annual report and external evaluation by MFA Norway, 2017, Holly Carter

It is the ISHR’s assessment that the model law is *a* model and not *the* model and that the engagement of civil society and other stakeholders are crucial to ensure that any law developed for the protection of HRDs based on the model law is effective and protective. The model law provides an important framework for HRDs and governments to use when developing a national instrument. The reporting from ISHR is thorough and precise, with clear performance indicators and means of verification given, both qualitative and quantitative. There seems to be a sound culture for learning and evaluation practices, with ‘real-time’ and ‘near-time’ evaluation praised in one of the evaluations. The annual reports include yearly HR developments and ISHR contributions to these. Unintended impact has not been noted in the documents scrutinized, but according to ISHR is reported to donors when specifically asked about it.

**FIDH.** FIDH has a special role in engaging with multinational companies, either confrontational or in a more consultative/dialogue-oriented manner. The below case is not directly related to the Finnish funding but included because of the general relevance.

*Box 3 Oil exploration in Uganda and human rights***Oil exploration in Uganda and human rights**

Ugandan HRDs worked to document possible impacts on human rights of two big oil exploration projects in Uganda, but were consistently attacked when doing so. FIDH engagement with TOTAL gave an immediate and positive response. The projects are driven by a consortium of three corporations, Total, Tullow and CNOOC. The Tilenga Tilenga project comprises oil exploration, a crude oil processing plant, underground pipelines, and infrastructure in the Buliisa and Nwoya districts of Uganda, and the EACOP project involves the construction of an underground hydrocarbon transport pipeline through Uganda and Tanzania.

FIDH entered in contact with TOTAL to alert the group of the persistent attacks against Ugandan human rights defenders following their involvement in the documentation and alert on the impacts of the project. Following the initial exchanges with the group, TOTAL immediately responded to condemn such attacks, convey their concern to the authorities of Uganda and even offered to provide security to the defenders. FIDH and TOTAL are now looking at setting-up a discussion with the concerned defenders in Uganda, to hear their concerns and discuss modalities to best address them, as part of a more global discussion on the human rights impact of the project. This will be set-up in the early months of 2020.

FIDH has set-up a methodology that gives ownership to affected communities to assess and document the potential human rights impacts that investment projects may generate on human rights and the environment. The step-by-step methodology guides communities and NGOs to measure the actual or potential human rights impact of an investment project and enables the drafting of a final report and recommendations which can serve as a basis for engagement with public and private actors involved in the investment project. This methodology has been developed in Brazil, South Africa, Colombia, and is under way in Uganda and Armenia. This approach is complementary to that of legislative initiatives to provide a legal framework around the work of HRDs, as set up by some NGOs. The dialogue with TOTAL is also complementary to the judicial avenues that other NGOs are pursuing. At least this is an avenue that may provide immediate and informed decisions by the group. *Source: FIDH interview*

**MRG (in collaboration with CESR):** The following provides examples of results as reported in the 2015 Annual Report to MFA: *“MRG was actively contributing to two civil society networks - the indigenous ‘major group’ and the human rights ‘caucus’ - in the negotiations leading up to the SDGs (...) with regard to the human rights caucus, it was being coordinated out of the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) (...) CESR’s analysis of the then draft SDGs informed our own materials (for instance, CESR helped us identify the issue of public/private partnerships in the Addis Ababa draft text. (...) MRG continued to engage with staff at UN Women throughout the first half of 2015. MRG assisted by doing background country research on violence against indigenous women in three countries (Uganda, India, and Bolivia); we also prepared a concept note for the project itself, as well as drafted a budget for UN Women to use (...).”* (MRG, 2015, Annual Report to MFA).

MRG has developed several results-based frameworks for a multitude of donors and several sub-programmes seeking contributions from various donors. The individual log-frames and M&E plan (Results Monitoring Framework) are well documented and reported. The documentation presented in reports to MFA Finland are very clear, even if it is difficult to track results by donor. The reports outline the activities undertaken, the capacity building initiatives and how these relate to the defined outputs. However, due to the short time frame, the reports have only limited information on impact and higher-level effects.

**CESR:** Many outputs, outcomes, results and impacts are achieved through partnering with others or through global platforms that are influenced by multiple actors. In such a setting, it is not possible to identify what the impact of an individual actor was, and even less what the impact of any one individual donor supporting a particular organization might have been. However, CESR has been able to present different cases illustrating the CESR’ contribution, including the below case on tax justice:

*Box 4 Tax justice and human rights***Tax justice and human rights**

“There is evidence that the Lima meeting on Advancing Tax Justice through Human Rights has helped to change the thinking and practice of the various sectors and CSOs represented, which have generally tended to work in silos in the past. The forum also resulted in the Lima Declaration on Tax Justice and Human Rights (<https://www.cesr.org/endorse-lima-declaration-tax-justice-and-human-rights>), which sets out the links between tax abuse and human right abuse, and calls on states, international institutions, the private sector and civil society to take steps to address these. The Declaration has been widely endorsed and cited as an authoritative reference. It has over 150 endorsements from participants at the meeting and others from the human rights and tax justice communities worldwide.” *Source: Annual Report to MFA 2015*

Results include: The number, scope and relevance of the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council in the course of the UPR reviews, often based directly on the recommendations made by CESR in its submissions and factsheets. In Egypt, which is part of Finland’s prioritized Middle East and North Africa region, there has been significant media coverage of the outcomes of these initiatives both domestically and internationally, with commentators picking up on the significance for other countries of our findings on austerity. Another key result in Egypt has been in building and sustaining an informal coalition of partners galvanized by the opportunity to hold their government accountable before international human rights bodies. Key to the effectiveness of these partnerships has been their horizontal nature, the complementary competencies CESR brings and the fruitful marriage of national and global perspectives (...)

*Source: Annual Report to MFA 2014*

**DD.** The outcome and impact of DD activities is very much related to good governance and democracy, as civil rights are the preconditions for democracy and upholding and protecting HRs is a fundamental part of good governance as well. A case from Tanzania illustrates how DD’s advocacy at international level on this issue is carried out. As the case (Box 5) illustrates, DD can make itself heard, but it is difficult in the short term to register any changes, particularly among the more authoritarian regimes. Other cases from Eritrea and South Sudan illustrate how DD has been persistent in trying to keep the focus on the human rights situation in particular countries by liaising with many international stakeholders, including bilateral donors.

### Box 5 Protecting civic space in Tanzania

#### Protecting civic space in Tanzania

Since the election of President John Magufuli in October 2015, Tanzanian civic space has faced a sharp and dramatic decline, with the government increasingly intolerant of civil society, HRDs, and dissent of any kind. In June 2018, DefendDefenders published “Spreading Fear, Asserting Control: Tanzania’s Assault on Civic Space,” a report which examines how newly enacted draconian legislation and extra-legal methods are being used to harass HRDs, silence independent journalists, and significantly restrict freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly.

Following the publication of this report, DD held a side event at the margins of the UN Human Rights Council’s 38<sup>th</sup> session (June-July 2019). During this event, Tanzania’s Ambassador to the UN invited the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association, Clément Voule (who was on our panel) to visit the country. DD pursued efforts to draw attention to the situation in Tanzania, using a “preventive” angle. This materialized in a **joint civil society letter** ahead of the Council’s 39<sup>th</sup> session – during which for the first time the EU raised concerns over Tanzania’s rights situation at the Council.

Ongoing **advocacy led to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, raising serious concerns** over Tanzania’s restrictions to civic and democratic spaces, which, in her words, “hampered prospects” for free and fair elections in 2020. She did so during an “informal conversation” with Council members and observers held in February 2019. This contributed to Tanzania’s decision to send its Justice Minister to deliver a speech during the “High-Level Segment” held during the first week of the Council’s 40<sup>th</sup> session (February-March 2019). DD met with the Minister at Tanzania’s Permanent Mission in Geneva. Although he dismissed DD concerns, the Minister engaged with the Council and met privately with the High Commissioner. This led the High Commissioner to omit a paragraph on Tanzania in her opening speech to the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the Council.

At the Council’s 42<sup>nd</sup> session (September 2019), **the High Commissioner resumed her public advocacy on Tanzania**, again raising concern over developments in the country. DD will continue to advocate for amendments to Tanzania’s restrictive legislation, building on multilateral achievements so far. In any case, the country is now “on the map,” with stakeholders increasingly responsive to the “preventive engagement” approach DD proposes.

*Source: External evaluation (2018) and input from DD (Dec. 2019)*

### 5.3. Examples on prioritized themes

**ICJ** published a study on challenges to achieving redress and accountability in Eswatini. They also conducted capacity-building events among civil society on redress and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and on engaging with UN human rights mechanisms, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). They undertook national advocacy to combat SGBV, including in a submission to the Senate on the need to enact the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill (which contributed to its enactment). ICJ convened the first ever meeting of justice sector stakeholders involved in combatting SGBV; and issued press releases concerning the need for enactment of SGBV legislation and next steps following enactment. The SODV (Sexual Orientation and Domestic Violence) Act was passed by the Senate and the royal assent given in July 2018. ICJ Commissioner and Supreme Court Judge Quinsile Mabuza from Eswatini hailed this as a “phenomenal achievement”.

**ISHR.** A case linked with the HRC highlights work to protect and expand women’s rights also highlights the cooperation and networking between the Geneva based organizations and national – and regional civil society (Box 6).

*Box 6 Women's rights in Saudi Arabia***Women's rights in Saudi Arabia**

ISHR lobbied States ahead of the Universal Periodic Review of Saudi Arabia which led to specific recommendations calling for the release of detained women HRDs and lobbied States during the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Council. This resulted in the first-ever joint statement on Saudi Arabia. Shortly after the statement, seven out of the ten WHRDs named appeared in court after 10 months of detention without a charge. Six were subsequently provisionally released. In March 2019, ISHR lobbied member States of the Council, which led to Australia delivering a joint statement with 24 States calling on the Saudi government to ensure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders, including women HRDs. ISHR cooperates with a number of organizations about Saudi Arabia including Free Saudi Women Coalition, the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, MENA Women HRDs, MENA Rights Group, CIVICUS +.

*Source: ISHR Annual Report*

**IDA:** Gender is streamlined within the programme supported by Finland. There are indicators and target that refer explicitly to the percentage of women with disabilities and persons with disabilities from marginalized groups as trainees and facilitators in regional and national Bridge CRPD-SDGs trainings. Generally, across all activities, data is disaggregated by gender and disabilities. Notwithstanding, in terms of outcome and impact, the Sida evaluation states that IDA is affected by external factors: *“IDA’s engagement in gender equality advocacy has not yet yielded the results hoped for, and women with disabilities continue to be marginalised and invisible in mainstream women programmes. This is both due to slow progress at some IDA member organizations and difficulties in making inroads to UN Women and to mainstream women’s movements.”* IDA has presented one of its cases in the material reviewed (Box 7).

*Box 7 Meaningful involvement of women with disabilities***Meaningful involvement of women with disabilities in selected UN Women country programs**

In May 2018, an MoU was signed between IDA and UN Women. IDA was able to comment on the draft of the UN Women Strategic Plan for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities, which was adopted in 2018. IDA has been able to develop different layers of partnerships with UN Women such as the Disability Focal Point at the Arab region office and the Director of the security management system for all of UN Women. IDA led a disability inclusion workshop for UN Women Headquarters staff and also participated in an informal briefing of the UN Women Executive Board. This training has opened doors for multiple ad-hoc requests from various parts of UN Women, while an overall collaboration to support the implementation of UN Women disability strategy in a systematic manner remains on halt (including due to a prolonged sick leave of the UN Women HQ disability focal point).

In this context, IDA focused its advocacy work on areas of UN Women's work where opportunities for change were called for. These include: working with UN Women at the regional and country office level in the MENA region, securing further mainstreaming of the women and girls with disabilities in the work of the UN Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and addressing the priorities of women and girls with disabilities through the Inter-Agency Security Management Network led by UN Women. IDA has provided specific information on each of these activities.

For example, regarding the **initial collaboration with UN Women in the MENA region**, the Women with Disabilities flagship has its first meeting from 7-9 December, 2018 in Cairo, Egypt. The objective of the meeting was to identify key opportunities and define IDA's strategy towards inclusion of issues of women and girls with disabilities in the work of the UN and other development partners; and to promote leadership of women and girls with disabilities. While in Cairo, the Task Team visited the Arab Regional office of UN Women to discuss specific needs of the regional office and the expertise that IDA could bring to the table to address these needs. As part of the MoU signed with UN Women, the Arab region would be one the regions for a site visit in 2019. Towards this end, IDA will conduct a needs assessment for the regional office in order to further identify areas where support would be required.

*Source: Communication with IDA, December 2019*

As can be seen, the main focus in IDA's reporting is on outputs. IDA mentions that it is focused on outputs because it is a specific example of a wider initiative which is in progress. "Higher-level effects" around IDA's women with disabilities flagship include, for example, contact to the UN Trust Fund on Violence against Women which decided to sustain its call for proposals on violence against women with disabilities. Other examples include support to the participation of African women with disabilities in the Beijing +25 regional consultation who formulated recommendations for their rights. The African Disability Forum now builds on this to produce an SDG report on the situation of women and girls with disabilities in five African countries. It is interesting that in 2020 IDA is preparing an independent evaluation of its "*Catalyst Disability Programme*". The programme's objective is that "*Early implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda contributes to greater attention to and allocation of resources for inclusion of persons with disabilities - women and marginalized groups in particular - in accordance with the CRPD*". The Finnish funds supplement and co-fund this Programme. The purpose of the evaluation is, among others, to "*provide objective feedback on the progress made towards the achievement of output- and outcome-level results in the Programme logical framework*". It is thus expected that more data on outcomes will be provided.<sup>17</sup>

**WYWCA.** Based on the information received as regards participation, the project contributed significantly to ensure the presence of WYWCA at regional and international human right forums. In terms of outcome

<sup>17</sup> IDA: Terms of Reference for Independent Evaluation of IDA's Disability Catalyst Programme, October 2019.

under this objective, WYWCA pointed out that it was difficult to measure the exact effect of the participant's human right advocacy actions. Based on decades of promoting and ensuring the participation of community leaders at regional and international human rights forums, while the impact can be difficult to capture, the continued invitation to YWCA leaders, especially young women leaders, is an indicator of the value. Documenting such qualitative impact is always difficult and WYWCA works to find a realistically implementable and accurate methodology.

*Box 8 WYWCA's advocacy at international and national level*

**WYWCA's advocacy at international and national level**

The World Council brings together the entire WYWCA leadership, board, and country representatives from the entire global movement. The WYWCA bases its action on the premise that women's and young women's movements have historically played a crucial role in transforming power structures. WYWCA's gathering contextualized women's movements in light of the goal of young women transforming power structures for gender equality. The World Council is the supreme authority of the World YWCA where the highest governance and business decisions are discussed and taken by the movement. During the Council, space is also created for workshops, knowledge exchange, network building and to discuss trends and opportunities in light of greater influence for processes such as the SDGs and Beijing +25 and the World YWCA's transformative Goal 2035.

*Source: discussions and meetings at the World Council in Johannesburg, November 2019.*

The WYWCA's advocacy work to a large extent is focused on empowerment of young women as part of the movement. The Finnish funded interventions have focused on economic empowerment and justice of women in conflict and post-conflict countries and links between mental health and SRHR. The country coordinators viewed the awareness raising and engagement as an avenue for building transformational leadership on core advocacy issues for girls and women's rights. Finnish support is seen as critical, and after constant evaluation, by local and WYWCA leaders, there are clear plans to make the work more strategic, improve the results-based management and internal processes, to continue leveraging from the power of the global movement, which is very connected and has a visible presence on social media etc. The roles, stories, perceptions, challenges and opportunities of young women are depicted on various forums: it is a clear advantage that the organization makes an effort to ensure that no one speaks on behalf of the young women but rather that they are the agents of change themselves. The WYWCA engages on numerous platforms to ensure young women are sharing solutions, including in terms of rights-based advocacy.

**IDA (field level).** The Review Team interviewed some DPO leaders trained by IDA in Rwanda and who had participated in presenting their points of view regarding the "list of issues" for their Government's implementation of the CRPD, as well as the presentation of alternative reports. The leaders consider that they had acquired new knowledge and were now better able to structure their demands.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The recent Sida evaluation has a comprehensive survey among PWDs, in which positive Bridge-effects are noted.

*Box 9 IDA's capacity building of national stakeholders' advocacy regarding the CRPD***IDA's capacity building of national stakeholders' advocacy regarding the CRPD**

Gaudence Mushimiyimana, Executive Secretary of the Rwandan Organization of Women with Disabilities (UNABU), Rwanda, December 2, 2019. "I was supported by IDA to attend Rwanda Review sessions (CRPD) in Geneva including the preparatory session during 2019. I think IDA is a professional advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. The sessions were well organized including individual meetings with key people to influence the opinion of the committee reviewing the Rwanda report and as well as preparatory guidance. Secondary the support was more fruitful for the organization I represented in Geneva because we managed to bring on the board the issues affecting girls and women with disabilities in Rwanda whereby for almost each article of the convention the committee came up with an observation around girls and women with disabilities. I would like them to also help DPOs they support to interpret each article of the CRPD to that the advocacy is focused on key things. Before Geneva we struggled as DPOs to collectively understand some articles."

*Source: Interview*

Interestingly, during 2019 the Government in Rwanda has prioritized inclusive education by increasing the budget and scholarships for PWDs, as well as training of teachers. However, there is a need to follow up more closely on the implementation of the CRPD's concluding observations. It must be kept in mind that many other factors beyond only Finnish support influence changes in policy, such as the Global Disability Summit Commitments, which IDA also co-hosted together with DFID and the Government of Kenya in 2018, at which Rwanda made several commitments. The changes are mainly at policy level, especially at the UN, including the contribution to the disability inclusion review. While policy changes may not lead to immediate change, they can potentially put pressure on national governments.

**ILGA** has worked for decades for LGBTI equality. While much of the world's attention has focused on global efforts to decriminalize same-sex sexual acts, there is a vast range of other laws and policies that discriminate against trans, intersex and LGB persons. The review will not attempt to assess the exact impact from ILGA, since changes in legislation and customs are also a result of globalization of information, work of other local and International NGOs, general changes and trends. However, ILGA has been providing a centrepiece of knowledge building in the global efforts through its State Sponsored Homophobia Report and putting LGB criminalization, protection and recognition laws on the agenda of the global human rights arena. It also has growing research on global laws relating to trans persons. In a total of 74 countries, same-sex sexual contact was a criminal offence in 2016 while in 2019, the number is 67, with a steady decline since 1969.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, key informants, like the EU Representation in Geneva, confirms that ILGA contributed well to work with the resolution, promoting a greater understanding on LGBTI-topics. It is mentioned that despite a considerable division in the Human Rights Council, ILGA has gradually promoted more information and knowledge on SOGI. The support to the regional chapters of ILGA has been another key part of Finland's support, as indicated in the case below.

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2019/october/20191007\\_criminalization-same-sex-sexual-relationships-decreasing](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2019/october/20191007_criminalization-same-sex-sexual-relationships-decreasing)

*Box 10 SOGI UN expert***SOGI UN expert**

On December 18, 2019, the Review Team interviewed Victor Madrigal Borloz, the UN Independent Expert on protection from violence and discrimination based on SOGI. Regarding the support to the regional chapters of ILGA, he said that: “Support is essential for three reasons: it allows the community to work with more specific topics and to generate important regional consensus for advocacy. Secondly, regional structures help to generate links and solidarity mechanisms among those organizations. Thirdly, regional structures provide inputs for global and/or international advocacy thereby ensuring true cultural and geographic balance and participation in the construction of the global overview. For example, ILGA organises that I can meet the regional structures. I use their contributions as input from civil society to prepare my reports. Three to four meetings with these structures has the same value to me as 1-2 months’ worth of work, as I get comprehensive information.” As regards ILGA’s work in general, Madrigal reaffirms that ILGA has products that are recognized at an international level, as the State-Sponsored Homophobia Report and its related map, which enjoys a very high credibility. On the other hand, ILGA prepares highly important research products.

Source: Interview

Regarding the renewal of SOGI’s Independent Expert mandate, Madrigal indicated that “*ILGA had a huge convening power: At that time, 1.324 organizations from 174 countries moved to renew the mandate – a mandate that has been controversial, with many countries against it. Its added value is very important. It goes deep into its grass-roots organizations and therefore has the knowhow about the most relevant topics.*” Another example of a significant effect is ICJ’s work with SOGI in India, which went hand in hand with ILGA’s efforts.

*Box 11 India and the penal code***India and the penal code**

In September 2018 the Supreme Court of India struck down section 377 of the penal code, a relic from British colonial rule that criminalized consensual same-sex relationships. The Court recognized that section 377 was in violation of the individual’s fundamental rights to equality, non-discrimination, life with dignity and privacy as per the Indian Constitution, as well as in breach of India’s obligations under international law. The Supreme Court judgement directly cited the ICJ 2017 report (Unnatural Offences: Obstacles to Justice in India based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) in its decision, as it highlighted harassment and violence by state actors against LGBTI persons. The case is interesting because of its potentially far-reaching impact including not only India, but further down the road possibly also a range of other Commonwealth countries such as Pakistan and Kenya, where ICJ will pursue the argument. It is interesting also as ICJ was instrumental in convening a closed-door session with the Indian Supreme Court judges, at which judicial elements could be discussed peer-to-peer. And finally, it is interesting to note that ILGA and its network had worked for decades to decriminalize homosexuality. Here ICJ and ILGA complemented rather than overlapped each other. It is also noteworthy that on several occasions the Supreme Court relied on the Yogyakarta Principles, which were drafted by ICJ and ISHR, and thus have become a kind of ‘soft law’, which contributes to the development of *opinio juris*.

Source: ICJ Annual report 2018 with quotes from former Delhi High Court Judge

## 6. EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

In the context of this Review, efficiency is about assessing the extent to which there has been strategic cooperation and interplay between the local-regional-global levels that leads to added value. The Review Team has considered sustainability as the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

There are multiple examples of strategic cooperation and interplay between the local-regional-global levels. The INGOs are very diverse in size, capacity and organizational set ups, and the linkages between the different levels differ accordingly. Some have associates or members, some have strategic and thematic partners, some engage with regional and national partners and coalitions or are instrumental in setting these up, some engage stakeholders in strategic discussions and major cases. Generally speaking, the INGOs have a privileged access to and knowledge about the global HR system and are in various ways using this to build the capacity of other organizations by facilitating access and contacts to organizations and individuals. Representatives coming to (especially) Geneva include both organization representatives and beneficiaries.

Work at the national level in the global south is primarily done by associates or members and not by the INGOs directly. While all INGOs have a consistent focus on building capacity some have a significant presence in countries and regions, for example ICJ who has 12 offices worldwide including one in Myanmar with 15 staff and one in Tunis with 10 staff. The HRCnet is an important forum.

### Box 12 HRCnet

**HRCnet:** ISHR holds the secretariat and it brings together 14 leading national, regional and international CSOs when the HRC meets. It allows for exchange of information and coordination about ongoing and possibly highly controversial cases related to the HRC as well as exchange of experiences. The annual retreat is used to determine the major strategic focus including priority countries, priorities for the work groups and division of work/cases for joint action. The latter will also be called for ad hoc during the year. It is implied that members of the net coordinate with 'their' stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts. *Source: Interview with ISHR.*

As for sustainability, the INGOs, like many other human rights organizations, depend on donor funding. The only option for the INGOs is to try to diversify the funding sources to decrease dependency of one or few donors and to supplement with public donations. The capacity building and ownership of national and regional CSOs and individuals are important as well, as the capacity generated can be utilized and possibly be multiplied even if the INGO have to downsize. The above- mentioned Geneva access cannot be substituted though.

**ISHR efficiency.** ISHR never work alone and has a range of thematic partners related to LGBTI, Women HRDs, HR in restrictive environments and businesses as well as a range of national partners. The latter are important from a sustainability perspective and because they contribute to ensure there is contextual knowledge and awareness.

ISHR also hosts the DD's small office in Geneva (DD is headquartered in Kampala, Uganda). ISHR and DD are both members of the HRCnet and coordinate their work. ISHR will normally not get involved directly in HRD-related campaigns in countries covered by DD.

ISHR's training programs, as well as other capacity measures, are very highly rated by participants and stakeholders, and the online training program launched in 2019 will enhance this further. There are

statements by partners and individuals who feel they will need the continued support of ISHR despite these efforts. This was foreseeable, because of the expertise generated in ISHR and their crucial role as the ‘go-to’ organization when civil society is engaging with the UN HR system. However, a distinction could be made between partners, whom ISHR works with on a continuous and peer-to-peer basis and partners who are trained over a certain span of years before they ‘graduate’ to peer partner status or are expected to work independently.

**ICJ efficiency.** ICJ’s capacity-building is focused on legal communities in countries/regions and is undertaken by various means, including context-tailored workshops, mentorship programs, following the HRC sessions, preparation of practitioners’ guides, peer-to-peer dialogue, and so on. It is reported that the practitioners’ guides are used extensively, even years after publication.

ICJ works in partnerships with civil society actors, either in coalitions or with single CSOs. This is key for national ownership and works with national judiciaries and key stakeholders. ICJ is committed to a long-term presence in the countries and the decentralized organizational model is helpful to foster ongoing dialogue and networking. ICJ commissioners too can be important in this respect.

**FIDH efficiency.** FIDH is a federation with 192 associations worldwide and a presence in 117 countries. FIDH builds the capacity of its members and partners primarily through bridging the gap between local civil society and regional and international mechanisms, facilitating access to interlocutors and undertaking joint advocacy meetings. Across all its work, FIDH implements a range of capacity-building activities, including joint actions, training, and provision of urgent and material assistance to defenders and NGOs at risk.

**MRG efficiency:** MRG works in partnerships with civil society actors, similar to most other INGOs who depend on their country-level partners for ownership and continued operations. How efficiently and sustainably this is done in terms of achieving sustained positive changes is challenging to assess due to the existence of multiple actors and overall dynamics (see the case box below on Tanzania).

**CESR** too works in partnerships with civil society actors, as do most INGOs who depend on their country-level partners for ownership and continued operations. CESR acknowledges that while the precarious situation faced by human rights defenders is potentially the biggest threat to the sustainability of this work, the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights and other partners have been keen to work with CESR in 2015 to devise a framework for monitoring the government’s implementation of the commitments it made at the 2014 UPR (CESR Annual Report 2014 to MFA). Another risk to sustainability, as acknowledged in the annual reports, is the high turnover rate among staff at their local NGO partners, requiring CESR to play a more active role than originally anticipated.

**DD:** While DD has been instrumental in setting up and funding national coalitions, its partners continue to rely on DD funding. The 2018 evaluation recommends that these coalitions become more self-reliant financially speaking, implying the need to strengthen their national fundraising capacity. According to the 2018 evaluation, DD is considered a bridge between the national and international HR work, and its work in setting up national coalitions of HRDs ensures a high degree of Southern ownership and capacity-building. DD is promoting the participation of HRDs in international forums, for example by inviting delegations to Geneva (including HRDs).

DDs annual reports include country-by-country contextual analysis and how it has responded in the given country. In 2017 Burundi and South Sudan accounted for 54% of all cases in which DD became engaged. As mentioned above, DD has also paid particular attention to the preparation of documentation on Burundi, which has since been submitted to key UN stakeholders, including the staff of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, thus serving as a link between HRD from Burundi and the international level.

DDs track record signals a high degree of responsiveness, indicating the organization is geared to handling these emergency situations. The emergency line is open 24/7.

As shown above, DD tries to maximize impact through alliances. Generally speaking, DD seems to cooperate with a wide range of other actors at national, regional and international levels, as this example on advocacy regarding Ethiopia shows (2018 report): *“On 4 October, for the 33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group, CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE), DefendDefenders, Committee to Protect Journalists, Article 19, Consortium of Ethiopian Rights Organizations (CERO), and Pen International, submitted a joint report for Ethiopia’s review.”* The report was also referred to in the HRC’s “Summary of Stakeholders” where, among other issues, it is noted that *“the government has continued to use restrictive legislation to impede the work of human rights defenders and journalists.”*<sup>20</sup>

**IDA:** The Bridge Training programme has as a deliberate intention to promote that DPOs are able to reinforce their advocacy both at national and international (CRPD and agenda 2030) level. IDA supports DPOs in preparing their shadow report to the CRPD and to the High-level political forum or regional SDG fora. The programme has as one of its targets to improve the quality of these report, which is being measured in regard to either approach, language, low quality use of diversified data, or ineffective recommendations.

Regarding training, IDA mentions that *“IDA’s persistent attention towards inclusion of persons with disabilities from marginalised groups is reflected across our work, especially in the Bridge CRPD-SDGs trainings. By having a strong representation of women with disabilities and people with disabilities from marginalized groups has enriched the participation of the Bridge trainings and increased the capacity of more vulnerable populations within the IDA Membership. The commitment to ensuring marginalized groups are represented will increase the depth and reach to beneficiaries of the capacity building and advocacy activities.”* (IDA: Review 2018)

The Programme promotes interplay between especially the national and global level. The national Bridge CRPD-SDGs training programme feeds directly into the promotion of the preparation of the shadow reports: Local /national disability activists are trained in their respective countries or regions, including in how to prepare follow-up and shadow reports on the CRPD. Once the country is being revised at the Committee for the CRPD, the leaders of the DPO – and in some cases those that have been trained – would prepare and present their shadow report in Geneva – again with accompaniment from IDA.

IDA coordinates mainly with other disability organizations, first and foremost the regional forums (in Europe, Africa and Asia) as well as disability international NGOs, such as Humanity and Inclusion, Sightsavers and CBM. It is noted that IDA engages with other organizations such as the TBnet++ regarding reform of the UN Treaty system.<sup>21</sup>

**ILGA:** ILGA’s capacity building activities promote that LGTBI HRDs, in particular those living and working in the countries most isolated and affected by discrimination, are able to represent themselves at all levels. In addition, ILGA supports, trains, and guides LGTBI organizations and its HRDs so they can actively and effectively participate in the entire processes related to HRC, UPR, TB and SP. The creation of currently three regional offices in the Global South is expected to further promote, sustain and benefit the representation of groups in vulnerable positions, particularly in countries where the situation of LGBTI in terms of security and discrimination is worrying and where LGTBI HRDs suffer from isolation and lack of social security networks. ILGA’s strategy is to strengthen its presence and activities in the global South,

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Thirty-third Session, 6-17 May 2019; art. 37.

