

# **International Human Rights Funders Group**

## **July 16-17, 2001 Meeting**

The Carnegie Corporation of New York

New York City

## **Monday, July 16**

### **Welcoming Remarks from the Steering Committee**

**Steven Riskin**, U.S. Institute of Peace

*Steve welcomed everyone, noting the excellent attendance and thanked the foundations contributing to the sponsorship of the meeting, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, our hosts, and the John Merck Fund, MacArthur Foundation and Joyce-Mertz-Gilmore Foundation.*

### **I. SPECIAL PROJECTS SESSION: “Leveraging New Funds to Support Human Rights”**

**Facilitator: Shalini Nataraj**, Reebok Foundation

This project seeks to increase funding available for human rights work by bringing new funders into the field, including people who currently do related funding and may be interested in applying the lens of human rights in order to bring about more systemic, lasting change.

### **Leveraging Project Report: Marcia Festen**

*Marcia Festen, a consultant who conducted the Leveraging Project research with Daranee Petsod, presented the findings and made recommendations for carrying the project forward contained in the “Leveraging New Funds to Support Human Rights” report. More detail is available in the Report itself. Questions and answers followed the presentation. Participants then outlined immediate and longer-term steps and formed a committee of people interested in working on this.*

### **Methodology**

The research involved reviews of the literature, databases and Internet sources as well as fifty interviews with:

- Foundation executives, program staff and individual donors, both “sympathetic funders” as well as funders who do work with some overlap with human rights
- Affinity group directors and board chairs
- NGO executive directors and development directors
- Advisors to donors and foundations (i.e., consultants to new donors)

### **Findings**

#### **Current funding for human rights:**

- Based on Council on Foundations (CoF) information – which is acknowledged to be flawed given the lack of clarity in the coding -- “international affairs” represents just 11% of all foundation giving and human rights is a sub-category within this field. International Human Rights did experience the greatest growth of any single category. This growth was due to an expanded commitment by existing funders rather than the involvement of new funders; Ford and MacArthur account for two-thirds of all international human rights funding.

**Lessons from other Affinity Groups:**

- Most use a combination of strategies, don't evaluate the results and often don't have sufficient resources for such reflection.
- Among the strategies, peer-to-peer outreach is rated the most effective. Partnerships permit tapping into a group or network that is already defined, but work must be mutually beneficial for it to continue. Site visits or experiential learning is valued. Pooled grant-making funds, which are gaining in popularity, are difficult to organize, expensive and hard to sustain over time.
- Effective leveraging requires a clear goal and a well-thought out message. Then, members of the affinity group must be willing to reach out to all of their contacts.
- The case for leveraging needs to be made with extreme care and consideration of the target audience. People don't want to be told that they are not funding human rights if that's what they believe they do; and pointing out that current funding for human rights is insufficient (currently only 4% according to CoF data) only makes funders defensive.
- Hurdles to overcome: eliminate the ambiguity of the definition of human rights; and distinguish this effort from other funders' groups also trying to leverage the growing pool of philanthropic money.

**International Leveraging Opportunities:**

US foundations' overseas funding is increasing. Some current "hot" issues are:

- low-wage workers rights/labor rights;
- immigrant/refugee rights; and
- transnational/cross-border projects.

**Recommendations****Communications and Planning:**

- Develop a focused mission, message and set of leveraging strategies.
- Develop a multi-faceted definition of human rights grantmaking; use every-day language; show funders they can make a difference through human rights funding; and demonstrate the connection between human rights and what they do already.
- Focus on the right targets: strategies should be progressive building blocks.

**Immediate Action Steps:**

- One-on-one relationship building
- Develop a succinct description of the IHRFG
- Convene a Council on Foundations session

**Medium-Term:**

- Domestic site visits
- Web-site development (human rights activists are internet users)
- Engage those interested in a funding pool

**Long-Term:**

- Reach out to funders outside the US
- Organize overseas site visits
- Move funding pool forward if interest exists

**Questions for Marcia Festen:**

Q. Did the advisors to individual new donors see affinity groups as allies or groups from which to protect their clients?

A. They feel that they must protect their clients/donors but at the same time, if a client has a particular interest, it could be a match. Some new philanthropists see affinity groups as "old style" philanthropy.

Q. Do people understand Economic, Social and Cultural rights (ESCR)?

A. Many see this area as the way to engage new funders but others thought this makes the field too diffuse.

Q. Does the changing economic situation limit the ability to bring in "new" money, new philanthropists?

A. New family foundations and new tech money are unlikely targets for leveraging because they are hard to find. Corporations may think about charity, but since they are often the target of human rights campaigns, they may not be interested in funding the field. Older and larger foundations are most likely to fund this area.

Q. What about getting more money out of the foundations that are already members of the Group?

A. It's possible, but it makes sense to diversify the base of this Group since it is still fairly small.

Q. How can NGOs be involved in the leveraging project without giving them an unfair advantage over other grant seekers?

A. Since it is important to include the people for whom you are leveraging, this should be handled carefully by setting ground rules for their participation without actually becoming members of the group.

Q. What is the aim of the leveraging project? To do what we aren't doing [fund what isn't being funded in human rights] or do more of what we are doing [increase funding for what is currently being funded in human rights]?

