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Newsletter - April 2024

Editorial.

To speak of the socio-environmental agenda is, above all, to speak of human rights - and it is in this exact nexus that the fundamental meaning of the work of the Socio-Environmental Funds of the Global South (Alianza Socioambiental Fondos del Sur) lies.

Such a relationship can be exemplified by the logic of rights, such as the right of populations to live in their native environments, in healthy and protected ecosystems - but it must also be looked at in an even more acute aspect, as in the face of violence against environmental and land defenders worldwide, with a special focus on countries in the Global South.

Between April 24 and 26, representatives of the Alianza Socioambiental Fondos del Sur will participate in the Funding Futures Festival, an event organized by the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) with the objective of "strategizing and imagining new possibilities for philanthropy in human rights".

In this context, the Alianza will promote reflection sessions on the nexus between human rights and the socio-environmental agenda. The occasion will also mark the launch of the publication "Rapid Response Funds in Brazil" - lessons learned in supporting Human Rights and Environment Defenders in Brazil" - a story of collaboration, learning, and collective overcoming produced by the Casa Socio-environmental Fund (Fundo Casa Socioambiental), which recounts the fund's experience with funding environmental and land defenders in Brazil.

It is urgent that the social agenda be increasingly recognized as inseparable from the environmental agenda: that such a struggle always becomes socio-environmental. This is our invitation to reflection and action.

Happy reading!

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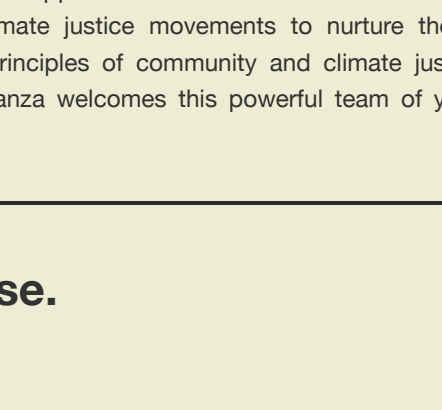
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News.

New Member

Youth Climate Justice Fund



In April, we welcome the Youth Climate Justice Fund, a fund formed and led by young people that supports climate justice movements with trust-based funding, resources, and capacity development - from youth to youth. The fund connects funders and organizers, providing knowledge and opportunities to support civil society. The organization works to strengthen the efforts of emerging movements focusing on youth and the connection between funders and activists to enable flexible and impactful support. "We believe it is crucial to have empowered and resourceful youth climate justice movements to nurture the next generations of activists, rooted in principles of community and climate justice," says the fund's presentation. The Alianza welcomes this powerful team of young climate activists with open arms!

Our Universe.

Funding Futures Festival 2024: Rethinking Global Philanthropy



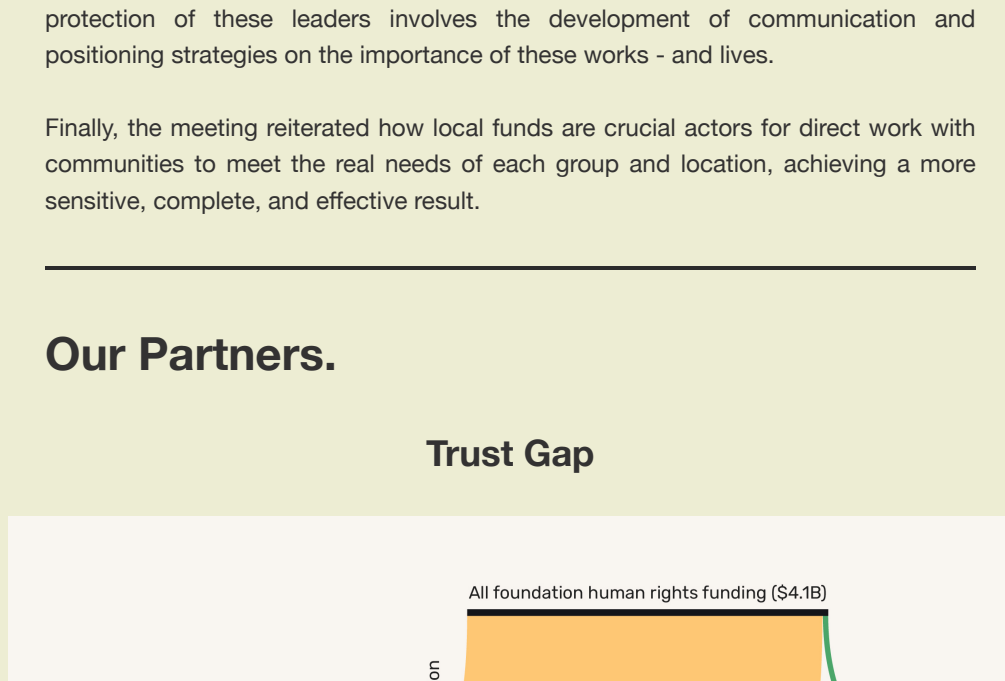
A space for funders to learn, connect, and build new visions of philanthropy; this is how the organizers of the Funding Futures Festival define their conference. Organized by the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) and Ariadne – European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, in partnership with the Women's Fund in Georgia, the event challenges participants to develop "new narratives and practices to guide us towards a global ecosystem of abundant funding."

The 2024 edition will take place in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, from April 24 to 26, bringing together funders from around the world to develop new narratives and practices for the development of a fairer and more effective funding ecosystem. "We are being called to action. There is an urgency for us to meet, reflect, and find ways to shift power, transform oppressive systems, and provide resources for movements," says the presentation.

