

10 RECENT WINS FOR REAL CHANGE



The Fund supports community-based activists through a comprehensive model, providing the financial backing, tools, connections, and emergency support they need to power tangible, systemic change for people whose rights and lives are frequently dismissed.

Here are 10 recent examples of how our unique approach has fueled real change.

1. INDIA

SECURING A LANDMARK VICTORY FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE

For years, a colonial-era ban on same-sex sexual relations had been used to harass and threaten LGBTQ people and activists. In 2018, the provision was declared unconstitutional by India's Supreme Court. No fewer than six Fund-supported organizations were critical to this landmark win.

Yet, barriers to accessing education, housing, employment, and welfare rights persist for LGBTQ people. Hence, the Fund continues to support community-based groups that work locally and collaboratively across gender, class, and caste lines to further LGBTQ economic, political, and social equality.

Today, our general support grants and technical assistance help organizations identify gaps in implementation, garner support for stronger protections, improve access to higher education within the LGBTQ community, and build visibility for LGBTQ issues within the growing labor movement.



2. MEXICO

GRANTING BASIC LABOR RIGHTS TO DOMESTIC WORKERS

There are an estimated 2 million domestic workers in Mexico, 90 percent of whom are women. In 2020, Mexico's government ratified ILO Convention 189 and incorporated it into law, granting basic labor rights such as paid leave and a cap on working hours for the first time to this base of domestic workers. This hard-won victory was led by Fund-supported Centro de Apoyo para Empleadas del Hogar (CACEH).

CACEH is founded by and comprises domestic workers. This win came after nearly two decades of public education campaigns, the establishment of the first union for domestic workers in Mexico, and direct advocacy with national government. The group is currently working to support the Convention's implementation through monitoring and by raising awareness among employers around their obligations. It also continues to provide training in ten states to more than 800 domestic workers, moving this work online due to the pandemic.

Our support has given CACEH the ability to forge deeper engagements within specific communities, grow strategically, and enhance their trainings for domestic workers, allowing them to build strength in numbers.

3. HONDURAS

PROTECTING SUSTAINABLE FARMS FROM IRRESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

Four years after 92 families in southern Honduras awoke to discover a solar energy company was taking over their farms, the multinational company withdrew from the area in March 2020.

The community's opposition was due to an absence of free, prior, and informed consent for the project, which threatened local sustainable agriculture—the main source of their food and incomes—as well as their homes. But the win did not come without sacrifice: Eight community members were arrested for defending their rights and their land. As a result, MASS VIDA, a Fund-supported volunteer network of civil society and community organizations, stepped in to provide free legal aid and work with the families to file more than 30 legal complaints and maintain their peaceful protests. The group continues to advise them around restitution for damages to their land.

Our support allows MASS VIDA to both provide vital legal assistance to individual cases and strengthen the environmental movement throughout the country. This support is central to addressing corruption and exploitative land concessions in the country.



4. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

STANDING UP FOR THE RIGHTS OF MINING COMMUNITIES

Bringing reform to the mining sector and strengthening rule of law in the DRC are key to pushing past the country's history of violent conflict, corruption, and high levels of poverty. In 2018, the country took a critical step by adopting a new mining code that requires extractive companies to share profits with local communities. It gives miners and community members a voice in decision making. Six Fund-supported groups were crucial to its passage through extensive legislative advocacy and collaboration with other civil society organizations.

With our support, these groups now focus on ensuring the new law's implementation—documenting irregularities and resistance around funds reaching communities in four regions. This includes forming and empowering community committees to advocate for processes that are participatory, transparent, and free from corruption. This ability to demand accountability has been bolstered by the Fund's convening of grantee partners to generate collaboration.

Our flexible support has also helped them carry on their work during the pandemic—including helping villagers who were relocated to inhospitable land to make way for a mine's construction.



5. MYANMAR

ENSURING NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND DURING COVID-19

For thousands of Karen minority people displaced by conflict and oppression, the Fund-supported Karen Women's Organization (KWO) has been an essential resource throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Indigenous and women's rights group, comprising more than 60,000 women, has continued to advocate for the Karen people's rights while also providing essential health supplies, food, water, and information to people living in internal displacement camps along the Myanmar-Thai border, which receive zero international aid. When the government failed to translate COVID-19 facts or guidelines into any minority language, KWO did so, along with distributing thousands of masks and providing 5 kg of rice per person. KWO has also collaborated with a network of Karen organizations to draw attention to aggressive actions by the Burmese Army that caused hundreds of villagers to flee their homes during the pandemic.

Our support for KWO over the past five years, in addition to an emergency COVID grant, has helped them identify and channel resources to the most needed projects and train the next generation of Karen women leaders.

6. NIGERIA

PROTECTING CIVIC SPACE DURING A PANDEMIC

An organization that works to infuse human rights into social and economic policies, Spaces for Change (S4C) became a critical bulwark for civil society in Nigeria during the pandemic. With an emergency grant from the Fund, the group helped create a 24/7 hotline providing free legal assistance to citizens and activists whose rights were violated under the guise of COVID-19 restrictions.