A. The first. The field is changing rapidly and existing donors can't keep up with all the new needs such as economic, social and cultural rights, international human rights applied to the US, new countries and greater intersection with other issues; they can barely maintain support for the more established groups. When there are new strategies/innovations, you want to be able to support this.

Q. Was there any discussion of indigenous rights?

A. This did not come up specifically but the funders' network for indigenous issues came up as a potential partner.

Q. Is this affinity group intimidating to new funders?

A. Audience Comment: As a new funder, I need a narrow enough definition to make it manageable; this would help. Audience suggestions for future meetings: focus on specific, concrete themes and make these briefings open to all.

Q. Is the leveraging project and the mission of this group the same thing?

A. No, the leveraging project is just one of a number of IHFRG "special projects." The mission of the group will be discussed tomorrow during the business session.

Q. Did you talk to the Peace and Security Funders' Group, and are they open to cooperating?

A. Yes, and yes.

## **Action Plan**

### **General overview**

- Time-line need not be linear; different approaches could be pursued simultaneously.
- One-on-one connections are critical and should be on going.
- If there is an opportunity to engage overseas funders, there is no reason to wait.

### **Short-term Actions** (over the next six months, before the next meeting in January):

1. Outline purpose through in-depth strategy discussion and have assignments flow from this.
2. Review Adele Simmons paper on global philanthropy, Grantmakers Without Borders, and WINGS initiative.
3. Develop talking points.
4. Prepare succinct description of the IHRFG.
5. Increase presence in the field.
6. Define communications strategy.
7. Concrete task for each donor representative: Invite one new funder to the group's meeting in California in January.

### **Intermediate Term:**

1. Site visits: identify issues of interest and then work with interested funders/partners to choose locations, etc. Target funders who are not already members of the Group.
2. Reaching out to new partners: need to identify and contact both U.S. and non-U.S. funders -- those in Europe, Canada, Japan and the global South. Warren Allmand has a list of funders from Europe, East Asia and South Africa through an affinity group for the promotion of democracy.
3. Pooled fund: explore possibility and interest.
4. Web site: set up and develop content, including a database, this fall.

**Volunteers: Strategic Planning for the Leveraging Project**

Dorothy Thomas (by proxy), Larry Cox, Cora Weiss, Sarah Ford, Karen Colvard and interested members of the Steering Committee have agreed to carry out the above including developing a clear definition of human rights grantmaking. In addition, it was agreed that the talking points in #3 (short-term) should be structured as a briefing paper that would demonstrate the value-added that human rights funding can bring to a variety of funding areas.

## **II. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SESSION: "The Bush Administration's Perspective on Human Rights"**

**Facilitator: Cora Weiss, Samuel Rubin Foundation**

*The Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Paula J. Dobriansky, presented the six overarching principles that define the Bush Administration's approach to human rights. She also stated her own objectives for the coming four years. The Under Secretary's presentation, and questions from the audience, were followed by a discussion with two prominent human rights practitioners: Michael Posner of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights who presented a perspective from the global North, and Professor Abdullahi An-Na'im, a human rights scholar, who presented a view from the global South.*

**Paula J. Dobriansky**  
**Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs**

Under Secretary Dobriansky opened her remarks saying it is critical to be engaged in the NGO community, and that the Bush Administration is committed to human rights and democracy-building.

**Six Overarching Principles:**

1. Back to basics: Hold governments accountable to their international obligations under universal human rights norms.
2. Support for rule of law and democracy programs: democracy is the best guarantor of human rights; committed to "Community of Democracies" program.
3. Multilateral approach: Support, strengthen, and when necessary, reform international fora such as the OAS, OSCE, UN, UN Human Rights Commission.
4. Bi-lateral approach: Coordinate human rights activities with important allies.
5. Role of the corporate community: Consider ways to engage with them on specific, targeted issues
6. Tools and instruments: Will pursue both public and private approaches depending on what is appropriate; will use NGOs as well as government actors and will not be restricted to the executive branch; reports will remain a mainstay of the Human Rights and Democracy bureau.

**Goals for the next four years:**

To focus on the following issues: global climate change, infectious diseases, health issues as a national security issue; the community of democracies; Tibet; trafficking in persons; Plan Colombia; labor and workers' rights; Women's rights; to retain the position of Senior Coordinator for Women's Issues; connections between democracy and human rights; the environment; areas identified by the National Intelligence Council as "Global trends 2015"; water; human rights; environment and health.

**Q. and A.**

Q. What is the difference, morally and legally, not economically, between the Administration's policy towards Cuba and China?

A. Difference is in the perceived effectiveness of sanctions. In China, it is possible to use increasing economic openness and growth to try to effect change. Cuba is so isolated that it's harder to effect change. There should be a *quid pro quo* for lifting sanctions, and so far there has been no change in Cuba.

Q. What avenues is the Bush administration pursuing regarding Chechnya?

A. It will be raised at the G-8 meeting this week. The new ambassador to Russia has plans to evaluate the situation and see what can be done. Also efforts have been made to gain greater access, now the OSCE can go in and monitor.