<sup>21</sup> TBNet (Nov. 2019) Towards a strengthened UN Treaty Body System: Civil Society Proposals.

to engage with local and international public opinion on the work and the situation of LGTBI HRDs and to strengthen regional networks (formal/informal) for their protection.

ILGA promotes the interplay between local, national, regional and international levels. ILGA's capacity-building activities feed directly into promoting the preparation of the different interventions to be presented before UN human rights protection mechanisms. This is the case with "shadow reports", where national LGTBI HRDs are trained, including on how to prepare, present and follow-up on their reports. For example, during 2018, in the context of the project, ILGA engaged with the work of seven Treaty Bodies (TB), supported 56 submissions at TBs and trained 15 HRDs in Geneva on TBs. Of these, 11 were funded by the program that allowed them to attend TB sessions in Geneva. TBs could include the CEDAW Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As for the UPR, once the country is being examined at the HRC, the representatives of LGTBI organizations – and in some cases those that have been trained – prepare and present their shadow report in Geneva, again with ILGA accompaniment.

The creation of the regional offices has strengthened this dimension and it will become even more consolidated. Strong regional offices will increasingly benefit ILGA in general, but in particular local LGTBI HRDs will have a strong ally in the region that is monitoring, supporting, protecting and assisting them. The regional offices ensure that the particularities of the regions and countries are taken into account when designing policies, projects and interventions at decision-making level. To ensure sustainability it will be important to continue to diversify the funding of regional and international activities.

The **WYWCA** and the two projects supported by Finland promote interplay between national, regional and international level. WYWCA interaction with affiliated members derives from general organization activities, such as coordination, information sharing and capacity building activities. The implementation of the two projects serves to strengthen the interaction mentioned above and makes WYWCA advocacy interventions more consistent, accurate and up to date. In addition, it provides the opportunity for WYWCA affiliated members with a few resources to be heard within WYWCA, that their concerns are part of the WYWCA advocacy agenda and that their concerns are raised in regional and international human rights forums. This was the case, within the framework of the first project, where Myanmar YWCA was responsible for documenting cases of violence against women in the communities for inclusion in the CSW Shadow Report. The documentation alone is important, ensuring it reflects the realities, voices, and data on women in Myanmar (versus none or complementary to data provided by institutions or those in a position to create an inaccurate narrative or one missing critical realities). There is limited information on impact resulting from interaction, in particular on different human rights platforms, such as the Human Rights Council, its UPR, the Commission on the Status of Women and the engagement with the CEDAW Committee.

The interaction depends to a large extent on the availability of funds and resources of the members affiliated with WYWCA. Likewise, advocacy activities at national level depend on the resources (staff, funds etc.) and capacity of the member associations affiliated to WYWCA. Another example is YWCA-YMCA of Norway where there even is an independent international committee, which was made into a separate identity and has resources for advocacy work of the national YWCA and works with WYWCA as well on advocacy relating to peace and security for example.

In general, World YWCA (WYWCA) does not carry out direct advocacy interventions at national level, but rather by design enables or supports members affiliated to do so. WYWCA. Given the varying capacity of the associations, it is difficult to implement a community relevant and specific data collection and measurement system. This is an ongoing problem for YWCA to solve, as it works with under-capacitated associations that are serving communities that are in countries which are ODA eligible, in post-conflict,

in economic, political or climate crisis, etc..<sup>22</sup> However, WYWCA has presented some examples of advocacy activities carried out by members affiliated with WYWCA, such as in the framework of the 2014-2017 project, where economically empowered young women from the five implementing post-conflict and conflict countries contributed to the construction of peace at the community level and national, and YWCA Tanzania contributing to the national declaration for CSW and one representative was included in the government delegation for the 59<sup>th</sup> session of CSW.

Likewise, WYWCA also collect through the newsletter process information sharing on participation advocacy events and local level advocacy. It is part of a larger strategic of information exchange between national associations and the WYWCA office. Finding a solution to this need for consistent and steady reporting from communities in crisis or under-capacitated is something that the WYWCA is seeking new solutions to, in order to ensure that resources continue to be available in the most challenged and marginalized communities.

### **Finland's approach to INGO-partnership**

All INGOs point out that they find there is a good relationship with Finland and the Unit for Human Rights Policy. Considerable interaction takes place and MFA takes time to participate in key events (e.g. ILGA's public activities, WYWCA's international meetings, IDA and ICJ events. Finland is considered to have a clear commitment and shared values with the INGOs it works with.

An interesting observation was made in the interview with ILGA. ILGA World has been very happy with the support from Finland, the dialogue about the support and Finland's active, global role in promoting the rights of LGBTI communities. However, ILGA believes that Finland does not necessarily have to play a bigger role in directly influencing Global South states in complying with LGBTI human rights, since this might be considered a "Western influence" but continue to empower local and regional civil society stakeholders and voices.

The modality chosen implies that most INGOs receive support for specific activities in short/medium term projects while core support is the exception. Many INGOs and stakeholders argue that core support and longer-term funding would be more effective, refer above under 'effectiveness'.

### **Examples of other countries' support to the INGOs and human rights advocacy<sup>23</sup>**

Finland's support to INGOs is in content not very different from that of other like-minded countries. The other Nordic countries actively promote a human rights-based approach and stress the importance of synergy between national and international stakeholders. In terms of the partners selected, Sweden and Norway would support many of the same INGOs, while Denmark focuses mainly on strategic partnerships (long-term) with some of the larger Danish NGOs, where some of these would support the same INGOs that Finland is assisting. A few INGOs do receive support from Denmark though.

In the case of **Norway**, institutional support is provided to some of the INGOs, while others receive support under specific grant schemes. The grant scheme titled "Rights of Faith and Belief Minorities" has for its objective to strengthen the rights of such minorities and to combat discrimination based on faith and belief in accordance with the principle of the Global Goals to "Leave No One Behind". It has supported

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<sup>22</sup> For the second project supported by Finland, WYWCA will be collecting results through work with the country leads as part of the MEL implementation. Also, WYWCA mentions that that the member survey relaunched in 2018 has aimed to collect baseline information on the work of YWCAs around the world incl. asking them about their thematic focus, nature of their work (see Annex 4).

<sup>23</sup> This section provides examples, and is not a presentation of the full scope of human rights activities in the countries we refer to

MRG (2019-22). ISHR also benefitted from Norwegian MFA core support during the review period and to this day. Other calls have included the “Rights of PWDs”, where IDA receives NOK 40 million and “Women’s Rights and Gender Equality”. FIDH received 3 million NOK per year for three years (2017-2019). ICJ has received institutional support over several years. Both Norwegian and international NGOs can apply to these schemes, and there are other modalities keyed towards Norwegian NGOs. A grant-based scheme similar to that of Finland is used, but some of the amounts per organisation are larger.

**Sweden** supports IDA, ILGA, MRG, FIDH, DefendDefenders and ICJ. SIDA provides support to capacity-building, for example regarding improvement of monitoring and evaluation. Likewise, Sida organizes quite comprehensive evaluations (e.g. IDA, ILGA), some of which were used to inform this Review. It could be argued that this support makes it less necessary for Finland to carry out its own capacity-building or reviews of INGOs, but Finland could free resources to coordinate supplementary thematic reviews or evaluations with Sida. Likewise, it is noted that the Unit for Human Rights Policy conducts dialogues with Sida on issues related to the INGOs. It is important that these continue.

**Denmark** has chosen to support CSOs and human rights mainly through Strategic Partnership Agreements with Danish NGOs. Exceptions are ISHR and ICJ (a service contract in Myanmar). A partnership agreement is a four-year commitment based on overall strategy, theory of change and results chains and is in essence core support. The organizations are required to use a HRBA approach. The advantage of this modality is its continuity, the possibility of supporting a strategic framework, the on-going dialogue on accountability and goals as well as broader and more important results. Likewise, there is a potential to focus not only on the accountability (results) of this support, but also joint learning between the SPA partner and the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, specifically on how to work with challenges in the field of human rights. In addition, Denmark supports human rights through specialised organisations like the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Dignity and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims as well as IWGIA.

## 7. CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS, OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

In the course of the review the Review Team have discussed some issues relevant to the Terms of Reference, which may contribute to inform the future dialogue between Finland and its partners. These observations are included in the below.

**Capacity for communication:** Social media have changed the rules of the game for INGO advocacy. While research, documentation and knowledge remain the basis for trustworthy advocacy, command of and capacity for social media activity is now vital to reach not only the broader public and build public attention and pressure, but also as a means for reaching decision-makers. While most of the INGOs can deal with today's challenges regarding approaches to advocacy, they should provide for social media expertise in their budgets.

**Coherence in interventions:** In December 2019, DAC included 'coherence' in the evaluation criteria to ensure an overall perspective on the compatibility of HR interventions with other interventions in a given country, sector or institution, as a means by which to avoid duplication. This new dimension of the DAC criteria resonates with elements of the ToR for this review and questions were posed to the organizations concerning coordination, cooperation, the division of labour and/or possible overlapping among the interventions.

An interesting and positive example of this is the case of India and the 2018 Supreme Court's ruling that same-sex prohibition in India's laws were unconstitutional and decriminalized these acts by changing the Indian Penal Code. See Box 9 above. Both ILGA and ICJ have stakes in this ruling: ILGA exerted pressure for a change in the law through supporting public campaigning and an open 'LGBTI' stakeholder approach whereas ICJ worked behind closed doors with Supreme Court judges from a judicial perspective. It is not possible to attribute this achievement to any one organization, as was in fact a decision taken by High Court judges. The evidence suggests, however, that both ILGA and ICJ played significant roles, and ICJ's report on the matter was in fact cited by the Supreme Court.

Coherence and cooperation could also involve a more visible Finnish role in such cases. However, ILGA's observation is that this may be counterproductive if it is perceived as direct donor engagement in a country's culture and politics, leaving the effort exposed to the risk of being labelled as 'Western influenced'. This may not be true in all cases / areas of work, but it does suggest that a contextual analysis is needed before donors and INGOs advocate jointly.

**Coherence in Finnish interventions:** In a discussion with representatives from the Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30) in the MFA, it was noted that the links between the INGO work funded by various entities in the Ministry is strong, but in practice these are seldom looked at coherently despite an existing "INGO working group" coordinated from the side of the Unit for Civil Society.

In practice, there has been an opportunity to increase the strategic cooperation with relevant INGOs in New York/Geneva or strategic locations through Finnish seconded posts (such as in OHCHR, ensuring that Finland gets a speaker representative in side events etc.). The MFA staff also noted that the space for human rights advocacy is much better in Geneva, than New York. In New York the focus is strongly on development, and thus embedding a human rights-based approach and human rights advocacy is more challenging on the whole in UN circles. It was also noted that it seems that the nature of the organization matters a lot – the organizations with an excellent global reputation often get more varied opportunities to engage with

UN organizations and high-level actors in terms of side-events or strategic advocacy efforts. These inputs could call for more use of dialogue between some of the key strategic INGOs in Geneva and New York.<sup>24</sup>

**Project or core funding:** Project funding may encourage actors to pursue new avenues and be ‘dynamic’ in their thinking, but it comes at a cost. Some organizations consider lack of core funding a major obstacle (‘the single biggest impediment’), and several organizations ‘advocate’ use of core funding including ICJ, DD, IDA, a position supported by evaluations of for example DD. ISHR received core funding. Project funding is for the organisation a jigsaw puzzle to match different donor priorities in terms of themes and geography with the sustained, complex and long-term effort that is required to obtain results and achieve an impact in the type of work undertaken by the INGOs reviewed. If an organization receiving support has a solid track record and if the cooperation has been tested, core funding is an attractive solution. If not deemed feasible, ‘light project funding’ is an alternative, suggesting that flexibility will be given to be able to react quickly to contextual changes and windows of opportunities that arise but are not foreseen. It should be noted that the organizations appreciate the flexibility shown by Finland in specific instances. Elements which can be considered when deciding the way forward are as follows:

- The extra resources and capacity needed at both MFA and the INGOs to administrate project funding in a meaningful manner, and whether those same resources could be spent differently by focusing on a dialogue about overall strategic elements of the cooperation.
- Legal and/or political requirements in Finland.
- The fragmentation dimension is an issue for some of the organizations. Specific demands increase the risk that organizations may come under pressure to cover ‘everything’ because of donor demands. To be effective, organizations working with a holistic perspective must have an overall vision, strategy, Theory of Change (ToC) and focus.

The Danish model, whereby ‘Strategic Partnership Agreements’ are made between the MFA and the major national NGOs and a few INGOs have comparable agreements. The NGO outlines the overall strategic approach including an overall ToC and within the areas of intervention the expected results with a four-year horizon. The intention is to provide an overall strategic frame within which the latter can operate, encouraging cooperation and interchange in areas of common interest while respecting the autonomy of the NGOs. Finland has a similar approach to Finnish NGOs but might discuss elements of it in relation to INGOs.

**Measuring results:** The organizations reviewed vary in mandate, size and capacity, and the result frameworks reviewed have different dimensions and levels of complexity. An example of a strong results framework is that of ISHR, as presented in the summary found in annex 5; the annual ISHR reporting to the MFA is equally strong. All organizations are capable and do indeed report and measure outputs that can be clearly attributed to their work. It is more complicated to measure the entire results chain and include outcome and impact, partly because it is often not possible to attribute certain results to any one stakeholder, partly because the results are based on long-term, complex processes and societal developments. Further, the present reporting format of the Unit for Human Rights Policy does not clearly require reporting in a certain format distinguishing between outputs and outcomes, for which reason some but not all organizations have not carried out this analysis.

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<sup>24</sup> It was also noted that there has been discussion around how to ensure choosing the most strategic partners to ensure the impact. However, for the purpose of this Review, the Review Team would be cautious about reduction of partners before looking further into possible consequences through a more extensive evaluation, since there are already relatively few partners for each of Finland’s priority topics.

*Box 13 Variety regarding measurement of results***Variety regarding measurement of results:**

**ISHR:** Work with the HRC can be a frustrating exercise because of the composition of the Council and the ensuing credibility issues this raises. Cases presented by ISHR sustain that it can bring about important results despite the (so far) lack of success in the reform process. ISHR's reporting in progress reports and annual reports are very accessible and combine 'looking back' accountability and results with 'looking forward' (new/amended goals) in a manner which may be inspirational for other organizations.

**CESR:** Here the core specialty is implementing rights-monitoring techniques that combine socioeconomic, legal and qualitative analysis intended to bring about concrete policy changes intended to improve economic and social rights. As described at <https://www.cesr.org/opera-framework>, "The OPERA framework allows an assessment that triangulates outcomes, policies and resources to provide a much fuller picture of what a state is doing to promote the realization of specific rights. Importantly, it traces economic and social deprivations and disparities back to the actions or omissions of the state, to make the case that they constitute an injustice and a violation of human rights." The OPERA framework and its practical application have resulted in a number of lessons learnt related to specific countries, contexts and themes. Some of these are documented and made available as separate publications at the CESR web-site, some shared through side-events and training sessions as papers and presentations (see also <https://www.cesr.org/opera-houseopera-stories>).

**ILGA:** In general, ILGA presents comprehensive information in its reporting. An area that could be considered to develop in the future, is to document further some of the cases where international advocacy has inspired national processes. This may also inspire and feed into ILGA's planning. ILGA is currently improving its monitoring, evaluation and learning processes, policies and procedures through a project supported by Sida, linked to ILGA's new Strategic Plan.

**WYWCA:**

WYWCA has considerable information in its reporting, although finding an effective means to qualitatively capture outcomes (versus outputs) is a challenge they are currently addressing in a comprehensive MEAL review process, including the participation of community leaders and young women.

As has already been mentioned, the DAC criteria were revised in December 2019 and now distinguish between 'attributable results' which are labelled under "efficiency", and 'significant higher-level effects', which are labelled under "impact".

It is the opinion of the Review Team that organizations can and should be expected to define and report at the output level (people trained, workshops conducted, people freed, individual cases pursued etc.) and that these data should be gender disaggregated. Likewise, it makes sense to define significant, higher-level effects, which the organizations can pursue in the long-term and normally only report on steps taken / progress made to achieve the sought-after effect, and rarely on the end effect.

Staff from the MFA Unit for Civil Society also mention that an increasing amount of INGOs are using case –stories and human stories as part of their advocacy, which is a very powerful tool. This is something that could be assessed, how powerful human stories are as an advocacy tool and how they are best used for this purpose. The Review Team discussed that the inclusion of case stories – both on specific advocacy processes and their impact on individuals – may be part of a revised reporting format.

**ESC rights versus civil/political rights:** There seems to be agreement among organizations that civil and political rights are important for democracy and accountability, but equally important as enablers for ESC rights. Highly controversial ESC issues are not least linked to land and environment, SRHR and corporate accountability, whereas protection of civil rights and fighting impunity are important enablers. Human rights are indeed indivisible.

**Staying relevant:** From a bird-eye perspective, HRs are under pressure, with many states openly ignoring their obligations under the conventions and playing hardball, although the outlook is not uniformly grim. Organizations do discuss what consequences this could or should have for their work. One aspect is to address new challenges and dimensions of HR work like new technology, migrants and terrorism. Another aspect is that the demand for continuing many of the current activities is higher precisely due to the increased pressure. And to acknowledge that it may be an important result to avoid further undermining of the rule of law. The discussion about these priorities is important and should result in well-considered long-term strategic choices.

**Beneficiary participation:** It is important to maintain the possibility that the target group's representatives can participate directly in the advocacy process at the forums held in Geneva and at the UN. All key stakeholders interviewed (UN, EU; special rapporteurs; bilateral donors; INGOs) indicate that this presence ensures credibility, easy access to specific information and evidence regarding the advocacy process. Further, it is an important aspect of capacity building to be exposed and engaged directly in these processes.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

### 8.1. Relevance

All nine organizations support the policy goals of the Finnish MFA and all address rights-holder's needs, short, medium and long-term. Some of the INGOs are particularly visible in advocacy forums; others carry out specialized functions, while yet others provide important voices to persons who are under-represented at forums. For example, ISHR, FIDH, ILGA, MRG, IDA are visible and known by bilateral and multilateral stakeholders, while ICJ provides specialized and very important legal input to advocacy processes and is visible in judicial circles. CESR contributes with a global focus on economic and social rights; WYWCA ensures young women have a voice at the forums. The PANT principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Transparency) are being applied and championed in human rights advocacy as well as in some of the national advocacy efforts and interventions receiving Finnish support. Protection of HRDs can per se be clandestine and not transparent.

Important and relevant interventions for Finland's human rights policy have been carried out in several countries, with assistance from the INGOs. All nine have a presence in several countries, not all of which are necessarily priority countries for Finland. The Finnish support to global human rights work outside the priority countries gives Finland insights into a broader range of countries and issues, something which can be useful in various ways. Likewise, the broader range of countries permits the INGOs to design interventions in those contexts where the best opportunities for successful cases and learning arise. A few of the INGOs coordinate with the embassies. Some of the cases found in the reports (e.g. from Tanzania) indicate an overall good alignment with Finnish country strategies, even though there is no direct contact between the INGOs and the embassies.

It is a striking feature that some of the most impressive high-level effects have come about after many years of engagement coupled with windows of opportunity arising following societal or political developments. Examples include the Eswatini case, the India case and the Cambodia/Chiquita case all presented in Annex 4.<sup>25</sup> Further, that some cases have far reaching potential like for example the India case (as the Supreme Court ruling can be used for leverage in other Commonwealth countries) or the Model law case where the adaptation in one country is leading to adaptations in other countries.

At global and international level, several of the INGOs have carried out activities in coordination with Finland or with the coordination forums they belong to (e.g. States' Group of Friends, which has an ongoing engagement with IDA and ISHR, ICJ with embassies).

Almost all nine NGOs have carried out equity-focused work and use gender-specific targets. By selecting these nine organizations, Finland has achieved an overall focus on human rights through organizations like ISHR, FIDH, ICJ and CESR. Finland has prioritized special groups like the rights of persons with disabilities (IDA), the rights of persons regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity (ILGA, ISHR), women's rights (WYWCA), the rights of indigenous peoples (MRG) and the protection of human rights defenders (DD). This corresponds well with Finland's human rights policy.

Overall, the nine organizations represent a good mix of visible and committed organizations that carry out

<sup>25</sup> In fact, other examples could have been included such as the Ogiek African Court Decision, which set major precedent for indigenous peoples' land rights, supported by MRG. <https://minorityrights.org/2017/05/26/huge-victory-kenyas-ogiek-african-court-sets-major-precedent-indigenous-peoples-land-rights/>

advocacy efforts, promote general and specific human rights and support Finland’s international human rights and development policy goals.

‘*Staying relevant*’ is a natural discussion as human rights are under pressure and new themes with human rights relevance are emerging. Terrorism, rights of migrants, climate change and corruption are examples of this as is the role of the private sector in working towards the SDGs. It is the opinion of the Review Team that the civic and political rights (the rule of law) remain highly relevant as they in many cases are prerequisites for meeting the ESC rights and they are indeed prerequisites to ensure an enabling environment for civil society (avoiding ‘shrinking space’). This does not preclude that emerging themes are given more prominence. It is however important that strategic shifts are made with a long-term and holistic perspective.

## 8.2. Effectiveness on capacity and on outcome and impact

The organizations vary greatly in size and capacity. Advocacy strategies are in most cases part of the INGOs’ overall strategic plan. Most of the organizations target the HRC and UPR processes and the UN Treaty Bodies (e.g. committees for conventions; CRPD, CEDAW, others), or the special rapporteurs. For those organizations that work with women’s rights, PWD’s rights and indigenous peoples, the advocacy (supported by Finland) “by default” focuses on compliance with UN Conventions or on fulfilment of UPR recommendations.

Most of the human rights INGOs which receive support from the Unit for Human Rights Policy are considered to have a high degree of capacity to carry out advocacy. ICJ, FIDH, ISHR, ILGA, IDA and MRG are relatively big and specialized organizations, technically well-skilled and well-equipped to conduct research and documentation which can sustain the advocacy efforts. They are specialized within their fields of rights-based work: Human rights law in the broad sense, work on SOGI and disability. DD works with national organizations and has reported about quality advocacy and research and work with very concrete cases (reports, delegations) that have contributed to draw attention to human rights violations from both multilateral (UN, EU) and bilateral donors. Key informants consider the mentioned to INGOs to be highly qualified (e.g. OHCHR-staff, several UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights-related topics and bilateral donors such as DANIDA).

The approach to advocacy by the big organizations is often to combine research/publication with advocacy, which makes the efforts credible and more effective, and to engage thoroughly with national partners. IDA has carried out important advocacy using its shadow reports and the promotion of “concluding observations” geared toward states and intended to show them how to implement the CRPD. IDA produces guidance for national DPOs to use the concluding observations and conducted itself a few missions as a way to develop a methodology for thorough follow-up.<sup>26</sup>

Public campaigning is in many cases an integral element in advocacy, and command of social media (SoMe) is a necessity to master. The organizations have different levels of capacity in this area and some have moved more quickly than others to utilize the opportunities presented. The organizations must strive to ensure capacity for this element of the work.

Some organizations have very convincing formats for reporting and documenting results, notably ISHR,

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<sup>26</sup> In some cases, due to the early changes generated by the CRPD (the most recent of the human rights conventions) change is happening first at the global level and is yet to be seen at regional and national levels. In other areas, such as the capacity development, IDA documents outcomes and impacts through testimonials of Bridge participants who report on how they have used the skills imparted through the training to generate change at the national level (see annex 8 and <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/bridge-testimonial>)

ICJ and ILGA. Other INGOs could strengthen their documentation regarding the results of advocacy interventions, which often tend to be output oriented rather than at outcome/impact level. This is to a large degree related to the 2-3-year horizon of the project period, which limits the possibility for documenting long-term effects as changes at an overall policy level. There are several cases which highlights the long-term nature of human rights work. As mentioned above, IDA's primary mandate is at the global level, which is why documentation is focused on changes at the global level and to document its influence at international level and WYWCA's documentation is also being improved. Having said that, key informants still rate the contribution from all INGOs as very important.

Several organizations have gender-disaggregated indicators and results and it must be 'a must' when at all possible due to the nature of the intervention, whether at output, outcome or impact level. Strengthening the 'gender lens' more generally may also lead to relevant, new avenues when analysing women outside the system.

The Review Team finds that the new DAC definitions' distinction between output and 'significant higher-level effects' is useful and possibly can make it easier for donors as well as organizations to capture the effect of the work.

### 8.3. Efficiency and sustainability

Interplay between the global, regional and national/local level is promoted by most INGOs, although the way it is done differs considerably, as they have different structures. Some have brought representatives of marginalized groups to international forums, something which has been very important – both for those who listen (according to key informants) and for those who participated (some of which were interviewed for this report). Others bring the target group to meet key UN persons (e.g. ILGA ensuring that their regional structures meet the special rapporteur on SOGI, who stated that by holding these meetings he is able to do *"in 3-4 days the equivalent of 2-3 months of work in terms of getting to know the issues at regional level"*). Others (e.g. ICJ, DD) mainly use strong evidence and documentation and are likewise considered highly credible.

'Coherence' is an addition to the DAC criteria and relevant to the ToR of this review. The HRCnet in Geneva seems to be an example of one of the key forums to ensure cooperation, division of work and coherence in the INGOs' work, avoiding overlap and using the different strengths of the organizations. Coherence will also relate to donors' own interventions, which may strengthen the overall effort. An important observation and caution was made by an organization, noting that donors involvement can also label the advocacy of national organizations as promoting 'Western values' as opposed to national values. With that caution in mind it is relevant to consider if and how the strategic cooperation and dialogue between Finland (MFA) and the INGOs can be strengthened also at Embassy level.

All INGOs depend on donor support and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. The only relevant approach is to strive for donor diversity and avoid a high level of dependence on any one donor, and if possible, build a decent reserve fund to avoid stopping interventions when applications fail. Big organizations need to have provision for slumps in funding, otherwise they are too fragile, and important interventions at risk.<sup>27</sup> Most NGO's argue that core support would be more efficient because it would improve the possibility for long-term planning, continuity, setting strategic goals instead of carrying out projects and allowing better possibilities for preparing reports. The capacity building efforts in the Global South provides a lasting effect as partners and beneficiaries can utilize and pass on the knowledge and expertise gained.

<sup>27</sup> This was also a finding in the recent evaluation of the INGOs' financial management (2019) carried out by the KPMG.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information provided and suggestions made throughout the foregoing chapters, the Review Team recommends the following regarding the human rights INGOs: <sup>28</sup>

### Regarding relevance:

- 1) Policy-level acknowledgement. Include a clear reference to INGO-cooperation in Finnish development and human rights policies and strategies. When revising the Finland's human rights report, as well as overall and country strategies, more reference could be made to the role of INGOs and their national allies and partners as regards the promotion and protection of human rights, including through advocacy.
- 2) A diverse INGO-portfolio. Maintain the current support to diverse human rights INGOs. It is relevant to support a mix of INGOs who are different in mandates and capacity for advocacy, including strong, specialized INGOs, umbrella INGOs and minor INGOs with good connections to national and local stakeholders. This makes it possible to address Finland's international human rights priorities, ensuring partners that can support the immediate needs of human rights defenders at risk, as well as policy work to address the structural causes which endangers the rights of people in vulnerable and marginalized positions. The number of INGOs supported must however be balanced with the amount of resources available at any given time.
- 3) New challenges and emerging trends. Consider if new challenges or emerging trends merit new strategic choices. The growing role of the emerging theme of business and human rights, climate change, terrorism, corruption and migration are high on the global agenda and warrant new forms of advocacy. Consider if priorities should be amended and make a long-term, strategic commitment, with consideration of Finland's overall INGO support and other donor country priorities.

### Regarding effectiveness, capacity and results development:

- 4) Improve reporting. Organizations should be expected to report in detail at the output level (people trained, workshops conducted, people freed, individual cases pursued, expenditure against budget, etc.). A future reporting format could introduce a greater distinction between output level and significant higher-level effects and set different standards for smaller and larger human rights organizations (project vs core funding). Organizations should define significant, higher-level effects that they will pursue in the long-term, and in the short and medium term only be expected to report on steps taken / progress made to achieve this effect. It should be noted that such effects will very rarely be attributable to any one INGO, although a significant contribution may have been made.
- 5) Based on the INGO reports reviewed herein, consider introducing 'best cases on human rights advocacy' as well as systematically collecting testimonies from rights-holders in the reporting format on how the INGOs international and national advocacy efforts contribute to changes to inspire learning and cooperation. These may also be used to engage the larger public and generate support for human rights work as funded through development assistance.

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<sup>28</sup> Specially, the recommendations focus on the human rights INGOs supported by the Unit for human rights policy, although some of the issues raised may also be relevant to discuss in relation to Finland's other support to INGOs.

- 6) The gender and equity lens. All organizations should report gender, age- and disability-disaggregated results for a given intervention, if at all possible. Organizations should account for their analysis of gender and inequality in a given context when determining their priorities and include descriptions of possible interventions aimed at tackling multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- 7) INGO exchange and synergy. In order to stimulate synergy and learning on higher-level effects, the MFA may encourage or incentivize coordination and exchange of experiences/best practises on human rights advocacy between the INGOs supported. Already during the application process, it could be clearly communicated that strategic partnerships and synergies for increased impact are merits the applicant could present.
- 8) Social media. SoMe platforms are nowadays a necessity for organizations to master when working with advocacy, and an organization's capacity in this area must be part of a capacity assessment. Likewise, donors should consider how to enable organizations to invest in this dimension strategically, and possibly also in a way, which also supports donors in leveraging advocacy-opportunities.
- 9) Strengthen donor coordination. MFA could consider making its exchanges with other donors more regular, particularly Nordic countries, regarding their support in areas such as capacity-building, reporting and joint advocacy, with a view toward harmonizing the requirements their INGOs are expected to meet, including reporting requirements.

