

**SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE
NEW YORK CITY
JULY 17-18, 2012**

**Opening Plenary Small Group:
Building a Broader Constituency for Human Rights**

Tuesday July 17, 2012

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

***Please note that these notes have not been reviewed
by the speakers or organizers of this session***

Facilitators:

- Reagan Ralph, Fund for Global Human Rights
- Mona Chun, International Human Rights Funders Group

Speakers:

- Tim Parritt, Oak Foundation
 - Terry Odendahl, Global Greengrants Funds
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Mona Chun opened the discussion by introducing Terry Odendahl, Regan Ralph, and Tim Parritt. She then used the mapping tool to illustrate the importance of the possibilities for constituency building outside of the traditional human rights funding organizations. She also discussed missed opportunities, and how constituency building can, in the future, help to avoid missing opportunities for funding in the future.

Terry Odendahl: Clearly there are 50 or 60 funders who should be recruited into IHRFG based on the findings we looked at. Global Greengrants Funds mainly funds groups who are building constituencies around human rights, groups at the most grassroots level.

Terry then showed a clip about a Peruvian organization.

Global Greengrants often makes grants that do not, at the beginning, look like human rights grants, but they become human rights grants later.

- Documentaries
- Fund to protect human rights defenders
- Fund film festivals that help introduce people to the ideas of human rights.
- Funding a little project that Oil Watch is doing, a game on your phone, that is about protecting the rainforest from extractive industries.
- Fund messaging educational tools.
- Protect against the criminalization of activists
- Now rethinking grant categorization; lots of funding for indigenous rights as well.

Funders could provide a lot more “thought leadership.”

- New Working Group → global economy.
 - Funding for Resource Extraction
 - Relationships between state and corporation around HR abuses
 - Go to Environmental Organizations with a Human Rights framework

Tim Parritt: Looks at messaging differently. Oak Foundation has moved into area of communications and messaging recently. Tends to fund classic advocacy organizations and campaigns, sudden realization that effectiveness of these organizations were defeated by lack of political will/negative media coverage/poor enthusiasm. Bigger emphasis on the mobilization, legal definition, strategies of the human rights framework.

Critical roles for funders in building constituencies

- Changing minds about human rights

Regan Ralph then facilitated the discussion.

- Reactions to the mapping findings
 - Idea that something might not start off looking like a HR grant, but it turns into one. There’s an investment you need to make at the beginning with grassroots groups, and you need to trust them. Creating a shared vision is important.
 - The data shows the need for collaboration between funders to create action. Any time there is vulnerability, there is a need for collaboration and action.
 - Reminds us of important debate – so-called professionalization of HR movement
 - Should HR groups become more professional?
 - How to attract constituencies and make them your allies, how to do the right kind of messaging?
 - How to use constituencies? How can you specifically make use of a constituency in a particular way?
 - What this does is give us a starting point.
 - Think about implications – there is a need and there is a lack of funding to address that need. What is the most important part of that for us as funders to grapple with?
 - Also important for us to note that there are a whole group of donors (those who give after being advised by professionals) who are not here.
 - Nontraditional foundations
 - Grantmakers are all overhead – they should get out of the way and let the grantees do what they need to do.
 - Does the data mapped link to any movement to get grantees to share information or collaborate on what they’re doing?
 - There is inherent risk involved in opening up grantmaker information, but are there benefits to sharing information with grantees or other grantmaking information?