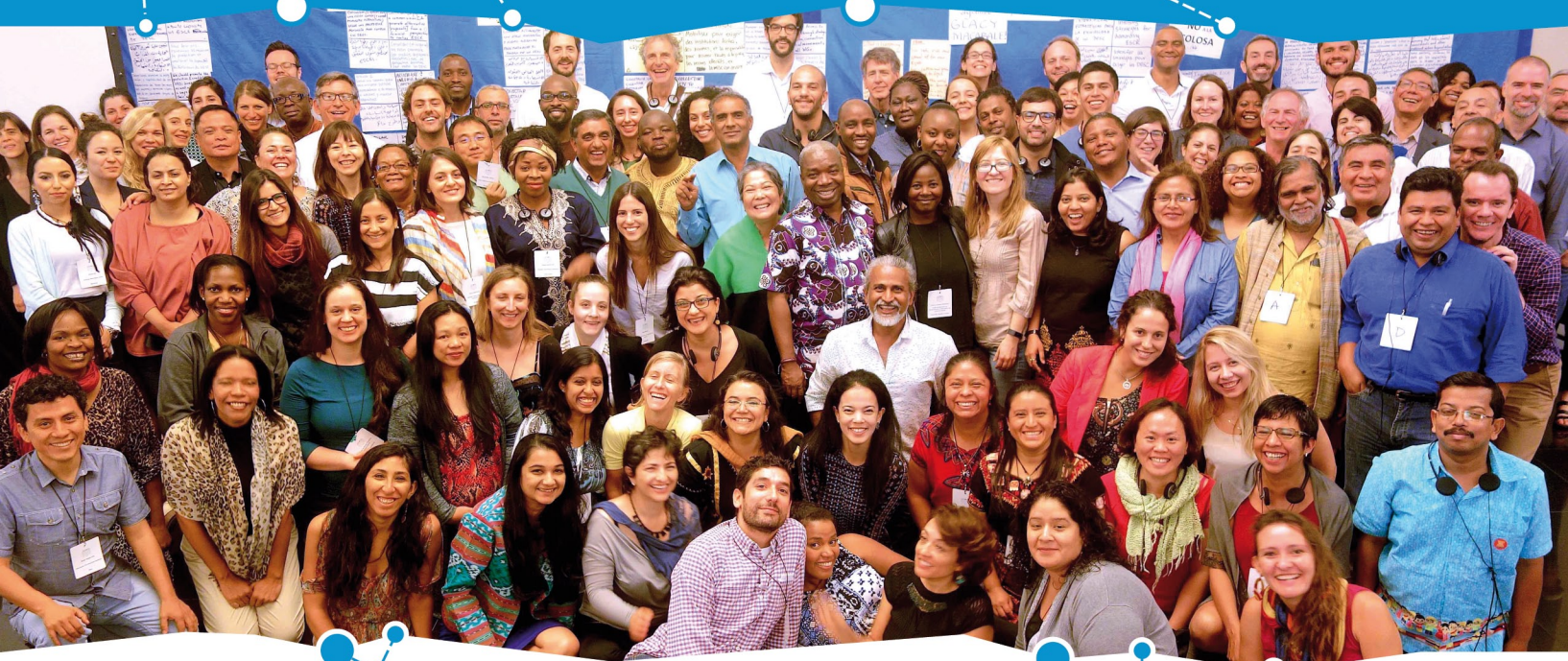


ESCR-Net International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Annual Report 2016



الشبكة العالمية
للحقوق الاقتصادية
والاجتماعية والثقافية



ESCR-Net
Red-DESC
Réseau-DESC

1

Greetings

ESCR-Net Members strengthened their common commitments and defined shared objectives in 2016, providing a solid foundation for transformative action. Social movement and indigenous leaders, campaigners and litigators, human rights academics and advocates—140 representatives of ESCR-Net Member organizations, from over 40 countries—convened a Global Strategy Meeting in Argentina, in November. In a moment of political upheaval and intensifying inequality, they came together to deepen their understanding of the global conditions affecting their communities and to explore opportunities to connect struggles for justice across borders. One social movement leader suggested “we are not poor, we are made poor.” Members affirmed that this was the result of a system that regularly “commodifies people and nature and often criminalizes the poor,” particularly when they stand together for the human rights of their families and communities. In response, another leader stressed that “we must globalize the struggle for the rights of the poor,” with a fellow Member explaining that this begins with the recognition that “your struggle is my struggle.”