#### **Regarding efficiency and sustainability:**

- 10) Strategic dialogue and core funding. Consider expanding the core funding modality to the INGOs with whom the cooperation has been solid. Consider if the strategic dialogue with the INGOs can be expanded at HQ and at Embassy level. Country strategies could include provisions for strategic dialogue on human rights issues and the project administration elements could be downsized at MFA level.
- 11) Liquidity. Consider if INGOs can be supported to build up a level of liquidity to allow for the continuation of interventions if funding decreases or ceases for a period. Encourage diversified funding and fundraising.

It should be said that this review has only focused on the INGOs funded by the Human Rights Policy Unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

## ANNEXES

Annex 1	Terms of Reference
Annex 2	Review Methodology
Annex 3	Evaluation Brief
Annex 4	INGO profiles and analysis
Annex 5	Best practice regarding results framework. Example from ISHR.
Annex 6	Finland-funded INGO work from the perspective of country strategies 2016-2019 (Nepal, Myanmar, Tanzania)
Annex 7	List of interviewees
Annex 8	Opinions from rights-holders on the human rights advocacy

# Annex 1. Terms of Reference

August 2019,  
POL-40 / Human Rights Policy Unit

## Review: Human Rights Advocacy of International NGOs (INGOs)

### Background

The Government of Finland channels official development assistance through thematic or core support of International non-governmental organizations (INGO). The Unit for Human Rights Policy administers part of such funds (3 million euros per year on average). In accordance with the government resolution, INGOs are supported when they are considered to be the best suited channel for promoting Finland's policy objectives. The activities are guided by international human rights policy and development policy priorities, and other Government decisions as well as the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (Valtionavustuslaki 688/2001) and all interventions are to follow the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) of Finland's development policy. Supported INGOs must have extensive knowledge and solid experience of working in developing countries.

### The objectives of Finland's INGO cooperation are:

- to reach the goals of Finland's development policy and development cooperation policy
- to reach the country- and organization-specific objectives
- to strengthen developing countries' civil societies and democracies
- to bring about greater synergy between different actors

Priorities of Finland's international include: Women's rights, The rights of persons with disabilities, The rights of sexual and gender minorities, The rights of indigenous peoples, Economic, social and cultural rights. The, last few years organizations working on the themes of human rights defenders, impunity and economic social and cultural rights as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights have been supported, among others. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also published guidelines for protecting and supporting human rights defenders, due to this particular priority area. The Unit for Human Rights Policy has also emphasized the track record in advocacy and planned advocacy work when selecting partners through open calls. The purpose of advocacy is to strengthen the capacity of different actors to respond to human rights violations by fostering collaboration and enhancing security, and to raise awareness.

For the purpose of this exercise advocacy is defined broadly to entail a) recommending changes to policies, rules, laws, practices; b) seeking systemic change through public education or programs; c) public input and recommendations; d) media releases; e) cooperation with governments, government departments, agencies and/or organizations towards a solution respecting the issue; f) supporting positions taken by other organizations; g) research and development used for advocacy purposes; h) working in cooperation with affected stakeholders to achieve change or pose recommendations to duty-bearers.

INGOs may engage in international human rights advocacy at the United Nations (UN) as well as through regional systems including the European human rights system, the Inter-American human rights system, and the African human rights system and others. Each regional system has slightly different bodies and mechanisms that may be used to advance and which monitor human rights. International human rights advocacy and monitoring at the United Nations may be accomplished through UN bodies, charter-based mechanisms and treaty-based mechanisms, and specialized agencies, including special rapporteurs. The current review aims to explore the advocacy strategies and achievements of MFA-supported INGOs on all levels; national, regional and international.

## Purpose, objective and rationale of the review

According to the Finnish Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001) According to Section 15 of the Act {State aid authorities' duty} "State aid authorities must take care that there is appropriate and sufficient supervision of discretionary Government transfers by obtaining information on their use and monitoring, (...)." Based on this mandate, the MFA launches now a review to explore what strategies INGOs employ to tackle systemic barriers to realization of human rights through advocacy, and to assess the impact of this work. The purpose of the review is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of INGOs in supporting the human rights objectives of Finland's development policy, by reviewing INGOs' national, regional and international impact, including with focus on advocacy work.

The specific objectives of the review are:

- To assess the relevance of Finland's INGO-cooperation, as reflected in MFA's country strategic plans, including looking at the perspectives of rights holders in a specific INGO operational context (both policy level and grassroots-level)
- To assess the appropriateness and feasibility of INGOs' human rights work as part of Finnish policy work and dialogue
- To assess the impact and effectiveness (results) achieved by the co-operation, as far as they can be determined;
- To assess Finland's approach to INGO-partnership in comparison to other countries

## Scope and tasks of work

The organizations under review are those which have been receiving support/ reporting in 2015-2018; as follows:

World Young Women's Christian Association	Reports: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
International Lesbian and Gay, Association (ILGA)	Reports 2015, 2016, 2018
Minority Rights Group	Reports 2015, 2016
ESCR-Net*	Reports 2015, 2016
Center for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Reports 2015, 2016
International Disability Alliance	Reports 2015, 2018
International Commission of Jurists	Reports 2015, 2017, 2018
International Federation for Human Rights	Reports 2015, 2017, 2018
DefendDefenders, East and Horn of Africa	Reports 2017, 2018
International Service for Human Rights	Reports 2017, 2018

(\*ESCR-Net was later removed by the MFA from the group of INGOs for evaluation)

The consultants undertakes the work in close cooperation with MFA officials involved in this review. The consultants are requested to pay special attention to advocacy mechanisms (and procedures) in relation to regional and international human rights fora and nationally in target countries and their functionality and impact.

The review criteria to be applied are impact, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, sustainability and the key review questions are presented below. The review will focus strongly on impact, while centering around the following core areas, without excluding other relevant issues.

**EFFECTIVENESS: TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE INGOs HAVE SUFFICIENT CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY WORK, INCLUDING A DOCUMENTED, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ADVOCACY?**

- Advocacy strategy analysis of organizations; are separate advocacy strategies in place or defined as part of wider organization strategy? Which are the key advocacy goals and messages and delivery methods? What type of strategies are in place, and what similarities/differences are there between these?
- The capacity of the organizations to carry out advocacy work: Resources, (staffing and funds) for advocacy work? Are there separate advocacy officers in Geneva /New York working at key international human rights fora, and what type of activities have been carried out at their lead?
- Are INGO's current approaches to advocacy and campaigning up to today's challenges? Is advocacy work documented, strategic, and innovative? To what degree is formal, visible forms of power challenged, versus hidden power structures?

**EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT: TO WHAT EXTENT THE INGOs SUCCEED TO MEASURE AND DEMONSTRATE RESULTS AND IMPACT?**

- What type of interventions have been carried out in terms of advocacy on key human rights fora? What other type of advocacy work is conducted, such as strategic litigation, etc.?
- In what ways do the INGOs report about advocacy interventions? Which are emerging trends and commonalities? What are the key reported results I impacts under advocacy and what are the key success factors and drivers of the interventions? Quality of reports with regards to advocacy?
- To what extent has INGO's advocacy work contributed to important changes in policy and practice on a range of issues {what exactly}, and how can this impact be unpacked and measured? Can intended and unintended, short- and long-term, positive and negative impacts be distinguished? Would there be ways to improve reporting instructions and requirements to gather this type of data more effectively?

**EFFICIENCY: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE STRATEGIC COOPERATION AND IS THE LOCAL-REGIONAL GLOBAL LEVEL INTERPLAY DEMONSTRATING ADDED VALUE AND INCREASING EFFICIENCY?**

- To what degree have human rights defenders and representatives of marginalized groups been brought in to international fora for the purpose of effective advocacy?
- How well-functioning and coherent is the interplay between local/national, regional and global levels, and how well have the member organization/coalition structures benefitted advocacy interventions?
- How do INGOs operate in a country and how is this work perceived? Are there certain contexts in which there has been particular gains or certain contexts which have been particularly challenging? How much is advocacy adapted based on country contexts? How are sensitivities taken into account and best tackled? To what degree are efforts conducted jointly with other actors for increased coherence and greater synergies? Which interventions emerge as the best practices?

**RELEVANCE: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE ADVOCACY EFFORTS PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUPPORTING FINLAND'S INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY GOALS?**

- Does this type of advocacy benefit the work and support the policy goals of the Finnish Foreign Service, including the embassies and the Human Rights policy unit?
- To what degree has advocacy been equity-focused and with specific gender targets?
- What is the role of joint events (such as at the Human Rights Council) carried out with Finland or other actors, and what could be established about their impact and role? Are INGOs perceived as strategic partners in terms of policy goals and how could cooperation in this regard be strengthened?

The list of issues under the review questions is by no means an exhaustive list and the Review Team is welcome to suggest other issues to be covered outside of these core areas.

#### 4. Review Team: required expertise

The Review Team is to consist of one Senior consultant and one Junior consultant. The team leader as a senior consultant is required to have solid review experience and review understanding of human rights mechanisms, special procedures, and human rights defenders' work. One official from the MFA who has been involved in the INGO administration will be giving input and be part of the Team. He/she has a role in oversight and inputs, while not in carrying out desk review or the interviews.

##### Qualifications of the Team Leader (TL)

- Master's Degree in Human Rights, Law, Social Sciences or related field or equivalent working experience
- Proven working experience in fields relating directly to human rights
- Good understanding of international human rights standards and advocacy mechanisms
- Experience and skills in implementing a Human Right Based Approach (HRBA) and gender issues review- Good review experience, including conducting development reviews as the Team Leader
- Good analytical and documentation/report writing skills
- Good communication and facilitation skills
- Excellent command of oral and written English

##### Qualifications of the Junior consultant (JC)

- Bachelor's or Master's degree
- Understanding of Human Rights issues
- Relevant work experience
- Good analytical and documentation/report writing skills
- Excellent command of oral and written English

In addition, one MFA official will be part of the Team, facilitating and giving inputs:

##### MFA official

- A representative from the Human Rights Policy unit
- Input based on the experience of facilitating cooperation with INGO's from a MFA perspective
- Input about the role of INGOs more broadly on political level for the MFA and the Unit for Human Rights Policy and other units
- Facilitating the process, incl. access to relevant INGOs

These roles will be precisely defined at an early stage of the process.

#### 5. Methodology

The Review Team will conduct the review using methodology and tools adequate for this kind of assessment according to the international standards, agreed on in consultation with MFA. The work will be divided into an inception phase during which the detailed review methodology, questions and work plan will be prepared, and the actual review phase consisting of analyses of documentation and stakeholder consultations. No field missions are expected whereby ICT tools will be used in the consultations. Following methods can be used to complete the above mentioned tasks and fulfil the purpose as defined by this ToR.

- Desk review of the relevant documents (INGO reports, strategies, policy/strategy documents of MFA)
- Literature review, as relevant (reports, publications)
- Consultative meetings, interviews (face-to-face, skype)
- Questionnaires or other relevant on-line methods
- Other methods such as facilitated self-reviews may also be applied

Each deliverable (Inception Report, Draft Final Report, Final Report) is subjected to specific approval. The Review Team is able to move to the next phase only after receiving a written statement of acceptance by the MFA.

The Consultants are asked to review background documents, including those provided by MFA and partners ‘ prior to the review to fully understand the nature of the advocacy work and to absorb key lessons.

The review reporting shall follow the MFA’s review manual’s outline guidelines: <https://um.fi/kehitysyhteistyön-evaluointikasikirja> and should be prepared in English, consisting of a summary report. The report is to be concise. Conclusions and recommendations are to be based on evidencebased findings and be clear, concrete, accessible and presented in a way that they can be used internally for the MFA’s purposes and externally.

## **6. Time frame and reporting**

The review is to be started in October 2019. The review will to most parts be done remotely applying relevant ICT tools, with contact to the MFA and the reviewed organizations. The following reports shall be provided:

- Inception Report within four weeks after commencing the review:’ The Inception Report will include a detailed review methodology and work plan for the review.
- Draft Final Report by February 2020
- Final Report within two weeks after receiving the comments from the MFA (February-March 2020).  
review

## **Application instructions**

Please see attached Instructions to tenderers

## **Mandate of the review**

The Review Team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this review with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland. The Team will receive all documentation needed for the review, such as reports, briefs etc.

## **Intended use of the review**

The review is intended to serve decision-making at MFA and provide information how the supported INGOs have been influential on national, regional and international levels in terms of advocacy. The final report will be directed primarily to INGOs and MFA government officials as well as other Ministries, but the intention is to aim for wide dissemination also to external stakeholders (CSOs and other MFAs) about findings and recommendations including for exchange with other donor countries.

## **Authorisation**

On behalf of The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland Helsinki, 27.8.2019

## **Director**

Unit for Human Rights Policy

## Annex 2. Review Methodology

### 1. Methods of data collection

#### 1.1 Overview of methods and general considerations

The following methods were used:

- Desk review
- Semi-structure questionnaire/Informed list of questions, tailor-made for each INGO
- Interviews (Skype or face-to-face)

The FCG team noted that the MFA and INGOs aimed to ensure that the review process would be light and not too burdensome for each organization. Therefore, rather than using a traditional questionnaire that would require more INGO time and resources, the FCG submitted a list of topics that would serve as the basis for the INGOs during the interview.

#### 1.2 Desk Study and use of an assessment grid

The Desk Study included four elements:

- Desk review of the organizations' reports, including specific material on advocacy. An assessment grid based on the Terms of Reference was prepared. This was used to analyse what information was available and what was pending.
- Desk review of relevant material regarding Finland's INGO cooperation. From the first reviews made, some of the INGOs work at a global level with few interventions in specific countries, so there may not be a strong link to country interventions. However, based on the material, an analysis of the relation between the INGOs work and the country strategies in Nepal and Tanzania was carried out.
- Internet-based search and review of information from representatives of target groups/ organizations/partners who have been engaged with the INGOs regarding advocacy, with particular focus on cases as well as the interplay and synergy between them. It may be two organizations that work on an equal level with the INGOs or organizations that needed specific support from the INGOs.
- Desk review sources that had reference to the INGOs or cases related to their work, such as the UN organizations, EU and the regional human rights system.

#### 1.3 Semi-structured interviews

The FCG Team suggested interviewing the following stakeholders:

- INGO representatives who have been working closely with topics of relevance for the assignment
- Relevant MFA staff
- Human rights experts with general knowledge on the INGOs, the UN and/or the human rights system and, possibly, on cases of relevance as well as information on other donor approaches
- If possible, representatives from MFA staff in Denmark and Norway
- If possible, representatives from allies or other NGOs

Interviews were used to increase and verify understanding of events and their significance by obtaining insights and accounts from eyewitnesses and other knowledge-holders. They are described as semi-structured because although they were guided by a general protocol. The aim was to understand what happened (and why) as well as to elicit opinions about matters that the interviewee considers important to the general and specific lines of enquiry. This required a mixture of open-ended questions and specific requests for information adapted to the particular interview and interviewee, as well as taking into account that some of the interviews would take place via Skype.

However, because six (6) of the partners have offices in Geneva the Team carried out a brief visit to that city in order to have face-to-face meetings with as many as possible of the organizations.

In order to maximise the chance of obtaining opinions and observations from all those who possess useful knowledge, potential interviewees were categorised. This categorisation was presented in the inception report to the MFA. It would allow progress to be monitored and reported, and gaps in coverage to be corrected during the study.

#### **1.4 Questionnaire or list of questions**

Originally, the FCG Team considered preparing a questionnaire based on the Terms of Reference, in order to help provide information which is not available in the documentation. For example, specific information related to the INGOs' human resources engaged in advocacy are often not presented in a report. To make the review leaner and save time and resources for the interviewees, the FCG team prepared a list of topics which were tailor-made to each organization based on gaps in the reporting. It was possible to interview several of the persons face-to-face or by skype.

## **2. Methods of analysis**

### **2.1 Evaluation criteria**

Table 1 defines the criteria for assessing the interventions and explains what will constitute evidence and how it supports judgements. In accordance with the ToR, the Team has chosen to use the DAC criteria. It should be mentioned that the definition of the DAC criteria is slightly different than that used by the OECD<sup>29</sup>, but the Team finds these adjustments very relevant for this particular assignment. Table 1 is a summary of the understanding of the criteria. In the assessments, all the elements of the ToR will be used.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Table: Evaluation criteria and evidence for performance

<p><b>1. Relevance</b> is considered high if there is evidence that i) the intervention responded in a balanced way to the objectives of the advocacy targets, including needs of the target groups in their specific contexts, as well as to the policies of the partners; ii) there is evidence that an intervention has contributed to the goals in the MFA's country strategic plans and to Finland's development policy; and iii) the interventions made use of joint events (e.g. Human Rights Council).</p>
<p><b>2. Efficiency</b> is considered high if there is evidence that the intervention contained measures that i) brought national partners, including defenders and representatives of marginalised groups into international forums; ii) promoted interplay between local/national or regional and global levels; iii) there is clear evidence that advocacy has been adopted to country contexts. Efficiency is considered "medium" if one or two of those criteria are fulfilled; it is considered low if none or only one is partially fulfilled.</p>
<p><b>3. Effectiveness</b> is considered high if there is evidence that i) clear advocacy strategies are in place; ii) sufficient resources, in quantitative and qualitative terms, are assigned to carrying out advocacy in general and especially at international human rights forums, including formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and lessons learnt; and iii) INGOs have been able to adapt advocacy to circumstances. Effectiveness is considered "medium" if one or two of those criteria are fulfilled; it is considered low if none or only one is partially fulfilled.</p>
<p><b>4. Effectiveness, impact and sustainability</b> are considered high if there is evidence that the intervention i) achieved the goals of the advocacy strategy; and ii) achieved effects, both immediate and long-term. Negative impacts should also be noted. The effects should be related to i) advocacy at key human rights forums; ii) should be well-documented (several sources, use of SMART indicators and documentation of own contribution); and iii) contributed to important changes in policy and practice according to external stakeholders. Effectiveness, impact and sustainability are considered "medium" if one or two of those criteria are fulfilled; they are considered low if none or only one is partially fulfilled. The team will include considerations regarding the interventions' replicability and sustainability.</p>
<p><b>5. Cross-cutting themes (support to groups in marginalized or vulnerable situations):</b> Meeting these criteria is considered "high" if at least the first issue is covered: i) evidence that advocacy has been equity-focused and with specific gender targets; ii) if the rights of PWDs, indigenous peoples and/or of sexual minorities are included in the advocacy work. It is considered medium if only the second issue is covered, and is considered "low" if there is no or very little fulfilment of these criteria.</p>

## 2.2 Case stories

The FCG Team identified cases that constitute examples of actions and engagements that illustrate particular results or challenges. They were chosen on the basis of performance (especially impact/replicability criteria), or some other feature that made them worthy of particular attention and publicity. Another criterion was that enough evidence must be available.

### **3. Limitations of the study**

As already mentioned in the main report, the fact that the Review Team could not carry out any comprehensive field work is a limitation. It means that it has not been able to verify in situ the INGOs' references to outputs and outcomes; only through other informants or secondary sources.

However, the Review Team has included a few field visits (carried out in connection with other assignments). Information has been collected in Nepal and Uganda. Likewise, interviews with the INGOs' own representatives were carried out in Geneva.

Finally, the Review Team has respected that the MFA and the INGOs wanted this review to be as lean (less time-consuming) as possible. Therefore, a limited number of days was assigned to the Review. Therefore, the Review Team has only been able to interview quite few representatives from the INGOs whereas a more comprehensive review would have triangulated with more representatives and also more external stakeholders.

## Annex 3. Evaluation Brief

### Finland's support to human rights advocacy via International NGOs

Finland supports international human rights work through development funds. An important aspect of this work is the support given to nine international NGOs, and the results of this support has now been reviewed with a focus on their advocacy work. The review complements the ongoing reporting by the organizations.

The overall conclusion is that the organization's work supports the policy goals of the Finnish MFA and the Human Rights policy. The review acknowledges the results achieved, which range from short-term to long-term results including some very impressive high-level effects. The need for maintaining long-term, strategic goals is underlined and discussed in a global context where democratic space is under pressure in many countries and where new human rights challenges are emerging in view of climate change, migration and terrorism.

The nine organizations vary considerable in mandates, capacity and organizational structures. Some are large organizations with a global outreach and broad mandates and priorities, others are in varying degrees smaller and with mandates which are narrower and more focused on special groups. Some are member organizations, and some have regional and/or country offices. Combined, the nine organizations cover a broad range of human rights topics related to international and national law, promotion of the rule of law and good governance, including the protection of spaces for civil society and the groups prioritized in Finland's Human Rights policy: the rights of women, the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of sexual and gender minorities, the rights of indigenous peoples and economic, social and cultural rights.

The organizations employ several methods to advance human rights. These include working with organizations and individuals in the global South and building capacity via training sessions, workshops, on-the-job training, on-line courses, producing teaching materials, etc. The organizations assist human rights defenders via direct support to individuals and organizations under threat and by working with partners to change national and international law. The organizations engage with all relevant human rights structures, including the Human Rights Council and UN Treaty Bodies and interact with other relevant stakeholders.

Impressive results include a Model Law for Protection of Human Rights Defenders which several countries have adopted to their national context - or are in the process of doing so. This in turn gives national organizations and individuals a strong tool to protect and further the rule of law and the protection of human rights defenders. Another example is the contribution of organizations to India's Supreme Courts decision to decriminalize same-sex relationship, a leftover from British colonial rule.

The review recommends that Finland continue to support a diverse mix of organizations that through their different specialities can further Finland's human rights goals. Some organizations can improve their reporting standards, including ensuring gender-disaggregated data. The review suggests strengthening the strategic dialogue with the organizations as a means of enhancing synergy.

## **Annex 4. Profile and Analysis of each INGO**

- Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)
- DefendDefenders, East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (DD)
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)
- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)
- International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
- Minority Rights Group (MRG)
- World Young Women's Christian Association (WYWCA)

## Annex 4 INGO 1: Center for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESR)

### Background

CESR's over-riding objective is to hold governments and powerful institutions accountable for human rights abuses arising from unjust economic and social policies.

CESR mission is to work for the recognition and enforcement of economic and social rights as a powerful tool for promoting social justice and human dignity. CESR exposes violations of economic and social rights through an interdisciplinary combination of legal and socioeconomic research and analysis. Together with civil society groups around the world, CESR advocates for changes to economic and social policy at the international, national and local levels so as to ensure these comply with international human rights standards.

CESR core specialty is *implementing rights monitoring techniques* that combine socioeconomic, legal and qualitative analysis to bring about concrete policy changes to improve *economic and social rights*. CESR in its Program Proposal to MFA (April 2014) writes that "CESR is one of the few international NGOs to have addressed the retrogressive and discriminatory nature of austerity policies from a human rights perspective." It uses these monitoring techniques to bring evidence before human rights mechanisms at the national, regional and global level, as well as to advocate for policy change in development forums.

CESR's governance is overseen by a Board of Directors made up of eminent figures in the human rights and development fields. Its international staff team is based in New York and Johannesburg. CESR's annual operating budget for 2015 was US\$1,000,000 and had increased in 2020 to USD\$1,300,000. Current and past funders include: Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, MacArthur Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, Oxfam Novib, Oxfam Intermón, Christian Aid, Canadian International Development Agency, International Development Research Center, the Foreign Affairs Ministries of Finland, Sweden and Spain, and anonymous donors. (Source: Taking stock of two decades of economic and social rights advocacy, 2015).

CESR Strategy 2014-2016 had three goals for this period, implemented through three program areas: 1) Securing Human Rights in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 2) Safeguarding ESC Rights in Times of Crisis and Transition and 3) ESC Rights Monitoring and Accountability. During this period CESR has received block grant funding from the MFA in 2014-2016. The overall goal of the three-year program of work supported by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs was to promote effective implementation of economic and social rights in development policy and practice, in line with the goals of Finland's Human Rights Strategy and Development Policy. Specifically, the objectives of CESR's work over this period are:

- to help secure human rights on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda
- to safeguard economic and social rights in times of economic crisis and political transition
- to strengthen tools and mechanisms for economic and social rights accountability

### Relevance of the intervention

CESR project proposal to MFA in April 2014 "seek to contribute to the objectives outlined in Finland's Human Rights Strategy with regard to promoting effective implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, and increasing the accountability, transparency and operational capacity of governments to make the enjoyment of all human rights an integral part of development." The proposed programme areas are relevant for the MFA.

CESR applies the PANT principles consistently in their work, with particular attention into M&E and HR

related indicators and practices. One of the programme areas is specifically focusing on this: “*Strengthening ESC Rights Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms.*”

**Box: The OPERA framework – CESR’s analytical framework for assessing economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights compliance:**

M&E is part of CESR’s strategic support to civil society organizations. This is based on its comprehensive methodology for ESC rights monitoring, known as the OPERA framework. “*The OPERA framework examines both obligations of conduct and result—and, importantly, makes the link between the two. As outlined further below, the framework looks at different dimensions of the obligation to fulfill, grouped around Outcomes, Policy Efforts and Resources. It then triangulates the findings from each step to make an Assessment of a state’s compliance with its obligation to fulfill human rights.*” (...) “*the step-by-step approach adopted in the OPERA framework is not a rigid one-size-fits-all formula. CESR has used it as a dynamic and flexible structure to frame different monitoring activities with differing objectives in a range of countries in recent years: from reproductive health in Kenya, to the economic and social dimensions of Liberia’s transition from conflict, to the impact of the economic crisis in Ireland and Spain.*”

Source: The OPERA Framework: Assessing compliance with the obligation to fulfill economic, social and cultural rights” pp.13-14 (<http://cesr.org/opera-framework>) CESR “design and disseminate multidisciplinary training programs, materials and other resources on research methodologies, in order to advance rights monitoring practices.” (<http://cesr.org/rights-claiming-and-accountability>) For staff, see <http://www.cesr.org/staff>)

## Effectiveness in terms of capacity for advocacy

CESR works with policy makers and the impacted community on remedies for economic and social rights violations. This is done through meetings, skills-building workshops and active lobbying carried out with local partners, aiming to bring communities into decision-making process on major issues that affect their lives. Another advocacy tool is to bring petitions before international and regional bodies that monitor state compliance with economic and social rights. These procedures aim to draw international attention to violations, bolster the work of local activists, and help strengthen international standards. CESR also provides evidence in public interest lawsuits. CESR has the capacity to carry out advocacy work even if in practice the extent to which this is done, depends on available resources. CESR’s advocacy work is documented and available through its website. For the study period of 2015 and 2016, however, significantly less products compared to 2018 for instance<sup>30</sup>, with the publications being clearly done with other donors). The reason for this was the significant increase in budget for 2018 (just under US\$1.5m), which resulted in increased research, advocacy and communications capacity. For data on the number of publications, partnerships and advocacy events/activities in 2018, see [CESR Annual Report 2018](#). For reasons of capacity we did not produce equivalent data for 2015/2016.

## Results and effectiveness in terms of impact

Many outputs, outcomes, results and impacts are achieved through partnering with others or through global platforms that are influenced by multiple actors. In this kind of context, it is challenging to identify what was the impact of an individual actor, and even less what was the impact of one individual donor supporting one individual organization. However, identifying CESR’s contribution to concrete outcomes and impacts requires sophisticated evaluation and impact-tracking systems that CESR has not had the capacity to implement. An example from the Annual Report to MFA 2015 : “During the report period, the immediate beneficiaries of this project included human rights NGOs and grassroots activists, and the communities and constituencies they serve, as well as members of the UN treaty bodies, special rapporteurs and regional

<sup>30</sup> As a core grant, the MFA’s support contributed to many of our publications over this period, including key publications on Agenda 2030 such as [From Disparity to Dignity](#) and [The Measure of Progress](#). CESR does not list any of the funders in these publications.

human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, all of whom have benefited from CESR's work to build tools and capacity to monitor and claim ESC rights. The ultimate, indirect beneficiaries are those people deprived of their rights, many in the global South, and disproportionately poor and female, who turn to these organizations and institutions to help them seek justice and accountability”.

### **Activities supported by MFA funding:**

Program 1: Securing human rights on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda included the following (Annual Report 2015 to MFA): feed specific proposals on human rights accountability, governance, and rights-based tax reforms at key moments in the lead-up to the 2014 and 2015 General Assemblies, urging selected governments, development agencies and CSOs to take them up. Producing of thematic briefings and other publications for various advocacy purposes and venues. Outreach to supportive states, including politically influential countries of the global south, to take forward recommendations of the Human Rights Caucus and support the process of national tailoring of global goals and their translation into national development strategies

Program 2: Safeguarding Human Rights in Times of Crisis and Transition: national case studies highlighting inequalities and identifying internal and external challenges preventing the use of fiscal policy in fulfilling economic and social rights and reducing inequalities. Comparative analysis and interdisciplinary reflection on the relevance of ESC rights and social justice in transitions, promoting human rights-based policies in resourcing rights, reducing inequalities and fostering accountable governance in situations of transition.

Program 3: Strengthening ESC Rights Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms: encourage more effective oversight of ESC rights by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and other UN treaty bodies, Special Rapporteurs, and regional human rights mechanisms, so that these play a stronger role in norm development and clarification, particularly in the thematic areas of concern to CESR. Boost the role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in monitoring and ensuring the implementation of economic and social rights. Develop and apply innovative tools to build civil society capacity to monitor and claim ESC rights.

In the annual report two countries stand out: Egypt and Spain. With regards to Egypt, CESR reports that “In November 2014, Egypt appeared before the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR). CESR worked with the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights to coordinate a joint submission to the UPR examining the continuing failure of successive governments to confront the root causes of socio-economic deprivation and inequality that fuelled the revolution. The report, endorsed by 130 Egyptian non-governmental organizations and labor unions, analyzed the human rights impact of ill-conceived austerity measures exacerbating the effects of Egypt’s economic crisis, as well as the increasingly hostile climate for human rights defenders working on economic and social rights”. This work is reported under the financing from MFA in 2014, but the Fact Sheets do not acknowledge it as such, as CESR does not in general credit donor in such publications.

