

# IMPACT REPORT 2019

How does the work of Civil Rights Defenders influence the development of civil and political rights? A full overview of the Civil Rights Defenders' activities during 2019 can be found in the [Annual Report](#). This Impact Report aims to demonstrate on a more granular level the effects and impact of some of Civil Rights Defenders' key activities during 2019, and how they deliver on our vision and mission.

Civil Rights Defenders is a member of Giva Sverige - the Swedish Fundraising Association - and follow the organisation's [Impact Reporting Guidelines](#). Giva Sverige works to ensure that Sweden's fundraising sector is transparent, accountable, ethical, and professional.

Civil Rights Defenders is an international, non-profit, human rights organisation that is politically and religiously independent. For almost 40 years, Civil Rights Defenders has been working to defend and promote people's civil and political rights and empower human rights defenders at risk around the world. We engage in advocacy activities and legal processes, work with security and capacity building, and provide information on the situation concerning human rights. We are a global organisation with a presence on four continents. In 2019, Civil Rights Defenders continued its efforts to support human rights defenders in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eurasia, and Europe. With a long-term perspective, Civil Rights Defenders runs programmes and collaborates with more than 200 human rights organisations in over 30 countries. Together with the human rights defenders in our networks, we jointly champion a world of democratic societies where we all enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' VISION**

*A world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights.*

## **CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' MISSION**

*Our mission is to defend civil and political rights together with local human rights defenders to increase their security, capacity, and access to justice.*

*We work as a part of a global movement of human rights defenders and partner with those at risk. Through legal means and public advocacy, we hold states, individuals, and non-state actors accountable for human rights violations.*

*We advocate for the norms and values of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other relevant human rights standards, as we encourage people to use these rights to promote democratic societies.*

## **THE LIMITATIONS AND TIME FRAME OF THE IMPACT REPORT 2019**

Civil Rights Defenders' work covers a wide range of activities, including holding states accountable through advocacy, litigation, and public campaigns; supporting partner organisations through capacity building activities and trainings; and advocacy and awareness-raising. With regards to Civil Rights Defenders large span of activities, and to be able to effectively demonstrate the correlations between resources, activities, output, outcomes and effects on a medium and long term, we have chosen to focus the Impact Report 2019 on our cross-cutting work on security, which is one of the cornerstones of our work.

We partner with and support human rights defenders who work in some of the world's most repressive regions across four continents. Human rights defenders are regularly subjected to threats, harassment, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary imprisonment at the hands of authoritarian regimes. Security is a key concern for human rights defenders in our networks and thus a fundamental priority for Civil Rights Defenders. Civil Rights Defenders' Human Rights Defenders at Risk Department is working systematically with several different programmes that constitute core functions within Civil Rights Defenders and aim to increase the security situation for all our partners in our global network.

The Impact Report covers three key components of our work on security: The Natalia Project, The Mobile Training Centre, and the Emergency Fund.

This Impact Report follows Giva Sverige's new and improved guidelines for impact reporting. The report covers activities during 2019. To get a comprehensive overview of all Civil Rights Defender's activities during 2019, please see our Annual Report for 2019, page 4-30.

## **WHY IS CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' WORK ON SECURITY NEEDED?**

In 2018, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights are being challenged at an increasing rate, both in Europe and even more so globally. At the same time, democracy is eroding in countries previously regarded as free and open.

All states need thriving civil societies, but when populations are deprived of influence, critical voices fade. In many cases, they are not just excluded, but repressive regimes are increasingly using brutal methods to quell human rights defenders' fight for the civil and political rights that belong to us all. Whether by banning individual organisations, imprisoning representatives, destroying assembly halls and offices, or persecuting sympathisers, the repression against human rights stops at nothing.

Many of our partners live and operate in some of the most oppressive countries in the world, others in countries showing clear signs of democratic backsliding. Although living and working in regions and countries with vast differences, they are all affected by the current wave of autocratisation and shrinking civic space. They face similar patterns of oppression and work under increasingly difficult conditions.

