



# Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025



The Global Initiative  
for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

# About GI-ESCR

The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) is an international non-governmental human rights advocacy organization.

Together with partners around the world, GI-ESCR works to end social, economic and gender injustice using a human rights approach.



# Time to be bold

## Preface by Magdalena Sepúlveda

This strategy document describes the GI-ESCR's organisational goals for the next four years and how we intend to reach them. Its priorities will continue to be relevant beyond 2025 and will provide the scaffolding for our work in the decade ahead.

We live in uncertain times. The COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis it has generated conceal older crises with deeper roots that in the long term are more important. Some of these – including the climate and environmental crises, extreme and growing inequality, and failure to regulate the powers of private companies – are named below.

To confront these global uncertainties, which are existential globally and for countless individuals and communities, we propose a strategic plan for the period 2022 to 2025 that is bold, grounded in the work we do with and for others, flexible, and based on evidence and shared learning.

## Bold

If there was ever a time when policy makers must take ambitious decisions to move to fairer societies, it is now. Prevailing global models of consumption and production are no longer sustainable: societies need to work out how to replace them with better ones, and to do this we must rethink power relations and our relationship with the planet. GI-ESCR's long-term commitment is to look for real-world alternatives, for example in the provision of services and energy, that work for the public good, align with human rights, and remain within planetary resource constraints. This implies rejecting models that privilege the interests and profits of corporations and their shareholders. We are positioning ourselves to push forward the many discussions that will be required to reconcile interests and agree what actions are needed.

GI-ESCR will work to establish economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights as an essential point of reference for reforming the institutions that govern our societies. Accordingly, it will work to: create public services that deliver ESC rights for everyone; make public and private institutions properly accountable to all the people they serve, including those who at present enjoy least power; establish fiscal policies that promote social justice and prioritise human rights; advance an intersectional feminist vision in which all genders enjoy the same opportunities and rights; and support action to stem global heating and restore biodiversity.

This planning document covers the four years from 2022 to 2025. It was originally to have covered the period 2021 to 2025 but our planning was thrown out by COVID-19. The plan that follows this one will run from 2025/6 to 2030; we will start to prepare it in 2025. We expect core elements of the programme to continue into the 2030s, but will remain flexible in order to be able to respond to important new issues that arise.

## Grounded in partnerships

Significant change cannot be achieved in a vacuum or alone. Our partnership model is critical to our success. We will join with many kinds of partner, and especially with marginalised groups and communities, to end social and power imbalances that cause economic, social and environmental injustices (inequalities) and the environmental breakdown. We will operate across disciplinary silos and national frontiers, with institutions at all levels, to build collective capacity to identify and then reduce inequality and bridge the gender gap. We will work especially closely with social movements because social movements engage society at large, not merely intellectual and political elites. This is the terrain in which GI-ESC has chosen to work.

## Flexible

We know we will need to adapt to new circumstances. GI-ESCR applies a model of continuous learning. Being flexible means that we will remain open to new opportunities – with respect to issues, ideas, forms of action, and alliances.

## Evidence based advocacy and shared learning

We listen to different voices and undertake research to assemble evidence on plausible alternatives and mobilise around them. We value all types of knowledge and ideas, especially the knowledge of those at the grassroots who have first-hand experience of violations of rights and implementation of alternative initiatives. We disseminate and make that evidence accessible to others so that they can be better prepared to defend their rights. We will work with others who share our objectives, and especially with people who benefit least or not at all from the extraordinary wealth that today's unbalanced economy generates, to identify what needs to change and what forms of organisation and conduct will deliver health and well-being, education, and fair access to resources for all members of society. We will listen to those in need of support, work with them and others to rebalance unfair arrangements, and lobby public and private institutions to exercise power accountably and sustainably and in the interests of everyone in society.