### **Examples of Impact**

*“There is evidence that the Lima meeting on Advancing Tax Justice through Human Rights has helped to change the thinking and practice of the various sectors represented, which have generally tended to work in silos in the past. The forum also resulted in the Lima Declaration on Tax Justice and Human Rights, which sets out the links between tax abuse and human right abuse, and calls on states, international institutions, the private sector and civil society to take steps to address these. The Declaration has been widely endorsed and cited as an authoritative reference. It has over 150 endorsements from participants at the meeting and others from the human rights and tax justice communities worldwide.”* Source: Annual Report to MFA 2015

*“Evidence of impact includes: the impact achieved can be measured in the number, scope and relevance of the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council in the course of the UPR reviews, often based directly on the recommendations made by CESR in its submissions and factsheets. In both Spain and Egypt, there has been significant media coverage of the outcomes of these initiatives both domestically and internationally, with commentators picking up the significance for other countries of our findings on austerity. The third key impact in both countries has been in building and sustaining an informal coalition of partners galvanized by the opportunity to hold their government accountable before international human rights bodies. Key to the effectiveness of these partnerships has been their horizontal nature, the complementary competencies CESR brings and the fruitful marriage of national and global perspectives (...)”* Source: Annual Report to MFA 2014

CESR’s final report to the MFA details the results and impacts of its activities under the three programs. These include:

- directly contributing to the inclusion of commitments on human rights, inequality and fiscal reform in the text of Agenda 2030 adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015
- having CESR’s proposals on SDG goals, targets, indicators and monitoring mechanisms taken up by human rights organizations, development networks, UN agencies and certain Member States
- amplifying human rights voices, particularly from the global South, in international advocacy around the SDG process, by convening the Human Rights Post-2015 Caucus
- jointly establishing a ground-breaking global civil society initiative to periodically monitor the implementation of the SDGs, the Spotlight on Sustainable Development Report
- effectively challenging austerity measures in Spain, Egypt, Peru and Brazil through different human rights accountability mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels
- prompting the CEDAW Committee to call on Switzerland to account for the cross-border impacts of its tax and financial secrecy policies on developing countries’ ability to fulfill women’s rights
- securing a written commitment from tax justice, development and human rights advocates worldwide to work together to advance tax justice through human rights, via the Lima Declaration
- laying foundations for a potential test case under the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR regarding the denial of the right to health care to undocumented migrants in Spain
- securing a commitment from States who make up the Group of Friends on ESCR to improve coverage of ESC rights issues in the Universal Periodic Review process
- strengthening the capacity of national, regional and international human rights bodies to scrutinize governments’ fiscal policies, through training workshops, hearings and manuals
- enabling scores of human rights defenders and groups in Egypt, Dominican Republic, Kenya, Macedonia, Palestine, Peru, South Africa and Uganda to apply the OPERA rights monitoring tool

Source: *Final report to MFA 2017*

### **Efficiency and sustainability**

CESR works in partnerships with civil society actors, similarly to most other INGOs who do depend on their country-level partners for the ownership and continued operations. With respect to working in hostile environments such as Egypt, CESR acknowledges that *“While the precarious situation faced by human rights defenders is potentially the biggest threat to the sustainability of this work, the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) and other partners have been keen to work with CESR in 2015 to devise a framework for monitoring the government’s implementation of the commitments it made at the 2014 UPR”* (CESR Annual Report 2014 to MFA). Another risk to sustainability as acknowledges in the annual reports are capacity limitations and the frequent staffing changes in their local NGO partners, at times requiring CESR to play more active role than what initially envisaged. A key sustainability-related safeguard is CESR distinctive approach to partnership and collaboration with national NGOs. CESR consciously avoids the

more “extractive” model of larger INGOs and builds longer-term, mutually reinforcing partnerships that respect the partners’ leading role at the national level, involve jointly-produced and branded outputs, and seek to strengthen the research and advocacy capacity of our partners in the longer-term. In the words of one Egyptian partner, the Social Justice Platform, “CESR has consistently supported our agenda without imposing their own on us. They showed us how an international partner ought to be – supportive, understanding and dedicated to strengthening our local work, while reinforcing our cause on an international level” (CESR Annual Report 2018).

### **Lessons learnt**

CESR core specialty is implementing rights monitoring techniques that combine socioeconomic, legal and qualitative analysis to bring about concrete policy changes to improve economic and social rights. As described at <https://www.cesr.org/opera-framework>, “The OPERA framework allows an assessment that triangulates outcomes, policies and resources to provide a much fuller picture of what a state is doing to promote the realization of specific rights. Importantly, it traces economic and social deprivations and disparities back to the actions or omissions of the state, to make the case that they constitute an injustice and a violation of human rights.” The OPERA framework and its practical application have resulted in a number of lessons learned related to specific countries, contexts and themes. Some of these are documented and made available as separate publications at the CESR web-site, some shared through side-events and training sessions as papers and presentations, see also <https://www.cesr.org/opera-houseopera-stories>.

Related more new item is “Defending Dignity: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions on Monitoring Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, prepared together with the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in January 2015 and updated in August 2018, available at [https://www.cesr.org/sites/default/files/Defending\\_Dignity\\_ESCR\\_Manual\\_2019.pdf](https://www.cesr.org/sites/default/files/Defending_Dignity_ESCR_Manual_2019.pdf).

## Annex 4 INGO 2: DefendDefenders (DD)

### Background

DefendDefenders' mission is to protect and strengthen human rights defenders (HRDs) in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region; Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia (together with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The organization has six strategic interventions: i) protect HRDs through emergency support, protection grants, relocation programs, and legal support; ii) promote HRDs and their work at regional and international human rights platforms; iii) build capacity of HRDs in security and protection, digital safety, advocacy and communication, monitoring and reporting, human rights education, and mental health and well-being; iv) connect HRDs and human rights organizations through the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net); v) raise awareness about HRD and human rights situation in the East and Horn of Africa by conducting in-depth analysis and research; vi) advocate for the protection of HRDs at regional and international level.

The support of the current Finnish project has as objective to protect civic space in the region by contributing to establish a safe environment for human rights defenders (HRDs) where duty bearers fulfil their national, regional and international obligations. The project helps to protect especially HRDs in vulnerable situations (women, minorities, journalists and HRDs working in the extractive industry), building capacity for protection in the region and by documenting and disseminating incidents, as well as building systems for doing so.

### Relevance

DDs work with HRs include several of Finland's priority countries and is well aligned with one of Finland's key objectives: promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality. DD has a strong focus on protecting HRDs which is increasingly relevant in most countries in the region, as civil society's space is shrinking and HRD are increasingly being targeted by governments.

DD reports gender disaggregated figures. However, men outnumber women HRDs which may or may not reflect that HRDs are predominantly men. An independent evaluation (carried out by "Out of the Box – Kenya") from 2018 indicates, however, that there is a "need to develop a clear strategy or support for women HRDs". During an interview with DD in November 2019, DD indicated that the organization is preparing a new gender mainstreaming plan and a policy for gender equity trying to focus even more on both women's and men's needs. This is yet to be finalised. Likewise, the reports clearly indicate that LGBT persons are benefitting from DDs work.

DD does not specifically refer to the PANT principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Transparency) but judging from the reports these principles are followed and actively promoted. 'Transparency' is a special item since it is actively promoted as an integral part of accountability but protecting HRDs in safe houses and in exile must naturally be very clandestine.

In accordance with Finnish priorities, DD focus both on civil and political rights (104 cases supported in 2018) and cases linked to economic, social and cultural rights (43 cases in 2018). DD has been requested to provide additional information on examples that illustrate the 43 cases.

The mentioned 2018 external evaluation highlights the need for DD to plan long term interventions and strategize accordingly. Further, the work burden in different donor demands for reporting/accounting is noted as putting a heavy strain on DD and a more 'consolidated system' is recommended.

## Effectiveness regarding capacity and advocacy

DD is an advocacy organization, working at different levels ranging from advocating for individuals, building advocacy capacity and doing research to influence duty bearers.

The HQ in Kampala hosts 31 staff, and a small office with 1 person has been established in Geneva. Advocacy for protection of human rights defenders is regional and, to the extent possible, international. The 2018 evaluation recommended strengthening the M&E function in DD and this has been followed up by employing a M&E officer in 2018. ‘Lessons learnt’ is part of the annual project reporting and signals and open attitude towards improving ways of working.

According to the 2018 evaluation *‘the secretariat is now considered a bridge between the HRD community and international mechanisms’*. DD has added technology (digital safety) as the 4<sup>th</sup> priority area and thus as an additional capacity to the current strong focus on advocacy.

Advocacy is carried out through meetings in UNHCR and ACHPR (DD has observer status), also the NGO Forum held prior to ACHPR meetings. DD is the only African member of the ‘Protect Defenders EU consortium’ (consisting of 12 members). DD is also cooperating with other international stakeholders (ISHR, Amnesty International, etc.). As a preparation for its advocacy, DD do research and prepares position papers which are used nationally and in HR forums. A new webpage was launched in 2017, however the 2018 evaluation found that DD could do more to communicate with the wider public. Engaging increasingly in digital safety seems both innovative and highly relevant.

## Effectiveness in terms of outputs, outcome and impact

DDs annual reports include a number of HRD cases and a contextual analysis of the countries in the region and how DD has engaged. Both quantitative and qualitative reporting used. At international level, DD is part of alliances with other INGOs trying to influence the human rights situation.

For example, in a joint report launched at the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the UNHRC, DefendDefenders and the Burundian Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (CBDDH) highlighted the situation of exiled Burundian HRDs. More than three years after the eruption of Burundi’s human rights crisis, the Report *“Between Despair and Resilience: Burundian human rights defenders in protracted exile in Uganda and Rwanda”* examined the achievements of HRDs, and their professional, security, and socio-economic challenges in order to formulate concrete recommendations for the enhancement of their human rights work.

DD works primarily via the national coalitions and actively engage when the UNHCR meet, when UPR report are tabled and when the ACHPR meets. DD is on a continuous basis assisting individuals with protection (e.g. through the safe houses, going into exile, other types of support).

The 2018 evaluation is overall very positive about DDs effectiveness and impact. As HRD are increasingly put under pressure and targeted, the general picture is one of ‘defence’ rather than gaining new ground. Being instrumental in setting up national coalitions seems to be a key achievement with long term impact, especially if DD can succeed in gradually reducing the coalitions’ dependence on DD support. Bridging the national/regional level with the international level likewise seem very important to create impact. The individual cases are easy to attribute to DDs work as DD is responsible for bringing the individuals to safety, likewise the training courses are attributable to DD. The ongoing dialogue in national and international forums must be labelled under ‘contribution’, also for example the specific reports prepared by DD on specific regional - or country situations. These can clearly be important, but it will remain impossible to tell if they made the difference.

Women HRDs have from the outset been a target group prioritized by DD. However, as mentioned above, the 2018 evaluation notes that ‘specific support for women HR leaders is not evident in the program’. Notwithstanding, DD has informed in 2020 that specific activities for women do take place (‘Safe sister workshop on digital safety’) and that the numbers of assisted HRDs are gender segregated (and figures on sexual minorities are included too).

The impact of DD’s activities is very much related to good governance and democracy as civil rights are the preconditions for democracy and upholding and protecting HRs is a fundamental part of good governance as well. A case from Tanzania illustrates how DD’s advocacy at international level on this issue is carried out:

**Box: Protecting civic space in Tanzania**

Since the election of President John Magufuli in October 2015, Tanzanian civic space has faced a sharp and dramatic decline, with the government increasingly intolerant of civil society, HRDs, and dissent of any kind. In June 2018, DefendDefenders published “Spreading Fear, Asserting Control: Tanzania’s Assault on Civic Space,” a report d which examines how newly enacted draconian legislation and extra-legal methods are being used to harass HRDs, silence independent journalists, and significantly restrict freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly.

Following the publication of this report, DefendDefenders held a side event on the margins of the UN Human Rights Council’s 38<sup>th</sup> session (June-July 2019). During this event, Tanzania’s Ambassador to the UN invited the UN Special Rapporteur on freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, Clément Voule (who was on our panel), for a visit to the country. We pursued our efforts to draw attention to the situation in Tanzania, using a “preventative” angle. This materialized in a **joint civil society letter** ahead of the Council’s 39<sup>th</sup> session – during which the EU raised concerns over Tanzania’s rights situation for the first time at the Council.

Ongoing **advocacy led to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, raising serious concerns** over Tanzania’s restrictions to civic and democratic space which, in her words, “hampered prospects” for free and fair elections in 2020. She did so during an “informal conversation” with Council members and observers held in February 2019. This contributed to Tanzania’s decision to send its Minister for Justice (who was then appointed Foreign Minister) to deliver a speech during the “High-Level Segment” held during the first week of the Council’s 40<sup>th</sup> session (February-March 2019). DefendDefenders met with the Minister at Tanzania’s Permanent Mission in Geneva. Although he dismissed our concerns, he engaged with the Council and met privately with the High Commissioner. This led the High Commissioner to omit a paragraph on Tanzania in her opening speech to the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the Council.

At the Council’s 42<sup>nd</sup> session (September 2019), **the High Commissioner resumed her public advocacy on Tanzania**, raising concern over developments in the country. DefendDefenders will continue to advocate for amendments to Tanzania’s restrictive legislation; building on multilateral achievements so far – the country is now “on the map,” with stakeholders increasingly responsive to the “preventative engagement” approach we propose.

*Source: External evaluation (2018) and input from DefendDefenders (Dec. 2019)*

As the case illustrates, DefendDefenders can mainly raise the voice, but it is difficult in the short term to register any changes, particularly in the most authoritarian regimes. Other cases from Eritrea and South Sudan (box 2 and 3), illustrate how DefendDefenders has been persistent in trying to maintain focus on the human rights situation in particular countries by liaising with many international stakeholders, including bilateral donors:

### **Box DefendDefenders significantly contributed to the adoption of a resolution on Eritrea by the UN Human Rights Council**

After a strong resolution on the human rights situation in Eritrea, with regard to which DefendDefenders coordinated civil society efforts and contributed language suggestions (which were included in the final text), was adopted in July 2018, the diplomatic situation in the Horn of Africa changed dramatically. The *rapprochement* between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea led to a fundamental change of circumstances at the UN Human Rights Council. Traditional sponsors of resolutions on Eritrea, namely Somalia and Djibouti, which had led initiatives on Eritrea since 2012, were not in a position to take initiatives anymore. In January 2019, it appeared that, as it stood, **no State would present a resolution** on Eritrea and lead negotiations towards its adoption. Eritrea's election to the Council for the period 2019-2021 made things even more complicated – despite the argument that Council members should be subjected to more, not less, scrutiny.

In January 2019, DefendDefenders **convened a civil society meeting** in Geneva and started approaching States (the Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium, and the EU Delegation), while maintaining contacts with the delegations of Djibouti (and Somalia, to some extent). In April 2019, DefendDefenders and Human Rights Watch **met with a number of States** and had an in-depth discussion. Likewise, DD **coordinated the development and publication of a joint civil society letter** and **published a paper** outlining DD's vision for Eritrea at the Council. DD also kept in constant touch with the UN Special Rapporteur on Eritrea, her team, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) Africa branch.

As the Council's 41<sup>st</sup> session (June-July 2019) approached, it appeared that no resolution on Eritrea was going to be presented. The Ambassadors of Somalia and Djibouti made it clear to us. This would have meant the discontinuation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and an end to years of scrutiny over one of the world's most serious human rights situations – that includes possible crimes against humanity, as documented by the Special Rapporteur and the UN Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea (2014-2016). Ahead of the session, in June 2019, DefendDefenders **drafted a resolution on Eritrea**, to provide States with a concrete example of what could be possible. On the first day of the Council's 41<sup>st</sup> session (24 June 2019), Human Rights Watch and DefendDefenders held a private briefing with States. Ongoing advocacy efforts **triggered the formation of a new “core group”** (group of States leading the drafting, development and negotiation of a resolution) replacing the former core group, composed of Somalia and Djibouti.

The new core group (Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands) drafted a resolution that, while short and technical (it simply aimed at renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur), kept Eritrea on the agenda of the Council, ensuring monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation. **The resolution was adopted by a vote.** It will allow the international community, through the Council, to continue to publicly discuss Eritrea's domestic human rights situation, which has not improved despite diplomatic progress in the sub-region, and the Special Rapporteur to pursue her work on the “benchmarks for progress” she identified in her 2019 report, as per the 2018 resolution on Eritrea. These benchmarks constitute a road map for human rights reforms, which can be used now and if/when the regime opens up and a democratic transition can happen.

As mentioned above, DD has ‘six areas of concern’ in the region and these include HRDs working with elections and governance issues, journalist working with high end corruption and ending impunity as well as HRDs working with extractive industries and land rights. In many of these areas, the DD works closely with the UN. DD has provided a list with a number of UN officials that DD has engaged with. Below is the reaction from the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the situation on human rights defenders.

**Box: The OHCHR: DefendDefenders have played a critical role in the region and beyond it**

OHCHR has been requested to provide their view on the role of DefendDefenders. Although OHCHR does not relate it directly to the Finnish support, information is given on the general role DefendDefenders play: DefendDefenders has been a regular partner in the region. They have co-organized a series of side-events in which the Special Rapporteur has participated (in Geneva over the past years and lately in Banjul during the session of the ACHPR).

They have participated in a number of online discussions organised by the Special Rapporteur (most recently in June, on the occasion of the preparation of Mr Forst's report on impunity), and they have regularly provided names of defenders for the SR's consultations with HRDs. They have also helped with the translation of the poster of the UN Declaration to African languages.

They are very active and have played a critical role in the region but also beyond it. They have contributed to the establishment of the Ubuntu cities and the strengthening of regional networks. The Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative enables African HRD who have been subject to threats, violence and extreme pressure, as a consequence of their human rights work, to temporarily relocate and continue their work in a safe working environment, while enriching their experience through professional or educational opportunities. <https://africandefenders.org/africandefenders-launches-the-ubuntu-hub-cities-initiative-in-south-africa/> Olga Iskra from the office of Michel Forst (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders).

In addition, Birgit Kainz from the Civic Space Unit of the OHCHR also indicates (December 17, 2019) that DefendDefenders is carrying out good work, and their presence is important even if they are quite small. DD is a good example of a protection network that works. OHCHR is presently doing research on what makes networks work well or less well. Also, DefendDefenders is considered to have legitimacy and their contextual knowledge of the region is important. Also the Civic Space Unit refers to the role DefendDefenders played a role in setting up the above mentioned Southern Africa HRDs network.

**Efficiency regarding interplay between national – international level and sustainability:** DD has a Strategic Plan and Results Framework covering 2016-20 with 18 external and internal goals and an indicator tracking table. Further, DD has a strategic budget covering 2016-20 with fixed as well as indicative budget figures. DD is a 'home grown' African INGO covering the East and Horn of Africa, headquartered in Kampala, Uganda.

While DD has been instrumental in setting up and funding national coalitions, these continue to rely on DD's funding. The evaluation from 2018 recommends that these coalitions become more self-reliant financially speaking, implying the need to strengthen their national fundraising capacity.

**DD's role in promoting interplay between national and international level:** According to the 2018 evaluation DD is considered a bridge between the national and international HR work, and DDs work in setting up national coalitions of HRDs ensures a high degree of South ownership and capacity building. DD is promoting the participation of HRDs in international forums, for example by inviting delegations including HRDs to Geneva.

DDs annual reports include country by country contextual analysis and how DD has responded in the given country. In 2017 Burundi and South Sudan accounted for 54% of all cases which DD engaged in. As mentioned above, DD has also paid particular attention to preparation of documentation of Burundi which has been submitted to key UN stakeholders, including the Staff of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, thus serving as a link between HRD from Burundi and the international level.

DDs track record signals a high degree of responsiveness as if the organization is geared to handling these emergency situations. The emergency line is open 24/7.

As shown above, DD tries to maximize impact through alliances. Generally speaking DD seems to cooperate with a wide range of other actors at national, regional and international level, as this example on advocacy regarding from Ethiopia shows (2018 report): *‘On 4 October, for the 33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group, CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE), DefendDefenders, Committee to Protect Journalists, Article 19, Consortium of Ethiopian Rights Organizations (CERO), and Pen International, submitted a joint report for Ethiopia’s review.’* The report was also referred to in the HRC’s “Summary of Stakeholders” where, among other issues, it is raised that “the Government had continued to use restrictive legislation to impede the work of human rights defenders and journalists.”<sup>31</sup>

## Lessons learnt

It is important to work in alliances – both internationally and between national and international stakeholders. The cases show that many of the observations CSOs have are shared and are taken into account by the UN when presented together. DefendDefenders adds value to the other CSOs by providing specific information related to the work of DefendDefenders.

It is important to have key national contacts to be able to provide reliable information in order to be appreciated by the UN. The evaluation indicates that there may be a need for an improved communication strategy which would allow for exchange of information between DefendDefenders and existing and potential Human Rights Defenders. Likewise, the evaluation mentions the need for looking into reporting requirements and sustainability of the network.

## Conclusions and recommendations

DefendDefenders are in line with Finnish priorities and can document important activities and outputs from their human rights advocacy. The material and interviews show that DefendDefenders play an important role, both in terms of provider of information, contacts, analysis and information to the UN system and other stakeholders. It is difficult to judge outcome, since in many cases there are few changes due to authoritarian structures. In the very difficult context DefendDefenders work in, it is more about maintaining the civic space, as it may not always be possible to expand it. However, an overall recommendation would still be that efforts should be made to track outcomes of the advocacy.

Some recommendations from the evaluation and material indicate that:

The reporting requirements from the various donors places a huge demand on staff time and could be consolidated better. This could indicate that Finland in the future accepts to become part of a core funding mechanisms with joint reporting.

Value addition of the secretariat for member organizations was mentioned by the Evaluation. The Review Team has not been able to speak with any of the national coalitions. The evaluation said: *“The national coalitions are key to sustainability of the work of DefendDefenders. So far, the majority of the coalitions have been unable to become self-sustaining and are greatly dependent on DefendDefenders. A clear action plan elaborating their roles, responsibilities, expectations and resource mobilization needs to be developed. It needs to be clear how the coalitions are to move forward to become independent and how they are to collaborate with other networks and partners.”* The evaluation established that there are gaps in information among members of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network.

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<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Thirty-third session 6-17 May 2019; art. 37.

Defenders' secretariat is well placed to share information with the membership and should consider designing an easy access to information especially for HRDs with limited resources and online access.

## **Annex 4 INGO 3: International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)**

### **Background**

ICJ is the lawyer organization of the HR movement with a focus on the national and international legal framework. ICJ's overriding objectives are to: Support and advance the rule of law and human rights; Advance the independence of the judiciary and legal profession and the administration of justice in full compliance with international legal standards; Promote the global adoption and implementation of international law and standards that further human rights and the rule of law.

ICJ's strategic goals are: The Independence of Judges and Lawyers; Access to Justice for All; Accountability for Human Rights Violations and Abuses; The Rule of Law and International Human Rights Standards and Instruments; Domestic Implementation and Compliance.

ICJ got funding under 'Achieving Justice for Gross Human Rights Violations' with the themes 'Fighting impunity for HR violations' and 'Support for Human Rights Defenders (HRD)'. Seven countries (originally 10) were 'focus countries' and provision for made for 'emerging situations' in DAC countries. The project aims at building the capacity of lawyers and judges and HRDs to deliver justice by addressing legal, systemic and other obstacles and will develop practical tools for the stakeholders. Activities take place at national, regional and global levels and tailored plans of action are prepared for the focus countries.

### **Relevance of the intervention**

ICJ's work relate mainly to priority areas 3 (societies have become more democratic and better functioning) and 1 (the rights and status of women) in Finland's development policy. For a discussion about civil/political and ESC rights see main report. The mid-term evaluation by Rightshouse from July 2018 concludes that the project is 'highly relevant from a needs perspective as well as in relation to the SDGs and ICJ's own strategies.

ICJ finds that they in general have a good links with Finland's embassies and at Geneva level, and several examples of interaction are cited, including regular contacts with embassies in Yangon, Kathmandu, Bangkok and contacts during missions in Russia, Serbia and Turkey. Other interactions include the ambassador to Thailand speaking at ICJ regional trainings and ICJ participation in roundtable in Brussels. ICJ has a Finnish Commissioner (Jarna Petman).

ICJ priorities women as a target group and ICJ reported (2017) about a new 'Practitioners Guide on reparation for gender-based violence in transitional justice Activity' for justice sector actors and civil society to be better equipped to provide remedy and reparation and guarantees of nonrecurrence to victims of gender-based violence. ICJ will strengthen the internal vetting and analysis of female participation and has established a women's rights focal point within the organization. An Ombudsperson has been appointed within the Executive Committee and will with high level gender expertise assist in developing a gender mainstreaming policy.

ICJ receives project support from Finland but appreciates the flexibility shown by Finland in for example allowing a switch in priority countries from Mozambique to Eswatini to be able to pursue opportunities arising. It is also noted that the grant has a general provision for emerging situations. That said ICJ lack of substantive core funding (10% in average over the last years) is by ICJ considered the 'single biggest

impediment' to relevance (addressing situations and be able to change priorities when feasible) and effectiveness.

ICJ's congress in 2019 discussed the relevance of present approaches to HR at a time with serious push backs from major powers on HR and international law. The conclusion was that the respect for international law needs to be reinforced and sustained by fighting impunity, demanding accountability and supporting HRDs. ICJ will thematically be focusing more on climate change (and is in a coalition with AI and Greenpeace), cyberspace and new technology. ICJ apply the PANT principles consistently in their work.

### **Effectiveness in terms of capacity for advocacy**

ICJ has a long track record as a leading HR advocacy organization and the mission, overall objectives and strategic framework are all geared towards advocacy at national and international level. ICJ engage primarily with states and the law community – judges, lawyers, prosecutors, academics.

ICJ has app 100 staff out of which 20 are Geneva based and focused on policy, communication, administration/finance/donor relations and coordination whereas 80 are working in 12 offices at national / regional level. 60 Commissioners work pro bono for ICJ (elected for three-year periods) and can often be important to provide access, legitimacy and analysis. ICJ's total income was in 2018 14.7 mill CHF.

ICJ's approach to advocacy can be summarized under five headings, namely strategic litigation, trial observations, defending HRDs, advocacy engagement with international mechanisms and capacity building. ICJ makes use of wide variety of instruments and is based on legal analysis and research, also used by other stakeholders. Instruments include targeted actions like briefing papers, press releases, third party interventions, capacity building training sessions, preparing training manuals, consultations with key stakeholders, research, specialized reports, briefing notes and peer to peer interaction/judicial dialogue (refer India case below).

ICJ approach includes a communication strategy which is primarily focused on the law communities and not so much on the broader public although ICJ does get attention more broadly too. A current example is the ICC case against Myanmar where ICJ is providing weekly briefings to diplomats but is not found before the cameras. That said, ICJ does orchestra media attention and has since 2012 been 'catching up at a fast rate' on communications to broader audiences, using Facebook and other SoMe. ICJ has one full time position and two half time positions working with media and communication.

**SoMe case:** A briefing paper on Myanmar entitled "Questions & Answers on Human Rights Law in Rakhine State" issued in English and Burmese managed to attract significant attention, with ICJ reporting that the press release announcing the briefing paper was viewed 23,658 times - which is the highest number of views reached on ICJ's Facebook page. While the issues dealt with and the timing of the release were key factors behind the significant interest in this paper, the format most likely also contributed to ICJ reaching a broader audience than usual. Using both legal and non-legal terminology ICJ managed to describe the situation and issues at hand in relation to international human rights standards. The response exceeded expectations and the report was used by a number of actors not targeted initially including diplomats, journalists and civil society, and the translation into Burmese was a significant factor. Other ICJ briefing papers on the Rakhine situation received strong attention too.

ICJ work at the international level (Geneva, Brussels, New York) and engage with the HRC work including with the UPR processes. The work at the national/regional level is implemented by the national/regional offices with focus countries including Myanmar, Cambodia, Nepal, Venezuela, Tajikistan and Eswatini.

## Results. Effectiveness in terms of impact

'ICJ's added value is most visible in the performance of qualitative legal analysis and in alerting international human rights mechanisms and fora. The analysis, special reports, briefing papers and similar advocacy tools provide for a professional review of key legal issues pinpointing major disparities between legal and institutional frameworks and international human rights standards. ICJ excels in organizing various advocacy actions prior, during and after the UN Human Rights Council sessions and in performing joint advocacy actions with local partners – like in the case of Cambodia when two lawyers included in mentorship program attended UN Human Rights Council's 36th session.' (2018 evaluation page 24, with reference to outcome 2)

The Rightshouse evaluation also concludes that the project is 'a well-managed intervention which has consistently produced high quality outputs'. (Executive Summary page 4). The evaluation questions if it is possible to measure impact over a project period of 26 months and discuss also the outcome level. The argument is that issues like impunity, accountability and rule of law are complex, context specific and long term and that specific outcomes are more likely to be process oriented, whereas outputs can be measured more realistically. Reference to the main report which discusses measuring results and long-term engagement.

ICJ has developed a Results Based Framework which is part of the overall strategic plan. The project has an M&E plan (Results Monitoring Framework) which is aligned with the overall framework and indicators and data collection methodologies are drawn from this tool. The documentation presented in reports to MFA Finland are very clear and easy to go to with relevant references to changes occurred in the course of implementation, information about co-funding from others and development in the focus countries covered by the project. The reports outline the activities undertaken, the capacity building initiatives and how these relate to the defined outputs.

**Eswatini case** (formerly Swaziland) is a convincing example. The ICJ published a study on challenges to achieving redress and accountability in Eswatini; it conducted capacity building of civil society on redress and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and on engaging with UN human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; it undertook national advocacy on combatting SGBV in the country, including in a submission to the Senate on the need for enactment of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill (which contributed to enactment of the Bill); it convened the first ever meeting of justice sector stakeholders involved in combatting SGBV; and it issued press releases concerning the need for enactment of SGBV legislation and on next steps following its enactment. The SODV Act was passed by the Senate and the King's royal assent given in July 2018. ICJ Commissioner and Supreme Court Judge Quinsile Mabuza from Eswatini hailed this as a 'phenomenal achievement'.