Q. Does the US support the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) in its entirety, including Economic, Social, and Cultural rights (ESCR)?

A. Yes, we do support the Declaration and it depends upon your interpretation of ESC rights. If you make everything a right, it trivializes all the other rights. By stretching the Universal Declaration, it gets distorted and opened up to incorrect usage.

Q. Do you support the right to an adequate standard of living?

A. We support the UDHR.

Q. What is the Administration planning to do to promote funding for NGOs, through the Faith based initiative, for example? And will organizations be required to uphold human rights standards?

A. Can't answer that because it's under discussion.

Q. The US human rights policy undermines the UDHR in the Sudan. Why hasn't the US ratified the Rights of the Child treaty? How can the US hold other governments accountable while undermining the International Criminal Court (ICC)?

A. We recognize that for NGOs Sudan is a priority. Regarding the Rights of the Child, the State Department ranks treaties, and the rights of the child treaty is being discussed, in order, and will be presented to Congress. On the ICC, the Administration does favor targeted tribunals to deal with concrete situations, but is concerned about compromising its own sovereignty.

Q. Regarding the US losing its seat on the UN Human Rights commission, US allies view Sweden, France and Austria as stronger international human rights supporters, based on US failure to ratify CEDAW, rights of the child, land mines convention, ICC, and the favoring of the death penalty?

A. This is the first time I've heard this argument.

Q. The UN Conference on Racism is coming up. What will be the US role in this?

A. The Secretary of State is very interested in a resolution that would allow a high level delegation. Currently, issues of reparations and Zionism as racism are two stumbling blocks preventing the US from being involved at as high a level as they would like. If these issues aren't resolved, at this stage it's hard to say how it will affect our participation.

Paula Dobriansky also asked the Group a question: What do you deem the priorities to be?

Some answers included strengthening the US role in Women's rights, especially in Afghanistan, and human rights and peace in the Middle East; leveraging US influence more effectively in Latin America; extending US historic involvement in the Inter-Congolese dialogue; for the US to sign the Covenant on E.S.C Rights and to make all rights indivisible.

## **Discussants:**

**Michael Posner**

**Executive Director**

**Lawyers Committee For Human Rights**

The discussant began by noting the difficulty in commenting when the speaker has left.

## **General Observations:**

- The administration came in without a foreign or human rights policy;
- It has been slow to make appointments;
- It is a deeply divided administration with Secretary of State, Colin Powell who is pretty good on human rights, facing Vice President Cheney and Pentagon staff taking on an interventionist, military view of the world.

**Specific Comments on the Under Secretary's six principles:**

- There are a number of places to watch: Chechnya; Colombia; Turkey, military sales coming up; Great Lakes, the administration is floundering; Egypt, a decimated human rights community but 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest recipient of US aid; Indonesia; and Northern Ireland.
- It held the line on Milosevic's prosecution and is setting up a tribunal in Sierra Leone.
- On the Rule of Law and Democracy: Community of democracies? Is it an easy out, as an alternative to taking on governments directly?
- Multilateral: The world is ready to act in a multilateral way but the UN and other multilaterals are not working as they should. They need US government commitment to support reform.
- Coordination with allies: Since the US is on the other side (vis-à-vis their allies) of many issues, it will be difficult to construct alliances.
- Role of business: bi-lateral agreements with Jordan on labor rights linked to trade agreements -- this should be a model for more to come;
- Tools: Country reports will be a good way to see where we are a year from now; the quality of these reports may not be maintained; must not allow a deterioration.
- World Conference on Racism: the US has ratified the Convention on Racism, but it is already five years late on the self report card.
- Personnel: several appointments are worrisome.

**Abdullahi An-Na'im****Professor****Emory University School of Law****General Comments:**

What the US does or fails to do has consequences all over the world. In the case of Sudan, I am at a loss as to what to say when people throw the US record in my face, especially when the US claims moral leadership. Example: On the ICC, the Under Secretary said it was a question of sovereignty, which is what China and Cuba are saying.

A humane impulse in foreign policy exists but that is not the same as human rights. Human Rights requires a sense of obligation that must be followed consistently in domestic and foreign policy. Human rights requires a legal approach. For this, there must be institutions and consistent enforcement and accountability, and each country must start with itself.

There is a synergy between ends and means; a country can't get to good ends by using bad means. Unilateralism undermines multilateralism. Therefore, it is damaging for the US to change approaches with every administration. There must be something deeper that can't be changed from one administration to the next. American exceptionalism has been constant. The American public must hold the government accountable, and then the administrations wouldn't get away with this level of complacency. This requires public education.

**Q. and A. with Discussants**

Q. Is violence justified for the protection of human rights?

A. If you wait for the moment of crisis, you will be forced to take negative or counter-productive actions. So, you must invest in the rule of law and multilateral institutions so that we may not have to take this action the next time around.

Q. How to overcome the hurdle of Western "moral imperialism" or "Western values" arguments in order to promote universal human rights?

A. Empower internal voices but also don't be apologetic or too relativistic. Combine a commitment to the universality of human rights and then be consistent. Liberal relativism does a disservice to universality.