Being a human rights defender has become increasingly dangerous. Many on the frontlines are daily exposed to risks and threats, putting their lives and safety in danger. Persecution, surveillance, harassment, arbitrary arrests, interrogation by the security services, torture, and disappearances – the list of the risks faced by human rights defenders in their work goes on. Living and working in a hostile environment often takes its toll, on both the physical and the mental health of the individual. Civil Rights Defenders therefore work to increase the security of human rights defenders through several programmes run by our Human Rights Defenders at Risk Department.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND OUR RESOURCES**

### **Organisation**

Civil Rights Defenders has an independent, non-profit board of nationally and internationally recognised human rights experts. The members of the board are elected during the Annual Meeting, which is the organisation's supreme decision-making body. The organisation has a secretariat led by the Executive Director, whose task it is to implement the decisions of the board and to handle the day-to-day operation of the organisation.

By the end of 2019, Civil Rights Defenders had 65 staff members at the organisation's head office in Stockholm, at our regional offices or stationings in Asia, Africa, Belgrade, Bogotá, Brussels, Istanbul, Pristina, Sarajevo, and Tirana.

Country programmes are managed and coordinated by five regional departments: Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Europe, and Latin America. The organisation has two thematic departments: The Human Rights Defenders at Risk Department and the Legal Department, in addition to departments for Communications, Fundraising and Partnerships, and Finance.

The Human Rights Defenders at Risk Department, at the centre of this Impact Report, is a team of eight people, specialised in safety, security and innovative methods to support human rights defenders most at risk. The team is also responsible for organisational security and IT management, neatly connecting the internal expertise with the external work of Civil Rights Defenders.

In addition to our internal expertise on security, we often collaborate with consultants and trainers with special expertise in the field, who speak the same language and share the same culture as the participants. This to better reach the human rights defenders with the most need for support. The large number of human rights defenders reached in 2019 could not have happened without our global network of trainers.

### **Partners**

We cooperate with more than 200 human rights organisations across East and Horn of Africa, Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Sweden. We believe that local forces are best placed to be driving human rights work due to their permanent presence and closeness to those whose rights are violated.

Our Human Rights at Risk Department work closely with Civil Rights Defenders' partners, but also beyond the already established partner networks of the organisation.

### **Funding**

The world is increasingly putting great demand on us to act quickly and provide flexible support when emergencies arise, or the security situation deteriorates for those standing up for human rights.

Civil Rights Defenders is a registered Swedish non-profit organisation with no religious and political affiliation. Our work is financed by governmental organisations and private funders, including foundations, corporate partnerships, and contributions from the general public. The support is essential to ensure our flexibility and ability to act quickly and to target actions where the need is greatest.

**Public Grants**

The most important grant-awarding bodies are the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Grants from state actors are important for maintaining long-term engagement, in Sweden and the world.

**Private Foundations**

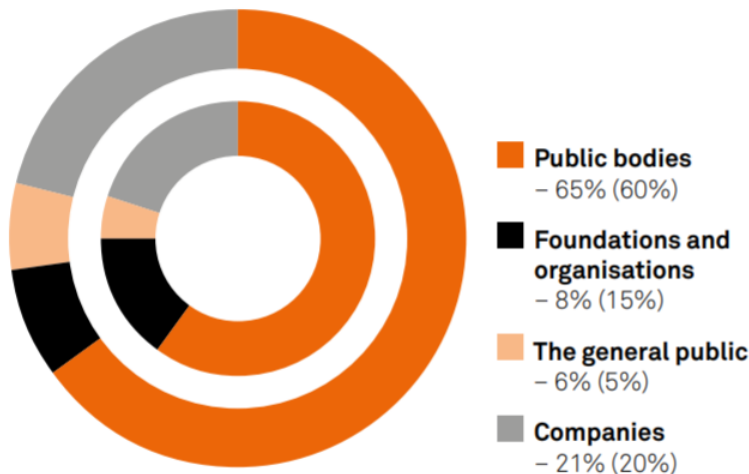
Private foundations are becoming an increasingly important source of funding for the organisation. In 2019, the most extensive contributions came from the National Endowment for Democracy, Open Society Foundation, and the Gerald and Monica Nagler Foundation.

**Funds Raised from the General Public**

The number of both sporadic private donors and monthly donors is increasing, and at the end of the year, the organisation had just over 1,600 monthly donors. Monthly donations allow for long-term planning and stability and reduce administration costs.

**Companies and organisations**

Companies contributed to Civil Rights Defenders, either through long-term partnerships, or by giving a one-off donation. We are since 2013 a beneficiary of the Swedish Postcode Lottery and receive an annual distribution. In 2019, we entered a long-term partnership with the Swedish Olympic and Paralympic Committees. Other important partners that supported our operations include the Swedish Football Association and Twitter. Several new corporate donors made contributions in connection with our 2019 Christmas fundraising campaign.