ICJ is conscious about unintended outcomes and 'doing harm', especially in authoritarian environments where capacity building activities can well be used for oppression rather than for strengthening the rule of law. The Rightshouse evaluation (page 37) praise the safeguards which are based on a solid contextual analysis, a long-term presence and often broad interactions. ICJ has this reportedly taken a restrictive approach in this regard which is considered sound.

Likewise, ICJ is conscious about using opportunities in difficult environments and drawing the line somewhere. This has resulted in pulling out of China in 2010 as the work for the rule of law was likely to become work for law enforcement. The presence in Myanmar is ongoing and still considered worthwhile, and it has not prohibited ICJ from playing a central role the ICC case against Myanmar.

**Myanmar case.** In June 2018 ICJ made submissions to the ICC and analyzed why the ICC had jurisdiction and competence to investigate and consider the allegations of forced deportation of Rohingyas as a crime against humanity in Myanmar. The Office of the Prosecutor directly quoted ICJ's analysis and the court ruled that it could exercise jurisdiction. Further ICJ advocated via legal briefings and oral statements at the UN for an independent mechanism to be established to collect evidence of crimes in Myanmar, and this was adopted by the HRC. ICJ finally made an analysis, published in English and Burmese, of the merits and shortcomings of the established mechanism.

**India case.** In September 2018 the Supreme Court of India struck down section 377 of the penal code, a relic from British colonial rule that criminalized consensual same-sex relationships. The Court recognized that section 377 was in violation of individual of individuals' fundamental rights to equality, non-discrimination, life with dignity and privacy as per the Indian Constitution as well as in breach of India's obligations under international law. The Supreme Court judgement directly cited the ICJ 2017 report (Unnatural offences: Obstacles to justice in India based on sexual orientation and gender identity) in its decision to highlight the harassment and violence by state actors against LGBTI persons. The ruling may well have transnational value as the judgement can be used in other Commonwealth countries with similar provisions in their statute books.

The case is interesting because of the potential far reaching impact including not only India, but further down the road possibly also a range of other Commonwealth countries like Pakistan and Kenya where ICJ will pursue the argument. It is interesting also as ICJ was instrumental in convening a closed-door session with the Indian supreme court judges where the judicial elements could be discussed peer-to-peer. And finally it is interesting as another INGO, ILGA, had worked for decades to decriminalize homosexuality. ICJ and ILGA complemented each other rather than overlapped.

It is also interesting that the India Supreme Court relied on several occasions on the Yogyakarta Principles, which were drafted by ICJ and ISHR, and thus have become a kind of 'soft law' which contributes to the development of 'opinio juris'.

More recently, the ICJ through its intensive advocacy work before the UN (together with other human rights groups), contributed to establishment by the Human Rights Council of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Republic of Venezuela adopted on 27 September 2019. The Independent International Fact-Finding mission is established for a period of one year to investigate extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment since 2014 with a view to ensuring full accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims. This is another successful example of the ICJ's proven effective advocacy work, and engagement with different stakeholders at the international level to bring change in the pursuit of accountability for gross human rights violations.

### **Efficiency and sustainability**

ICJ's capacity building is focused on the legal communities in countries/regions and is undertaken by various means including context tailored workshops, mentorship programs, following HRC sessions, preparation of practitioners' guides, peer-to-peer dialogue etc. The practitioners' guides are reportedly used extensively, even years after their publication.

ICJ works in partnerships with civil society actors, either in coalitions or with single CSOs which is key for national ownership and works with national judiciaries and key stakeholders. ICJ is committed to a long-term presence in the countries and the decentralized organizational model is helpful to foster ongoing dialogue and networking. ICJ Commissioners can be important in this respect too.

## **Observations, lessons learnt and recommendations**

The flexibility shown by Finland has been important for increasing effectiveness and results. It allowed ICJ to shift resources to a country (Eswatini) where there was an opportunity for impact. The merits of project support versus core support are a relevant discussion.

In many countries, it may be an achievement to avoid further undermining of the rule of law and adherence to international standards. Overall objectives and outcomes should reflect this harsh reality.

The work undertaken by ICJ is complex, long-term and does not follow a linear pattern. Whereas outputs can be planned it is much more uncertain if outcomes can be planned and captured well in a results framework, the more so impact, within a 26 months project period. Impact may be achieved when the context provides an opening, refer the India and Eswatini cases.

Ensuring women's rights and mainstreaming gender into the work must take into account that women's grievances are sometimes outside the system and needs to be acknowledged before they can be addressed.

Capacity building may bring unintended and undesirable results if the HR offenders are capacitated alongside HRDs. This calls for careful contextual analysis and adaptation.

## Annex 4 INGO 4: International Disability Alliance (IDA)

### Background

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) is an Alliance of 14 global and regional organizations of persons with disabilities. IDA advocates at the United Nations for a more inclusive global environment for everyone. The key objectives of IDA are: i) The upholding of the highest UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) standards in jurisprudence of international human rights instruments, and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in these mechanisms; ii) The inclusion of persons with disabilities in international development frameworks in line with the principles and provisions of the UN CRPD. iii) The development of international stakeholders' capacity to support national stakeholders in the ratification, implementation and monitoring the UN CRPD.

The most recent project support from Finland has the title "Making the most of the SDG to ensure the realisation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities." The expected outcome of the project is: "Early implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda contributes to substantive inclusion of rights of persons with disabilities in UN Development Group agencies work - with attention to women and most marginalized groups - in accordance with the CRPD."

While IDA's main mandate is not to work at the national level but rather to advocate for inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities at UN and global level as well as providing capacity building trainings for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, IDA is increasingly developing operations at the national and local level. This has been implemented either directly or through our members, or members of our members. IDA provides technical support, training initiatives, advocacy programs and campaigns, as well as watchdog role.

### Relevance to Finland's development priorities and the target group's needs

IDA's advocacy benefits the policy goals of the Finnish MFA. In general, it supports the fulfilment of the rights of groups in vulnerable situations and PWDs, which are explicitly mentioned in Finland's development policy - particularly with reference to the UNHCR and the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). Likewise, the Finnish Guidance Note to a Human Rights Based Approach refers to PWDs: The PANT (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Transparency) principles that are promoted are Non-discrimination and Participation (towards the CRPD and national forums discussion the CRPD) and non-discrimination (of PWDs, women). There are also dimensions of accountability in the sense that the preparation of the shadow reports in the different countries has as purpose to ensure improved data and information on how the Governments implement the CRPD as well as the 2030 Agenda. Having said that, it is clear that IDA activities respond to partner needs – if translated into national level action. In fact, the potential impact of changes in policies and practices at national level holds the potential to be more relevant for DPOs and PWDs' rights and needs than focused, local projects.

The objectives and the indicators include gender specific targets. In addition, specific Finnish support has been provided to indigenous women with disabilities. Notwithstanding, a recent SIDA evaluation indicated a need to "strengthen the gender component". The strategy from IDA has been 1) mainstreaming of disability to engage within the work of UN Women through collaboration with UN Women headquarters and 2) strengthening the leadership of women with disabilities to engage with the women's rights agenda. IDA has, as will be further explained in section 4, not been as successful as expected regarding 1) but doors were opened with specific UN Women departments and regional offices. Regarding 2) a relevant strategy is to strengthen the disability approach by encouraging regional coalitions of women with disabilities to anchor this work more. A recent example has been the engagement of a delegation of African women with disabilities at the regional consultation on the Beijing+25 agenda in Addis Ababa where women activists

had to campaign to even enter the conference organized in an inaccessible venue. Norad and DFID likewise contribute to this work.

The Permanent mission of Finland in Geneva has been particularly active around advocacy towards the implementation on the CRPD Article 11 on humanitarian action, including several actions on this (e.g. the Charter on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, among others). This may be an issue where IDA and Finland could collaborate further. IDA characterizes Finland's support in Geneva as "extremely useful" including through the States' Group of Friends. Finland has joined IDA in organization of many side events in both the UN system in New York and Geneva. In Helsinki, Finland hosted the Global Action on Disability network meeting in 2018. There is not information of Embassies supporting DPOs in the field.

### **Effectiveness regarding capacity and advocacy**

The Programme's main outcome focuses on monitoring of the Agenda 2030 and how to make sure that the rights of persons with disabilities are reflected in the UN priorities. Specific goals have been formulated regarding having i) UN flagship programmes that have references to women with disabilities; ii) to achieve that UN Country Teams indicate that disaggregated data by disability, has been adequately used to inform the country analysis stage. iii) Two UNDP global report or official regional SDG reports address specifically inequalities faced by persons with disabilities The underlying outputs include support to Disability Organizations at national level and how they can be involved in preparing input for the review of the CRPD, hereby maintain a strong voice regarding persons with disabilities' rights in a UN forum. In general, progress has been satisfactory as is further presented in section 4 below.

In fact, IDA would state that progress has largely exceeded expectations when it comes to changing the UN system. When doing advocacy IDA needs to constantly adapt to evolutions of our interlocutors. One of the ground breaking successes of 2019 with the UN has been the adoption and launch of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy which will lead to 360 degree review of how the UN includes and responds to the rights of persons with disabilities.

IDA's overall capacity to carry out its functions is assessed to be good – although in 2019 there are several vacant positions (including a Senior Advocacy Manager and less senior positions); an issue that was the result of the slow and complex processes to secure work permits in Geneva. IDA expects to mitigate this during the beginning of 2020. This capacity is constantly challenged by the fast growth of demands towards DPOs and towards IDA in particular, by new opportunities emerging from successful advocacy, and IDA cannot always hire as fast as required to meet these demands.

Advocacy cuts across all activities of IDA in link with the mandate. The capacity for advocacy is placed within the IDA Secretariat which is based both in New York and in the advocacy unit of Geneva, with regular involvement of the Board for high-level events. Specialised staff is assigned to the task of advocacy. In New York, a human rights officer promotes the CRPD in her work on UN General Assembly Third Committee resolutions, the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD, as well as all relevant for the mandate the UN functional committees and commissions. In Geneva, staff has been assigned to IDA's advocacy and DPOs' engagement towards the UN Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies. The executive director is responsible for coordinating the IDA Secretariat and the IDA advocacy towards the UN System. In particular, he is engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, a Senior Advisor works on the 2030 Agenda and another senior human rights advisor is responsible for advocacy towards inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in the humanitarian action – CRPD article 11. At least 1 more senior person will be recruited in NY in 2020.

The assessment from different stakeholders, including the EU Representation in the Geneva and the SIDA

evaluation from 2019 is that the IDA capacity to advocacy is high: the staff is well-connected and raises relevant topics within key events, e.g. in the Human Rights Council.

The advocacy approach includes: 1) recommending changes to policies and practices (e.g. the UN); 2) public input and recommendations; 3) cooperation with government and agencies (UN); 4) contribution to resolutions, charters and programs that are negotiated by member states in the UN or in other international fora. Press releases are being used to a lesser extent (according to the website). Informants confirmed that IDA engage directly with government stakeholders in the Human Rights Council and with UN stakeholders in New York. Other types of work which can be considered advocacy includes the work done under the programme unit which promotes and advises on mainstreaming of disability in different sectors and disability international nongovernmental organizations as well as by providing technical guidance for the policy and decision makers for the implementation of the CRPD and agenda 2030 inclusive of persons with disabilities. IDA is at present preparing a new strategy to substitute the current Strategic framework which covers 2015-2018.

### **Effectiveness in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact**

The reported results on human rights are quite comprehensive. In 2018, the reporting on the first two outputs is very explicitly referring to advocacy activities. Success factors are indirectly mentioned, indicating a long haul of capacity building of DPOs, knowing more about the CRPD and how to present evidence as main factors for success. The quality of the report is, as shown below, good in terms of explaining the results. Below the status for output, outcome and impact is mentioned.

Outputs were: Output 1 – Organizations of persons with disabilities increase their capacities to make the most of national and international SDGs and human rights monitoring processes to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities and implementation of the CRPD; Output 2 - Greater and more technical engagement of DPOs with UN system, other development agencies and national authorities in selected countries and Output 3 - Greater availability of evidence and guidance on addressing non-discrimination and inclusion of persons with disabilities in development with attention to most marginalized groups.

Regarding output 1, IDA has been instrumental in boosting significantly the capacities of organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) to engage in advocating for their rights and using international monitoring mechanisms in support to this. Regarding all three outputs, IDA has managed to produce a growing number of trained activists with disabilities from different regions. The so-called Bridge CRPD-SDGs training focuses on both the SDGs and the CRPD, which promotes an understanding of social, legal, economic rights and how to enact them through public policy reforms, development programmes, budget advocacy or accountability mechanisms. The training's purpose is to empower participants to play a role in national advocacy and become meaningful contributors to their governments. While the calendar of countries reporting before the CRPD Committee or other mechanisms does not always make it possible to establish direct linkages between training investment and use of the acquired skills, IDA and UN observers could observe a growing trend of rising quality of DPO submissions, reflecting their better understanding of the CRPD.

Likewise, in general, the documentation indicates that IDA has contributed to develop and adopt the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, to the adoption of the first-ever UN Security council resolution on the protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict, as well as the first guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action (IASC guidelines). The Bridge training has contributed to empowerment of hundreds of DPO activists, including their participation in parallel reporting on the CRPD and high-level UN meetings on the SDGs. Finland contributes to the Secretariat activities through indirect costs and to activities to all activities that are of a cross-cutting nature, e.g. ensuring rights of indigenous persons with disabilities. A recent technical workshop with indigenous persons with disabilities (IPWDs)

has planned the way forward for the development of a network dealing with issues faced by this group which is marginalized both within the disability rights and the indigenous peoples' rights movements.

In terms of **outcomes and impact**, the Review Team could interview some of those DPO activists trained by IDA in Rwanda and who had participated in presenting their points of view regarding the "list of issues" for their Government's implementation of the CRPD as well as the presentation of the alternative reports. The activists find that they had obtained new knowledge and could better structure their demands (see chapter 5).<sup>32</sup>

Interestingly, the Government in Rwanda has during 2019 prioritized inclusive education with additional budget and scholarships for persons with disabilities, as well as training of teachers. However, there is a need for closer follow-up on the implementation of the CRPD's concluding observations or guidance to national advocates to do so. Likewise, many other factors outside the Finnish support influence changes in policy, such as the Global Disability Summit Commitments, which IDA also co-hosted together with the UK Government and the Government of Kenya in 2018 and where Rwanda has made several commitments.

Furthermore, the publication of the first-ever Global Report on the Situation of Persons with Deafblindness by the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB) has been made. Early impact that can be reported includes that the report proves to be a critical instrument to: i) Build the capacity and ownership of persons with deafblindness on their own issues to engage with one common position (there was a vibrant participatory validation process of the recommendations of the report) ii) Open doors and raise unprecedented interest from stakeholders, such as WHO to discuss recognition of deafblindness as a unique disability, INGOs growing their attention to this group such as CBM who recently published guidelines on working with persons with deafblindness, etc. In addition, a report of this type contributes with new knowledge, providing a tool for the DPOs to continue evidence-based advocacy, in particular to the increase in understanding of discrimination and obstacles for one of the most marginalized groups of persons with disabilities.

The changes are mainly policy level, especially at the UN level, including the contribution to the disability inclusion review, as well as the external review of the UNDP work on disability inclusion. While changes at policy level may not lead to immediate change, they contribute to create a more conducive environment with incentives for governments to respond to these policies by reflecting them in programmes and services. In this regard, the Bridge CRPD-SDGs training empowers DPO activists to follow-up at national level and demand accountability on implementation of globally agreed policies.

Good and relevant indicators have been formulated with a clear baseline and reference to progress. At output level, IDA shows very clearly the exact contribution from IDA.

**Women/gender:** Gender is streamlined within the programme. There are indicators and target that refer explicitly to the percentage of women with disabilities and persons with disabilities from marginalized groups as trainees and facilitators in regional and national Bridge CRPD-SDGs trainings and generally across all activities, data is disaggregated by gender and disabilities. Notwithstanding, in terms of outcome and impact, the Sida evaluation states that IDA is affected by external factors: *"IDA's engagement in gender equality advocacy has not yet yielded the results hoped for, and women with disabilities continue to be marginalised and invisible in mainstream women programmes. This is both due to slow progress in some IDA member organizations and difficulties in finding inroads to UN Women and mainstream women's movements."* IDA has presented one of its cases in the material, which is presented in the main report.

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<sup>32</sup> In addition, the recent Sida evaluation has a comprehensive survey among PWDs where positive Bridge-effects are noted.

## Efficiency to promote interplay between national-international level and sustainability

The Bridge Training programme has as a deliberate intention to promote that DPOs are able to reinforce their advocacy both at national and international (CRPD and agenda 2030) level. IDA supports DPOs in preparing their shadow report to the CRPD and to the High-level political forum or regional SDG forums. The programme has as one of its targets to improve the quality of these report, which is being measured in regards to either approach, language, low quality use of diversified data, or ineffective recommendations.

Also, regarding the training, IDA mentions that *“IDA’s persistent attention towards inclusion of persons with disabilities from marginalised groups is reflected across our work, especially in the Bridge CRPD-SDGs trainings. By having a strong representation of women with disabilities and people with disabilities from marginalized groups has enriched the participation of the Bridge trainings and increased the capacity of more vulnerable populations within the IDA Membership. The commitment to ensuring marginalized groups are represented will increase the depth and reach to beneficiaries of the capacity building and advocacy activities.”* (IDA: Review 2018)

The national Bridge CRPD-SDGs training programme feeds directly into the promotion of the preparation of the shadow reports: Local /national disability activists are trained in their respective countries or regions, including in how to prepare follow-up and shadow reports on the CRPD. Once the country is being revised at the Committee for the CRPD, the leaders of the DPO – and in some cases those that have been trained – would prepare and present their shadow report in Geneva – again with accompaniment from IDA. IDA coordinates mainly with other disability organizations, first and foremost the regional forums (in Europe, Africa and Asia) as well as disability international NGOs, such as Humanity and Inclusion, Sightsavers and CBM. It is noted that IDA engages with other organizations such as the TBnet++ regarding the reform of the UN Treaty system.<sup>33</sup>

A case: Interplay between national level and international level

Increase in Quality of Submissions to UPR, Treaty Bodies/High Level Political Forum

In 2018, IDA supported at a distance the drafting of submissions to the CRPD Committee during the 19th session and 9th pre-sessional working group (14 February – 16 March, 2018) and the 20th session and 10th pre-sessional working group (27 August – 27 September, 2018). IDA supported national DPOs to participate in the work of the CRPD Committee by reviewing and supporting the drafting of alternative reports and briefing the CRPD Committee about country-specific information. Over the period January to December 2018, IDA supported DPOs from 34 countries with their submissions to the CRPD Committee, providing guidance to ensure compliance of their recommendations with the CRPD. Only 15% of them (5 out of 34) included non-appropriate language and instances of non-CRPD aligned messages, meaning that the other 85% of the reports were considered compliant with the CRPD. The CRPD Committee reviewed and adopted Concluding Observations on 14 countries. The Committee also adopted the List of Issues for 15 countries. Finally, the Committee has also initiated the 2nd cycle under the Simplified Reporting Procedure for 9 countries, adopting List of Issues Prior to Reporting. In order to prepare national DPOs for the pre-session, IDA organised national workshops in the countries to be reviewed. In June 2018, IDA organised 4 pre-session national workshops in Niger, Senegal, Rwanda and Iraq. In November and December, IDA organised 2 pre-session national workshops in Turkey and Albania. Source: IDA review report 2018.

Likewise, Bridge alumni testimonials illustrate this interplay and how activists gain knowledge and power

<sup>33</sup> TBNet (Nov 2019) Towards a strengthened UN treaty body system Civil Society Proposals

to change things at country level through the training. For example, Gaudence Mushimiyimana, Executive Secretary of UNABU, Rwanda, Dec 2, 2019 told the Review Team: *“I was supported by IDA to attend Rwanda Review sessions (CRPD) in Geneva including the preparatory session during 2019. I think IDA is a professional advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. The sessions were well organized including individual meetings with key people to influence the opinion of the committee reviewing the Rwanda report and as well as preparatory guidance. The support was more fruitful for the organization I represented in Geneva because we managed to bring on the board the issues affecting girls and women with disabilities in Rwanda whereby for almost each article of the convention the committee came up with an observation around girls and women with disabilities.”*

## Learning

The SIDA evaluation (2019) outlines a number of lessons which also seem to be relevant for the Finnish support:

- Long term core funding is a key precondition for organizations to succeed in sustained advocacy. Project funding is also welcomed but can distort priorities and negatively affect local ownership (as is well-known but still not applied by most donors). This means that IDA’s members and their constituencies cannot succeed unless they have core funding for some basic functions (e.g. advocacy, communication, strategizing and fundraising).
- Staff commitment, good connections to key decision makers and “helping” them to do a good job seem to be key components of successful advocacy, as demonstrated by IDA.

The Sida evaluation mentioned that critical self-reflection could be further enhanced if inviting external civil society observers from the wider human rights and SDG monitoring arena to comment. However, IDA states that it already engages with other CSOs. This includes the TB Net for Human Rights organizations, the IDDC and its members and the Major Groups under the 2030 Agenda.

## Conclusions and recommendation

Recent evaluations, representatives from the target group and the documentation indicate that IDA has a strong advocacy capacity (although a need for fill out vacant positions and challenged by a rapid growth of demands stimulated by its own success); produces good results and has a good contact with national DPOs, international NGOs, member states, representatives and experts from the UN system etc. Likewise, the activities are in accordance with the priorities of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

While IDA is strong on documenting results at international level (related to concluding observations), there is a need to develop monitoring of the new commitments<sup>34</sup> already made by UN, governments, and the commitments made at the Global Disability Summit.<sup>35</sup> Although this cannot be done for all countries, countries may be selected for further review. Some of the lessons learnt indicated could also serve as input for the dialogue with IDA.

Finally, the Finnish government could explore a core funding for IDA as it will increase their ability to respond and to deliver on their advocacy objectives which are in line with those of the Finnish government, with the required adaptability that has been a core component of IDA’s success to date.

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34 UNDIS was launched in June 2019 so IDA is still evaluating how to best engage to monitor outcomes. The IDA Global Survey on DPO participation in development programmes and policies is a key contribution to monitor indicator 5 of the UNDIS already and will be further strengthened and continued.

35 Hosting the secretariat of the GDS to monitor progress on commitments is something that is part of the new strategy

## Annex 4 INGO 5: International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

### Background

FIDH is a federation of 192 organizations worldwide with a ‘ground to top’ presence: its members are present in 117 countries and FIDH has representations at international fora. FIDH has a long track record for engaging multinational companies.

FIDH’s strategic plan for 2017 – 22 focuses on freedom, equality and accountability. FIDH works with decision-makers and actors who can influence decision-makers. Means are missions (fact finding, judicial), reports, legal actions and support and capacity building of civil society. This approach is translated into seven priority areas which are: i) Support to HRDs ii) A conducive environment for democracy and freedom iii) Women’s rights iv) Sexual orientation and gender identity v) Rights of migrants vi) Fighting impunity vii) Economic actors’ accountability.

In 2017-18, FIDH received project support under the ‘Fighting impunity for HR violence’ budget line with a focus on 12 countries, mainly in Asia but also in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

### Relevance of intervention

FIDH’s work relates mainly to priority areas 3 (societies have become more democratic and better functioning) and 1 (the rights and status of women) in Finland’s development policy. For a discussion about civil/political and ESC rights see main report.

The three dimensions of FIDH’s work under the project are logically interlinked: Improving the implementation of victims’ rights to truth, justice and reparation by documentation and dissemination of information; Increasing the NGOs’ capacity to use the range of HR mechanisms; Increasing the awareness about impunity issues and generating public pressure. These three dimensions link the national implementation with the international mechanisms while building national capacity to sustain the efforts.

**Myanmar: HRC creates independent mechanism to expedite prosecutions.** In 2018, the Council voted by an overwhelming majority to establish an ongoing independent mechanism to ‘collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011’ in a move that will ‘expedite fair and independent criminal proceedings’ against the perpetrators of grave human rights violations who have so far acted with impunity.

FIDH and its member organizations [ALTSEAN-Burma](#) and [Odhikar](#) have systematically advocated before the international community to ensure such accountability for this brutal and systematic onslaught against the Rohingya population, producing documentation and analysis “[No stone unturned - Q&A on accountability for crimes in Myanmar](#)” which answers the most pressing questions on accountability for crimes in Myanmar and explains the international justice mechanisms and their scope of application.

FIDH’s partnerships with its member and partner organizations are long term, the situations addressed by FIDH’s action are rarely contained to the life of a single project and FIDH is committed to follow through based on the strength of its federated structure. The progress reports reflect that this is an ongoing effort, and although there are sections about ‘impact’ and outcomes, the results are predominantly output and process oriented.

While FIDH acknowledges the serious push back by states on the HR agenda it also takes inspiration in the popular movements which have grown, and which take issue with repressive states. FIDH acknowledges

the power of the ‘economic players’ which is one of FIDH’s priority areas. Accordingly, FIDH works with multinational companies and plan to engage further with the IMF and World Bank.

FIDH apply the PANT principles consistently in their work.

### **Effectiveness in terms of capacity for advocacy**

The FIDH HQ is in Paris and there are permanent representations in New York, Brussels, Geneva and in The Hague. Further there are regional offices, joint offices and representations in Tunisia, Taiwan, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali and Central African Republic. HQ staff number around 45 and in total FIDH has around 90 staff, interns and employees of joint offices with member organizations. FIDH also engage lawyers on a voluntary basis. FIDH does not have a department for M&E and learning, which is integrated into its Operations Department and overseen by the Deputy Director of Operations.

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An evaluation from 2016 of ‘FIDH’s globalization work aimed at empowering local Human Rights NGOs to act locally and globally’, funded by BROT, focuses on corporate HR abuses and is as such not directly compatible with the Finnish support to FIDH. Nevertheless, some observations are relevant including the ‘core strengths’ listed in the evaluation. These include: quality of work with a rigorous emphasis on evidence, fairness and impartiality; visibility and presence from the ground to the top; an active and ongoing engagement with civil society and other stakeholders; detailed knowledge and unusual wide range of technical mechanisms ; a powerful presence in Brussels; bravery in tackling difficult issues; constructive engagement. The below Uganda case is not directly related to Finland’s INGO support but is included as it has some interesting perspectives in how the private sector can be engaged and influence human rights.

**Oil exploration in Uganda and HR.** Ugandan HRDs worked to document possible impacts on human rights of two big oil exploration projects in Uganda but were consistently attacked when doing so. FIDH engagement with TOTAL gave an immediate and positive response.

The projects are driven by a consortium of three corporations, TOTAL, Tullow and CNOOC. The Tilenga Tilenga project comprises oil exploration, a crude oil processing plant, underground pipelines, and infrastructure in the Buliisa and Nwoya districts of Uganda, and the EACOP project involves the construction of an underground hydrocarbon transport pipeline through Uganda and Tanzania.

FIDH entered in contact with TOTAL to alert the group of the persistent attacks against Ugandan human rights defenders following their involvement in the documentation and alert on the impacts of the project. Following the initial exchanges with the group, TOTAL immediately responded to condemn such attacks, convey their concern to the authorities of Uganda and even offered to provide security to the defenders.

FIDH and TOTAL are now looking at setting-up a discussion with the concerned defenders in Uganda, to hear their concerns and discuss modalities to best address them, as part of a more global discussion on the human rights impact of the project. This will be set-up in the early months of 2020.

FIDH has set-up a methodology which gives ownership to affected communities to assess and document the potential human rights impacts that investment projects may generate on human rights and the environment. The step-by-step methodology guides communities and NGOs to measure the actual or potential human rights impact of an investment project and enables the drafting of a final report and recommendations which can serve as a basis for engagement with public and private actors involved in the investment project. This methodology has been developed in Brazil, South Africa, Colombia, and is under way in Uganda and Armenia.

This approach is complementary to that of legislative initiatives to provide a legal framework around the work of HRDs, as set up by some NGOs. The dialogue with TOTAL is also complementary to the judicial avenues that other NGOs are pursuing. At least an avenue which may provide immediate and informed decisions by the group

The below case from Colombia is related to Finland's support and exemplifies the long-term nature of an engagement to follow through on court cases.

**Chiquita in Columbia, crimes against humanity.** Another example of FIDH's work with multinational companies was FIDH's investigation of the responsibility of executives of the multinational Company Chiquita Brands for crimes against humanity through their financing of paramilitary groups during the internal armed conflict in Colombia between November 2000 and (at least) February 2004. This intervention was supported by funding from Finland.

In September 2018 the Attorney General of Colombia decided to indict 15 employees from Chiquita using both FIDH arguments on the existence of a contribution to crimes against humanity and the evidence FIDH had provided.

The accused appealed the decision, and in September 2019 an appeal decision confirmed the call to trial against 10 former directors of the Colombian subsidiary of the multinational fruit company. However, the accusation against two members of Banacol and a former US director of the banana company was revoked. The appeal decision not only left the accusatory document firm but confirmed that it is a crime against humanity. This illustrates if anything the need for long-term engagement.

## Results and effectiveness in terms of impact

The results promised in the application to Finland are concise and include for example six reports or position papers, 15 advocacy actions, 3-5 roundtables on transitional justice, enforced disappearances, death penalty and workshops/outreach events/creation of communication tools. The progress reports are in a

similar manner quite concise, first outlining the action taken and later ‘results and impact’. Reference is made to discussion in main report about impact and the new DAC criteria.

Cases illustrating results of FIDH’s work:

**Ukraine case, sexual crimes:** The findings of the confidential Article 15 communication on conflict-related sexual crimes committed in Eastern Ukraine submitted to the ICC Office of the Prosecutor in September 2018 were specifically echoed in the annual report of the Office of the Prosecutor on preliminary examinations published in December 2018. More than 60 newspaper articles, mainly in Ukraine, were published, and several interviews with TV (Current Time) and radio (Deutsche Welle) were done after the presentation of the findings in The Hague in September 2018.