Q. What is the state of play of 'Fast Track' trade negotiations and how does it affect human rights?

A. The debate will culminate in the fall. The administration is pushing it and it will probably go through but there will be a fight. In Jordan and Cambodia conditions to trade have been taken seriously, this could be a way forward. There has been very little work on workers' rights.

Q. Why do you think the Under Secretary says she never heard this view of the US from other governments on the UN Human Rights Commission?

A. She has probably only heard the inside foreign service view and the diplomatic reinforcing of insularity.

Q. Is it worth pushing the government to ratify international treaties?

A. It's always worth trying. But, know that a reasonable date for success is not within the next 4 years. Efforts demonstrate that there is a domestic constituency that cares.

Q. US delegates to the UN are very conservative on reproductive rights. What could this lead to?

A. In general, we must be attentive to the fact that delegates are being sent with no instructions or instructions to keep the rights issue out of all UN discussions and no one is fighting for the other side.

Q. How can we address an increase in privatization?

A. The ideological split of communism and capitalism goes way back, but the focus should be on the violator of human rights whether its governments or corporations. It is unrealistic to think that corporations are going to take the lead to get governments to act differently; however, companies do have responsibilities to share-holders and the public and they must also relate to security forces to protect their businesses.

Q. How can human rights funders advocate for human rights with the government? Clearly NGO pressure is key, is there room for funders beyond funding?

A. Funders fall into a "no category" and the government doesn't really know what to do with them. There could be an opportunity here but it is not clear.

Q. Would this group be more effective as a lobbying group if it were allied with the European donors?

A. Not if there is no receptivity to policy change. However, this doesn't mean that nothing can be done, we must think about specific issues that can be taken on board and followed up in a targeted way.

Q. How can non-US organizations be supported to provide equilibrium to the power of the US?

A. Must build capacity abroad while also building a domestic constituency.

Q. Is there money for human rights education domestically?

A. Some yes, some no. Ford is giving attention to domestic constituency and mobilizing people. As a start, funders could work with domestic groups like the ACLU – by giving them a human rights lens for their work while learning from them about grassroots support.

## **Tuesday, July 17**

### **III. NETWORKING SESSION: "Capacity-Building Grantmaking"**

**Facilitator: Nancy Stockford, John Merck Fund**

*Three grant-makers, representing large, medium and small foundations, were interviewed by the facilitator about their capacity-building grantmaking – approaches, successes, failures and lessons learned.*

**Larry Cox (LC)**

**Ford Foundation**

**Robert Crane (RC)**

**Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation**

**Michael Gibbons (MG)**

**Banyan Tree Foundation**

### **Q1. Define “capacity-building.”**

**RC:** The creation of long-term sustainable institutions; going beyond what normal operating support might involve; its not support for short-term projects although it might include program support.

**LC:** Special grants for long-term institutional strength so an organization can respond better to a variety of challenges.

**MG:** Also, developing the space around the institutions; for example, building human rights education might involve building the capacity of citizens to think about human rights, building social capital; often in institutional forms but also in coalitions or networks. Determine the intervention point: At what level are we trying to change capacity, what is the target of change and how do we get resources there? Education and training to develop individual human capital. Other support strengthens teams, organizations and even fields or movements.

### **Q2. At each of your foundations, what types of grants are designed to build capacity?**

**MG:** At Banyan, all grants include capacity-building, blended with the project or program support. They can be at the individual level to strengthen specific skills, or team level, institutional or for a cluster of groups to strengthen the field

**RC:** We share the distinction between “projects” (primarily driven by donors) and “programs” (driven by institutions). You could call our whole portfolio “capacity-building” because we make operating support over a long period of time.

**LC:** Ford has four types of “capacity-building” grants beyond normal grant-making: (1) Grants to human rights NGOs that help build capacity like the International Human Rights Internship Program or the International Human Rights Law Group; (2) Grants to organizations like the Management Assistance Group in Washington DC that help NGOs to build capacity through strategic planning or special training; (3) significant “extra” money, usually from reserves, provided at a critical juncture in an institution’s life; and (4) core support ear-marked for institutional strengthening.

### **Q3. Please give specific examples of capacity-building grants and what they looked like.**

**RC:** (1) Human Rights Watch: to revamp their technical capacity in 1994. At the time, they had four offices and antiquated technology, with no compatible computer equipment. The grant of \$500,000 allowed them to completely change their equipment and train their staff. They have done this again since but this got them thinking in this way, changed the culture and nature of the way the organization thought and worked.

(2) GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates Against Defamation): It was a collection of statewide offices with some key offices in LA and New York. Each office was independent but weakly joined together. With \$300,000, they strengthened their linkages to form a national organization. Caution: Mergers are often difficult to do because of varying office cultures, but it was very successful in this case. Since, the budget has grown 300% because of a more focused mission and connections with the grassroots, combined with a national presence.

**LC:** (1) Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights: Mary Robinson’s appointment provided the opportunity. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights worked with them to create a proposal of what a capacity-building grant would be. With a grant of \$2 million over two years, they hired specialized fundraising and organizational staff, created a plan for the institution, and now they are ably reporting on how they use their money. The grant moved the institution to a level where it can think about being a well-run institution and it created hope. To make sure the change sticks, you have to change the culture by appointing 5-6 key people who can systematize change.

