



Working Group of Social Movements and Grassroots Groups



The **Working Group of Social Movements and Grassroots Groups** (SMWG) builds solidarity, facilitates mutual learning, deepens a shared analysis and builds global alliances around common challenges, goals and issues of collective interest, while promoting the active participation and leadership of grassroots organizations in all areas of ESCR-Net's collective work. In the coming period, the Working Group is committed to advancing a global movement, together with diverse allies and partners, to realize ESCR and challenge those forces that pose threats to human dignity.

Current Objectives

- Social movements and grassroots groups will deepen shared analysis of common challenges, including global forces that perpetuate impoverishment, dispossession and social exclusion;
- Proposals reflecting the above-mentioned shared analysis will be presented to, and considered by, the broad ESCR-Net membership as possible future projects or campaigns;
- Social movements and grassroots groups will engage in mutual learning and build solidarity; and
- ESCR-Net, and its various thematic Working Groups and projects, will enjoy increasing participation and leadership of social movements and grassroots groups.

Impacts 2013-2016

- Via multiple solidarity and mutual learning activities, the Working Group has strengthened alliances and contributed meaningfully to transcending historic divisions between the groups represented by ESCR-Net's social movement members.
- Grassroots groups have increasingly informed strategic analysis and direction within the Network via their centrality and leadership in several areas of collective work, including three social movement members on the current Board and a growing number of grassroots groups in leadership roles in several thematic Working Groups.
- The analysis and knowledge of social movements have been consolidated and shared with the wider human rights community via a series of publications and events, including "Land in the Struggle for Justice: Social movement strategies to secure human rights," while informing developments in international human rights standards.

Prioritized Activities for 2016

1. **Facilitate strategic exchanges within the SMWG.** This will include virtual and in-person dialogues about growing trends of repression, their underlying causes and potential responses, as well as informal and formal meetings alongside events of other working groups and the Board. A dedicated meeting of the SMWG during the GSM will continue to deepen shared analysis of common global conditions and clarify the connections between their struggles, while strengthening the utilization of human rights in social justice work.
2. **Prepare a proposal for global campaign to realize ESCR.** The SMWG is developing a concept note for a coordinated global campaign to promote the realization of ESCR and collectively confront threats affecting many members. In the lead-up to the Global Strategy Meeting, this

concept note will be vetted by thematic working groups who will be invited to further build the analysis and detail specific campaign components before being submitted to the GSM.

3. **Promote the active participation and leadership of members of the SMWG in all areas of collective work in ESCR-Net.** The centrality of social movements and grassroots organizations in all areas of collective work is a core principle of the Network; evidenced in ESCR-Net's Governance Document, criteria for the composition of the Board, and a key criterion for thematic events and projects. Given their ability to represent communities struggling to resist violations of ESCR, the SMWG will continue to facilitate their leadership in all thematic work.

Membership

As of March 2016, the SMWG is comprised of 23 member organizations. Almost 50% of these are from Latin America and the Caribbean and most of the rest are from Africa and Asia, a couple members from North America. Working group members represent indigenous peoples, peasants and fisherfolk, the urban poor, landless farmers, domestic workers, racial and ethnic minorities and groups resisting harmful development projects. Several also enjoy the strong leadership of women and several have specific sections of their movements dedicated to advancing the rights and interests of women. Overall, social movements and grassroots organizations are priorities for outreach to future ESCR-Net members. Specific priorities within this focus include (a) more groups from Africa, (b) more groups from Europe and (c) groups led by women or more deliberately embracing a women's rights agenda and an intersectional analysis.