Building on a series of dialogues held by the Social Movement Working Group, the Global Strategy Meeting reinforced the leadership and vital analysis of affected communities, grassroots groups and social movements. These dialogues emphasized the need to reclaim and popularize human rights as a vital framework for collective struggle emerging from peoples’ demands for well-being, participation and dignity. While Members acknowledged the need to respond to immediate threats, they emphasized the need to also amplify and articulate alternatives to the dominant socio-economic model grounded in their common commitment to human rights and environmental justice. These alternatives provide space to imagine and debate possible futures, to mobilize the creativity and commitment of new groups in support of human rights and social justice.

Further, members highlighted the need for our demands and visions to include all of us, recognizing our different histories and positions within current social relations. This includes asking how women from diverse backgrounds are differently or disproportionately impacted by policies, laws, budgets and practices in a particular context. This also involves foregrounding the perspectives and leadership of those who have long confronted exploitation and oppression as we do the difficult work of trying to articulate and advocate a common future. In the face of leaders who attempt to secure power via a politics of fear and exclusion, developing inclusive demands for freedom and equality—capable of connecting struggles across historic divides and embodying our shared values—is a vital step towards building a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all.

ESCR-Net Board 2016-2018



Francisco Roca
Board Chair
Consejo de Pueblos
Wuxhtaj
(Guatemala)



Cathy Albisa
Treasurer
National Economic and
Social Rights Initiative
(United States)



Sandra Ratjen
Secretary
Franciscans International
(Switzerland)



Ruth Aura-Odhiambo
Federation of Women
Lawyers (FIDA)
(Kenya)



Saeed Baloch
Pakistan Fisherfolk
Forum
(Pakistan)



Hasan Barghouthi
Democracy and
Workers' Rights Center
(Palestine)



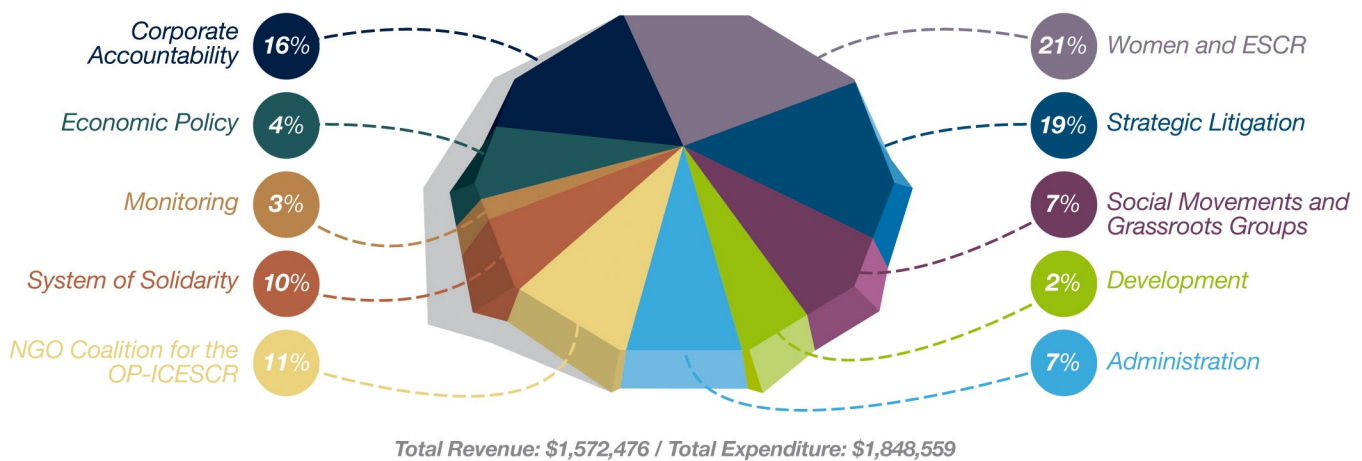
Herman Kumara
National Fisheries
Solidarity Movement
(Sri Lanka)



