

THEORY OF CHANGE

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

IMPACT

OUTCOMES

THE GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT IS POWERFUL AND RESILIENT

Human rights defenders are safe when working, have the capacity they need, get support, and have impact.

DECISION MAKERS TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights defenders shift the power balance from autocrats to democratic actors so that decision makers, including political, corporate, legal, and in international organisations, take action for human rights.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

Duty bearers on all levels and in all sectors, including international, state, regional, local, public and private, are held to account in relation to their human rights commitments. Those affected get redress.

OUTPUTS

SECURITY

- Human rights defenders manage security effectively.
- Human rights defenders feel we have their back.

CAPACITY

- Human rights defenders manage human rights work effectively.
- Human rights defenders have broad organisational capacity.

ENGAGEMENT

- Individuals, civil society, decision makers, and corporations engage to promote and demand human rights and challenge oppressive practices.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Human rights defenders influence legal decisions, legislation, and practices that improve the respect for human rights.
- Individuals have access to justice.

ACTIVITIES

WE PROVIDE SECURITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING TO MEET FUTURE DEMANDS

- **Tools:** documentation, risk, security, and crisis management.
- **Support:** moral, legal, psychosocial, networks, and grants.
- **Trainings:** human rights, security, legal, digitalisation, gender, building efficient organisations, grant raising, strategy development, good governance, and coaching.

WE ADVOCATE THE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND WE MOBILISE SUPPORT

- **Legal advocacy:** strategic litigation, lawsuits, court cases, hearings, legal advice and support, together with partners and on our own.
- **Political advocacy:** campaigns, media presence, reports, meetings, and partnerships.
- **Public advocacy:** campaigns, shaping opinions, mobilisation, fundraising, and partnerships.

INPUTS

PEOPLE

- Staff presence in the regions where we work
- Staff development processes
- Internal staff community
- Staff members with diverse experiences and backgrounds

CORE VALUES

- Commitment
- Integrity
- Together
- Innovation

EXPERTISE

- Civil and political rights
- Legal expertise
- Human rights contexts
- Organisation building, HR, IT, and finance
- Communication, advocacy, and fundraising
- Gender equality and transformative approaches

RESOURCES

- Sustainable and diversified income streams
- Partner network
- IT-systems and technology
- Working environment
- Working routines
- Quality assurance processes

BRAND

- Respected brand, well-known for our:
 - Defender centric approach
 - Human rights expertise
 - Bold and engaging work



THEORY OF CHANGE EXPLAINED



Civil Rights Defenders' theory of change describes how we contribute to the pursuit of our vision by changing the human rights situation in the regions where we work.

CHANGE

Our vision is a world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights, and we believe that strong civil societies are a vital component for achieving democratic societies. Human rights defenders play a central role in the struggle for human rights and democracy and building strong civil societies. To achieve our desired impact and positive change in relation to human rights, the security and capacity of human rights defenders is therefore crucial.

In the short-term, operating within a safe personal, psychosocial, and digital space is key for ensuring that human rights defenders can do their work. Human rights defenders who know how to analyse and mitigate security risks are better equipped to conduct their work in a safe way and are better positioned to develop the capacity necessary to effect change. Capacities to engage stakeholder and mobilise communities are particularly important, because these enable people to collectively advocate for respect for human rights, demand accountability, and spur democratisation.

In the mid- to long-term, better security and improved capacity for human rights defenders

leads to a more resilient human rights movement which is effective in engaging and mobilising so that decision makers take action for human rights, and duty bearers and human rights violators are held to account.

Civil Rights Defenders contributes with various resources, expertise, values, our network of partners, and other key inputs, to support and organise activities that lead to both short- and long-term outcomes along these lines. We work together with human rights defenders around the world as part of a global human rights movement because the aggregation of our efforts strengthens our contribution to the achievement of these outcomes.