A rapid rise in human rights abuses, such as arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings, soon came to their attention, along with a proposed law that would grant extraordinary powers to government and the police. Thanks to the collective advocacy of S4C and the Action Group on Free Civic Space—an informal network of civil society groups it convenes—the bill was paused for public hearings and then tabled. S4C was subsequently invited by legislators to advise on a new version that currently awaits review by the National Assembly.

Our support for S4C dates to 2016 and has helped them establish relationships and conduct outreach with government, other community organizations, and youth throughout Nigeria. As a result, S4C is a go-to resource for organizing and coalition-building to defend civic space in the country.



7. INDIA

LOOKING OUT FOR INFORMAL WORKERS DURING COVID-19

India's complete nationwide COVID lockdown, intended to bolster public health, in actuality neglected or threatened the lives of millions of informal and migrant workers, who faced loss of income, separation from family, and overburdened housing.

In response, the Fund-supported Jan Sahas, an organization that works to ensure the rights of marginalized people, formed a Migrants Resilience Collaborative. Through coordination with community groups, local government, and funders, the initiative provided lifesaving, direct relief for more than 1 million migrant workers, along with developing medium- and long-term strategies for strengthening migrant communities' and their safety nets. They continue ensuring that corporate and government recovery work initiatives follow ethical recruitment and hiring practices.

As a Dalit-led organization, Jan Sahas brings an oft-ignored voice to the forefront of civil society in India. Our flexible support over the course of a decade has helped the organization grow strategically, identifying and advancing solutions for its communities most pressing needs and rapidly shift resources in times of crisis. As Jan Sahas has increased capacity and impact, we have also connected it with grassroots labor rights organizations to help strengthen emerging groups' organizational and technical development.





8. SIERRA LEONE

DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERS

Just over a year after the Fund partnered with Purposeful—a movement building hub for adolescent girls in the Global South—to pilot a participatory grantmaking fund, the initiative is creating ripples of change by and for young people.

Ten projects were selected by a diverse panel of young people focusing on youth-identified needs: combating sexual violence, building leadership of girls and young women, and promoting young people’s skills and livelihoods. While some work was halted due to COVID-19, Purposeful and the youth groups forged ahead to ensure that young people have a say in policies affecting their lives and a role in developing solutions for their communities. For example, Mirror Africa trained 20 school-based sexual violence facilitators and reached 400 children with skill-building education on sexual violence and their rights; Forum for Community Development, a youth group in the mineral rich but neglected Kono District, established a computer training center for youth.

Our flexible support also enabled the youth activists, who would never have received funding from traditional donors, to quickly fill gaps in the country’s pandemic response. They coordinated food and PPE distributions and provided education on COVID-19 alongside information on reducing gender-based violence, teen pregnancy, and early marriage. Thanks to their participation in the pilot, several youth have been invited into community decision-making spaces for the first time, creating new opportunities to amplify young people’s voices and meet the needs of young women and girls.



9. MOROCCO

PUSHING BACK ON RESTRICTIONS ON FREE SPEECH

In early 2020, legislation was drafted in Morocco under the guise of curbing online misinformation about COVID-19 that would have violated people’s right to freedom of expression. Prometheus Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, a Fund-supported, youth-led organization, successfully spearheaded a campaign to suspend the draft bill.

The bill’s definition of “false information” was vague and no details were provided about the proposed government body that would enforce the law. It also included several provisions that sought to directly constrain activists. One banned the use of social media to mobilize people to boycott a company or service. Penalties included imprisonment or a fine of up to \$5,000 US. This came two years after a large boycott campaign of three leading goods and services companies in protest of high prices.

Our support helped Prometheus issue a petition and mobilize civil society groups to stop the law from passing. We continue to ensure this group of young leaders can act against abuses and work to strengthen youth activism and its place in Moroccan civil society.



10. GUATEMALA

DEMANDING ACCOUNTABILITY AGAINST ALL ODDS

Following three decades of civil strife, Guatemala has seen significant human rights gains, including the conviction of several high-profile military accountable for war crimes. While a new government has dismantled most existing institutions for protecting human rights, with the Fund’s multilayered support, groups remain steadfast.

In November 2020, despite this hostile context and the pandemic, Family Members of the Detained-Disappeared in Guatemala (FAMDEGUA) helped obtain a ruling that a former special forces soldier can be brought to trial for his actions in the 1982 Dos Erres massacre. He faces charges of sexual assault and crimes against humanity for his role in the murder of 205 men, women, and children.

FAMDEGUA’s dogged pursuit of justice demonstrates the efficacy of the Fund’s strategy facilitating transitional justice through comprehensive legal approaches that comprise documentation, empowerment of survivors, security, advocacy, and strategic communications. FAMDEGUA has been involved in the case for more than 25 years. Our support has enabled them to attain the Inter-American Human Rights System’s demands for domestic investigations and prosecutions, partner with other Fund-backed groups to provide psychosocial support to families, protect families and their lawyers from retaliation, and raise the case’s profile in the media. If successful, this will be the eighth Dos Erres conviction that the organization has secured.



www.globalhumanrights.org



[fundforglobalhumanrights](https://www.instagram.com/fundforglobalhumanrights)



[@fundhumanrights](https://www.facebook.com/fundhumanrights)



[@fundforglobalhumanrights](https://twitter.com/fundforglobalhumanrights)