**MG:** Banyan is not able to do capacity-building on the same scale. Instead, we try to leverage investments to catalyze new money. All grants go to international NGOs for their work with local NGOs in developing countries in two thematic areas:

#### **Training or staff development:**

Columbia University Center for the Study of Human Rights

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Refugee Program to provide annual training on the rights of refugees for staff of other organizations.



Washington Office on Latin America has an advocates training school in Central America; hundreds of NGOs send staff there to train and learn to operate as advocates.

Women, Law & Development International for training in Africa to bring women and NGO leaders together.

**Local-level accompaniment:**

Amnesty International, African Human Rights Development Project works with community leaders to design programs. Human Rights Watch (HRW), Lakes area project works in partnership with activists and NGOs in the Great Lakes region. Staff primarily coach and collaborate, working one-on-one with people, as a way to pass on the rigor of HRW while also gaining skills and information from the activists with whom they work thereby expanding from researchers and monitors to enablers. (Grant was \$250,000 per year for 2 years.)

International Human Rights Law Group. They work in numerous countries around the world. To maximize effectiveness of resources, Banyan Tree had to focus in particular locations, and chose Nigeria and Nicaragua. They mobilize indigenous legal expertise and link them with local NGOs.

**Q4. How do you build capacity in challenging environments overseas, and in particular, in organizations that are centered around a single individual?**

**RC:** JM-GF looks for local partners who can help us get to know the institutions well enough to identify their needs. Also it encourages peer learning - getting institutions to work together to share strengths and understand weaknesses. The field is emerging and pushing us to follow.

**LC:** Having offices overseas is key; it provides a permanent presence. The problems of small organizations overseas are no different than problems here. If there is one leader who won't let go, you just don't do anything until he goes, its impossible to overcome some personalities.

**MG:** It's important to look at movements as well as institutions and to determine how to enable resources to flow to those places. How do we equalize power?

**Q5. Is it useful to push an organization toward capacity building? What is the philanthropic ethic regarding an organization when there is a problem that the board is not addressing?**

**LC:** Often the bigger problem is being an "enabler," i.e. continuing to give money to organizations that have problems rather than confronting the director about the problem.

**RC:** First, look for the right moment to try to assist an organization and accept the times when it can't be done. Success is dependent on organizational readiness or receptivity. Sometimes organizations have outlived their useful life-span and must be allowed to "die."

**Q6. Is a technology grant typical as capacity building? Are there other such typical grants?**

**RC:** It's not typical. Organizations should build technology costs into their core institutional budgets in order to "keep up" with the field as a whole rather than look for separate grants for this.

**LC:** Many grants, if not every, include some component of technology. In Africa, Ford is looking at connectivity issues and helping organizations gain access so they can be on par with their colleagues in other parts of the world.

**Q7. Where is the sustainability for grassroots organizations and how do we prevent them from dying? Or growing and leaving their grassroots constituency behind?**

**RC:** It is important to separate "institution building" from "capacity building." Capacity building allows you to support whatever form people use to organize themselves and get things done even if it is not the traditional institutional model.

**LC:** Regarding endowments, they are very expensive and difficult to do. Also, there is no need to propagate ourselves as the way to go. There are other ways to raise money and grassroots groups should be able to get support from the

communities they serve. They need money before they need technical assistance, equipment, anything else. One staff person means so much more.

**Q8. Where is the human rights funding? Does it go to the grassroots? Can Foundations support grassroots or do they have to do this through intermediaries?**

**MG:** Banyan Tree reaches the grassroots through “bridges” or networks that provide access to thousands of other organizations, and this work is focused on a small number of regions and serves to address the power differential in the local space..

**RC:** In using intermediaries, funders can’t just “use” them but must be willing to develop their capacity and not just have them serve as a pass-through. They begin to democratize philanthropy a bit.

**MG:** At Banyan Tree, we feel most comfortable with intermediaries who are located in the place where the work is being undertaken and can take the responsibility for knowing the area and be committed to following this through.

**LC:** Linking Northern groups to local groups is not donor-driven; it is reality-driven.

**Q9. Is evaluation and assessment part of capacity building? How can small organizations do this?**

**MG:** Evaluation and assessment is a critical capacity that needs to be built as a way of working, and not just to be used to produce reports for donors. One way is to build a planning period into grants and use this early outcome as a tool for future accountability.

**LC:** There is a danger of consultants taking something small and straightforward and making it into an entire industry. Simply put, what are the goals and how will people know if they have achieved them?

**Q10. How can we help make organizations sustainable? How do we help organizations develop different ways to raise non-grant money, such as a business model? Are Program Related Investments one tool?**

**RC:** PRIs have been more successful than the business model. Especially in a situation where an organization owns something, like property, but has a mortgage. JM-GF has refinanced property at a lower interest rate and allowed the organization to recoup the additional money. In terms of business opportunities, this has been difficult. In most cases, running a business brings no value-added to these organizations. However, there are other ways to diversify income sources such as developing an individual donors base.