**INCOME**

**Total income incl. interest income and similar profit items for 2019: SEK 89,042 thousand (2018: SEK 91,454 thousand)**

The outer circle shows the distribution of income for 2019 and the inner circle for 2018.

## **NATALIA PROJECT, THE EMERGENCY FUND AND THE MOBILE TRAINING CENTRE IN 2019**

In 2011, Civil Rights Defenders established its Human Rights Defenders at Risk Department as part of systematising and focusing Civil Rights Defenders efforts within safety and security. The department upholds several key components of the organisations' global work; such as the unique alarm system the Natalia Project (since 2013) the systematic security training programmes within the Mobile Training Centre (since 2011), the flexible, rapid response granting initiative the Emergency Fund (established in 2013).

### **The Natalia Project**

The Natalia Project is the world's first security alarm system for human rights defenders at risk. The GPS based alarm system was born out of the conclusion that many attacks against human rights defenders occurred without colleagues and international networks knowing about it until several hours or even days after. By which it might be too late to try to influence the events.

When human rights defenders are included in the Natalia Project, they are equipped with an alarm device and undergo comprehensive training in security planning and emergency response. When in immediate danger, they can trigger the alarm and thereby send an alarm signal to their organisation and/or trusted contacts and to Civil Rights Defenders' headquarters in Stockholm. The alarm signal indicates the position of the human rights defender and will continue sending updated positions until the alarm is turned off. When the organisation receives the alarm signal, it can initiate actions and mobilise search and support according to the security plan. When Civil Rights Defenders receive the alarm signal, we can engage thousands of people over social media and e-mail within a very short period of time.

Since the launch, the Natalia Project has grown steadily. During 2019, another 21 persons joined the Natalia Project. It now provides increased personal security for over 170 individuals from Russia, Central Asia, Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and western Balkans. Countries that host most participants are Russia, Kenya, and Venezuela - each with more than 20 participants - closely followed by South Sudan, Belarus, and Somalia. Among the most common countries are also countries that are too sensitive to mention publicly – indicating that many of the Natalia Project participants are under threats so severe that their security depends on them being anonymous.

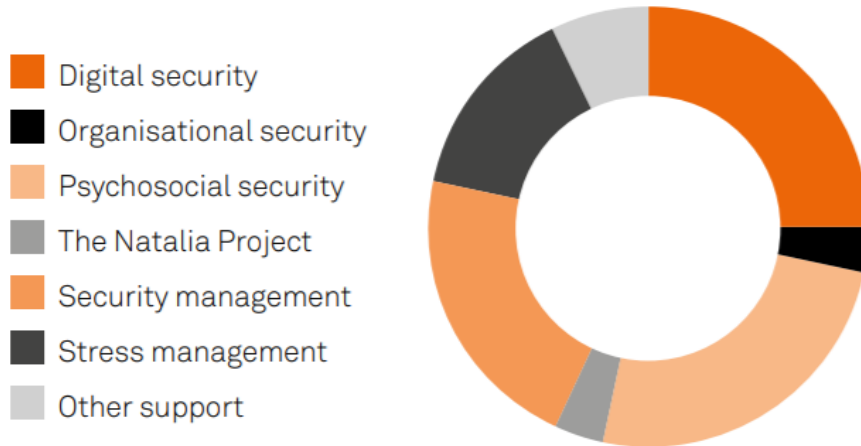
### **The Mobile Training Centre**

To meet the growing need for better safety and security for human rights defenders at risk, our Mobile Training Centre provides them skills and knowledge necessary to protect themselves, their organisations, and their work from immediate and long-term danger. Civil Rights Defenders conduct trainings in organisational, psychosocial, physical, and digital security. We also provide stress management training and other types of needs-based support.

The Mobile Training Centre also performs security audits and research to strengthen the ability of human rights defenders to face risk in connection to their work. As part of the longer-term engagement, the component also provides ongoing security related mentoring and support to Civil Rights Defenders' partners to ensure a close and strong collaboration when situations get difficult.

In 2019, training sessions with 196 participants were carried out through our Mobile Training Centre. Security training, with a focus on digital security and security management for human rights defenders, has long formed the core of our programme. But in 2019, there was an increased demand for psychosocial support, such as strategies to prevent burnout and to feel more confident in the face of difficult conversations with, for example, the police and security services.

