

ESCR-Net

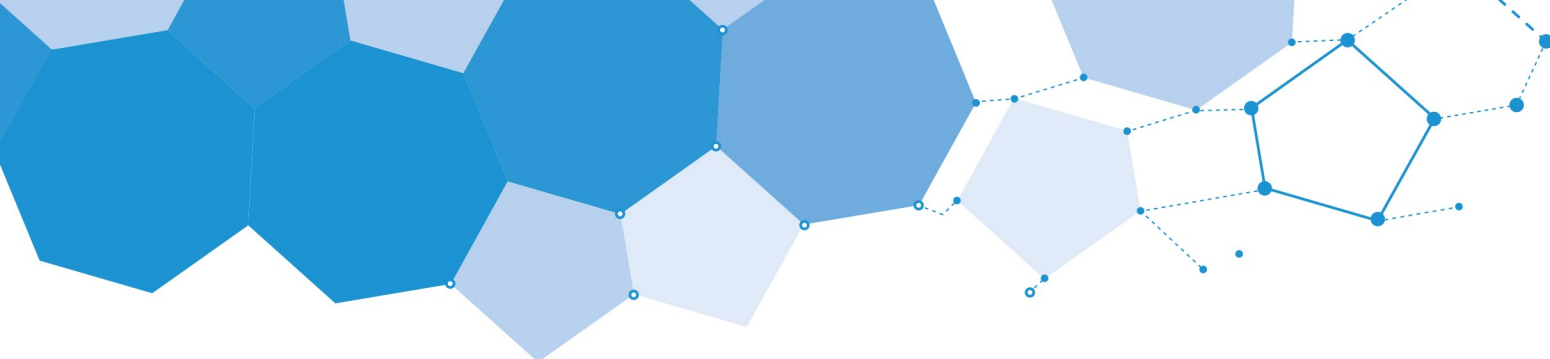
International Network
for Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights



الشبكة العالمية
للحقوق الاقتصادية
والاجتماعية والثقافية



ESCR-Net
Red-DESC
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We remain committed to our mission to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all, in the face of deepening inequalities, impoverishment and dispossession amid abundance, corporate capture of public institutions, climate change, and growing repression affecting communities in every region. In confronting these conditions, ESCR-Net - a network of over 280 social movements, organizations and advocates worldwide - is committed to social movement centrality, building shared analysis and action guided by movements and grassroots groups emerging from affected communities. Human rights emerge from, and will ultimately be secured via the demands and collective action of people for participation, well-being, and dignity. Members have also reaffirmed commitments to regional and gender balance in leadership as first steps in addressing longstanding structural inequalities and set as a common objective to operationalize a feminist intersectional analysis, building inclusive demands in the face of intertwining systems of oppression and exploitation.

As members who have been engaged in and provided leadership to collective action via ESCR-Net, we are honored to be elected by fellow members to our new roles on the Board. We are grateful for the leadership of the last Board—fellow members who supported the adoption of the Common Charter for Collective Struggle, drafted by social movement members and discussed across all working groups, as a foundation for network-wide shared analysis. The process of developing the Common Charter provides a model for deepening analysis and collective action grounded in the resistance and alternatives of impacted communities. As part of this effort, our predecessors provided leadership to the Global Strategy Meeting of ESCR-Net members, where we collectively developed network-wide shared objectives, reaffirmed our core principles, and envisioned more fully using the collective strength of members across 75 countries.

The strength of ESCR-Net is its ability to connect and coordinate the collective action of diverse members across borders. This requires building relationships and dialogue across regions, languages and interconnected histories, fostering meaningful solidarity, mutual learning, and practical member-to-member support. These relationships of solidarity provide the foundation to deepen a common, systemic analysis of evolving global challenges and openings. Rooted in the understandings of social movements and grassroots groups, this analysis provides the basis for member-led collective action confronting unjust structures and advancing transformative alternatives. If members are the core of ESCR-Net, wider alliances and partnerships are vital to making human rights and social justice a reality for all.