## **IV. THE FUNDERS’ SOAPBOX!**

**Facilitator: Steve Cheifetz, Stewart R. Mott Charitable Trust**

*At this meeting the IHRFG introduced an innovative forum which proved to be popular. Participants used the lunch period to make announcements, ask questions or raise issues of particular interest to them in their work. Many suggestions were exchanged.*

**Larry Cox, Ford Foundation**

- Announced that a Ford Foundation-commissioned Report on funding of Human Rights in the United States will be available soon.
- The Network on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has been launched. Membership is open to anyone interested in learning how to contribute and take action. A worldwide meeting will be held next spring.
- Ford and Carnegie will co-host a gathering in October to introduce the African Women’s Development Fund -- a new grant-making organization based in Ghana. It will make grants for women’s rights and

economic justice.

- Introduced the new publication, *Making the Connections: Human Rights in the United States*, copies of which were made available [and may still be obtained from the IHRFG].

#### **Joe Wilson, Public Welfare Foundation**

- Suggested a funders' meeting during the upcoming UN Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa.
- A sign-up sheet was circulated for members interested in such a gathering at the Conference.

#### **Melanie Oliviero, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**

- Gave update on "New Tactics on Human Rights" project now assembling first-hand accounts of effective human rights tactics. "Tactics" number in the hundreds and include national budgeting strategies, personal accompaniment, various forms of documentation and partnering with others (NGOs, businesses, academics). Guided by an international Working Group and coordinated by the Center for Victims of Torture, based in Minnesota, the next phases will be regional training sessions on selected tactics by local human rights groups in preparation for assembling at an International Symposium in 2002.

#### **Melissa Pailthorp, ASPIration**

- Introduced the new foundation ASPIration -- a project of the Horowitz family foundation and Open Society Institute. Its mission is to work with NGOs to determine their software needs and help make the software they require available. Seeking potential organizations and information on the intersection of technology and social change.

#### **Valentine Doyle, Lawson Valentine Foundation**

- Introduced Grantmakers without Borders (GWOB), a funders affinity group that seeks to leverage more US-based funding for social change to the global South and to promote best practices in international grant-making.
- Proposed the creation of a sub-committee on environmental human rights.
- Drew attention to upcoming Global Water Crisis conference in Vancouver, and suggested a future IHRFG session on the subject.

#### **Shalini Nataraj, Reebok Human Rights Foundation**

- Questioned the lack of funding for advocacy on the issue of human rights in Asia. Highlighted the Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace, which is based in Washington, DC and which seeks to be the voice on Asian issues in the area of justice and peace
- Highlighted ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) and the need to fund anti-human trafficking measures. Also questioned why US-based groups such as ECPAT find it so difficult to fund work directed at US issues.

## **V. BUSINESS SESSION**

**Coordinator: Mona Younis, Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation**

### **• IHRFG: Mission, Membership and Money**

#### **Mission Statement**

Participants reviewed a draft mission and membership statement, which was based on a synthesis of elements from seven other affinity groups' statements. The discussion produced consensus on the following revisions:

**Resources:** Securing "more, and more effective use of, resources" for the field of human rights will be added to the mission statement to indicate the Group's commitment both to (a) leveraging more resources for the defense of the UDHR and (b) improving the efficacy of what resources currently exist for the field. The latter was deemed important to stress the Group's continuing role as a forum for funders who want to learn how to make more effective use of resources for human rights.

**Defining Human Rights:** A committee was formed during the Leveraging Project discussion to define "human rights grantmaking." The definition they develop will be incorporated into the mission statement.

Note: Special projects (such as the Leveraging Project) are distinct activities that the Group chooses to undertake but are not necessarily the central mission of the group.

#### **Discussion:**

- The draft statement is not precise enough. Only the last sentence of first paragraph actually states the Group's mission.
- A vision statement would outline what we want to see the world become.
- It should be short, sweet and compelling of about 3 sentences, along the lines of: "The IHRFG is open to individual and institutional grant-makers who make or are interested in using a human rights lens/framework"; "Formed in 1994, an affinity group committed to increasing resources to human rights movement worldwide," etc.
- There is a need to clearly define human rights.

Discussion on including both "leveraging of more resources" and "more effective use of resources":

- Not including the latter might deter potential participants who might wish to attend for educational purposes only.
- A way to be more effective is to generate more resources and so its important to be up-front about that. We want to be a friendly environment but also finding more resources is an urgent need.
- Grantmakers of different sizes have different needs. Small funders understand the need to expand but don't see this as the most compelling issue; they see it as legitimate for part of the Group but it's important to have room for other things.
- We do want both aspects. There should be something about keeping people up to date with the rapidly changing world of human rights as a living and dynamic concept.
- "Diversity is desirable"; we want to encourage every size and type grantmaker who is interested to participate.

The Steering Committee will revise the mission statement and circulate for approval at the next meeting.

#### **Membership**

This discussion culminated in a decision to describe those involved as "participants" rather than "members." This decision should be reviewed in the next year or two. In addition, it was decided that by the January meeting, a survey should be done of the pros and cons of registering the IHRFG as a member of the Council on Foundation.