**Chile and the expulsion of native (indigenous) communities.** The Inter-American Court of Human Rights landmark decision of 2014, which recognized the illegality of criminalizing Mapuche communities protecting ancestral land, was only a first step in rooting-out the human rights violations suffered by the Mapuche in Chile. Indeed, violations continued and a legal battle was thus furthered. In 2017 and 2018, FIDH observed the trial of the “Machi” Francisca Linconao, a spiritual leader and human rights defender of her community, who was accused of leading terrorist activities that would have contributed to the assassination of two individuals and advocated for her acquittal. In June 2018, “Machi” Linconao was acquitted, however, three other members of the Mapuche community, were condemned, two of them to life imprisonment, under the anti-terrorism law. Meanwhile and as the IACHR ruling remained ignored by the Chilean authorities, FIDH together with two other lawyers represented five victims before the Supreme Court of Chile, to challenge the government non-compliance with the IACHR ruling. In May 2019, the Supreme Court ruled in support of FIDH, overturning the conviction under “terrorism” charges of Mapuches, and demanding guarantees to avoid further discrimination.

## Efficiency and sustainability

FIDH entertain a long-term commitment and engage with the members of the federation as well as with other national and regional partners.

Under its advocacy strategy, FIDH builds the capacity of its members and partners primarily through bridging the gap between local civil society and regional and international mechanisms, facilitating access to interlocutors and undertaking joint advocacy meetings.

Across all of its work, FIDH implements a range of capacity-building activities, including joint actions, training, and provision of urgent and material assistance to defenders and NGOs at risk. FIDH is supported by a wide range of donors and has as such a diverse funding base.

## Observations, lessons learnt and recommendations

FIDH is a strong organization with a global outreach building on the federal structure and providing a ground to top presence. FIDH has a long track record for engaging with multinational companies and the Uganda cases cited above indicate that multinational companies are willing to work for human rights and can likely influence authorities significantly because of their financial importance.

M&E is integrated in the operations department, and it is beyond the scope of this review to determine if this is the most effective way.

## Annex 4 INGO 6: ILGA World - International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

### Background

ILGA World<sup>36</sup> is an umbrella organization representing 1,614 member organizations from 158 countries and territories (2019). Full membership is open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex non-profit organizations, while associate membership is open to any other association. Its mission includes to act as a leading organization and a global voice for the rights of those who face discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression and sex characteristics.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland has supported two projects during the review period. The most recent project is carried out from 2018-2020. The project name is “*Empowering LGBTI Human Rights Defenders in Global South to Advocate Effectively at the UN and National Levels Against Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics*”. The project addresses 2 cross cutting objectives: 1. Elimination of discrimination and 2. Greater openness and inclusion. Outcomes included developing the regional chapters of ILGA in the Global South (Pan Africa ILGA, ILGA Asia, ILGA LAC and, to a small degree, ILGA Oceania). Some of the activities to reach this objective include: (i) the setting up of offices to organise regional conferences; (ii) ensuring that progress is made towards the universal decriminalisation of homosexuality; and (iii) supporting the participation of local LGBTI organization to the UPR process, and coordination of advocacy strategies aimed at regional institutions and human rights mechanisms (such as the African Commission for Peoples’ and Human Rights, the Inter American Human Rights Court).

### Relevance

ILGA activities benefit the policy goals of the Finnish MFA, since it supports “equality and non-discrimination”. The MFA makes explicit reference to all being entitled to their rights no matter their kind of “sexual orientation and gender identity”.<sup>37</sup> The support to ILGA since 2013 has been provided with the heading ‘Human Rights, Democracy and Empowerment’, which focuses on the creation of four ILGA regional offices in the Global South. The initial support has promoted the Cross-cutting objectives ‘Elimination of discrimination’ and ‘Greater openness and inclusion’ of the Human Rights Action Plan 2013-2015 of the MFA of Finland, including actions like strengthening “*international acceptance for the interpretation that the concept of discrimination includes discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and promotes efforts to define objectives for realising the rights of transgender and intersex people*”. The project activities includes, apart from non-discrimination, elements of promotion of participation of rights-holders in the decision-making process in accordance with a human rights based approach.

ILGA World has been very happy with the support from Finland, the dialogue about the support and Finland’s active, global role in promoting the rights of LGBTI communities. However, ILGA believes that Finland does not necessarily have to play a bigger role in directly influencing Global South states in complying with LGBTI human rights, since this might be considered a “Western influence” but continue to empower local and regional civil society stakeholders and voices.

<sup>36</sup> Note that after a decision of the membership at the World Conference in Wellington, New Zealand, in March 2019, ILGA’s name was changed to “ILGA World”. ILGA World is the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

<sup>37</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs: HRBA in Finland’s Development Cooperation, 2015. p18.

## Effectiveness regarding capacity and advocacy

ILGA has human rights advocacy as part of its overall strategy. A key element is participating in UN forums as follows: (1) giving visibility to and raising support for LGBTI issues globally by conducting advocacy and outreach at the Human Rights Council (HRC). (2) supporting ILGA members work with their government on improving LGBTI human rights in the country within the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), including coordination, providing specific inputs in reaching out and supporting members in making submissions and following up on states recommendations. This activity is also accompanied by workshops aiming to train local activists on how to engage with the UN system. (3) providing support and guidance to NGOs engaging with the TB, working to ensure LGBTI persons and their human rights are taken into account and protected.

Apart from participating in UN forums, advocacy strategies include: providing advocacy tools, information and guidance on lobbying at the UN. Some of the publications are commented by OHCHR below. In addition, capacity building and training with a strong advocacy component to regional LGBTI communities and finally, support to advocacy at national level. ILGA promotes changes in the laws in the countries that criminalize, persecute and/or discriminate against LGBTI people is through the engagement of local LGBTI organizations and activists in the UPR process.

OHCHR considers ILGA documentation as “key references” and “instrumental in mobilizing CSOs worldwide” on LGBTI peoples’ rights.

During the review, the human rights officer at OHCHR supporting the Independent Expert of the SOGI was requested to comment on the advocacy capacity of ILGA. Below some of the comments are presented.

“ILGA organized and participated in HRC-related meetings representing the voice of LGBTI CSOs. More specifically, ILGA was instrumental in the context of the creation and the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on SOGI. In addition, ILGA made regular statements related to the human rights of LGBTI persons at the HRC, including during the interactive dialogues with the Independent Expert on SOGI and in the context of the creation of the mandate.

ILGA also provides information to stakeholders (e.g. Publication by ILGA of its State-Sponsored Homophobia Report and its related World Map on LGB Rights, and its State Sponsored Transphobia Report) The reports are extremely relevant and useful. The Independent Expert on SOGI often refers to data provided in ILGA’s reports in his thematic reports and recommend ILGA’s resources to other stakeholders. ILGA’s reports on State-Sponsored Homophobia, on Transphobia and publications related to international human rights mechanisms’ jurisprudence have become key references, documenting progress and discrimination.

ILGA has been very active in the promotion of the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Equity. In fact, ILGA has been instrumental in mobilizing CSOs from around the world, bringing human rights issues pertaining to LGBTI people to the attention of delegations, mobilizing Permanent Missions, allies, and others for both the creation and the renewal of the mandate.”

ILGA World has its HQ and Secretariat in Geneva and 11 full-time staff of which half are dedicated exclusively to advocacy purposes. According to other stakeholders, ILGA World has a strong advocacy capacity and engage with many other network when relevant. A representative from the EU Representation in the EU highlights ILGA’s technical capacity when carrying out advocacy.

## Effectiveness in terms of impact

**The strengthening of the regional communities** provides a platform for increased visibility, advocacy, awareness raising and push on lawmakers and public opinion to gradually be less discriminatory and

open towards LGBTI. ILGA World in Geneva would serve as a space for bringing different regional community leaders together and learn regarding best practices for how to do advocacy. ILGA World in Geneva facilitates exchange rather than being a hub that submits information between regions. As for the **decriminalization process**, it is almost impossible to identify the exact impact from ILGA, since changes in legislation and customs are also a result of globalization of information, work of other local and International NGOs, general changes and trends. However, ILGA has been providing a centre piece of knowledge building in the global decriminalization efforts through its State Sponsored Homophobia Report and putting the decriminalization on the agenda of the global human rights arena. In a total of 74 countries, same-sex sexual contact was a criminal offence in 2016 while in 2019, the number is 67, with a steady decline since 1969.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, key informants, like the EU Representation in Geneva, confirms that ILGA contributed well to work with the resolution, promoting a greater understanding on LGBTI-topics. It is mentioned that despite a considerable division in the Human Rights Council, ILGA has gradually promoted more information and knowledge on SOGI.

UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) about the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – ILGA.

The Review Team interviewed Victor Madrigal Borloz, the UN Independent Expert on protection from violence and discrimination based on SOGI, on December 18, 2019. Regarding the support to the regional chapters of ILGA, he said that: *“Support is essential for three reasons: it allows the community to work with more specific topics and to generate important regional consensus for advocacy. Secondly, regional structures help generating links and solidarity mechanisms among those organizations. Thirdly, regional structures provide inputs for global/international advocacy thereby ensuring true cultural and geographic balance and participation in the construction of the global overview. For example, ILGA organises that I can meet the regional structures. I use their contributions as input from civil society to prepare my reports. Three to four meetings with these structures has the same value to me as 1-2 months’ worth work, as I get comprehensive information.”* As regards to ILGA’s work in general, Madrigal reaffirms that ILGA has products that are recognized at an international level, as the State-Sponsored Homophobia Report and its related map, which enjoys a very high credibility. On the other hand, ILGA prepares very important research products.

Regarding the renewal of SOGI’s Independent Expert mandate, Madrigal indicated that that *“ILGA had a huge convening power: At that time, 1.324 organizations from 174 countries moved to renew the mandate –a mandate that has been controversial and with many countries against it. Its added value is very important. It goes deep into its grassroot organizations and has therefore the knowhow about the relevant topics.”*

**Going beyond** the Finnish support, ILGA highlights key examples where international advocacy have been used at national level. In India, the recommendations from the UPR are considered to have been used by national stakeholders to promote the decriminalization of sexual activity between people of the same gender. Since 2018, sexual activity between people of the same gender is legal, This year the Supreme Court of India decriminalized homosexuality by declaring Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code unconstitutional in respect of consensual homosexual sex between adults. The ruling followed decades of struggle by activists, lawyers, CSOs, including members of LGBTI communities in Asia connected to ILGA. The

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<sup>38</sup> [https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2019/october/20191007\\_criminalization-same-sex-sexual-relationships-decreasing](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2019/october/20191007_criminalization-same-sex-sexual-relationships-decreasing)

court's decision also has significance internationally, as the Indian law served as a template for similar laws throughout much of the former British Empire.<sup>39</sup>

Progress has also been made in recent years in Fiji. National and international activities have coincided to push for decriminalization of same-gender sex. In 2013, a new Constitution was promulgated in September 2013 and includes a provision banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. In addition, as mentioned, several of the countries in Southern Africa (part of the Commonwealth) have been inspired by the discussions in India, which in some cases have benefitted the progress in these countries. The changes require long-term advocacy processes - with "ups and downs".

### **Efficiency and sustainability**

ILGA's capacity building activities promote that LGBTI HRDs, in particular from the countries most isolated and affected by discrimination are able to represent themselves at all levels. In addition, ILGA supports, trains, and guides LGBTI organizations and its HRDs in participating actively and effectively in the entire processes related to HRC, UPR, TB and SP. The creation of four regional offices in the Global South is already further promoting, sustaining and benefiting the representation of groups in vulnerable situations, particularly in countries where the situation of LGBTI in terms of security and discrimination is worrying and where LGBTI HRDs suffer from isolation and lack of social security networks. ILGA's strategy is to strengthen its presence and activities in the global South, to engage with local and international public opinion on the work and the situation of LGBTI HRDs and strengthen regional networks (formal/informal) for their protection.

ILGA promotes the interplay between local, national, regional and international levels. ILGA's capacity building activities feed directly into the promotion of the preparation of the different interventions to be presented before UN human rights protection mechanisms. This is the case with "shadow reports", where national LGBTI HRDs are trained, including in how to prepare, present and follow-up on them. For example, during 2018, within the project, ILGA engaged with the work of seven Treaty Bodies (TB), supported 56 submission at TBs, trained 15 HRDs in Geneva on TBs, of which 11 HRDs were funded by the program that allowed them to attend TB sessions in Geneva. TBs could include the CEDAW Committee or Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

As for the UPR, once the country is being examined at the HRC, the representatives of LGBTI organizations – and in some cases those that have been trained – would prepare and present their "shadow report" in Geneva – again with accompaniment from ILGA. With the creation of the regional offices this dimension has been strengthened and will be consolidated even more. Strong regional offices will benefit ILGA in general, but in particular local LGBTI HRDs, who will have a strong ally in the region that is monitoring, supporting, protecting and assisting them. The regional offices ensure that the particularities of the regions and countries are taken to account when designing policies, projects and interventions at decision-making level.

To ensure sustainability it will be important to continue to diversify the funding of the regional and international activities.

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<sup>39</sup> This example from India, where ILGA indicates that international inputs have been used at national level is an example where several stakeholders contribute. For example, among the 9 INGOs supported by Finland, ICJ would have been working directly on this issue (see ICJ and <https://www.icj.org/india-upr-outcome2017/>)

## Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations

The Projects carried out by ILGA are fully in line with Finnish MFA priorities. They are covering a very important area of MFA priorities, namely all being entitled to their rights no matter their sexual orientation and gender identity. ILGA is a key stakeholder for human rights advocacy; it is a structure with a comprehensive connection to local, national and regional organizations. It also has a very high credibility in terms of presentation of products and research relevant for the duty-bearers and the public debate in general.

The documentation and interviews indicate a high capacity to carry out advocacy. Likewise, examples have been presented regarding the products and the outcomes of the advocacy. It is not possible to identify the exact impact of ILGA's work to e.g. decriminalization at national level. However, stakeholders indicate that ILGA's work inspire the national processes on this issue. Some lessons include:

- The importance of respecting that regional, national and local LGBTI communities carry out the advocacy at national level. The international stakeholders can inspire national processes, but should consider whether and how to participate in such work.
- The importance of facilitating a space between regions to share advocacy experiences.
- Recognising that there will be steps forward and steps back and that impact should be seen in a 10-20 years perspective.

It is recommended that, in the future, some of those cases where the international advocacy has inspired national processes are furthered documented so that they can feed into ILGA's planning.

## Annex 4 INGO 7: International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

### Background

ISHR is the ‘go-to’ organization for civil society actors to engage with the UN system. ISHR is the secretariat for HRCnet, a coalition of 14 leading, national, regional and international civil society organizations. ISHR’s goals are i) to support HR defenders to use international and regional HR standards, ii) to strengthen these same standards by making them more accessible, effective and protective for HR defenders and iii) to advocate for national implementation of HR standards and an enabling environment.

ISHR prioritize support to HR defenders who work to promote equality and combat discrimination (women HRDs, LBBTI, migrants/refugees); promote democratic rights and good governance (restrictive environments, civil society space); promote ESC rights (corporate accountability, sustainable development). ISHR got funding under ‘Support for Human Rights defenders’ with the theme ‘Securing an enabling environment’. The support is core support and has a global outreach, mainly addressing needs in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The outcomes are around capacity building of HRDs, legal work and advocacy, monitoring and reporting and support for national implementation.

### Relevance of the intervention

ISHR’s work relate mainly to priority area 3 (societies have become more democratic and better functioning) and priority area 1 (the rights and status of women) in Finland’s development policy. An external evaluation from 2017, commissioned by ISHR to assess a project funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway, concludes that ‘there was virtually unanimous agreement among interlocutors that ISHR’s strategy and program are relevant to the needs of human rights defenders.’ The scope of the Norwegian grant is comparable to the Finnish grant.

Finland’s Presidency of the EU included tabling an ‘Agenda for Action on Business and Human Rights’ on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 as the outcome document of a conference held in Brussels. The basic rationale is that the private sector is crucial to deliver on the SDGs, that the private sector needs predictability and the rule of law and that the private sector has an important role in implementing, promoting and protecting human rights. ISHR provided informal advice which contributed to the §23 text in the outcome document.

§ 23. Human rights defenders can have a key role in advocacy on the state duty to protect, the corporate responsibility to respect and the need for access to effective remedy and in enabling private sector actors to understand the concerns of affected stakeholders, including in fragile contexts. Building on the EU’s broader commitments to protect and promote the work of human rights defenders, stakeholders should be consulted on where increased financial, political and moral support can be provided to human rights defenders working to address adverse business-related human rights impacts. In this context, specific risks and challenges facing women, and indigenous peoples as well as environmental human rights defenders should be considered.

ISHR’s perspective on civil/political rights versus ESC right is that HRDs need enabling rights (civil rights) to be able promote ESC rights within health, education, housing etc. ISHR strives to link EU advocacy with their work with the UN system as the EU and individual member states play an important role, notably at the HRC. The dialogue with the EU system is often via networks such as the Human Rights and Democracy Network and include the Commission’s bilateral HR dialogues, trade policy decisions and situations of concern.

ISHR lobbied States ahead of the Universal Periodic Review of Saudi Arabia which led to specific recommendations calling for the release of detained women HRDs and lobbied States during the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Council. This resulted in the first-ever joint statement on Saudi Arabia. Shortly after the statement, 7 out of the 10 WHRDs named appeared in court after 10 months of detention without a charge. 6 were subsequently provisionally released.

In March 2019, ISHR lobbied member States of the Council, which led to Australia delivering a joint statement with 24 States calling on the Saudi government to ensure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders, including women HRDs.

ISHR cooperates with a number of organizations about Saudi Arabia including Free Saudi Women Coalition, the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, MENA Women HRDs, MENA Rights Group, CIVICUS +.

The Saudi case is interesting in perspective of the relevance of working with the HRC, which is often criticized because of its membership (the inclusion of states with dismal HR track records) and question marks about the (lack of) implementation of HRC statements. The case shows that HRC is a platform which can bring results and it has in ISHR's perspective become more accessible for civil society. The ISHR annual report 2018 mentions that 90% of ISHR recommendations to UPR were taken up (by an average of 6 states). ISHR is actively trying to influence HRC's membership policy to enhance the credibility of the Council and has for example run a 'BurundiOut' campaign in 2017 / 18.

ISHR apply the PANT principles consistently in their work.

### **Effectiveness in terms of capacity for advocacy.**

ISHR has a long track record of providing training and capacity building, conducting research and policy advocacy, making strategic interventions, providing technical advice and implementation support and building coalitions. ISHR has 20 staff in Geneva, 3 in New York, 1 in Abidjan and remote coverage of Brussels and London. This capacity is complemented by internships and by cooperating with pro bono lawyers. ISHR has taken on board a recommendation about not overstressing and planning staffs time 100% but allowing space for urgent matters which will occur in the course of the year. The above number of staff is also an increase of 3-4 staff which has eased work pressure.

Further, ISHR working method is to work with partners and build national coalitions to ensure local ownership and capacity. Being the secretariat for the HRCnet bears witness to ISHR's central position and reputation for being the bridge between the international and national (grassroot) level. ISHR provides strategic advice and support for HRDs and civil society to engage with the HRC and with the UPR processes. One example is that ISHR worked with both local and international NGOs to successfully push the UN HRC to address the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Burundi and prevent further atrocities. This led to the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry on Burundi through resolution 33/24 of 30 September 2016.

ISHR's training programs, including its flagship Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Program (HRDAP), are seen by all interlocutors as an integral component of its overall support for HRDs and as a highly relevant aspect of its work. In ISHR's theory of change, human rights defenders are central to the change that is being sought. The vast majority of its activities and intervention strategies, from trainings, advocacy accompaniment, policy development and strategic advocacy, to building and coordinating coalitions, are directly and logically linked to strengthening the capacity of human rights defenders so that they can effect change at the international, regional, and most importantly the national level.

The 2018-19 report highlight the launch of an on-line platform for training, which will be amended after a test period and which will expand the outreach considerably. <https://academy.ishr.ch/> The reporting

from ISHR is thorough and precise with clear performance indicators and means of verification given, qualitative or quantitative. There seems to be a sound culture for learning and evaluation practices, with ‘real-time’ and ‘near-time’ evaluation praised in one evaluation. The annual reports include relevant HR developments and ISHR contributions to these. Unintended impact has not been noted in the documents scrutinized but is according to ISHR reported to donors when specifically questioned about it.

### Results and effectiveness in terms of impact

The available evaluations are very positive in their assessment of ISHR’s work and sees ISHR as an effective and influential organization which is strengthening the work of human rights defenders by providing training, capacity-building, collaborative advocacy initiatives, and access to international and regional (especially in Africa) mechanisms and policymakers. The Model Law stand out as an outstanding example of how international commitments can be translated and contextualized into impact at the national level.

**Model law case.** ISHR launched in 2016 a Model National Law on the Recognition and Protection of HR defenders. The model law was developed to guide states who wanted to implement the UN Declaration on HR Defenders towards best practice and was developed in consultation with over 500 defenders from every region and subsequently adopted by leading HR jurists. A law for the protection of HRDs was first developed and adopted in the Ivory Coast and later in Burkina Faso (2017) and Mali (2018), while a range of countries in Africa and Asia are in the process of developing their national policy framework, taking inspiration from the model law, which must be contextually adopted.

Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders commented on ISHR’s Model Law initiative: “This process has a great deal of momentum, and is generating progress in many countries (...) ISHR has helped change the debate at national level’.

It is ISHR assessment that the model law is ‘a’ model and not ‘the’ model and that the engagement of civil society and other stakeholders are crucial to ensure that any law developed for the protection of HRDs based on the model law is effective and protective. The model law provides an important framework for HRDs and the government to utilize in developing a national instrument.

As cited above ISHR reports on results in the progress report in a comprehensive manner. Two significant cases are the below:

**LGBTI case.** ISHR played a leading role in bringing about the June 2016 HRC resolution that created the position of Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). This resolution, and the November 2016 appointment of Vitit Muntarbhorn as the first ever mandate holder, was a direct response to civil society’s calls for the UN to do more to address the violence and discrimination faced by LGBT people. In June 2016 when hostile amendments were introduced to the HRC resolution establishing the mandate of the Independent Expert, ISHR in collaboration with ILGA, coordinated a joint civil society response by an informal coalition of NGOs across the globe. Only months later, in December 2016, when hostile governments introduced amendments to a resolution at the General Assembly that would have halted the work of the recently appointment independent expert indefinitely, ISHR along with Outright International, coordinated a joint civil society response by an informal coalition of NGOs across the globe that – once again – successfully led to the amendment being defeated. 870 organizations from 157 countries signed an open letter calling on governments to ensure that the Independent Expert could continue his work.

**China case.** One of the few country-specific programme ISHR manages focuses on support to human rights defenders working in, and in respect of, the People’s Republic of China. In 18 months, ISHR’s advocacy has been integral in obtaining clear statements from the UN Special Procedures, and in leveraging these legal analyses to encourage state action to hold China accountable on a variety of issues. With the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders and The Rights Practice, among others, ISHR initiated a complaint to the Special Procedures about provisions of the Criminal Procedure Law allowing the use of incommunicado detention (‘residential surveillance in a designated location’). The subsequent analysis of the legal provisions has informed both State positions (both Germany and Switzerland highlighted this in the 2018 UPR of China) and legal strategies of Chinese human rights lawyers. With organizations like the Tibet Advocacy Coalition and World Uyghur Congress, among others, ISHR coordinated meetings with Special Procedures experts and staff in response to the repression of fundamental freedoms and mass detention of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. . As a result, two legal analyses have been released in 2018 and 2019, addressing ‘de-extremification’ and the Chinese Counter-Terrorism Law respectively. The first of these was part of a series of interventions, culminating in a joint press release with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the World Uyghur Congress in February 2019 that urged the UN Human Rights Council to call for access, monitoring and reporting on the situation in Xinjiang

### **Efficiency and sustainability**

Ownership at national level is crucial for long-term sustainability of the interventions, and it is part of ISHR’s DNA never to work alone. ISHR has a range of thematic partners related to LGBTI, Women HRDs, restrictive environments and business & HR as well as a range of national partners. These partners are important in a sustainability perspective and equally so to ensure contextual knowledge and awareness. ‘DefendDefenders’, another INGO which is part of this review, is headquartered in Kampala, Uganda but has a small office in Geneva and is housed by ISHR. ISHR and DefendDefenders are both members of the HRCnet and coordinates their work. ISHR will normally not get involved directly in HRD related campaigns in countries covered by DefendDefenders.

ISHR’s training programs (refer above) as well as other capacity measures are very highly rated by participants and stakeholders, and the online training program launched in 2019 will enhance this further. There are statements by partners and individuals who feel that they will need the continued support of ISHR despite these efforts. This is probably to be foreseen because of the expertise generated in ISHR and their crucial role as the ‘go-to’ organization when civil society is engaging with the UN HR system. However, a distinction could be made between partners, whom ISHR work with on a continuous basis on a peer-to-peer basis and partners who are capacitated over a certain span of years before they ‘graduate’ to peer-to-peer’ partners or must be expected to work independently.

### **Observations, lessons learnt, recommendations**

ISHR receives core support from Finland. This is greatly appreciated as it allows for a more effective use of resources as ISHR’s overall strategy and ToC provides the overall guidance and coherence in activities. The work with the HRC can be a frustrating exercise because of the composition of the Council and the ensuing credibility issues this raises. Cases presented by ISHR sustain that it can bring about important results despite the (so far) lack of success in the reform process.

ISHR’s reporting in progress reports and annual reports are very accessible and combines ‘looking back’ accountability and results with ‘looking forward’ (new/amended goals) in a manner which may be inspirational for other organizations.

## Annex 4 INGO 8: Minority Rights Group International (MRG)

### Background

MRG works to secure rights for ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples around the world. MRG's core specialty is the focus on minority groups. MRG's key strategic objectives for the period 2013-2016 included 1. Counter discrimination against minorities and indigenous peoples, and ensuring they benefit equitably from development; 2. Protect the existence of communities under threat and those persecuted for their minority or indigenous identity; and 3. Strengthen the voices of minorities and indigenous peoples. In the current period these were amended to 1. Counter Religious and Ethnic Persecution: a root cause of forced migration; and 2. Promote Inclusion of Minorities and Indigenous People in Sustainable Development and Society.

MRG has received block grant funding from the MFA in 2015-2016 which funded eight programmes in 2015 and four in 2016. The funding from the MFA for the multi-donor programme had four components:

- Strengthening minority rights advocacy in Africa: Train minority rights activists on their rights and how to best claim them, provide support to make organizations stronger and more effective, support activists to bring legal challenges where violations of minority rights occur, support minority women to raise issues of intersectional discrimination.
- Awareness raising and media work in the Global South: Minority inclusion in the post-2015 agenda Ensure that marginalised minority communities can get their voices heard in the global media to draw attention to their issues and ensure they are fairly included in the post-2015 development agenda.
- Promoting human rights in conflict situations: Intervene where conflict puts minority communities at risk, give them the tools and skills to collect and report evidence of violations, raise awareness of risks of genocide and mass killings, promote innovative and inclusive approaches to reconciliation.
- Strengthening civil society organizations in the Eastern Partnership region: This programme seeks to leverage EU influence to improve respect for minority rights in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. The project focuses on capacity building, network strengthening and the push for inclusion of minorities in decision making that affects them including national and local government and development planning

MRG is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) based in UK. It has an international governing Council that meets twice a year. This Council includes members of minority and indigenous communities themselves and experts on minority and indigenous issues.

MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. MRG has worked with over 150 partners across 60 countries for more than 50 years to promote peaceful coexistence and sustainable social change. MRG has operational partnerships with inter-governmental agencies, including with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Council of Europe.

### Relevance of the intervention

MRG's advocacy benefits the policy goals of the Finnish foreign service including the cross-cutting themes. We can assume that this is also the case at the country level where Finland does have a country strategy considering that these should be in line with the Finland's national development policy and programme. For instance, Finland's Tanzania Country Strategy 2016-2019 for Tanzania has the impact is "Improved

*performance of the public sector*” whereby one of the outcome indicators is “1.2. More accountable and inclusive public policy-making” measured by two output indicators: 1.2.1 improved leadership and 1.2.2 Improved capacities of civil society to hold the government accountable. MRGs work in Tanzania directly contributes to this. In the Annual Report 2015 to the MFA, MRG reports that a capacity needs assessment was carried out in Tanzania (and some other countries) among the emerging partners, with training provided accordingly.

MRG focuses on minorities, and often ‘minorities within minorities’. Groups in vulnerable situations do benefit (indigenous peoples, LGBT, persons with disabilities). MRG has specific programmes targeting minority and indigenous activists and persons with disabilities within these communities, for example “Sida Disability Project” (2018-2020). Disability or LGBTs are not mentioned in the Annual Report 2016 to the MFA, but in the Annual Report 2016 to the MFA there is the following with regards to MRG having created a new online multi-media format for their information packs during 2015, see case box “Life at the Margins”.

Case: MRG’s online multi-media format for their information packs titled “Life at the margins: The challenges of multiple discrimination”. The thematic sub-pages include 1) Disability – case study on Dalits with disabilities in India; 2) Children and young people - case study Endorois youth in Kenya; 3) Age – photo story minority and indigenous older people; 4) Poverty and livelihoods - case study on indigenous livelihoods in the Philippines; 5) Women with case study on indigenous women in Mexico; and 6) Sexual orientation and gender identity with film: The Manu project in New Zealand.<sup>40</sup>

MRG applies the PANT principles consistently in their work. For instance, MFA and IrishAid funded “*Strengthening Minority Rights Advocacy in Africa*” programme objective aims to reduce discrimination, the related results indicator being. “Governments and regional and international bodies demonstrate increased awareness of discrimination faced by minority and indigenous communities, and commitment to making improvements”. The main focus area included political participation, and the specific objective “To empower minorities and indigenous peoples in Central and East Africa to participate in governance processes, increase their access to justice, and secure their rights to economic and social development” was about accountability and transparency.

