

Mapping and Analyzing Global Human Rights Grantmaking: Producing Knowledge to Advance the Field

*Contributed by Christen Dobson, Program Manager, Policy & Research,
International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG)
Human Rights Funding News, IHRFG e-Newsletter, January 31, 2013*

Can better data help human rights grantmakers to identify and address gaps and take note of opportunities for collaboration? Can a definitive look at the scope, diversity, and depth of global human rights funding help to promote more strategic and effective human rights grantmaking? Does the lack of a functional definition of human rights grantmaking serve as a barrier to the entry of new funders to the field?

To help address these questions, IHRFG and the Foundation Center, in January 2010, embarked on the *Advancing Human Rights: Knowledge Tools for Funders* initiative, the first-ever effort to capture and analyze global human rights grantmaking, by issue, region, and population supported. This project was sparked and informed by years of discussion among IHRFG members.

What Are We Learning?

An analysis of grants data from a set of over 1400 foundations revealed that **\$1.2 billion dollars** supported human rights work in 2010, provided by 703 foundations based in 29 countries spanning seven major world regions. To fully understand these data, it is helpful to understand the methodology of the research and the important complexities involved in gathering, organizing, and analyzing such a vast amount of nuanced data (see Methodology section below).



Who Makes Human Rights Grants?

- The majority of human rights funders in the study are based in the United States (652), largely reflecting the relative accessibility of grants data for these foundations.
- Western Europe accounted for the next largest number of human rights funders (28), followed by Latin America (9), Asia and the Pacific (4), Eastern Europe (3), Sub-Saharan Africa (3), and the Middle East and North Africa (2).
- 146 members of IHRFG, Ariadne/European Human Rights Funders Network, and the International Network of Women's Funds submitted grants data for this analysis. These grantmakers provided 64% of the overall human rights grants dollars and made approximately 7 out of 10 grants.

Where Do Human Rights Grants Go?

- Of the \$1.2 billion in funding for human rights in 2010: 54.1% focused on North America; 9.25% focused on Sub-Saharan Africa; 6.8% focused on Latin America and the Caribbean; 5.3% focused on Western Europe; 4.9% focused on Asia and the Pacific; 3.4% focused on Eastern Europe; 2% focused on the Middle East and North Africa; and 0.67% focused on the Caribbean.

What Do Human Rights Grants Support?

- The definition of human rights grantmaking adopted for this study includes 26 issues combined into 10 overarching areas of activity.
- The most funded issue area was *individual integrity, liberty, and security*, at 36% of funding, which includes rights such as right to equality and freedom of opinion, expression, and access to information. The vast majority of funding in this area supported right to equality, which includes any grants made in support of rights of a particular population (e.g. “LGBT rights” or “women’s rights”) that did not provide any more specific information, as well as grants for the general support of organizations focused on protecting the rights of specific identity groups.
- The second most funded issue area was “general,” which included grants for which foundations provided such limited information that the grants could not be assigned to a specific rights area, such as a grant to “protect human rights” in a specific country.
- Health and wellbeing rights received \$119.3 million.
- Sexual and reproductive rights received \$103.4 million.
- Social and cultural rights received \$68.4 million.
- Access to justice/equality before the law received \$61.6 million.

Who Do Human Rights Grants Support?

- Women and girls were the population group that received the most support -- 23% of human rights grants dollars and 30% of the number of grants.
- Children and youth accounted for over 14% of grants dollars.
- Migrants and refugees received at least 10% of human rights grant dollars.
- LGBT population received at least 10% of human rights grant dollars.

Methodology

This study is based on a definition of human rights grantmaking drafted by an advisory committee comprised of eight human rights funders. This definition emphasizes grantmaking in pursuit of structural change to protect and promote the enjoyment of the rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent conventions (see “Working Definition of Human Rights Grantmaking” in the Resources section).

Based on this definition, the Foundation Center developed strategies for “mapping” actual grants data to the definition. This process entailed using existing issue focus, population, and type of support codes, along with keywords, to quantify human rights grants data in a way that would be meaningful to the funding community. As a result of this process, the Center added five new issue focus codes (labor rights, cultural rights, environmental and resource rights, freedom from violence/torture, marriage rights) and one new population focus code (sex workers) to its taxonomy to ensure that human rights grantmaking is captured even more fully and accurately going forward.

One challenge we faced in capturing the nuances of human rights funding was a lack of detail in grants descriptions provided by foundations about the purpose of their grants. Another challenge was ensuring grantee safety, while also promoting transparency. In numerous cases, funders felt that revealing the name, location or exact nature of their grantee’s work would expose the organization to danger. In these cases, the grantee is listed as “anonymous” to prevent identification.

One finding from this research is that a number of foundations who do not identify as supporting human rights made grants that were classified as human rights based on the definition adopted for this study.

We believe this offers great possibilities for new learning, coordination and collaboration among funders seeking to advance human rights.

How Can You Get Involved?

Your input and feedback into the research methodology, produced tools and publications, and future areas for research is critical. To date, we have released Philanthropy In/Sight: Human Rights, an online interactive map of global human rights funding and a publication highlighting the key research findings. We would love to hear how you are using these tools in support of your work. In late February 2013, we will release the full report with a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the field.

Moving forward, we will expand the scope of data collected to include grantmaking by additional non U.S.-based funders and track giving by bilateral and multilateral donors. We will also release annual updates on the state of human rights giving, conducting further research into funding for particular issues and/or regions, and track trends over time.

We are immensely grateful for IHRFG member leadership and involvement in this work to date, especially that of the Advisory Committee and members who have submitted their grants data. If you have not yet submitted your 2011 or 2012 grants data (or are unsure if your institution has done so), please contact Christen Dobson at cdobson@ihrf.org.

Additional Resources

- Advancing Human Rights: The State of Global Foundation Grantmaking, Key Findings
<http://www.ihrf.org/policy-research/mapping-human-rights-funding>
- Philanthropy In/Sight Human Rights Map (Please log in using your IHRFG member area account. If you do not have one, you can create one here) <http://www.ihrf.org/member-area/philanthropy-insight-human-rights>
- Working Definition of Human Rights Grantmaking
<http://ihrf.org/member-area/advancing-human-rights-knowledge-tools-for-funders>

For more information about this ongoing effort, to provide feedback, or if you are interested in IHRFG staff sharing and discussing these findings at your institution, please contact Christen Dobson at cdobson@ihrf.org.