**Not theory but shared learning.**  
**Not top-down decision-making but bottom-up practice.**  
**Not nationalism or elite globalisation**  
**but international sharing of ideas and experience.**  
**Not dogma-driven plans but practical proposals,**  
**publicly accountable and grounded in evidence.**

# Table of Contents

<b>I Introduction: current context and trends</b>	<b>6</b>
Neoliberalism and ESC rights	8
<b>II GI-ESCR's blueprint</b>	<b>9</b>
Vision, mission and values	10
Our practice	13
Measuring impact	13
Theory of change	14
<b>III GI-ESCR's four-years Strategic Plan</b>	<b>15</b>
1. Strategic goals	16
2. Programme	16
3. Cross-cutting strategic perspectives	17
A. Gender perspective	17
B. Economic value perspective and progressive fiscal policies	19
4. Programmatic priorities	20
<b>Programme priority 1.</b> Reverse the commercialisation of public services	20
<b>Programme priority 2.</b> Address the environmental breakdown and ensure a just transition to sustainable low-carbonsocieties	22
<b>Programme priority 3.</b> Reinforce the capacity of international and national institutional frameworks to tackle social and economic injustice effectively and hold States and economic actors accountable	25
5. Strategic areas of intervention	27
6. Partnership priorities: Harnessing collective power	29
7. Communications priorities: Changing the narrative	31
8. Organisational priorities: Strengthening our ability to achieve change	32
9. Funding priorities: Growing resources and ensuring sustainability	32
10. Governance priorities: Strengthening our governance	33



Callum Shaw | unsplash.com/photos/75E389KUVGw



## Introduction: current context & trends

The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated policy discussion since the start of 2020. It has thrown health systems and economies into crisis and highlighted profound shortcomings in public financing, institutional capacity, global economic resilience, and care systems.

The most profound implications of the pandemic are felt in the Global South, due to legacies of colonialism, and by the most disadvantaged in our societies, including people living in poverty, black people, indigenous peoples, migrant workers, and those working in the informal economy. While vaccines have the potential to end the pandemic, their inequitable distribution continues to harm the right to health of millions and means that the threat to global health remains.

Longer term, the pandemic is dwarfed by a **climate breakdown** that has the potential to bring an abrupt and socially perilous end to the current economic, political, and social order. Increases in floods and storms, drought and water shortages, air pollution, extreme temperatures, destruction of biodiversity, and challenges to farming and food production are already harming health, threatening food security and driving climate migration, with yet unknown future effects.

The shift to **decarbonise the economy** is one of the most critical challenges that humanity faces. We will need to rethink how we organise, manage and power our economies and societies, while making sure that the transition to renewable forms of energy does not replicate or entrench existing inequalities. We have an opportunity to transform our energy systems, and the economies and societies they support, into ones that respect rights, protect the environment, and ensure substantive equality, including gender equality.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis have weakened a political, social and economic order that is already fragile. **Inequality** has been rising since the 1980s, driven by neoliberal policies that have privileged the wealthy and widespread privatisation and international tax competition. Economic growth is overwhelmingly captured by those who are already rich, while tax havens and loopholes have hollowed out the global tax paid by corporations and the wealthy.

**Privatisation of public resources** has notably benefited small economic and political elites and disproportionately harmed people and groups who have historically been marginalised or oppressed. Services

and natural resources that are vital to life and social health are increasingly owned by a few powerful individuals or by corporations, which ignore their democratic obligations to society and marginalised communities. Global South and low-income countries are burdened by unfair levels of debt and do not have enough tax revenue or sovereignty to adapt to these threats.

As always, the most impacted are those additionally disadvantaged due to their age, class, or ethnicity. These crises have especially exposed and exacerbated **gender inequality** in work, education, health, social protection and other economic, social and cultural rights (ESC rights). Women have suffered disproportionate job and income losses because they are over-represented in the hardest-hit sectors, and COVID-19 has highlighted the unfair burden they shoulder in the delivery of care. Women already did most unpaid care work before the crisis, and this work has skyrocketed as a result of school closures and the need to care for the sick. Girls are also more likely to drop out of school, and in several countries their access to sexual and reproductive health services has been curtailed. In addition, the great majority of healthcare providers in hospitals and care homes, whose role has been vital during the pandemic, continue to be women. Despite their critical contributions to our societies, most are poorly paid and many work in deplorable conditions. They are paying the price for decades of budget cuts and privatisation of essential services.

Social and economic progress has stalled, for many people it has retreated, and human rights are threatened on an entirely new scale. These crises are interlinked and require an intersectional perspective that comprehends the implications for women, impoverished sectors and indigenous peoples.