OUR NETWORK OF PARTNERS

Civil Rights Defenders works with human rights defenders who face threats and attacks which affect their civil and political rights, or who have the potential to positively impact the human rights situation in their context.

Civil Rights Defenders adds value by organising partner support activities and by providing grants. In addition to these Activity Partners, Civil Rights Defenders cooperates regularly with Strategic Partners to amplify the impact of our own human rights work or to strengthen our work with Activity Partners.

The organisation also has Fundraising Partners who, via contractually formulated agreements, contribute financially or pro-bono to

our work. In our theory of change, all these partners contribute to delivering change together with us.

OUR APPROACH TO GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

People's experiences differ depending on who they are or are perceived as being. Unequal power relations and structures based on gender, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or other, obstruct people's equal access to their rights. Human rights defenders face differentiated threats and violence depending on gender and the intersection of diverse identities. Civil Rights Defenders therefore considers and acts on these differences when supporting partner organisations to redefine and alter power balances.

IMPACT

Civil Rights Defenders' overarching vision is "a world of democratic societies where we all enjoy our civil and political rights".

OUTCOMES

Our contribution to the pursuit of our vision is dependent on achieving three major outcomes together with our partners: building "a global human rights movement that is powerful and resilient", contributing to settings where "decision makers take action to improve the respect for human rights", and ensuring that "human rights violators are held accountable".

OUTPUTS

Achieving the three major outcomes requires that Civil Rights Defenders and our partners generate outputs that contribute to them. We do this by providing support for human rights defenders in the form of measures that increase their security and capacity. We also work together with our partners to engage stakeholders in support of human rights and to hold those responsible for human rights violations to account.

Therefore, our four main output areas are:

- **Security:** actions we take to ensure the security of our operations (internal) and protection for partners (external) which enables human rights defenders to defend their rights.
- **Capacity:** we support organisations in developing and strengthening their skills, expertise, administration, and advocacy work. Capacity is also about our internal capacity to deliver.
- **Engagement:** work we do to engage the public, civil society, corporations, decision makers, and media to take action for human rights based on their convictions and conscience.
- **Accountability:** actions we take to hold duty bearers to account for not fulfilling formal human rights commitments (under law, contractual agreements, or self-commitments) to respect, protect and promote human rights, or for violating human rights.

ACTIVITIES

To generate these outputs, Civil Rights Defenders engages in activities that “provide security and capacity building to meet future demands” and that contribute to “advocating the respect for human rights and mobilise support” both within our organisation and for the human rights defenders we partner with.

INPUTS

The inputs Civil Rights Defenders provides to deliver on our activities include people, values, expertise, financial and organisational resources, and a strong brand.

THE ARROW

The arrow represents the scale between attribution and contribution, where results on the activities level can be directly attributed to the work of Civil Rights Defenders. Higher up on the scale, change is the result of our contribution as well as the contribution of other actors.



CORE ASSUMPTIONS OF OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change makes some key assumptions. These include that:

- Ensuring individual and organisational security, capacity, and resilience of civil society actors conducting human rights work is a fundamental prerequisite for the construction of democratic societies.
- When human rights defenders and organisations work within a safe and enabling space and have access to organisational skills, they become resilient and able to engage other society actors in demanding power shifts in favour of human rights and democratisation.
- If capacities, attitudes, behaviours, and skills of many individuals working with human rights are transformed, human rights defenders are more effective in building a critical mass of people that contributes to positive change.
- If individuals and communities understand their rights, they are willing to participate in the development of policy and practices which affect their lives.
- Providing human rights defenders with increased organisational and advocacy capacities results in increased ability of communities to be effective in their human rights work.
- Engagement drives mobilisation and generates resources – when different societal actors are sufficiently engaged in demanding respect for human rights and democratisation, they play an active role in holding duty-bearers to account for the realisation of their responsibilities.
- Engaged social actors contribute to foster decision maker’s accountability for respecting and protecting democracy and human rights. Establishing effective accountability mechanisms therefore decisively deters human right violations.