### **Effectiveness in terms of capacity for advocacy**

MRG has approximately 40 staff out of which six are based in the Africa Sister Office and ten in European Sister Office, these persons operating from several countries. The UK based staff focus on policy, communication, and administration/finance, and project development and partnerships. There are six staff in the Legal Cases team. MRG works with minority and indigenous communities and campaigns for recognition of their rights in the following ways:

- Advocacy and lobbying governments and the United Nations alongside and on behalf of minorities and indigenous peoples
- Publishing authoritative publications that are widely valued by academics and the media
- Producing documentary films on a range of issues and countries – from Afro-Colombian miners to religious minorities in Iraq
- Pioneering legal cases work advances the protection of minorities under international law.
- Deliver projects in many countries around the world, using methods such as training, street theatre and the arts to effect social change

MRG uses a wide variety of advocacy instruments, many of which are well presented on their web-site

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<sup>40</sup> For more, see <http://stories.minorityrights.org/lifeatthemargins/>

including “Peoples Under Threat Map” and “Minority Stories”, the “Directory” providing an opportunity to explore country and regional status of minorities and indigenous peoples. Instruments include targeted actions like research, briefing papers and specialized reports, press releases and “Minority Voices Newsroom”, third party interventions, capacity building training sessions, preparing training manuals, consultations and interactions with a range of stakeholders.

An example where MRG has played an active role in a joint effort with other INGOs is described on the website whereby MRG is working closely with Anti-Slavery International and SOS-Esclaves to tackle the ongoing problem of slavery in Mauritania. An external evaluation focusing on NGOs supported by MRG to participate in this. Local-regional-global interplay can be identified in many MRG’s operations, even those that ultimately target one specific country.

In its Annual Report 2015 to MFA, the following is reported: “Partners supported attendance at EAP Civil Society Forum and other international advocacy events 15 Minority activities in total attended in total the forums and other international meetings during 2015:

- Civil Society Forum: The 2015 Annual Assembly of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum took place on 19-21 November in Kyiv- 2 participants attending the Forum;
- UN Forum on Minority Issues: EaP Minorities Network was present at 2015 UN Forum on Minority Issues, in Geneva 24-25 November. Izabella Osipova (Public Defender’s Office, Office of tolerance and non-discrimination) Georgia participated in the forum.
- OSCE HDIM: An implementing partner of the EaPMN in Armenia, Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation, represented by Armen Grigoryan, has been present at the OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, Poland. Mr Grigoryan made a statement regarding the situation of the national minorities in Armenia.

Case MRG and Sensitivities: Sensitivities are taken into account in each context of its own right, sometimes not making it public and sometimes publishing and sharing the issue. A very recent example (October 21, 2019): *“The situation of women’s and girls’ human rights in Iraq will be reviewed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its 74th session, in October 2019. The Committee will assess Iraq’s compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, that the country has ratified in 1986. Ahead of this review, MRG, the Ceasefire Center for Civilian Rights and our partner in Iraq ASUDA have submitted an alternative report focussing on the challenges faced by women and girls belonging to minority groups in Iraq, including Yezidis, Christians, Kurds, Turkmen and Shabak.”*<sup>41</sup>

## Results and effectiveness in terms of impact

The following provides examples of tangible results as reported in the Annual Report 2015 to MFA: “MRG was actively contributing to two civil society networks - the indigenous ‘major group’ and the human rights ‘caucus’ - in the negotiations leading up to the SDGs (...) “with regard to the human rights caucus, it was being coordinated out of the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) (...) CESR’s analysis of the then draft SDGs informed our own materials (for instance, they helped us identify the issue of public/private partnerships in the Addis Ababa draft text. (...) MRG continued to engage with staff at UN Women throughout the first half of 2015. We assisted by doing background country research on violence against indigenous women in three countries (Uganda, India, and Bolivia); we also prepared a concept note for the project itself, as well as drafted a budget for UN Women to use (...)”. (MRG, 2015, Annual Report to MFA).

41 Source: <https://minorityrights.org/advocacy-statements/un-committee-to-review-the-rights-of-women-and-girls-in-iraq-mrgs-submission/>

MRG has developed several results-based frameworks for multitude of donors, several sub-programmes seeking contributions from several donors. The individual log-frames and M&E plan (Results Monitoring Framework) are well documented and reported. The documentation presented in reports to MFA Finland are very clear even if it is difficult to track results by donor. The reports outline the activities undertaken, the capacity building initiatives and how these relate to the defined outputs.

MRG received 1 050 000 € from MFA over the years 2014-2016 to increase the inclusion of discriminated minorities and indigenous peoples ("Syrjittyjen vähemmistöjen ja alkuperäiskansojen osallisuuden lisääminen").

List of projects the Finnish block grant was allocated to (2015-2016)

2015

- EU EAP - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/eastern-partnership-minorities-network-eapmn-funded-eu/>
- EU Gender Somalia- Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/somalia-overcoming-multiple-discrimination-minority-women/>
- EU Iraq - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/iraq-civilian-rights/>
- EU Mauritania - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/mauritania-gender-equality-haratinés/>
- EU Minority Realities - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/europe-minority-realities-news/>
- Irish Aid Africa 2012 - Evaluation: Mid term <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Strengthening-the-Voice-of-Marginalised-Minorities-Africa-Mid-Term-Evaluation-August-2014-Final-Version.pdf>
- Irish Aid Africa 2015 - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/final-evaluation-ireland-aid-3-ia3-realizing-the-rights-of-minorities-and-indigenous-peoples-in-east-and-central-african-programme/>
- Norway MFA – Legal cases (and MENA) - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/indigenous-peoples-land-rights-tanzania-kenya-impact-strategic-litigation-legal-empowerment/>
- 2016
- EU DR Street Theatre - Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/dominican-republic-street-theatre-programme/>
- EU Thailand -Evaluation: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/thailand-empowering-thai-civil-society-organizations-representing-marginalized-communities-in-the-southern-border-provinces/>
- SIDA FoRB South Asia - Evaluation: not available only this summary: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/south-asia-protecting-promoting-freedom-religion-belief/>

### Efficiency and sustainability

MRG works in partnerships with civil society actors, similarly to most other INGOs who do depend on their country-level partners for the ownership and continued operations. How efficiently and sustainably in terms of having sustained positive changes, is challenging to assess due to multiple actors and overall dynamics, see the case box below for the case Tanzania.

**Case Influencing Change:** MRG acknowledges that influencing change in policy and practice at national level is not easy. For instance, the case of “*Indigenous peoples’ land rights in Tanzania and Kenya: the impact of strategic litigation and legal empowerment*”. MRG commissioned this external evaluation in 2017 covering the period of 15 years. One of the conclusions is (...) *The impact of strategic litigation on the national legal frameworks of Kenya and Tanzania is not straightforward. While legal empowerment of communities is undeniable, the judiciary in Kenya and Tanzania have not yet taken on board international law on indigenous peoples’ rights. The training of judges and registrars held in Tanzania shows the importance of such activities in raising the awareness of decision-makers about indigenous peoples’ rights in Africa and internationally. Litigation is part of a larger advocacy strategy aiming at making national laws consistent with indigenous peoples’ rights in international law and supporting the legal profession to work to realise these rights. (...)*” Source: <https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/indigenous-peoples-land-rights-tanzania-kenya-impact-strategic-litigation-legal-empowerment/>

## Lessons learnt

MRG works with minorities and indigenous peoples, with programmes and projects targeting women or specific “minorities within minorities”. This is highly valuable work in a complex operational environment with a number of political and socio-cultural factors to be paid attention to. The block grant from Finland has supported several programmes and activities by MRG. In this regard, the flexibility shown by Finland has been important for increasing effectiveness and results. Yet, Finland as a donor does not stand out in the publications or other sources. Does Finland wish to be more visible in supporting MRG? Likewise, it is noted that MRG welcomes the particular flexibility in the way that the organization is able to use the Finnish project funding. However, core support is very much more efficient to organizations and Finland could emulate other donors who do manage to support organizations with core funding.

## Annex 4 INGO 9: World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

### Background

The World YWCA (YWCA) is a global movement working for women's empowerment, leadership and rights in more than 110 countries. The Goal of World YWCA that was adopted in 2015 is "By 2035, 100 million young women and girls transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war; leading a sustainable YWCA movement, inclusive of all women." Three strategic priorities have been formulated and approved by the YWCA movement in 2019; i) Management and Governance Excellence toward Goal 2035, including engagement of young women leaders in the movement.; ii) Strategic Partnerships and Communication toward 2035, including with partners that share a common desire to transform power structures for gender equality; and iii) Engagement and Mobilization of Girls, Young Women and Women Toward 2035, such as safe spaces model program for leadership and advocacy.

The most recent support from Finland focuses on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Project title is "*Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights - Young Women and Girls*": Young women changing narratives around SRHR and mental health. The objective is to empower young women to transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war. The purpose of the project is to build the capacity of young women to promote the realization of Health Rights for women and girls by equipping them with skills, knowledge and confidence to seek and claim their Health Rights, both individually and collectively.

From a thematic perspective, the project more specifically looks at engaging the young women leaders in advocating around narratives on SRHR and its intersection with Mental Health, using various approaches (e.g. engaging with relevant networks, international, regional and national platforms, social media, radio, local in-person outreach etc.).

### Relevance for Finnish development priorities

YWCA's promotion of rights of women and girls is also a key priority in Finland's development policy. The current project is aligned with the Government of Finland's core commitments to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the human rights of women more broadly. The project will be implemented in regions where women are most marginalized and discriminated; focused on young women and girls belonging to groups in marginalized or vulnerable situations, such as married girls, migrants, pregnant girls, the disabled, adolescent mothers, females living with HIV, out-of-school girls, LGBT women and girls, in-school girls, victims/survivors of gender based violence and refugees. It is expected that the target group of the project "*will advocate at national, regional and international level linking the advocacy messages to Finland's human rights policy in particular where economic, social and cultural rights and non-discrimination are enhanced*".

In general, the goals of the projects are in line with the country strategic goals. The first project (before the current) was implemented in Tanzania, Myanmar, South Sudan, Mozambique and Nepal, which based on the information analysed were countries with a Finnish country strategy. The current project has three regions of focus: Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia (originally Latin America was also mentioned); each co-led by a young women regional coordinator. Across the three regions, over 20 countries joined as of Year 1 with more countries joining recently. There are four countries of focus where a wider set of activities is enabled through the support of the government of Finland: Nepal, Ethiopia, Kenya and Ukraine. YWCA has a strong contact with MFA in Helsinki, and it may be considered to promote a similar link in some of those countries where Finland has Embassies and programmes, and where Finland could benefit from the view of national YWCAs.

The projects supported by Finland has promoted PANT (Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and Transparency) principles: *The World YWCA's approach is inclusive, participatory and non-discriminatory in nature, ensuring transparency and enhancing accountability to the fulfilment of human rights on different levels*<sup>42</sup>. Participation is promoted regarding access to information and influence government decision affecting them, such as at the HRC, UPR, AU, CSW and national forums. The YWCA movement formally adopted HRBA in 2007. The principle of non-discrimination, formally adopted as a resolution for the YWCA movement in 2015, is the point of departure of the work of YWCA using for instance CEDAW, UNSCR 1325 and SDG as the framework for their advocacy.

There are dimensions of accountability in the sense that WYWCA's contributions to the preparation of shadow reports (and civil society reports for the UPR) in different countries are intended to ensure better data and information on how governments implement CEDAW and other international human rights. In addition, the process for advocacy with the shadow reports and civil society UPR reports itself contributes to greater transparency in both the data and the position of governments and the WYWCA.

### **Effectiveness regarding capacity and advocacy**

WYWCA's core activity is to advocate at regional and global level to influence policies, regulations and norms which obstruct the rights and leadership potential of women, young women and girls. In addition, local advocacy is conducted by the local, national YWCAs. Through the global work, WYWCA provide a strategic framework, capacity building, access to networks and platforms, tools, peer support, mentoring, co-creation, amplification and dissemination of advocacy campaigns or messages.

WYWCA is based in Geneva with 12 permanent staff members (including General Secretary, Lead- Global Programming and Impact and Lead- Global Engagement and Strategic Communications ) providing a range of technical assistance and capacity-building services to member associations affiliated to the global WYWCA movement.<sup>42</sup> Within the WYWCA Secretariat there is at least one specialized staff assigned to advocacy, (Leadership and Advocacy Specialist). Advocacy is considered to be both programmatic and process based and so, out of the 12, two teams, each comprising of 3 individuals work on this.

There is an intentional co-shared responsibility over the advocacy portfolio by the Lead for Global Programming and Impact and the Lead for Strategic Communications and Global Engagement as they want to make sure that strategies and tools to engage and mobilise young women and their allies through communications and through our programming work hand in hand and strengthen each other. It also ensures that they have added perspectives in having consistent advocacy messages and aligned focus for future development.

WYWCA participates regularly in different international human rights forums, such as the UN's Human Rights Council (HRC), its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) and the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Every four years member associations of the WYWCA gather together for the World Council meeting, which is the highest decision and policy-making body of the global movement of the YWCA. The 29<sup>th</sup> World Council was held in South Africa, from 17 to 22 November 2019, with the presence of more than 500 delegates and observers from different countries.

The advocacy centres on promoting women's equality and rights towards governments, UN system, other international/regional bodies and processes is carried out by WYWCA, sometimes with the support of

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.worldywca.org/about-us-2/>

national YWCA members; for example, for non-ODA countries, YWCA Australia. For CSW, each year they bring an intergenerational delegation and contribute to engage the young women navigating CSW for effective advocacy – WCA of Korea is also a very active partner organising side events on nuclear disarmament with YWCA of Japan and advocacy for peace. There are also a few young women and women leaders of the YWCA that end up being part of government delegations for CSW and they work with them to make the best use of those opportunities.

YWCA that operate in ODA countries also join the WYWCA efforts organising and getting involved in their own right not only through sending delegates to CSW but also leveraging the wider YWCA brand and network for access and building solidarity and partnerships in advocating. There is a mix of approaches whereby WYWCA either is made aware that they intend to participate and respond by providing further opportunities within a specific platform (e.g. ICPD (YWCA of Haïti or YWCA of Kenya), GIMAC AU (YWCA from the SADC region and YWCA of Ethiopia), Beijing+25 regional review (YWCA of Eastern Europe), She Decides key events (YWCA of Zambia or YWCA of Nepal) or WYWCA facilitate and carve out access and space for their engagement (ICASA, YWCA of Rwanda for example).

The advocacy approach includes mainly: 1) recommending changes to policies and practices (e.g. the UN); 2) public input and recommendations; and 3) cooperation with government and agencies (UN). At regional level, WYWCA participates at African Union summits. There have also been other examples of regional attendance of World YWCA such as Pacific triennial regional meetings or Beijing+20 regional reviews.

WYWCA presents public information on advocacy through social media, such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. In addition, articles on themes are put on the WYWCA website as well as the [shespeaksworldywca.org](http://shespeaksworldywca.org) blog. WYWCA is also in process of streamlining the publication on advocacy statements. In addition, WYWCA has internal and external newsletters; the latter is being sent to donors and partners.

Besides, WYWCA has a blog named “She Speaks”, which is an engagement platform that features contributions from young women and girls who are driving social change and transforming power structures for gender equality. WYWCA is also connected with global campaigns, such as #SheDecides as well as the “16 Days of Activism against GBV”, “Thursdays in Black” and a local “Women’s March”.

Additionally, the current project has a strong capacity building and advocacy component. Three Regional Learning and Training Institutes - one in each of the three project regions, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe - trained over 50 young women champions from 20+ countries on leadership skills, practical and solution oriented advocacy, promoting and championing human rights and on SRHR. They identified capacity gaps in legislation, policy, and administration, and holding governments accountable for their human rights obligations, and returned to their countries to become trainers for more young women to address these issues. In 2019, this first cohort of young women champions has successfully used their training of trainers to train large groups of women in a variety of communities. For example, the YWCA of Nepal alone has already carried out 7 local trainings reaching 225 young women and girls. The project will be linked and connected with the global campaign (e.g. #SheDecides).

A representative from the EU Delegation in Geneva who used to work at the Finnish representation (Geneva) highlights that WYWCA has been able to attract attention to summer Youth Forum held before the United Nations Human Rights Council (UN HRC) where the delegations learn about young women’s point of view.

### **Effectiveness in terms of output, outcomes and impact**

WYWCA together with national YWCA members carry out direct advocacy at different human rights forums (as mentioned the HRC, UPR, CEDAW Committee and CSW). According to the information received, their

advocacy mainly focused on influencing human rights' policy decisions for women, young women and girls globally, and more specifically issues, such as ending child marriage in Africa and SRHR of women. Advocacy at national level is carried out by national YWCA member associations, with the support of WYWCA where appropriate and possible.

There are also examples working with other organizations supporting joint advocacy efforts such as World YMCA/WSO/WAAGGS as a member of the Big 6, ecumenical partners such as Act Alliance, WCC, LWF (especially on CEDAW), NGO CSW forums, Femmes Afrique Solidarités around GIMAC at its inception, and more recently WYWCA is strengthening this for example with Sayfty (joint social media campaigns), Greenpeace (engaging the Y movement in Climate Justice) or Islamic Relief (Gender Justice efforts). WYWCA is also members of the International Civil Society Centre as well where interaction takes place with advocacy counterparts from both the humanitarian and development sectors.<sup>43</sup>

WYWCA must navigate the challenge of working with autonomous leaders and autonomous civil society and advocacy organizations, in very challenging contexts in the world, to prioritize reporting of advocacy impact. Based on the current project documents, it seems that these aspects have improved, since a greater emphasis to these dimensions is contemplated in the project. Also, specific cases may contribute further to document changes. In general, WYWCA has taken significant steps to tackle the issue, including engagement of experts external to YWCA, grassroots and community leaders, and young women. The current structure of the organization links the MEL of multiple projects together to the MEL of the organization, including the current project financed by Finland.

**Project 2 (current):** In the 1 Year Report of this project no results and impact regarding human rights advocacy has been reported, since the project has not reached the phase that focuses on capacity building and advocacy. The result framework of the project presents one outcome for it as follows: *Young women, of which a % are from a marginalized community, through individual and collective action, transform the narrative and impact positively on policy decisions to enhance young women's SRHR. The underlying outputs also have a strong component of advocacy, therefore when the implementation of the project reaches the relevant phase, WYWCA will report results and impact regarding human rights advocacy.*

**Project 1 (previous)** had four objectives as follows: 1. YWCAs in 5 countries (Myanmar, South Sudan, Nepal, Mozambique and Tanzania) are strengthened in their capacity to advance human rights, gender equality and security, and to deliver economic empowerment programs. 2. Young women from the 5 national YWCAs are economically empowered through vocational training that enables them to earn an income. Economically empowered young women from the 5 national YWCAs contribute to peace-building at the community, national, and global levels. 4. The project generates an increased commitment to women's economic rights in regional and global policies, especially within the Human Rights framework and the Beijing+20 review process.

One of the main results of the project was an increase in the credibility and visibility of YWCA in the 5 project countries resulting in women perceiving YWCA as a strategic ally and as a safe place (safe organization) where they could share their concerns and get support. For example, due to these factors, YWCA Tanzania received allegations of human rights violations, and they were able to utilize their relationship with government, and other support organizations, to take these cases forward. Another example is regarding YWCA Myanmar that was allocated the responsibility for collecting cases of violence against women to

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43 WYWCA also sit on a number of coalitions such as the CEFM stakeholders group led by Girls not Brides. Likewise, WYWCA is part of the UN Multi-Faith Advisory Group as well as the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. WYWCA has ECOSOC Special status. For advocacy purpose, YWCA also work with eminent alumni of the YWCA to ensure it is able to contribute to global advocacy efforts such as the UN Women current ED who was a member of the YWCA of South Africa and a former young women's coordinator at the WYWCA.

be included in the CEDAW shadow report. On the other hand, young women who were trained as trainers by YWCA South Sudan were reportedly using Smartphones as a tool to document violations to the human rights of women. This documentation was shared with the YWCA South Sudan HQ who reported these cases to relevant local authorities and used YWCA legal assistants to follow up the cases. The results of the follow-up is yet to be known.

In addition, there were reported results of the project in relation to human rights advocacy in broad terms, which is linked with the increased credibility and visibility of YWCA is that YWCA also supports women on an individual basis to challenge and address any violations of human rights. This is done by offering safe spaces for women who come to YWCA to report violations and seek assistance.

The increased interaction between the trainers of the project and women belonging to marginalized groups and rural areas, contributed to greater increased access to information about human rights obstacles faced by these groups of women.

Based on the information received, in terms of participation, the project contributed significantly to ensure the presence of WYWCA at regional and international human right forums. Based on decades of promoting and ensuring the participation of community leaders at regional and international human rights forums, while the impact can be difficult to capture, the continued invitation to YWCA leaders, especially young women leaders, is an indicator of the value. Documenting such qualitative impact is always difficult and WYWCA works to find a realistically implementable and accurate methodology.

### **Efficiency in terms of promoting national-international contact and sustainability**

The WYWCA and the two projects promote interplay between national, regional and international level. WYWCA interaction with affiliated members derives from general organization activities, such as coordination, information sharing and capacity building activities. The implementation of the two projects supported by Finland serves to strengthen the interaction mentioned above and makes WYWCA advocacy interventions more consistent, accurate and up to date. In addition, it provides the opportunity for WYWCA affiliated members with few resources to be heard within WYWCA, that their concerns are part of the WYWCA advocacy agenda and that their concerns are raised in regional and international human rights forums. This was the case, within the framework of project 1, where Myanmar YWCA was responsible for documenting cases of violence against women in the communities for inclusion in the CSW Shadow Report. There is no information on how the interaction takes place more specifically, in particular on different human rights platforms, such as the Human Rights Council, its UPR, the CSW Committee and the CEDAW Committee.

The interaction depends to a large extent on the availability of funds and resources of the members affiliated with the WYWCA. Likewise, advocacy activities at national level depend on the resources (staff, funds etc.) and capacity of the member associations affiliated to WYWCA. Another example is YWCA-YMCA of Norway where there even is an independent international committee, Y Global, that was made into a separate identity and has resources for advocacy work of the national YWCA and works with WYWCA as well on Peace & Security advocacy for example.

In general, WYWCA does not carry out advocacy activities at national level, however, members affiliated with WYWCA do so. It seems that WYWCA does not systematically collect information on what is achieved at local and national level in terms of advocacy – at least regarding the supported projects.<sup>44</sup> However, it should be mentioned that that the member survey relaunched in 2018 has aimed to collect baseline

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<sup>44</sup> For project 2, WYWCA will be collecting results through work with the regional coordinators and country leads as part of the MEL implementation.

information on the work of YWCAs around the world incl. asking them about their thematic focus, nature of their work etc. and WYWCA will have another edition in 2020 with new questions. In the 2018 survey, there is the following question: “*Have your national, affiliated local associations, regional offices and branches been actively involved in advocating for women’s rights this year?*” However, WYWCA has presented some examples of advocacy activities carried out by members affiliated with WYWCA, such as in the framework of project 1, where economically empowered young women from the 5 implementing countries contributed to the construction of peace at the community level and national, and YWCA Tanzania contributing to the national declaration for CSW and 1 representative was included in the government delegation for the 59th session of CSW. Likewise, WYWCA also collect through the newsletter process information sharing on participation advocacy events and local level advocacy. It is a start to creation of a better strategy of information exchange between national associations and the WYWCA office.

### **Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendation**

The support from WYWCA is fully in accordance with the Finnish MFA’s priorities. WYWCA has a good capacity to carry out advocacy, although it could be further documented how the international advocacy results in changes at national level.

Results from the first project seem in general adequate, although mainly focused on outputs, and less emphasis on outcomes. Results on human rights advocacy are yet to be documented regarding the second project. WYWCA has finalized one three-year project and has only recently embarked on a second, quite different project. With the Finnish MFA’s requirements of a project of three years, it may be difficult to get documentation of good results and impact. Based on these observations, recommendations include:

- Strive to document outcomes better (and not only activities and outputs)
- Follow-up on and document how regional and international interventions benefit national and local level.
- Finland may consider whether a three-year duration of a project is sufficient to promote impact.
- Ensure more exchange between national YWCA structures and Finland’s Embassies in specific countries.

## Annex 5. Best practice regarding results framework. Example from ISHR

Example provided by ISHR (results framework and reporting on progress) ISHR Progress report on activities & results May 2018 – April 2019 – with reference to the ISHR results framework, June 2019  
Please note that it is only page 1 of the 16 pages, touching only 1 out of 3 goals. MFA can be consulted regarding the full document.

Goals	Expected results	Indicators	Targets achieved by April 2019	Target 2020	Means of Verification
Goal 1: Support human rights defenders so they are better networked and trained and more strategic, coordinated and effective in using international and regional human rights mechanisms to push for change on the ground	<p>1.1. HRDs have access to an innovative, moderated online training and tactical platform to build their capacity to use international and regional mechanisms effectively and to develop and pursue advocacy strategies and plans with ISHR's expert, individualised input.</p> <p>1.2 HRDs have access to an ISHR Human Rights Defender Fellowship Programme, providing up to six months of intensive training and advocacy support to at least two HRDs from ISHR's priority groups per year.</p>	<p>1.1. The platform is established &amp; fully running Number of users of the platform Qualitative feedback from users on the platform</p> <p>1.2. Number of ISHR fellows yearly Self evaluation of the fellowship programme by fellows Follow up initiatives undertaken by former fellows in international HR advocacy</p>	<p>1.1. The ISHR academy was launched in early 2019. It is available at <a href="https://academy.ishr.ch/">https://academy.ishr.ch/</a> and it will be road tested with participants in the 2019 HRDAP training, in June</p> <p>1.2. In 2018 ISHR hosted two CAP fellow and one WHRD fellows. They both provided positive feedback on their experience. One fellow who returned to China faced challenges in continuing to operate, with OHCHR publications confiscated, but continued to stay involved in reporting on the situation of minorities. The second fellow was, in part due to her experience working at the UN and with ISHR, hired by an international human rights NGO. She has also provided detailed follow-up to SP communications on specific cases</p>	<p>1.1 Platform is up and running At least 200 HRDs use the platform annually At least 75% of users provide positive feedback about the platform when prompted</p> <p>1.2 At least 4 fellows by 2020 At least 3 out of the 4 engage in international human rights advocacy as a consequence of the training</p>	<p>1.1 ISHR annual reports Statistics from the platform or Google analytics User surveys</p> <p>1.2 ISHR reports Evaluation and end of fellowship reports UN sources and/or spontaneous reporting by previous fellows to ISHR</p>

## Annex 6. Finland-funded INGO work from the perspective of country strategies 2016-2019 (Nepal, Myanmar, Tanzania)

This annex presents findings related to three countries (Nepal, Myanmar and Tanzania). It explains briefly Finland's Country Strategy for each country and the activities that some of the INGOs supported by Finland carry out in these countries. Likewise, an assessment is made regarding the relevance of the INGO-cooperation, as reflected in MFA's country strategies.

The annex is structured in the following manner:

- Nepal (country strategy, interventions from IDA, ILGA, MRG and WYWCA)
- Myanmar (country strategy, interventions from FIDH, ICJ and WYWCA)
- Tanzania (country strategy, interventions from DefendDefenders, IDA, ILGA, MRG and WYWCA)
- Overall findings regarding the relationship between INGOs and Finland's Country Strategies

It should be mentioned that some of the cases are also referred to in other annexes and in the main report.

### Finland's Country Strategy for Nepal

According to Finland's Country Strategy, *"Finland supports Nepal in this critical stage of transition into a stable, equitable and economically viable democracy. Finland's Country Strategy 2016–2019 contributes to this goal by promoting the most marginalised groups' rights to education, water and sanitation, and access to decision-making and service delivery. The Country Strategy builds on previously achieved results, focusing on sectors in which Nepal has strong ownership and where Finland has experience, expertise and value to add."*

Impact 1: Improved water supply and sanitation.

Impact 2: High-quality education for all.

Impact 3: Improve the rights and status of women and groups in vulnerable situations.

Activities in Nepal seek to address the rights of women and groups in vulnerable situations, livelihoods and access to basic services and decision-making. This is done by a) mainstreaming gender and social inclusion objectives into all activities, and b) supporting UN Women's Women, Peace and Security (2 million euros), Women's Economic Empowerment (3.5 million euros) and UNDP's Rule of Law and Human Rights (5.4 million euros) projects. The Country Strategy provides continuity with respect to applying a Human Rights Based Approach to development (HRBA). HRBA is at the root of all of Finland's interventions in Nepal. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) will be mainstreamed to all programmes to improve resilience.

### Interventions from INGOs in Nepal

Four examples of INGO interventions involving Nepal are presented below, namely interventions from IDA, ILGA, MRG and WYWCA supported by Finland.

**i) International Disability Alliance (IDA):** Making the most of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure the realization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2016 and 2018-2020

The project aims to ensure that early implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda contributes to substantive inclusion of rights of persons with disabilities in the work of UN Development Group agencies, in accordance with the CRPD, and with attention to women and most marginalized groups.

The regions covered are Sub-Saharan Africa Arab region, Central and South Asia (including Nepal).

The first global report on the situation of persons with deaf blindness was finalized in 2018 and multiple advocacy workshops were held, one also in Nepal, to spread awareness about the findings as well as to

generate momentum at the respective national levels towards recognition of deaf blindness as a disability and measures to address the issue.

IDA partnered with International Disability and Development Consortium, Transforming Communities for Inclusion Asia, DRAF and the Art 11 Project for a workshop of training of trainers. The workshop had 10 trainees with one from Nepal.

The project consolidates Finland's efforts to improve the rights and status of groups in vulnerable situations in Nepal.

**ii) International Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA):** to Advocate Effectively at the UN and National Levels Against Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics 2018-2021.

In 2018 ILGA supported Nepalese LBQ defenders in Nepal (Blue Diamond Society) in their engagement with The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), giving relevant recommendations and actively participating in meetings with the OHCHR officers. ILGA also provided technical support and facilitated consultations.