In reaction to these events, different forms of **social resistance** have emerged. Many individuals and **social movements** from all corners of the world (USA, Japan, Lebanon, Somalia, Colombia, Chile...) have worked to build solidarity and protest against corruption, austerity measures, structural abuse and discrimination, lack of good quality public services, and failure to involve citizens in decisions that affect their lives. They demand more rights, new ways of living together and more participatory democracies.

These demands are likely to amplify in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, as higher levels of precarity, poverty and inequality spread across the globe. Any attempt to find solutions should place ESC rights at their core. Strengthening institutions, ESC rights frameworks and accountability have the potential to catalyse peoples' demands by exposing, and taking steps to reverse, inequalities and economic and social injustices.

At the same time, another form of reaction has brewing. The crisis in the political order has opened the door to

extreme right alternatives and **authoritarian practices**. Political approaches that repudiate international law and human rights principles have become commonplace. The spread of unaccountable communications technologies has opened the field to fake news, while allowing authoritarian regimes to increase control over information and people, eroding the ability of democratic societies to command public trust.



August de Richeleu | pexels.com/photo/mother-putting-a-face-mask-on-her-daughter-4261252/

### **Neoliberalism and ESC rights**

This is a moment of change. Against a background of rapid and potentially irreversible ecological destruction, the neoliberal paradigm is increasingly questioned. It has promoted an aggressive free-market agenda of deregulation, privatisation and trade liberalisation that has undermined the State's role in the provision of services that are essential to human security. In many parts of the world, inequality has become so extreme that societies are unsustainable, while extractive economic models have led to ecological breakdown. Moreover, the same economic system has perpetuated inequalities between the Global North and South.

These are therefore challenging times for human rights. Globally, we face a perfect storm: a global pandemic that is exacerbating structural and intersectional inequalities, the threat of climate and environmental catastrophe, and the spread of authoritarian regimes that close down democratic space.

At the same time, there are reasons to stay hopeful. A growing number of people and social organisations are realising that ESC rights are of paramount importance and that solidarity, both national and international, is essential to face societal challenges. Human rights, as a set of democratically sanctioned societal goals, can provide us with a compass for transforming our political, economic and social institutions towards a fairer future for all.



Norbu GYACHUNG | [unsplash.com/photos/HcAU5A-e3YI](https://unsplash.com/photos/HcAU5A-e3YI)



# GI-ESCR's blueprint

GI-ESCR believes that, to confront these existential challenges, human societies will need to profoundly rethink social relations and political and economic institutions. We will need to renew our vision of work, of wealth, of justice, of care, our relationship to the natural world and our consumption patterns; and transform policies and the organisation of our economic and political institutions accordingly. We believe that, to survive, we will need governance and institutions that are fairer, more just, more respectful of the environment, more accountable, more caring and inclusive, and that consume the world's resources more responsibly.

To make progress towards these goals, in the next decade, including the four years covered by this strategic plan, we will work to:

- Regain public control over the activities and services that enable us to live together in society. We will work to make public and private actors who deliver public services more democratically accountable and aligned with realisation of rights.
- Establish/strengthen progressive tax systems in order to deliver education, healthcare, social protection and other ESC rights. We will campaign for robust measures to halt tax evasion, tax avoidance and global tax competition, and to improve solidarity and reduce inequalities.
- Reform societies so that women no longer experience unjust treatment relative to men, preventing them from enjoying rights on an equal footing with men.
- Treat care as a collective good and a social responsibility. Care systems should be adequately resourced and regulated; carers should be well trained, adequately paid, supported, and have decent working conditions.
- Restore biodiversity and pursue rapid decarbonisation while respecting rights and inclusive participation.
- Re-assess our models of economic development and value creation. We will work to move from a model dominated by GDP growth to one that puts human dignity and realisation of human rights at its core.

## Vision, mission and values

Coinciding with our tenth anniversary, we revision our vision, mission and values.



### Vision

A world in which every person and community lives in dignity and in harmony with nature.



### Mission

To transform power relations to enable every person and community to enjoy their ESC rights and all other human rights now and in the future.