Chris Grove
Executive Director,
ESCR-Net

Financial Information **2**

ESCR-Net **Members**—over 270 social movements, NGOs and advocates across 70 countries—“seek to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all.” Our **Board** is elected from and by Members based on principles of regional and gender balance and inclusion of social movements. ESCR-Net is led by Members, who build shared analysis, define strategies and undertake collective action, foremost through **Working Groups**, including: Women and ESCR, Corporate Accountability, Strategic Litigation, Economic Policy, Monitoring of ESCR and Social Movements. In addition, members take collective action via networkwide campaigns and the System of Solidarity (SOS), which responds to urgent threats facing communities or individual defenders and works to strengthen their security and protection. **Secretariat** staff facilitate the strategic dialogue and joint advocacy of Members.



ESCR-Net Members contribute to joint advocacy, strategic exchanges, and solidarity actions. These contributions are vital to the network and its collective impact. **ESCR-Net thanks the many Members and allies who dedicated immeasurable time and effort to cooperative work, as well as those who shared financial resources, in 2016.**

ESCR-Net expresses its appreciation to anonymous donors and to the following for their generous support:



Each of these contributions is vital to building a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all.

3 Global Strategy Meeting

From more than 40 countries, 140 representatives of ESCR-Net Member organizations gathered for an intensive week of strategic analysis and planning in Argentina, in November 2016.

Model of Work

As articulated in ESCR-Net's Governance Document, Members strive "to build a global movement to make human rights and social justice a reality for all," guided by a series of core principles, namely:

- Advancing all human rights, as universal, indivisible and interdependent, with a focus on ESCR issues;
- Ensuring regional and gender balance in leadership, intersectional gender analysis and the centrality of grassroots groups and social movements;
- Grounding network activities in the lived experience of

people resisting ESCR violations, and advancing concrete, collective actions able to affect systemic change; and

- Striving for shared analysis and consensus in decision-making as a member-led network, but respecting the autonomy of individual participants' positions.

Grounded in these principles, ESCR-Net provides a platform for Members to build solidarity, critical analysis and collective action across borders to confront systemic injustice and advance alternatives.

Common Analysis

ESCR-Net has long facilitated strategic exchange and mutual support between Members. In the past couple of years, led by social movement and grassroots Members, ESCR-Net has increasingly provided space for Members to deepen shared analysis of evolving global conditions. At our Global Strategy Meeting in November, Members affirmed a Common Charter for Collective Struggle, initiated by our Social Movement Working Group and revised with input from all working groups. The Common Charter outlines the interconnected global conditions