ILGA's work in Nepal supports the Finnish country strategy of improving the rights and status of groups in vulnerable situations in Nepal, and in the selection process it has been highlighted that this project would support strategically Finland's work and aspirations specifically in Nepal, alongside other countries.

**iii) Minority Rights Group International (MRG):** Promoting the inclusion of marginalized minorities and indigenous peoples 2014 – 2016. It should be mentioned that implementation of the project started before the country strategy period.

One of the project components was aimed at raising awareness and carrying out media work in the Global South, including Nepal. The project held a training course for journalists in Nepal early 2016. The training included 36 people representing Dalits Madehesis and Newars. The point of the training was to enable the minority communities to effectively get their voices heard in the global media to draw attention to their issues and ensure their voices are included in the post-2015 agenda implementation. The project consolidates Finland's efforts to improve the rights and status of vulnerable groups in Nepal.

**iv) The World YWCA: Enabling Economic Empowerment and Justice for Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries 2014-2017:** In this case, implementation started 2 years before the country strategy was published.

Finnish MFA funded a three-year project that had three goals: 1. Reduce poverty by economically empowering women and young women and providing them with the necessary skills to obtain employment. 2. Enable the empowered women to participate fully and effectively in their governments' peace-building, reconstruction, recovery and development processes at all decision-making levels. And lastly, enable the empowered women to advocate for economic justice, an equitable allocation of resources and women rights on national and global levels.

The project was implemented in five different countries, including Nepal. The program used ICT tools and training tailored to the particular needs and context of the target countries and focused on women from the national YWCA communities. On organizational level, the training included raising managerial and training capacity of each respective YMCA community, effectively raised the membership of each community and increased YMCA visibility in each country. In Nepal this led to multiple awards received by the members of the local YWCA for their work in the country.

Economic empowerment was done through vocational training in business and job skills development training, networking activities, and awareness raising campaigns. Nepal supported 13 participants in starting a business and then expanded the training so that approximately 150 participants secured employment (including casual labour). In Nepal, it was also noted that young women participants became interested in local politics and as a result, one Nepalese participant was proposed as Deputy Mayor. The economic empowerment of the women has contributed to the peace building, increased solidarity and awareness at local and national levels in the target countries.

This program was relevant to the Finnish country strategy of Nepal, covering both education as well as the improvement of rights and status of minorities, with reported collaboration with the embassy. The holistic approach to empowerment through a multitude of different means provided visible results from a HRBA-perspective. It improved women's rights whilst ameliorating their livelihoods and access to decision-making, mainstreaming gender and social inclusion both as a goal and as a mean.

### **Finland's Country Strategy for Myanmar**

Finland has been committed to supporting Myanmar's peaceful transition to a democratic and stable society governed by the rule of law. Finland focuses its support on three programming areas with the following intended outcomes:

- Good forest governance: sustainability, equitability and transparency. Local community involvement;
- Democratic governance and rule of law: inclusive and responsive state institutions and improved access to justice for the most vulnerable; and
- Quality education: The most disadvantaged girls and boys in Myanmar benefit from improved access to quality and inclusive pre-primary and primary education.

Guided by the principles and priorities set out in Finland's development policy (2016), the Country Strategy for Myanmar is results-based, pursues a human rights-based approach, and incorporates objectives specific to gender equality and climate sustainability. It has been developed in response to Myanmar's development needs and priorities, and it is informed by Myanmar's Framework for Economic and Social Reforms (2012–2015), while acknowledging the ongoing development planning and restructuring of the new Myanmar government that began its term on 1 April 2016.

### **Interventions from INGOs in Myanmar**

Three examples of INGO interventions involving Myanmar are presented below, namely interventions from FIDH, ICJ and WYWCA supported by Finland.

**i) International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH): Fighting Impunity 2017-2019.** The project focuses on fighting impunity for serious human rights violations and international crimes in order to prevent such violations and crimes, punish their perpetrators, increase the effectiveness of victims' rights and ultimately, to strengthen the rule of law.

The project has three objectives. The improvement of implementation of victims' right to truth, justice and reparation by investigating and documenting crimes and situations in which impunity is prevalent; increasing NGO's capacity to use regional, national and international mechanisms in their fight against impunity; and lastly, to increase awareness of, and advocate on the importance of, the fight against impunity.

FIDH conducted two fact-finding missions to the Cox Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh in 2018, regarding the situation of the Rohingya refugees. The missions also allowed FIDH to assess conditions in refugee camps and to collect documentation that will be used for advocacy to ensure that Rohingya refugees are

not forcibly repatriated to Rakhine State and that their status and conditions in Bangladesh improve. The missions also allowed FIDH to establish connections with Rohingya HRDs and aid groups in and around the refugee camps. It was reported that the significant amount of information collected during the two visits required considerable work in terms of processing as well as verification through multiple sources, including news articles and information produced by aid groups operating in Cox's Bazar. A report (not submitted to MFA) was to be published in 2019.

This project supported the Finnish country strategy for Myanmar through improving access to justice for the Rohingya in particular.

**ii) International Commission of Jurists (ICJ): Achieving justice for Gross Human Rights Violations 2017-2019 and 2019-2021.** The project pursues the objective of combatting impunity and promoting redress for gross human rights violations through the entrenchment of the rule of law in seven focus countries, including Myanmar.

Several sections of the Myanmar's national laws enable impunity for human rights violations, including shielding security forces from public criminal prosecution – as was demonstrated in the Rohingya crises. Police and military force enjoy impunity with the use of military courts and special police courts. Thus penalties and convictions are rare. These shielding mechanisms act as a significant obstacle for accountability. Therefore, the victims of human rights violations lack access to effective remedies and reparation.

In 2017 the project activities in Myanmar have included engagement with UN human rights mechanisms, an independent fact-finding mission, the support on discreet issues and media engagement in relation to the human rights violations the Myanmar security forces committed in Northern Rakhine state 2017. The phase two of the project began in 2019. In 2018 ICJ filed amicus curiae observations before the International Criminal Court (ICC) regarding ICC jurisdiction over forced deportation as a crime against humanity in Myanmar; launched four publications on achieving justice in Myanmar; trained lawyers on the issues of accountability for human rights violations; investigators and forensic experts were engaged in a regional capacity building on the investigation and prosecution of potentially unlawful death; UN advocacy and related statements to the Human Rights Council, joint NGO letter to the High Commissioner for human Rights; and a plethora of side events and media engagements on various issues, such as Rohingya crises, convictions against Reuters journalists and on the creation of a UN mechanism on Myanmar.

As with the FIDH project, the ICJ also support the Finnish country strategy through improving access to justice for victims of human rights violations. The Finnish embassy in Myanmar has been actively following project progress, and the embassy has specifically thanked ICJ for their human rights reports, policy briefs and updates in Myanmar, such as: <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Myanmar-Provisional-Measures-Briefing-Advocacy-Analysis-Brief-2019-ENG.pdf>

**iii) The World YWCA: Enabling Economic Empowerment and Justice for Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries 2014-2017.** The project was initiated before the country strategy was approved.

The project had three goals, firstly, to reduce poverty by economically empowering women and young women and providing them with the necessary skills to obtain employment. Secondly, to enable the empowered women to participate fully and effectively in their government's peacebuilding, reconstruction, recovery and development processes at all decision-making levels. Third, to enable the empowered women to advocate for economic justice, an equitable allocation of resources and women rights on national and global levels.

The project was implemented in five different countries, including Myanmar. The program used ICT tools and training tailored to the particular needs and context of the target countries and focused on women from the national YWCA communities. On organizational level, the training included raising managerial

and training capacity of each respective YMCA community, effectively raised the membership of each community and increased YMCA visibility in each country. In Myanmar, the increased pool of volunteers led to increase in the number of interventions in communities. Myanmar also successfully conducted leadership trainings in its local chapters. The Myanmar YWCA also took part in documenting cases of violence against women in communities for the CSW shadow report.

Economic empowerment was achieved through vocational training in business and job skills development training, networking activities, and awareness raising campaigns. In Myanmar, 15 young women started businesses and later Myanmar expanded the project into 11 local areas where YWCA is active, which led to another 10 women starting up a business. The young women who started their business were supported by the YWCA to expand their markets through networking with local, national and international business owners. ICT tools were integral part of this, especially Facebook. In the Myanmar project participants reported contributing to their household budgets as well as sharing their training to create crafts and other products.

The economic empowerment of the women has contributed to the peace building, increased solidarity and awareness at local and national levels in the target countries. Myanmar combined the use of ICT with advocating for peace and justice through storytelling on social media and digital photography. The commitment of Myanmar YWCA is well recorded: they are members of the international Women Peace Group and a board member was awarded Peace Ambassador in Myanmar. At the local level and particularly in armed conflict areas, YWCA has established safe spaces for women. In influencing policies at regional and global levels, YWCA reported being specifically involved in country activities in Myanmar that had the potential to shift commitments towards the economic rights of women. The specific details are lacking.

This program was relevant to the Finnish country strategy of Myanmar. It supports education, better governance and rule of law through reporting, training and boosting engagement on all levels, from local to global.

### **Finland's Country Strategy for Tanzania**

Finland's Country Strategy builds on the targets outlined in Tanzania's five year Development Plan for 2016–2021. Employment creation for the rapidly growing population as well as accountable and effective public financial management and inclusive decision-making are crucial for Tanzania's future development. Therefore, the Country Strategy aims to accelerate progress by strengthening the country's economic base, promoting job creation in the innovation and forest sectors, and by consolidating public finance management, taxation capacity and good governance. While the current strategy is based on previous cooperation, it has a narrower sectoral focus and fewer interventions than the previous Country Strategy. Finland will be withdrawing from agriculture and some other sectors, and at the same time intensify its efforts in public sector management and in the private sector. In the forest sector the focus will be on livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

Finnish support to local civil society focuses on human rights and democracy promotion. In job creation, Finland concentrates on bilateral private sector forestry programmes with a regional focus (PFP, FORVAC) and a nationwide innovation programme (TANZIS). Finland is a leading partner with Tanzania in these sectors and has developed sectoral institutions, policies and legislation as well as working with local communities. Finnish programmes highlight the role of the private sector and its productivity, and link the cooperation with Finnish partner organizations. Special attention is given to creating an enabling environment for businesses and livelihoods as well as competitive and responsible businesses and value chains. In the forestry sector, Finland's efforts also contribute to Tanzania's national climate change action plan.

Finland's Country Strategy for Tanzania has two main impact areas:

- Improved performance of the public sector
- Increased employment and livelihoods

### **Interventions from INGOs in Myanmar**

Five examples of INGO interventions involving Nepal are presented below, namely interventions from DefendDefenders, IDA, ILGA, MRG and WYWCA supported by Finland.

**i) DefendDefenders 2017-2019 and 2020-2021.** The project focuses on creating a safe and enabling civic and working environment for HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa, Tanzania included. President John Magufuli's administration has since 2015 restricted civil space in Tanzania by harsh silencing of media (and the closure of many prominent newspapers), hostility towards sections of the population and several brutal attacks on human rights defenders (HRD) and opposition members.

The target group include especially marginalized HRDs: women, sexual minorities and indigenous minorities face ever-increasing challenges. Thus, the DD project focuses on the five most-at-risk HRD groups: sexual orientation and gender identity HRDs, woman HRDs, HRDs working in zones of armed conflict, HRDs working on extractive industries issues, and journalists working to fight impunity and corruption. Funding of the project goes hand in hand with Finland's country strategy for Tanzania as it focuses on guarding human rights through the local Tanzanian civil society.

**ii) International Disability Alliance (IDA):** Making the most of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure the realization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2016 and 2018-2020. The project aims to ensure that early implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda contributes to substantive inclusion of rights of persons with disabilities in the work of UN Development Group agencies, in accordance with the CRPD, and with attention to women and most marginalized groups.

The regions covered are Sub-Saharan Africa (including Tanzania), Arab region, Central and South Asia. The program has been instrumental in boosting the capacities of DPOs to engage in advocating for their rights and using international monitoring mechanisms in support to this. This has been realized through onsite training, mentoring, coaching, and distant assignments. Enhancing the capacity of DPOs to articulate their claims using existing political frameworks.

The aims of this project follow along the Finnish country strategy in its focus on human rights through the civil society. The MFA finds that reporting from IDA has been lacking in details regarding achievements in Tanzania.

**iii) International Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA):** to Advocate Effectively at the UN and National Levels Against Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics.

In 2016 Pan Africa ILGA focused on building capacities of its members, in Tanzania (and Swaziland) specifically, the efforts were focused on assisting HRDs in producing a shadow report on LGBTI-issues. ILGA also made sure that the voices from the continent were heard through the process that led to the appointment of the first UN SOGI Independent Expert. ILGA also provided support to CSO and HRDs to propose recommendations in relation to the UN's Universal Periodic Review, leading up to nine recommendations in 2016. Pan Africa ILGA provided programmatic support to Tanzania in 2018. ILGA's activities were seen in the selection phase to complement other Finnish initiated/funded efforts in Tanzania.

**iv) Minority Rights Group International (MRG):** Promoting the inclusion of marginalized minorities and indigenous peoples 2014 – 2016 (implementation started before the country strategy).

One of the programs four components had to do with strengthening minority rights advocacy in Africa. Training minority rights activists on their rights and on the best way to achieve them, provide support in order to consolidate the organizations and make them more effective and resilient, provide legal support anywhere violations of minority rights occur, and support minority women in issue of intersectional discrimination.

The program provided capacity building to some Tanzanian NGOs. This included training on financial management and donors reporting, organizational development, programs design and management, Human resource management, and donor relations.

MRG provided legal assistance and paralegal training in Tanzania with good results. The organization was also involved in partially resolving Loliondo land conflict on the behalf of the Maasai pastoralist community.

**v) The World YWCA:** Enabling Economic Empowerment and Justice for Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries 2014-2017

Finnish MFA funded a three-year project that had three goals: 1. Reduce poverty by economically empowering women and young women and providing them with the necessary skills to obtain employment. 2. Enable the empowered women to participate fully and effectively in their governments' peacebuilding, reconstruction, recovery and development processes at all decision-making levels. And lastly, Enable the empowered women to advocate for economic justice, an equitable allocation of resources and women rights on national and global levels.

The project was implemented in five different countries, including Tanzania. The program used ICT tools and training tailored to the particular needs and context of the target countries and focused on women from the national YWCA communities. On organizational level, the training included raising managerial and training capacity of each respective YMCA community, effectively raised the membership of each community and increased YMCA visibility in each country. In Tanzanian YWCA positive changes brought by this organizational training involved the inclusion of young women in positions of leadership and now the Deputy General Secretary is a young woman. The empowerment of the Tanzanian women led to them bringing specific cases of human rights violations to the YWCA.

Economic empowerment was done through vocational training in business and job skills development training, networking activities, and awareness raising campaigns. In Tanzania 26 participants started businesses and 15 young women who attended the courses with a local authority are now employed in the formal sector. In terms of involvement in savings and investments, Tanzania had 50 young women selected to join the Village Community Bank system as an outcome of the business and financial skills they learned at the YWCA. Also, the women's families benefitted as 20 of the 26 new entrepreneurs reported that they were able to financially support their whole families. In addition, many women became interested in local politics and considered running for local government.

The economic empowerment of the women has contributed to the peace building, increased solidarity and awareness at local and national levels in the target countries. In Tanzania, the YWCA contributed to the national statement for CSW and one representative was included on the government delegation for CSW59 and then invited to CSW61.

This program was very relevant to the Finnish country strategy of Tanzania, improving livelihoods and enhancing employment. The training and raising political awareness of the participants can also be seen

at least indirectly contributing to the improved performance of the public sector as more women are involved, the better they are represented in decision-making.

### **Overall findings regarding the relationship between INGOs and Finland's Country Strategies**

It seems that the country strategies and programmes have sometimes been referred to in the INGO application and selection procedure (such as the statements by the development advisors at the MFA), however the knowledge regarding the results of the advocacy and programming work of these INGOs are clearly not a deciding factor in these selections. This is, in practice, made more difficult by the fact that there often are many countries in a proposal, some of which might be in Finland's long term development partners countries but not all.

There are clear linkages between country strategies and INGOs' advocacy work and country level interventions. There are several examples of embassies cooperating with INGOs in terms of opening events, workshops etc.

Every ambassador presents on a regular basis their strategic plan to the MFA, in conjunction with which also human rights are discussed. It has often been mentioned that the advocacy efforts of INGOs are much appreciated by embassies. The INGO advocacy work is of particular importance as the local cooperation funds (PYM) have decreased very much in recent years.

The reports produced by INGOs are of importance from an advocacy perspective and feed into Finland's engagement of human rights (UPR), however, this seems to be more on a sporadic basis rather than systematic.

There are discussions about how to take into account / strengthen potential synergies between all of the Finnish funded instruments and operations at the country level.

In the discussions about renewing the country strategy approach (increasing the coherence between the different country strategies, the INGO's work and also about increasing their human rights focus) it has been noted that it would be important that key human rights issues would be identified when country strategies are developed. This way the INGO application and selection process could better feed into this work.

Indeed, the revision and rewriting of strategies has started and is being carried out in 2020 and beyond, increasingly also considering the human rights situation.

## Annex 7. List of interviewees

Either face-to-face, skype or email

Name	Area/position	Institution
<b>Bilateral institutions</b>		
Rauno Merisaari	Human Rights Policy Unit, POL-40	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
Katariina Sario	Senior Adviser, non-discrimination KE020	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
Tiina Markkinen	Senior Adviser, human rights & rule of law, KE020	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
Nicolaj Sønderbye	Chief Advisor, Danida	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
Hans Petter Buvollen	Senior Advisor, Norad	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway
<b>Multilateral institutions</b>		
Mona Rishmawi	Chief of Rule of Law, Equality and Non-discrimination Branch	OHCHR
Catherine de Preux	Human Rights Officer, Special Procedures Branch	OHCHR
Olga Iskra	Research Assistant Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Special Procedures	OHCHR
Birgit Kainz-Labbé	Coordinator, Civic Space Unit	OHCHR
Victor Madrigal	Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity	OHCHR
Linda Ekholm	Delegation of the EU to the UN in Geneva	European Union
<b>INGOs</b>		
Ignacio Saiz	Executive Director	CESR
Hassan Shire	Executive Director	DefendDefenders
Memory Bandera	Director of Programs	DefendDefenders
Nicolas Agostini	Representative to the UN	DefendDefenders
Antoine Madelin	Director, International Advocacy	FIDH
Manon Karatas	Geneva Programme Officer	FIDH
Saman Zia-Zarifi	Secretary General	ICJ
Mariam Haidara	Programme Manager and Development Officer	ICJ
Bijoya Banerjea	Director, Programme Management and Donor Relations	ICJ
Priscille Geiser	Programme Manager	IDA
Eleonora Guzzi	Human Rights Officer	IDA
André du Plessis	Executive Director	ILGA
Kseniya Kirichenko	Senior Officer, Women & UN advocacy.	ILGA
Vincent Ploton	Director of Development & Treaty Body Advocacy	ISHR
Michael Ineichen	Programme Director	ISHR
Pooja Patel	Programme Director	ISHR
Claire Thomas	Deputy Director	MRG
Aida Rehouma	Lead Global Programming & Impact	WYWCA
Suchi Gaur	Lead, Global Engagement and Strategic Communication	WYWCA
Pauline Westerbarkey	Leadership and Advocacy Specialist, Global Programming and Impact	WYWCA
Ceylan Tokgöz	Associate, Global Programming and Impact	WYWCA
Jill Anami	Africa regional coordinator (based in Kenya)	WYWCA
Vera Syrakvash	Eastern Europe regional coordinator (based in Belarus)	WYWCA
Nirmala Gurung	Asia Regional Coordinator (based in Nepal)	WYWCA

<b>Key informants from human rights organizations</b>		
Susan Wilding	Head of Geneva Office	CIVICUS
Morten Kjærum	Director	Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Human Law, Sweden
Birgitte Feiring	Department Director for Human Rights, Development and Business	Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)
Elsebeth Krogh	Department Director for Human Rights Systems	DIHR
Kirsten Lund-Larsen	Former-Secretary General	YMCA-Denmark
<b>National organizations</b>		
Gaudence Mushimiyimana	Executive Secretary	UNABU, Rwanda
Helen Kidan	Executive Member	Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights

Discussions have also been carried out with representatives from the Unit for Civil Society, MFA.

Likewise, the Review Team has received inputs from a number of other human rights defenders. The names of these persons are known to the Review Team while for various reasons, they are not disclosed in the review.

## Annex 8. Rights holders' opinions regarding the human rights advocacy

During the review, inputs were received from – and interviews were carried out with – a few selected rights-holders in the Global South. Inputs were received regarding the DefendDefenders' work on human rights defenders. The Review Team has been in direct contact with the human rights defenders but is has been decided not to publish their names and organisations.

In Nepal, WYWCA's Regional Coordinator provided information on her experience of using advocacy tools and participating in advocacy in Geneva. Likewise, one of the women leaders from the disability movement in Rwanda submitted information on IDA's support to her participation in advocacy activities in Geneva. Below information from each of these three experiences is presented. The experience with WYWCA is more extensive, as it also provides information of the project results.

Other testimonies have been collected and handed over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Finland. However, as the content of their advocacy is confidential, it has not been included in this report.

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### **DefendDefenders**

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#### **A: South Sudan: Female human rights defenders' feedback: Regarding the visit to Geneva /UN activities supported by DefendDefenders**

*In which advocacy activity did you participate and when?*

Lobby and advocacy at the 40th session of the Human Rights Council which was held from 25 February-22 March 2019 where I participated in lobbying and advocacy meetings from 2-8 March, 2019.

*What kind of support did you receive from DefendDefenders in Geneva?*

They provided us with all the necessary information we needed to effectively utilize the meetings especially on the international level perspective and kept sharing any developments in terms of information with regard to South Sudan from the council sessions. They gave us background information on people we were going to speak to, which made our engagement with them really fruitful. Being both our first time in Geneva, DefendDefenders ensured they provided us with the utmost guidance on logistical processes such as transportation, made sure they came to our hotel on our day of arrival to check and make ensure we were okay, as well as financial facilitation to cater for our stay in terms of meals.

*Which are the advantages of being able to participate in a delegation in terms of results?*

I think there is value in bringing the actual voices of people on the ground, I felt like our physical presence, especially as young women working towards peace and justice in South Sudan, we put faces to the problems and challenges most people at the council level only read in documents. Our presence made a human connection to South Sudan conflict. The lobbying and advocacy allowed the renewal of the mandate.

*Which are the challenges regarding the participation?*

The process for me was really smooth, there is nothing I would wish to have gone differently.

#### **B. Human Rights Defender from Eritrea**

Name and position: Helen Kidan, Executive Member of Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (EMDHR) and head of advocacy.

*In which advocacy activity did you participate and when?*

I did various advocacy activities but participated in the Eritrea session in Geneva in March and June. I Attended in March and June 2017, and in June 2018. I provided a statement and worked with DefendDefenders to lobby delegates regarding the resolutions on Eritrea and highlighting the continuing human rights abuses in the country. This is a key work which is done in collaboration with DefendDefenders. It organises delegations that we feel are supportive.

*What kind of support did you receive from DefendDefenders in Geneva?*

DefendDefenders paid for my air ticket and hotel during my stay in Geneva and provided money for expenses. I would not have been able to attend without DefendDefenders' assistance and the ongoing advocacy and lobbying is important in ensuring that Eritrea remains on the agenda. DefendDefenders organises meetings with the delegates in lobbying them at the Human Rights Council.

*Which are the advantages of being able to participate in a delegation, in terms of results?*

It enables us to develop relationships and give those who listen to us the picture within the country and exert pressure on the council to continue scrutinising the human rights situation in Eritrea. The results have also meant that despite the international community bringing Eritrea in from the cold, it is important that the human rights situation is not shelved for political opportunism. Also working with the DefendDefenders team also means it gives credibility to the work that we do and more weight in an international context. It is important that this needed work continues.

*Which are the challenges regarding the participation?*

Lack of funds, and enough time to stay in Geneva and really work with the delegates as much as I would like. When we hold side events it would be good to get a larger number of delegates to attend. I am only one there for one week, understanding how to influence delegates and get a proper understanding of how the Human Rights Council operates to be able to get greater effect. It would be good if during the year, it would be possible to come to Geneva and continue lobbying them so that, when the March and June sessions come, we would not have to start all over again. This I believe would make the March and June sessions more effective.

### **C. Female Human rights defender and leader from Eritrea**

Name and position: Known by the review team.

*In which advocacy activity did you participate and when?*

I participated in advocacy activities at:

- The Human Rights Council, during two out of three sessions a year;
- At the UN General Assembly in New York, once a year in September or October;
- At the European Parliament, as necessary;
- At the African Commission, once a year.

*What kind of support did you receive from DefendDefenders in Geneva?*

DefendDefenders sometimes assists me financially for accommodation and flights during advocacy missions in Geneva. We do joint advocacy on Eritrea, to lobby delegations of UN Members at the Human Rights Council in order to support the Special Rapporteur's mandate on the situation of human rights in Eritrea; asking some countries to be main sponsors and co-sponsors of the mandate as it is a one-year mandate and needs to be renewed every year. The mandate was established in July 2012, and since that time DefendDefenders has played an important role in the establishment of the mandate and its continuation. We present statements at the Human Rights Council during the sessions.

*Which are the advantages of being able to participate in a delegation, in terms of results?*

- The advantage is being able to keep Eritrea on the Human Rights Council's agenda;
- To continue raising awareness of the dire human rights situation in Eritrea;
- To seek the support of the UN and the international community, and asking them to put pressure on Eritrean government in order to improve the human rights situation in the country;
- To hold the Eritrean government accountable for the crimes it has been perpetrating against its own people.

*Which are the challenges regarding the participation?*

- Financial constraint;
- Lack of support and guidance if you do not have an organisation with ECOSOC status;
- Distance - Need to travel to Geneva two to three times a year, sometimes more.

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## **WYWCA**

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Interview with Ms. Nirmala Gurung, Regional Coordinator, Asia, for the WYWCA Project: "Young Women Changing Narratives on SRHR and Mental Health" (second Project financed by Finland).

The interview focused both on the WYWCA project, advocacy and the experience with international advocacy in Geneva.

Nirmala Gurung works for the WYWCA as the Regional Coordinator for Asia. Before that, she was the Young Women's Coordinator in Nepal. In that role she travelled widely in the Far-western, Mid-western and Central regions of Nepal to reach out to young women and girls, organizing forums and workshops on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and economic empowerment in close coordination with the (local) government bodies. Her work focused on empowering and mobilizing a diverse group of women in the training and reaching out to unreached. She was producing advocacy materials, creating online visuals and braille resource materials. Nirmala shared several examples on what kind of advocacy tools are used: pamphlets, book marks, note books; organizing street drama, rallies, open forums to advocate on different issues on especial days like 14th February (Valentine's Day), 8th March (International Women's Day) and 10th December (Human Rights Day), in addition to many other international and national festival days. One approach to discuss openly about sensitive issues was to create safe spaces for the young women and girls, and to promote peer to peer education.

Other examples included creating online groups and pages to talk about SRHR and Mental health; and organizing talk show on Young women leadership and SRHR with religious leaders and community leaders, the kind of persons that the people tend to listen to more than some others. Networking with other NGOs, institutions and government bodies to reach out to more people is important. Examples of the highlights over the year 2018 included two young women from Nepal and Philippines participating in ICPD Youth Consultation in Bangkok, Thailand; conducting Training of Trainers in Nepal for around 25 young women;

conducting local level trainings for young women and girls and reached to more than 200 in the region so far Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines and Sri Lanka, and participating in local and national forums and our young women champions have raised their voices in those forums. Examples of campaigns include “One Billion Rising” and 16 days of activism on VAWG.

Nirmala has engaged with the international WYWCA HQ in Geneva by participating in two events CEDAW and HRC. Nirmala shares how they share local experiences and ground realities in the global forums and once they are back to their own countries, they organize forums sharing the new learnings and observations to other people, trying to adopt the new learnings locally. WYWCA HQ supports its member associations by investing in the core and multiplying the capacities of young women and girls from the grass root level. Nirmala shares that “*World office help us to connect us with other agencies and global movement*”.

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## **IDA**

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Name and position: Gaudence Mushimiyimana, Executive Secretary of the Rwandan Organization of Women with Disabilities (UNABU), Rwanda, December 2, 2019

*In which advocacy activity did you participate and when?*

I was supported by IDA to attend Rwanda Review sessions on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Geneva, including the preparatory session in 2019.

*What support did you receive?*

We received preparatory guidance on how to present our findings from Civil Society and how to address the Committee on the CRPD.

*Which are your opinions of the support and of the advantages of being able to participate in a delegation in terms of results?*

My general opinion is that IDA is a professional advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. First of all, when you look at how the sessions were organized including individual meetings with key people to influence the opinion of the committee reviewing Rwanda report, as well as a preparatory guidance. Secondly, the support was more fruitful for UNABU as the organization I represented in Geneva, because we managed to bring on the board the issues affecting girls and women with disabilities in Rwanda, whereby for almost each article of the convention the committee came up with an observation around girls and women with disabilities. We have another advocacy tool for reference in advancing the rights of G/WWDs.

*Could the new knowledge (if any) be used in Rwanda and how?*

Yes, it will be used for the preparation of the next CRPD review of Rwanda, but also outcomes (concluding observations) are important for our current advocacy. The experience we had will also help other DPOs in other countries. For example, I shared the same experience with the team supporting Malawi for their upcoming review. I feel we, my colleagues, and I all benefited in attending the sessions in terms of knowledge and exposure.

*Were there any challenges? Do you have any recommendations to IDA?*

I just want to ask IDA to keep up the good work they do with DPOs. However, I felt the understanding of

the legal articles of the UN CRPD could be difficult, and I would like it if they could also help DPOs with support to interpret each article of the CRPD so that the advocacy is focused on key issues. Before Geneva, we struggled as DPOs to collectively understand some of the CRPD articles.