Issues such as climate, racial, and gender justice are presented as key points of the conference. The history of resistance and activism in the Tbilisi region, connections with global justice movements, and the impacts of the war in Ukraine will be presented at the event, which will also feature spaces for exhibitions and the presentation of ideas and research.

The Alianza's mission at the Funding Futures Festival will be to promote discussions on the nexus between human rights and the socio-environmental agenda, reflecting on the implications for funders. Through gamified activities and proposed interactions, the Alianza's participation will seek not only to present this conceptual nexus but mainly to think about how it is possible to enhance the cause in practice, bringing the socio-environmental agenda to the center of philanthropic thinking for human rights.

Dialogue and Learning: Connections between Environment and Human Rights



The February meeting of the Alianza meeting of the Alianza focused precisely on the nexus between socio-environmental issues and human rights. Seeking to find concrete examples, participants were divided into four groups to develop the theme based on three essential questions to guide the debate.

How would you describe the link between your work and broader human rights issues? Are there specific cases that exemplify this relationship? What are the main challenges (political, economic, social, and environmental) affecting this work? Each group had 30 minutes to exchange experiences and reflections on the initial questions.

Participants agreed that the work of the funds forming the Alianza is necessarily linked to the human rights agenda, in broad and specific senses. The protection of communities, their lives, and means of survival, for example, is an inherent part of the protection of biomes and ecosystems, as well as the protection of the right to the territories of each community. Examples of essential points of the socio-environmental cause directly linked to human rights agendas are the institutional and professional strengthening of communities, strengthening of territorial governance, development of the socio-biodiversity economy, promotion of food security, and protection of territories. Similarly, socio-environmental conflict arises in topics such as food security, energy transition and resistance against large extractive projects.

Among the examples raised was the ongoing support provided by the Samdhana Institute to an indigenous community in the southern Philippines, in defense of guaranteeing their legislative and territorial rights, interpreting legislation, and monitoring the community's growth, based on indigenous governance practices. Another example comes from a reserve in the Peruvian Amazon, affected by deforestation and drug trafficking, where a community is assisted by the Fondo Socioambiental del Perú to continue monitoring work, receiving necessary equipment but also protection for especially dangerous activities in conflict areas.

Demonstrating how the issue spans from ancestral aspects to contemporary issues, internet access was raised as a new point of attention to human rights. Without connection, after all, access to information, application for resources, policy and initiative monitoring, and even to the funds themselves are drastically reduced, thus exacerbating existing frameworks of inequality and socio-environmental crisis.

The Colombian context was also used to underline the importance of a strategic communication approach. In one of the countries where more environmental leaders are killed in the world, such leaders carry a negative public image, seen as terrorists and rebels, troublemakers - as if their lives were worth less. Thus, part of the protection of these leaders involves the development of communication and positioning strategies on the importance of these works - and lives.

Finally, the meeting reiterated how local funds are crucial actors for direct work with communities to meet the real needs of each group and location, achieving a more sensitive, complete, and effective result.

Our Partners.

Trust Gap



Inequality among human rights funds in the global North and South: the trust gap portrayed in the report

Another essential point to consider in socio-environmental justice is the functioning of philanthropy for the agenda: the disparity in funding institutions between the north and south. According to the research "Trust Gap: The Troubling Lack of Direct, Flexible Funding for Human Rights in the Global South and East," conducted by the Human Rights Funders Network, 99% of funding for human rights is controlled by foundations in the Global North, and 88% of that amount is directed to organizations also located in the north of the planet.

It is no coincidence that among the "Principles of Climate Justice" adopted by the board of the Mary Robinson Foundation, former president of Ireland and creator of the term, are, alongside aspects such as "Respecting and protecting human rights" and "Highlighting gender equality and equity," the importance of "Sharing benefits and burdens equally."

The main focus of the report points to the inequality in access to funding between organizations in the Global North and South. Documenting differences in numbers, sizes, and types of organizations, the study shows that "organizations based in the Global North control the vast majority of dollars in donations for human rights, and largely determine the geographies, issues, and communities prioritized and funded for human rights actions around the world."

The impact of such a contradiction is exacerbated, according to the document, by the conclusion that organizations and actions led by the affected communities themselves promote more lasting and relevant changes. "Who has access to and control over funding (including flexible funding that gives beneficiaries discretion over how best to use it) has serious repercussions for human rights movements globally," it concludes.

These regional disparities in human rights funding therefore explain the "Trust Gap" highlighted in the title. Based on this premise, the report reaches nine main conclusions:

1. Foundations in the Global North control 99% of global human rights funding and grant 88% of this funding to organizations based in the Global North.
2. Of the funding for human rights allocated to each region, the proportion that reaches beneficiaries in the Global North directly is significantly higher than the proportion that reaches beneficiaries in the Global South and East directly. Only 1% of donation dollars benefiting the Global North go to organizations outside the beneficiary regions.
3. Bias and power inform the scale, flexibility, and direction of donations. Many in the field have documented the ways in which race, gender, and other forms of power inform implicit and explicit ideas about who can receive donations.
4. Two-thirds of Global North foundation funding to benefit the Global South and East that is not granted directly to beneficiary regions goes to NGOs and INGOs based in the Global North.
5. Large donations rarely go directly to organizations in the Global South and East that are leading changes in their own contexts.
6. Organizations in the Global South and East have considerably less access to flexible funding.
7. Local and regional funds in the Global South and East play an essential role in supporting community-rooted movements.
8. Women's funds are at the forefront of directly and flexibly granting subsidies to organizations in the Global South and East.
9. Our field will not change if we do not address bias, change power, and close the trust gap in philanthropy.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).



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