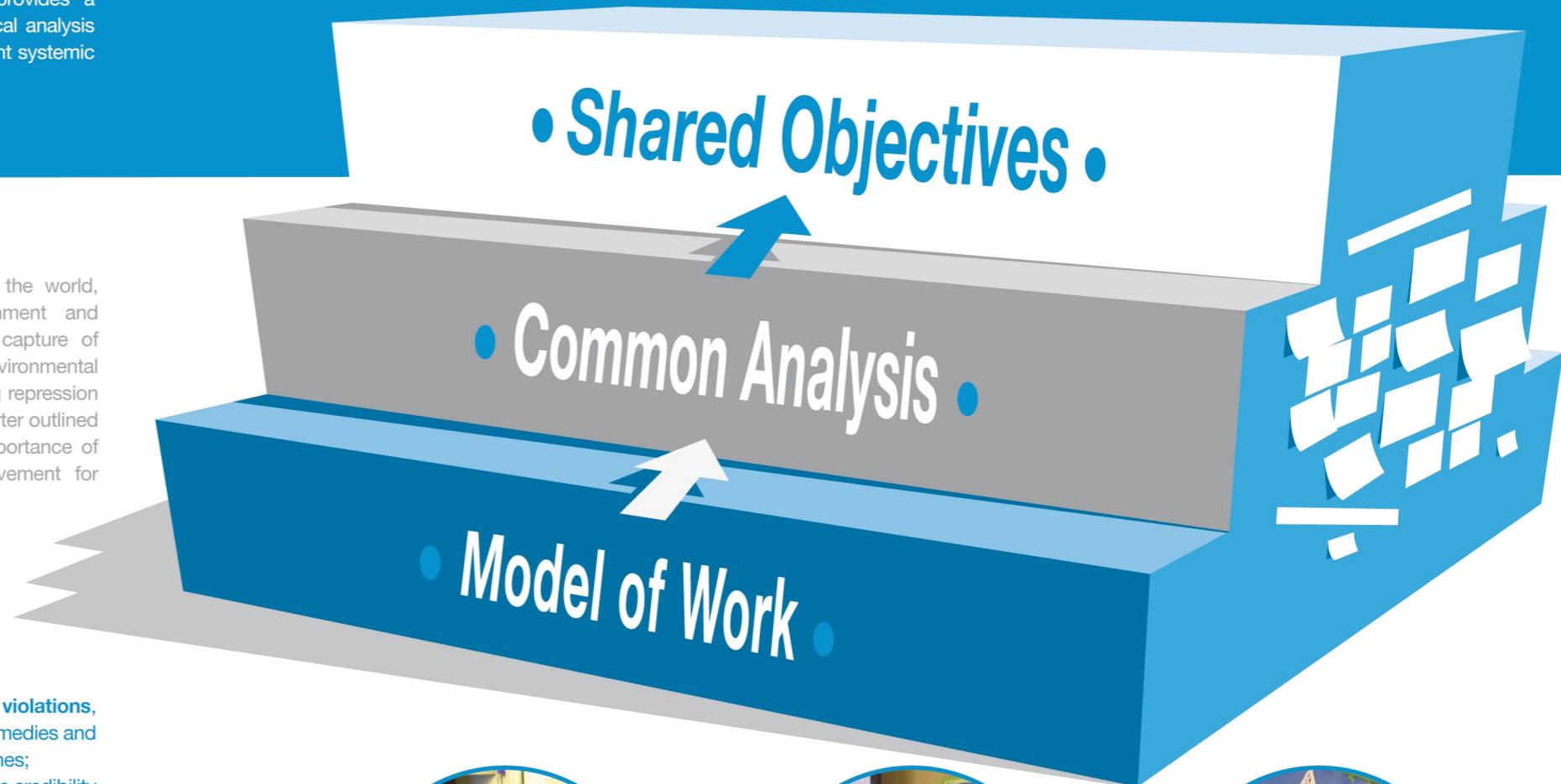
undermining peoples' human rights around the world, including deepening inequality, impoverishment and dispossession amid abundance, corporate capture of state institutions and decision-making, environmental degradation and climate change, and growing repression of human rights defenders. The Common Charter outlined emerging points of unity, recognizing the importance of uniting local struggles in an inclusive movement for transformative change.

Shared Objectives

This common analysis was intensified by disturbing political shifts in several countries by the end of 2016, pushing Members to do the difficult work of articulating shared objectives to guide their collective action across working groups and via network-wide campaigning and advocacy, namely to:

- **Advocate shared alternatives to the dominant socio-economic model**, grounded in an inclusive vision for realizing human rights and environmental justice;
- **Center ESCR in public debates, decision-making, structures and practices**, intensifying cross-network strategies for investigation, popularization, strategic action and campaigning, attentive to the roles of States, corporations and other actors;

- **Secure justice for systemic ESCR violations**, pursuing effective accountability, regulation, remedies and implementation through participatory approaches;
- **Counter growing repression**, reinforcing the credibility and capacity of human rights defenders and connecting reprisals to underlying ESCR issues;
- **Strengthen connections between diverse struggles**, challenging common global conditions and foregrounding the analysis and leadership of social movements; and
- **Operationalize an intersectional approach in practice**, foregrounding gender analysis and guided by communities confronting overlapping forms of oppression, exploitation and dispossession.