**To urgently advancing the struggle together,
ESCR-Net Board**



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Ryan Schrief, Treasurer
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Chris Grove
ESCR-Net (ex-officio)

• Core principles and Theory of Change

"[We must build] clarity around the forces that we face, and the history of those forces, but then also to not exclude, and deeply integrate the knowledge and insights of those who are fighting, who are feeling the impact of these systems every day." (Osama Diab, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights)



"Data from those that threaten us will not help us. If from the government or corporations, it will build their argument, will present a reality aligned to their interests. We have just sent a parallel report and we have collected data on our own to bolster our arguments. Only this data allowed us to defend our rights." (Toribia Lero Quispe, Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas)



"The problem we are facing here, another country or another community faces the same problem." (Massa S. Packer, Natural Resource Women's Platform)



The origins of ESCR-Net can be traced to a small group of social movements, human rights NGOs and advocates who came together in shared recognition that many of the injustices they were confronting were increasingly global in nature. Officially established in 2003, the network emerged as a space for members around the world to connect their struggles across regions to address these often systemic challenges. Reflecting an understanding of human rights as grounded in, and realized through, peoples' lived experiences and struggles, members defined regional and gender balance, the centrality of social movements, and an intersectional approach foregrounding gender analysis as core guiding principles for ESCR-Net. Over the past 15 years, these core principles have been the pillars of our member-led model of work, informing four primary strategies central to ESCR-Net's theory of change:

Solidarity, grounded in a recognition that "your struggle is my struggle," manifests in collective mobilizations via ESCR-Net's System of Solidarity to defend members facing threat or attack, taking up their broader human rights demands, and facilitating member-to-member strategic support.

"In order to address the systems of oppression that create inequality across the world, and across different demographics, whether we're talking about women, whether we're talking about indigenous people, we need to have a common understanding of the dominant economic system that's benefiting from this oppression. And once we have that common understanding, we can then decide what kind of actions we need to take to make change." (Sanam Amin, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development)

"[The] main priority is to utilize this process toward the treaty to highlight the asymmetries between communities, citizens, States and corporations, as well as to collectively strengthen recognition of the fact that corporate capture, interference, and conflicts of interest must be prohibited, that the interference of corporations in the design and implementation of laws and public policies must be prohibited." (Alejandra Scampini, Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research)

"It's giving people the tools and the resources to be able to sustain change themselves. I think that's the power of popular education and political education. Both that ownership and strength but also that solidarity and that mutual respect for each other." (Adam Barnes, Kairos – The Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice)



"We want to see all women domestic workers being recognized as workers, enjoying all benefits like other workers do. We want the lack of recognition to change. I am a feminist and I believe in equality for women. I believe in the power of solidarity." (Ida LeBlanc, National Union of Domestic Workers)

Mutual learning via cross-regional sharing of experiences, strategies and lessons is facilitated through grassroots leaders' exchanges, our Caselaw Database, and multilingual webinars. Solidarity and mutual learning nurture relationships of trust and foster movement-building, which are foundational to the other two elements of our theory of change.

Shared analysis of the global conditions and historical trajectories undermining human rights that is guided by resisting communities is integral to defining issues, strategies, and inclusive demands for systemic change, as captured in our Common Charter for Collective Struggle.

Collective action – drawing on the power of diverse members across 75 countries to make human rights and social justice a reality for all – involves advocating for effective regulation and remedy, shifting global economic policy, intervening in key legal cases, confronting corporate capture, and centering the visions of people's movements in all collective efforts.

"It's not only to share the experiences, but also, to see how the movement at the global level can connect with each other." (Chanda Thapa, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact)



ESCR-Net members contributed to a powerful legal precedent regarding the rights of unpaid care workers, particularly women, to access social security without discrimination via a collective third-party intervention to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (March 2018, *MCTC v Ecuador*).



A 'Training of Trainers' workshop with Endorois women leaders in Lake Bogoria, Kenya (May 2018), supported community-based organizing to advance implementation of the African Commission decision calling for restitution of Endorois land, while centering women's emerging leadership. Participants collectively developed and voted on 14 resolutions to further advance gender equality and women's leadership, which were accepted by senior Endorois leaders who pledged support for implementation.

Following a strategic exchange in Nairobi, Kenya (May 2018), grassroots women leaders advancing struggles for land, housing and natural resources are continuing mutual support and refining common demands – including via the use of online platforms, prioritizing the participation of young women leaders in key dialogues, and preparing to launch a series of short videos amplifying their analysis under the heading #WomenLeadOnLand.

Expanding their interpretation of the right to life, the UN Human Rights Committee found that Canada had violated rights to life and non-discrimination in denying a woman essential health services based on her irregular migrant status, resulting in life-threatening harms (July 2018, *Toussaint v Canada*). Five ESCR-Net members submitted a collective expert opinion in the case.



Advocacy shaped by affected and resisting communities around the world ensured that the initial draft of the UN Human Rights Council treaty on business and human rights included a provision to combat corporate capture and attention to the "rights of victims", indigenous peoples, women, and conflict-affected areas, as well as supporting mobilizations to secure effective regulation and remedy at the regional and national level.



