

### **A Glimpse Inside IHRFG's 2014 San Francisco Conference**

*Contributed by Imali Bandara, Program Assistant, International Human Rights, Wellspring Advisors*

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As a first-time IHRFG attendee, I have to say that the [2014 San Francisco conference](#) gave me the perfect introduction to a great community of human rights funders.

The opening plenary, “When Rights Collide: Human Rights at Odds with Itself,” led to dynamic conversations in small groups. When asked what happens when rights come up against each other through the example of sex selection vs. a woman’s right to choose, my peers noted that the best way to resolve tensions is to create more opportunities for conversations with people on the “other side.” We may be strong advocates for one specific right, but in thinking through the collision of rights, there is always room to build networks and learn from someone else’s passion and work!



The new attendees welcome lunch with Lesley Carson and Mona Chun was a great introduction to the world of IHRFG and how anyone can best utilize this network’s [resources](#). From the [interactive map](#) and [working groups](#) to [telebriefings](#) and [learning visits](#), there are so many ways to get involved at many different paces, all depending on what you need and want.

The session “Funding Nascent Movements: Lessons from Global Trans\* Groups” as well as the “Millennials and Human Rights: The Next Greatest Generation” panel provided great opportunities to learn from individuals in various movements. The trans\* panel raised compelling questions about the intersectionality of movements (i.e., the cross-section of the women’s rights movement and the trans\* right movement) and also started a conversation on how funders need to tailor their strategies to serve these rising movements. The panelists touched on the tendency of funders to conflate the trans\* movement with other movements – such as women’s rights or the LGBTQ movement –without actually cultivating a strategy for funding the “T.”

The millennial panel exhibited a powerful next generation of human rights advocacy. As a young professional, it was rewarding to see peers doing grassroots work which funders can and should support. As the activists spoke of the risks they take to demand the rights of their communities – from voluntary deportations to questioning social gender norms – their stories served to ground the more theoretical conversations of human rights funders with a glimpse of the real implications of the movements we fund.

The afternoon continued to be just as interesting—who knew financial regulation would be so crucial to the human rights movement? Rather than get bogged down by the technicality, the international panelists of the session “Resourcing Rights: What Does Financial Regulation Have to Do with Human

Rights (and Why Should We Care)?” showed us the power of understanding how complex issues like bank regulation have a dramatic influence on the future of the human rights field. Without close attention to and careful decision-making around financial regulation, we allow extremes like corruption, tax avoidance, and illicit financial flows to prevent governments from supplying the needs and services we all work to uphold under human rights.

Throughout the conference and the pre-conference institute, I met so many funders who showed me that this field is full of smart, talented individuals who are passionate about human rights and excited to find new strategies and best practices for funding. Though the closing plenary started with the Foundation Center’s harrowing fact that less than 1% of philanthropic giving goes to human rights work, I felt confident that the people in this space are working hard to see that number rise. As someone new in her career as a funder, I hope to use what I learned at this year’s conference and reconvene with young professionals in this space to learn from the experts around us, discuss how we can find innovative ways to shine the light on human rights funding, and keep the work moving forward.

*\*Many global activists have started to use the abbreviation “trans\*” with an asterisk to denote a placeholder for the entire range of possible gender identities, some of which are specific to local cultures, that fall under the broad definition of trans\**