*The Mobile Training Centre offers training in a range of areas. The distribution of courses in 2019 is shown below*



### Emergency Fund

Promoting and protecting civil and political rights has never been free of risk. Under the pretence of national security, public order, or morals, repressive regimes may intensify their efforts to silence those who dare challenge their power.

If the situation deteriorates for a human right defender at risk, and in the event of a security crisis, being able to react quickly can mark the difference between life and death. This is the purpose of the Civil Rights Defenders' Emergency Fund – to provide rapid assistance to human rights defenders at risk.

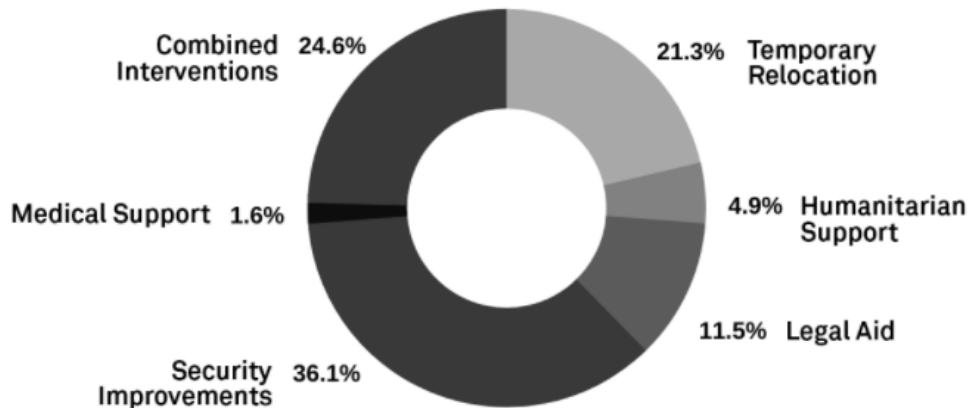
## TOTAL NUMBER OF DEFENDERS SUPPORTED



In 2019, more than 547 human rights defenders including family members have received support through the Emergency Fund. Grants were distributed to defenders in 23 countries, including Brazil, Cambodia, Kenya, Myanmar, Tajikistan, Venezuela, Uganda, and Ukraine, in

form of legal aid, security assistance, relocation to safe housing, or help to leave the country when threats become too serious. Some 92 per cent of those who received support from the Emergency Fund in 2019 have been able to continue their crucial work after receiving support.

## DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPORT BY FOCUS



### WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' WORK ON SECURITY MAKE?

By training human rights defenders and providing security support through the Natalia Project, the Mobile Training Centre and The Emergency Fund, Civil Rights Defenders aim to empower human rights defenders in their continuous work and strive to strengthen resilient civil societies around the world.

#### Natalia Project

Human rights defenders at risk all over the world use the Natalia Project alarm devices. It is a tool to provide a feeling of safety for the bearer and to prevent attacks. The alarms have for example been used when human rights defenders have been physically hurt in the border region between Venezuela and Colombia, arrested in North Caucasus, or detained during protests in Belarus. It is also a tool to put pressure on repressive governments that an attack against a human rights defender will not pass unnoticed.

[Genesis Dávila, is the founder and head of Defiende Venezuela](#), an organisation that document human rights violations in order to hold perpetrators accountable in the future. Since 2019, Genesis is a participant in the Natalia Project:

*“The Venezuelan regime sees us human rights defenders as enemies, and we are often subjected to threats and violence... I carry my alarm with me every day, it’s one of the things that make me feel more secure. It’s a good thing that the government knows we’re using the alarms. If something were to happen to me, and they know that someone else is watching, and that an international alarm is activated, our chances increase.”*

[Abdifatah Hassan Ali is a Somali Blogger and Social Media Activist](#), who is bringing attention to impunity and social injustice:

*"I work in Somalia and I have received many threats. One of the most helpful things for me is that the Natalia Project has helped us to developing security plans. Our organisation did not have this before, and we feel a lot more confident now that we do. We trust that if something happens, somebody out there will do something for us."*

### **Emergency Fund**

With the Emergency Fund, Civil Rights Defenders aim to protect human rights defenders from both immediate danger and long-term risks associated with their work and enable them to continue their important efforts to hold power accountable. Our support focuses on resilience and sustainability of human rights defenders. Also, in urgent situations our ambition is to make sure that human rights defenders can continue with their human rights struggles even in the most pressing circumstances. Responding to urgent threats to human rights defenders, the Emergency Fund provides a rapid response through flexible grants and relocation support.