Human rights defenders participated in exchanges in Tunis, Durban, and Nairobi, deepening their analysis of the role of conflict, corporate capture, and patriarchy in undermining security and protection. As a powerful component of building proactive advocacy, members shared strategies for community self-defense, digital security, and self-care from their different regions.

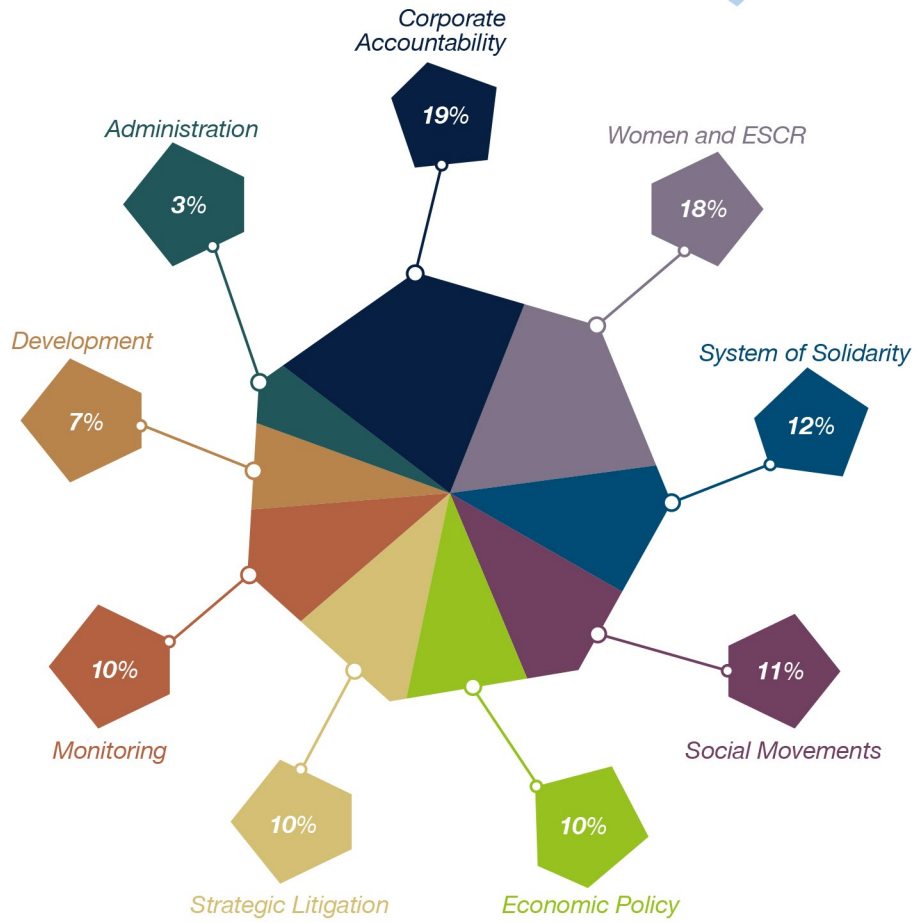
Focusing attention on implementation of UN treaty body decisions, members put forward key proposals at a joint briefing for the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN CESCR) and UN Human Rights Committee. After supporting new working methods for follow-up on decisions, members successfully submitted the first collective civil society intervention related to implementation of a UN CESCR decision on the right to housing (March 2018, *MBD v. Spain*).



Active member engagement with the UN Human Rights Committee over three years culminated in the development of General Comment No. 36 on the right to life (October 2018). Members celebrated recognition of sexual and reproductive health and rights, environmental rights, corporate responsibility, extraterritorial obligations, and States' duty to address the general conditions in society that prevent enjoyment of a right to life with dignity.

ESCR-Net members prioritized network-wide campaigning to confront corporate capture of government institutions at a strategy meeting in Durban (July 2018), with attention to the impacts on and leadership of women in struggles for land, housing, and natural resources. Movement and allied members are using the corporate capture framework to challenge large-scale development projects and related dispossession in Colombia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and South Africa.





Total Revenue: \$4,417,496 / Total Expense: \$1,815,884

By mobilizing in solidarity actions, engaging in mutual learning, deepening shared analysis and common demands, and, ultimately, advancing collective action, ESCR-Net members have made vital strides towards a reality of human rights and social justice for all. ESCR-Net thanks the many members and allies who dedicated immeasurable time and effort to collective work in 2018, as well as those who shared financial resources that strengthened ESCR-Net, including:



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