### Values

We believe human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inalienable, and that they are shaped by law and social relations. They are norms and, more importantly, shared values. Their ultimate purposes are to remove asymmetries of power between individuals in society, challenge oppression, end the subordination and marginalisation of groups and individuals, and promote individual agency, autonomy and respect for the inherent dignity of every human being.

In our practice, we attach particular importance to the human rights principles of equality and **non-discrimination**, including systemic and intersecting forms of discrimination. These principles underpin all our efforts. **Gender equality** is critically important because the full and equal participation of all is essential to achieve justice and ESC rights. We apply the principle of non-discrimination to everything we do, not least our relations with each other and our partners. This means that we strive for equality of treatment and condemn discrimination of all kinds, including on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, poverty or social condition.

More generally, as an organisation that puts solidarity and empowerment at the heart of its activity, we expect our own conduct, and also the conduct of institutions that we try to influence or with which we cooperate, to advance and promote:

- Respect and trust.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- Participation.
- Collaboration and solidarity.
- A sustainable future for all.

In addition, we promise to

- Act professionally and with integrity.
- Be bold and take risks in support of our goals.
- Remain independent at all times.

# What our values mean to us



## Respect and trust

Cultivating and developing relationships of respect and trust are at the centre of what we do and how we do it. Internally, relations between staff and with members of the Board are based on respect, trust, and a shared enthusiasm for human rights advocacy. The same values underpin our external relationships with partners and rights holders. We do not speak for others but bring their voices and perspectives to the table.



## Diversity and inclusion

We believe that our organisation and our work are enriched by the diverse backgrounds and views of our staff and Board. In our view, the human rights framework has too often been constructed by global elites: it needs to be informed and led by the experiences of marginalised groups and communities, who are most impacted by violations of ESC and other rights. We believe we can make the global human rights architecture more effective by working to ensure that individuals and communities are the architects of their own human rights solutions.



## Participation

We believe that all people have the right to participate in public decision-making processes that affect their lives. Through meaningful and effective participation, people can exercise their agency, autonomy and self-determination.



## Solidarity

We work collaboratively and seek to build strong peer networks. We believe it is essential to support the mobilisations of marginalised and disadvantaged groups in a way that has direct effects on the priorities we set and the decisions we make.



## Independence

We value our independence as a human rights organisation. Independence enables us to be a credible voice for ESC rights globally. When we seek or decide to accept new funding, we check that this will not compromise our independence in any way.



## Boldness

We increase our impact by being innovative. We are willing to take risks for human rights, including by challenging norms, promoting new ideas, and confronting the status quo. We are not afraid to try and fail, or to say what we think is right. We seek to work in areas in which others are not already leading, to fill unique niches, and address gaps.



## Professional integrity

We strive to ensure that our working methods and the work we do are of high quality, benefit rights holders, are consistent with our mission, and do not compromise our values. We are accountable in different respects to the rights holders and communities with whom we work, our partners, our Board, and our donors.



## Environmental sustainability and harmony

We will be mindful of the natural world, for its own sake and because realisation of ESC rights and other human rights depends upon it. We will monitor our policies and advocacy to understand their impact on the environment. We strive for a world that is sustainable for all now and in the future.

## Our practice

We are agile, constantly looking for innovative ways to advance social and economic justice, gender equality and human dignity. We reach out to people and engage with their diversity, values and experiences, as far as possible in their own languages. We see our work as a cycle, an upward spiral of iterative and cumulative change in which local and global actions influence and benefit each other. We

- Work with, through and for partners.
- Change the narrative.
- Build bridges between disciplines and geographies.
- Push the frontiers of human rights.
- Look for strategic opportunities.
- Learn from our experiences and share what can be scaled up.

## Measuring impact

GI-ESCR understands that it is important to measure the impact of its work. If we do not measure its impact, our model of change cannot be effective.

However, most of GI-ESCR's activities do not lend themselves to simple forms of measurement.

- GI-ESCR cooperates with many actors which makes it difficult to isolate GI-ESCR's specific impact.

Some of GI-ESCR's activities are very local in nature; others are highly international and large-scale. Very different forms of evaluation are appropriate for each.