[Angela Maldonado is the founder and scientific director of Fundación Entropika](#), an organisation working to preserve and protect the Amazon. Colombia was rated the most dangerous country in the world for environmental, land, and indigenous rights defenders in 2019. Thus, Angela Maldonado took it seriously when she received death threats because of her advocacy work in the Amazon. Due to the high risk of being targeted because of her work, she applied for support from our emergency fund. Within a couple of weeks, she was able to temporarily relocate to a safe area:

*"Thanks to the emergency grant provided by Civil Rights Defenders, I was able to relocate. It made a huge difference in my life. I am feeling safe, and I have the possibility to keep working".*

Angela Maldonado is now able to continue working for the future of younger generations – and for the future of the Amazon – in Colombia.

### **Mobile Training Centre**

When assessing the risks faced by human rights defenders in repressive countries, the fear and stress inherent to the environment are always one of the main dangers we identify. It is costly for organisations in terms of staff turnover and loss of capacity, and also extremely draining on a personal level, leading to health issues, such as burnout.

Teaching human rights defenders the skills to handle threatening situations takes some of the pressure off. Knowing that they can handle an interrogation without breaking down reduces the fear they live with day to day. In the same vein, helping organisations develop methods on how to prevent staff burnout and trauma ensures their capacity to keep working through tough times.

An anonymous human rights defender participating in an interrogation readiness training in South East Asia:

*"This is a real-life situation that we frequently find ourselves in. The techniques both in the personal and the organisational level were very helpful. It is very handy to have a tool to automatically tune into and de-escalate stressed colleagues. We do go under very stressful conditions and now we are equipped to handle them more adequately."*



## **WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE ACTIVITIES?**

**Civil Rights Defenders' Theory of Change** centres on the strength of the human rights movement to alter oppressive power structures and to ensure that authorities are held accountable in respecting democracy and human rights.

All departments at Civil Rights Defenders work in close contact with partners to strengthen their ability to represent and act in close consultation with their local communities. Our partners are often identified as actors with a strong potential to influence the human rights situation in the context where they act.

But despite having the potential to be strong voice bearers in the local communities, our partners often lack the resources or the capacity to organise effectively, thus their potential positive impact is easily lost. Further, as Civil Rights Defenders often support organisations, networks or individuals who oppose authoritarian regimes and dictatorship – they are up against strong forces who would rather see them silenced. These opponents often possess both legal means and crude force by being in control of both state- and non-state actors who can be mobilised to target our partners. When repressive legislation with broad and sweeping laws are not enough to deter or arrest human rights defenders on false grounds, human rights defenders might simply disappear, never to be heard from again.

To enable crucial voice bearers to continue to act as representatives of their local communities, they often initially need basic support in both security and capacity. Through security trainings on, for example, interrogation situations or digital security clinics, and participation in Civil Rights Defenders projects such as the Natalia Project, human rights actors are supported to continue their work under the most pressing circumstances. First, when security is at least at a basic level, organisations or networks can work for increased awareness and engagement for democracy and human rights for people in their communities.

## **WHEN CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE CHANGE?**

Civil Rights Defenders work together with partners in some of the most repressive countries in the world - states characterised by a lack of respect for human rights and real democratic governance. Actively promoting human rights work is associated with risks and persecution. The work can sometimes seem hopeless. Initiatives to promote human rights and democracy, and accountability from those in power, is often taken by small steps at a time, and may sometimes not have long-lasting effects. In many cases, a status quo or a non-worsening situation may be positive results. But through history, there are positive examples. Civil Rights Defenders mission is to support our partners and work alongside with them to achieve change, and we firmly believe that our vision is possible: *A world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights.*

## **THE COSTS OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' OPERATIONS**

Civil Rights Defenders total operation costs for 2019 was 90,377,053 SEK. The total operating expenses include project expenses (SEK 80,431,407), fundraising expenses (SEK 3,464,945), and administrative expenses (SEK 6,480,701). Project expenses are those that are directly associated with the fulfilment of Civil Rights Defenders' purpose according to its statutes, including expenses for personnel engaged to carry out activities, expenses for opinion-shaping and information activities regarding Civil Rights Defenders' mission. The monitoring, reporting, and auditing of projects are also classified as project expenses.