#### **Discussion:**

- Interested in having as many people at the table as possible.
- How do we define membership? Participation, attendance at meetings, voting, paying of dues? For now it might be best to describe ourselves as participants rather than members.
- Recommend delaying the set up of a dues structure until we have a better idea of who we are. Instead, continue to apply for grants for running the Group.
- If the IHRFG becomes an official affinity group of Council on Foundations, membership must be open to anyone who is a member of CoF. This includes corporate foundations.
- The CoF annual meeting is an important venue.
- At the CoF meeting, there is no automatic slot, just a provision for meeting space the day before the meeting starts, and a listing in the official program.
- Membership is a legal and financial issue for incorporation; decisions must be made about the criteria for a board and a voting system.
- There will be a conference at Stanford in January or March with 300+ new philanthropists on how to become global grantmakers. Could be a good forum for this group.
- The question of participation by corporate funders will need to be wrestled with in the future.
- The Environmental Grantmakers struggled with whom to admit and eventually decided to allow corporation foundations. In the end, it didn't really impact anything because of their lack of participation.
- We need to stress that international participation is welcome.
- Question of allowing public foundations that both seek and make grants to participate. Decision made to ensure that current language precludes participants from seeking funds during meetings.

#### **Money**

In preparing for the meeting, the Steering Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various ways of funding the Group's work:

- collect dues from members;

- approach members on a need basis; and/or
- apply for grants.

Noting that JM-GF has agreed to cover the running costs through 2001, and may do so through 2002 as well, the Steering Committee recommended that at this stage in the IHRFG's development, a combination of the second approach to cover meeting expenses, and the third approach for special projects, would be best. The example of the last two meetings indicated that it was possible to have one member cover hosting costs, and three others contribute to meeting expenses. The Leveraging Project Report is an example of special projects fundraising; seven foundation participants contributed \$42,000 for the project. However, assuming that the Group progresses at the current pace, beyond 2002 more substantial funding will be necessary. For one thing the part-time salary of a coordinator (which JM-GF currently assumes) will be needed. The Steering Committee will prepare a budget and proposal this fall to submit to foundations for 2002 to get a sense of foundation receptivity. (In that proposal, the current coordinator's salary will be presented as an in-kind contribution from JM-GF.)

## • **SUB-GROUP Reports**

*Note: The formation of new sub-groups is welcome. Anyone interested in launching a new sub-group should prepare an announcement for circulation to IHRFG participants. Once three members express interest in joining, the coordinator will assist.*

### **Direct Funding for Indigenous [Local] Human Rights NGOs**

Mary Ann Stein, The Moriah Fund

This sub-group has developed initial ideas for the creation of a fund that, for the time being, could go through an intermediary to support organizations working on human rights issues in the global South. Mary Ann distributed a concept paper for a fund for global human rights and made the following points and observations based on the sub-group's work thus far. (A copy of the concept paper is available upon request.)

An interest and a need exist to pool funds and work through an intermediary to connect donors and organizations operating in the global South that deal with the human rights violations in those locales. The purpose of a funding mechanism is to overcome the difficulties of getting resources to these organizations. Such difficulties include the small size of grants needed by local organizations and the fact that many organizations don't have 501(c)3 status thus requiring expenditure responsibility (ER) grants or the determination of equivalency.

Mary Ann suggested that, rather than creating a new organization from scratch, existing resources for some of the grantmaking functions be utilized, perhaps on a more limited regional basis. She also noted that the Tides Foundation might be a possible venue.

After some discussion, sub-group members (listed below) agreed on a series of action steps to be carried out and reported on at the next meeting.

After, or simultaneously with, engaging commitments from donors, the subcommittee would:

- (1) define more specific aspects of the project (i.e. size, strategy, regional focus, etc.);
- (2) based on those parameters, identify a group of advisors to select groups and recipients after soliciting proposals;
- (3) choose a governing board to approve decisions.

The Fund would be open to foundations and individuals willing to make significant contributions to such efforts for a minimum of three years but ideally at least 5 years. Getting money to organizations in need is just a starting point. Later, this body could be in a strong position to assess regions and compare strategies and provide moral support, protection and technical assistance.

### **Discussion:**

Participants expressed enthusiasm for developing a mechanism for funders to reach human rights groups in the global South. One donor representative noted that globalization funders have had similar conversations about such funding and

might be interested in joining this effort. Suggesting that it is important to involve advisors from the beginning, this participant commented that, for political reasons in some places in the global South, groups cannot receive money from the global North and asked, “Could the money come from a place in the South?” Another participant thought that “local” should be used to describe the groups instead of “indigenous.”

The group debated the issue of whether funding pledges should be secured before deciding on the target region(s) or vice versa? One participant expressed support for the idea that more than one area be chosen at the beginning, otherwise the project might get stuck on the first region and be unable to expand. Also, targeting three areas at first would generate comparable models. Another participant, supporting that approach, suggested the initiative should be experimental at the beginning, starting with more regions and then narrowing down if necessary. “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good,” noted this foundation representative who thought it was important to move forward, though further discussion on criteria for selecting a region or regions is needed. Another participant thought that it is important to keep breadth/depth issues at the forefront, and reminded the group that, to do it well, grant making in the global South requires a depth of knowledge. This grantmaker underscored the point that it is important to be as close to the ground as possible, noting that if the fiscal agent is in the United States, it would be somewhat removed. It was noted that the Ford Foundation has been looking at ways to alter its funding stream from North to South and that there might be a Foundation interest in global South capacity building funds—an issue that will be addressed in an upcoming Ford meeting in October. In this context, the Foundation might be in a position to commit significant resources to the human rights effort.