- Most of GI-ESCR's outcome goals are political in nature: this means that results are unlikely to be measurable by a simple metric, or measurable quickly, and cannot be claimed by one actor.
- Much of GI-ESCR's activity is facilitative, opportunity-led, and progressive (evolves over time).

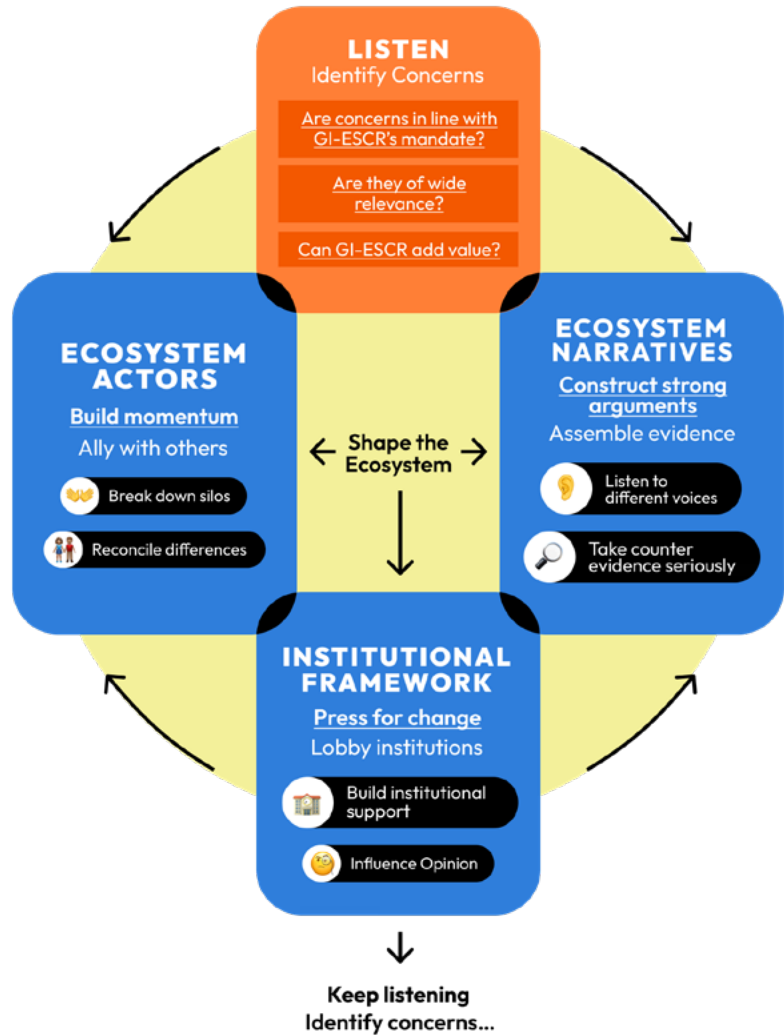
All these factors make simple evaluation methods more difficult to use.

GI-ESCR therefore considers the following elements to measure the quality or shortcomings of its work:

- The degree to which partners in a (large-scale or local) activity consider that the work that was undertaken together had positive effects or achieved agreed goals.
- The degree to which partners in an activity consider that GI-ESCR made specific expected contributions, surpassed partners' expectations, or underperformed.
- The partial or complete success of activities for which specific goals or outcomes can be set (steps in reform of Chile's constitution, adoption of a human rights norm, campaign by a local community), and the quality of the outcome achieved, including the quality of GI-ESCR's contribution to it.
- The scale of institutional and public support that GI-ESCR's activities attract; the number and variety of organisations that join social movements it facilitates or supports; the degree to which partner organisations value its contributions to their alliances and (where relevant) its facilitation skills.
- The degree to which GI-ESCR is successful (or not) in enabling local and national actors to influence international actors and policies, and participate with effect in international fora.
- The degree to which GI-ESCR achieves specific organisational objectives (with respect to partnerships, staffing, funding, communications, and governance).

Finally, it should be underlined that most of GI-ESCR's activities and programme are intersectional and cross-cutting. This means that success in one dimension (for example, affirming women's rights) may not be accompanied by success in another (achievement of an environmental goal). GI-ESCR needs to take this into account in all its attempts to evaluate and measure the impacts of its work.