Fundraising expenses are expenses intended to generate external income in the form of donations and grants from all donors and grant-awarding bodies, i.e. both private individuals and companies.

Administrative expenses are those required to manage and run the organisation i.e. expenses not related to projects or fundraising are classified as administrative expenses.

Examples of such expenses relate to board meetings, accounting and annual reports, the handling of payroll and social security contributions, VAT and tax declarations, audits of the organisation itself, as well as administrative systems such as accounting systems.

## MULTI-YEAR COMPARISON

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
<b>Total income including net interest income (SEK thousands)</b>	<b>89,042</b>	<b>91,454</b>	<b>82,800</b>	<b>79,185</b>	<b>85,582</b>
Operating income	88,954	91,125	82,782	78,655	85,436
Profit/loss after financial items	-1,335	-2,384	-353	1,602	3,902
Project expenses/total income	90%	91%	87%	89%	91%
Fundraising expenses/total income	4%	5%	7%	4%	1%
Administrative expenses/total income	7%	7%	6%	5%	3%
Equity ratio	8%	11%	13%	13%	11%

*For more details, see Annual Report 2019 page 41.*

The activities mentioned in the Impact Report for 2019; The Natalia Project, the Mobile Training Centre and the Emergency Fund are mostly supported through funds from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Resources used for the training activities during 2019 were approximately SEK 1,700,000, including both the Natalia Project and the Mobile Training Centre. The Emergency Fund did during 2019 transfer approximately SEK 2,650,000, which is an increase with over SEK 1,850,000 comparing to 2018. The activities have been performed by a team of four programme officers with different specialities within security support, overseen by the Director for the Human Rights Defenders at Risk Department.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND HOW CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS MEASURE ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

The training modalities developed by Civil Rights Defenders are all focused to increase organisational capacity to ensure security both for trained human rights defenders and their colleagues in respective organisation or community. This is done to make sure invested resources – both financial and human - are used as responsively as possible. Through-out the years, the Mobile Training Centre has developed successful methods for “training of trainers”. This refers to the ability to transfer knowledge to training participants that in turn can be transferred to other relevant staff without further intervention from Civil Rights Defenders. The team working with the Mobile Training Centre has complemented this practice with a mentorship function at the offices at Civil Rights Defenders, being ready to support local partners when additional assistance is needed.

The Natalia Project is run according to a similar methodology - with intense trainings focusing on a small group of human rights defenders but involving their extended network to guarantee sustainability and resource efficiency.

As part of the Emergency Fund granting mechanism, Civil Rights Defenders always performs a long-term security assessment to ensure that the support provided to human rights defenders most at risk adds to sustainability and continuation of the beneficiary's engagement in human rights work.

The Natalia Project and the Mobile Training Centre are measured to ensure that the Civil Rights Defenders training methodology does not add to one-off trainings or "symbolic" trainings. We therefore measure both qualitative insights such as participation – gender disaggregated to ensure diversity within the groups – and quantitative insights such as learnings.

The gender disaggregation has been deepened during 2019, where we moved to stronger highlighting of gender non-conforming participants to add inclusiveness and make LGBTQI participants more visible in our data.

The measurement of learning is done on both individual and organisational levels – where participants are subjected to both intake and evaluating surveys. This is done to better understand the general level of capacity among Civil Rights Defenders partner organisations (intake) and to establish how the trainings add to organisational learning and future capacity (evaluation). A more long-term follow-up is usually also conducted through Civil Rights Defenders geographical departments who are focal points for the longer-term relation with local organisations.

During 2019, the Emergency Fund went through an in-depth assessment of an external gender consultant. Through that process the consultant found that the Emergency Fund, aside its general efficiency, could strengthen its diversity and gender sensitivity measures to ensure that the supports reach those most in need. The Civil Rights Defenders Emergency Fund team used the recommendations from the assessment to further develop gender disaggregation in quantitative data collection to ensure greater equality in disbursements of grants but also to revise process related wordings in the overall communication to make the Emergency Fund more accessible to non-typical, more vulnerable, communities.

The Emergency Fund also does post-support surveys as part of the reporting procedure, which usually is done in very close collaboration with beneficiaries. Through that survey Civil Rights Defenders is able to assess both financial figures and how they have been spent, and how efficient the supports have been in relation to keeping the beneficiaries safe and able to continue their human rights related work.