4 Impacts

12 new cases published in 4 languages in the ESCR-Net Caselaw Database

91 Member News published on the website

818,715 page views of the website (44% increase compared to 2015)

Members active in the Corporate Capture Project successfully encouraged fellow Treaty Alliance members to advocate for protections against corporate interference in government processes in the emerging treaty on human rights and business.

Steps toward implementation of the African Commission decision calling for restitution of Endorois land are concurrently advancing women's substantive equality – Endorois women have developed proposals for their unprecedented participation in community governance structures, which have received initial endorsement by a group of community elders and Endorois Welfare Council leaders.

140 social movements, civil society organizations and advocates from 40 countries participated in the ESCR-Net Global Strategy Meeting in Buenos Aires

5 security trainings conducted by ESCR-Net built capacity of human rights defenders at risk

21 new Members in three new countries (Rwanda, Tunisia and Yemen)

Deepened advocacy contributed to ongoing implementation of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights positive decision regarding indigenous Sawhoyamaxa lands in Paraguay – two challenges to the constitutionality of the Paraguayan law approving land restitution have been defeated, and members of the community have reclaimed a portion of their ancestral lands.



Activists in Cambodia, the Philippines, Egypt, Pakistan, and Guatemala were released from prison; the murderers of a female leader in South Africa were convicted; and two frontline advocates and their families were moved to safety – outcomes attributable, in part, to the collective mobilization of ESCR-Net Members via the System of Solidarity.



The launch of an Arabic-language website (with over 15,000 visitors in its first four months), Facebook page and Twitter account has strengthened engagement of Arabic-speaking members and allies and consolidated collective work across four languages.

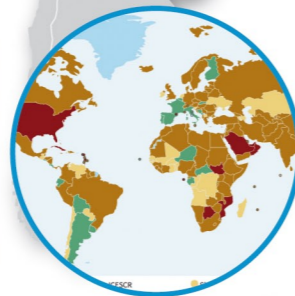


With the leadership of grassroots and indigenous groups, the Treaty Initiative has built cross-regional advocacy and legal proposals for a strong UN treaty to address corporate human rights abuses – members from all regions collectively engaged in recent treaty negotiations, stressing issues of corporate capture, disproportionate impacts on women and attacks on human rights defenders.

Regional workshops in Lebanon and Bulgaria brought together women's rights advocates to build capacity in the strategic use of UN and regional human rights treaty bodies, as well as complementary spaces to advance substantive equality and shape economic and social policies.

Timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Strategic Litigation Working Group convened members of the Human Rights Committee and Committee on ESCR, leading litigators, and academics for a dialogue on strengthening implementation as integral to access to justice.

ESCR-Net celebrated the adoption, entry into force and cross-regional ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on ESCR via the NGO Campaign for the OP-ICESCR coordinated by the Network from 2008 – 2016; individuals or groups of individuals in 22 countries can now seek justice for violations of their ESCR at the international level.



Hidrosantacruz, a subsidiary of the Spanish company Hidralia Energía, recently relinquished its rights to construct the Qanbalam hydroelectric plant in Guatemala; grassroots action and international solidarity—facilitated by ESCR-Net and emphasizing the extraterritorial human rights obligations of home states—contributed to this victory.



Learn more

www.escr-net.org

 [ESCR Net / Red DESC](#)

 [@ESCRNet](#)

 vimeo.com/escrnet

Contact us

info@escr-net.org

+1-212-681-1236

الشبكة العالمية
للحقوق الاقتصادية
والاجتماعية والثقافية



ESCR-Net
Red-DESC
Réseau-DESC