The Tides Foundation was identified as one possible early vehicle, thought as the program grows, another mechanism would be necessary. The representative from the Global Greengrants Fund offered to share that group’s experience in selecting a regional focus and advisors, and its experience with Tides as its fiscal sponsor.

**Current sub-group members:**

Maureen Aung-Thwin, Open Society Institute  
Larry Cox, Ford Foundation  
Michael Gibbons, Banyan Tree Foundation  
Josh Mailman, Ruben and Elisabeth Rausing Trust - UK  
Jesse Margolin, Diamondston Foundation  
Mary Ann Stein, The Moriah Fund

Interested members please contact Mary Ann Stein at (202) 783-8488 or [mstein@moriahfund.org](mailto:mstein@moriahfund.org).

**Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Warren Allmand, Rights and Democracy

The purpose of this sub-group is to advance Economic, Social and Cultural rights. A one-page information sheet describing the sub-group was circulated in spring. Among other things, the sub-group will work to inform and educate interested members about these rights, establish links with new NGOs working in this area and develop a strategy for increased funding to ESCR.

**Current sub-group members:**

Warren Allmand, Rights and Democracy  
Larry Cox, Ford Foundation  
Mark Rand, Funders Group on Trade and Globalization

Interested members please contact Warren Allmand at (514) 283-6073 or [wallmand@ICHRDD.ca](mailto:wallmand@ICHRDD.ca).

**Environmental Human Rights**

Valentine Doyle volunteered to assist in launching this new sub-group. Interested members should contact Valentine at (860) 570-0728 or [vdoyle@compuserve.com](mailto:vdoyle@compuserve.com).

- **Database and Web site**

The mapping of IHRFG foundations and human rights grantmaking continues. Many members have not yet returned completed questionnaires. The meeting packet contained samples of database entries for three foundations -- a large, a medium and a small foundation. Participants who have not already done so were encouraged to send in their completed questionnaires. The Steering Committee will oversee the completion of the survey by the end of the year.

Web site update:

The domain name has been secured: [www.hrfinders.org](http://www.hrfinders.org). An RFP and budget will be prepared for developing the Web site to include the Database. The objective of the Web site is to provide information on human rights funders for IHRFG members as well as grantseekers around the world. Ideally, participants will be able to update their information directly and as needed.

- **Information and resource sharing between members**

The Steering Committee wondered how this can happen more easily. One idea was to create a participant directory that includes brief bios on each member. Participants expressed interest in the idea but did not see this as a priority item at this time. And if such a directory were to be compiled, preference was expressed for it remaining an internal document, not part of the Web site.

The Steering Committee welcomes ideas for how to improve information and resource sharing among members.

- **Council on Foundations 2002 Proposed Session**

The Conference will be held April 29-May 1 in Chicago. For the first time the IHRFG has submitted a proposal for a session to the CoF titled, **"A Human Rights Approach in Funding: Adding Value to Your Grantmaking Program."** A one-page summary of the proposal was distributed to meeting participants. The Steering Committee expects to hear back in mid-September on whether the Group's proposal has been accepted. In the event that it is not, participants suggested that the Steering Committee submit the proposal to other conferences such as Africa Grantmakers, Environmental Grantmakers Association and the National Network of Grantmakers.

- **Next two meetings**

**January 21-22, 2002, San Francisco, California**

In anticipation of implementing Leveraging Project recommendations, the January meeting will be held in California to make it easier for new West Coast funders to attend.

Ideas for session topics are welcome. As usual, the Steering Committee will circulate a list of possible session topics over e-mail and ask participants to indicate their preferences. The following suggestions were made during the meeting:

- Helping grantees to identify alternative sources of income such as individual donors, income-generating projects, etc.
- Program Related Investment grants
- What are the current cutting edges in the field of human rights? Where is the field moving?
- Understanding the current "fragmentation" of the human rights field, its implications for grantmakers and what can be done.
- Use of film has been effective (Amnesty's video version of "Declaration" was mentioned).

Possible foundation hosts: Hewlett, Packard, Goldman, Shaler-Adams, Tides Center, Ploughshares.

Meeting agenda will include:

- Leveraging project committee will report.
- Pros and cons of registering the IHRFG as an official Council on Foundations affinity group.
- Update on the Fund for Global Human Rights that is being created by the sub-group on Direct Funding for Local Human Rights NGOs.
- Updates from other sub-groups
- Update on the IHRFG Database and Web site
- Mission statement

- Additional suggestions are welcome.

### **July 15-16, 2002 meeting will be held in New York**

- **Other business**

#### **Joining the Steering Committee**

Current Steering Committee members invited interested members to join. Valentine Doyle of the Lawson Valentine Foundation volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee; following the meeting Julie Richardson of the General Service Foundation also agreed to join. New members are always welcome. Please contact Mona if you would like to know more about what is involved.

#### **IHRFG logo**

Ideas are being solicited for a possible logo, also names of people who do this sort of design work.