# GI-ESCR'S THEORY OF CHANGE



GI-ESCR is a small and agile organisation. Our theory of change focuses on our capacity to shape the larger ecosystem that determines decision making. GI-ESCR identifies concerns and issues that fall within our mandate and tools that add value. We work on these issues by, on one hand, assembling evidence and arguments that lead to new narratives with power to rally social and political majorities, and, on the other, ally with other organisations to build coalitions that have enough momentum to advocate successfully. Transformative narratives together with broad social coalitions have the power to strengthen the **institutional human-rights framework**, influence public and institutional attitudes, and change thinking.



Hannah Busing | [unsplash.com/photos/Zyx1bk9mqmA](https://unsplash.com/photos/Zyx1bk9mqmA)

# III

## GI-ESCR's four- years Strategic Plan

## 1. GI-ESCR's strategic goals

---

GI-ESCR's theory of change has a triple focus. We will work persistently and creatively to:

- A. Create alliances with social movements, NGOs and institutional actors that support our mission in a manner that empowers all rights holders and communities, promotes gender equality, and protects the environment.
- B. Develop arguments and evidence that shape political narratives with a human rights focus that have the power to rally social majorities.
- C. Strengthen human rights standards and increase the effectiveness, accountability, and capacity of institutions in support of our mission.

## 2. GI-ESCR's programme

---

The next ten years will be shaped by the trends listed in the Introduction. GI-ESCR's long-term perspective enables the organisation to build its expertise and experience and generate long-term impact. In the medium term, GI-ESCR has developed a four-year programme, covered by this strategic plan, as a starting phase. The programme has three principal dimensions:

1. To reverse the commercialisation of public services. GI-ESCR will seek to identify economic and political arrangements that will more fairly and accessibly meet people's ESC needs, starting with education and health and subsequently extending to water and sanitation and other essential services.
2. To address the green transition using a human rights perspective. GI-ESCR will identify the concerns that action plans must cover and promote institutional mechanisms that deal with them.
3. To promote governance principles and the institutional accountability of private and public actors. In doing this, GI-ESCR will focus especially on accountability to those who are most disadvantaged and actions that guarantee ESC rights.

Although the crises we face are daunting, they are also generating new and creative political and public responses: new ways of cooperating, new forms of action, new ideas for the future. Social movements are engaging society at large, not merely intellectual and political elites. This is where GI-ESC has chosen to work.

We will cooperate with others who share our objectives, and especially with people who benefit least or not at all from today's unbalanced economy, to grow coalitions for change. Our objective is to create political, economic and social institutions that prioritise well-being, sustainability and human rights over profit and other short-term measures of value.

We have already made a start. In recent years, we pressed governments and intergovernmental institutions to focus on building strong and free public education systems with a focus on human rights, instead of diverting funds to a private sector that frequently privileges profit. We helped bring climate change into the international human rights field and worked with women's organisations to ensure that the transition to renewable energy is properly transformative and meets the economic and social needs of women. We engaged with national and international alliances supporting progressive constitutional reform in Chile and enabled disadvantaged and marginalised communities to participate in that process.

The next strategy cycle will build on these achievements. Our core task is to help replace neoliberal ideas and policies by new social goals and fresh narratives that draw on human rights. Our goal is to imagine and begin to put into practice models of economic governance that will promote human well-being, reverse economic and social inequalities, address the environmental crisis, and meet the economic and social needs of modern societies for income, care and security. To inspire public support, models will need to work – and work better than current ones. It is a large ambition that can only be achieved by genuinely acting inclusively in partnership with many others, taking risks, and being constantly innovative: this is where GI-ESCR can make its distinctive contribution.

### 3. Cross-cutting strategic perspectives

GI-ESCR has chosen specific programmatic areas that complement our theory of change, as well as specific human rights perspectives. These perspective – on gender (3A) and economic value (3B) - give GI-ESCR powerful tools that can assist it to analyse diversity, address key issues, and develop forward-looking narratives with the capacity to energise broad social coalitions and challenge the neoliberal paradigm.

#### A. Gender perspective

Twenty-five years after the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, the world has changed but gender inequality persists. Recurring economic crises and associated austerity measures, natural disasters and the effects of climate change, health crises, widespread privatisation of public services, as well as the influence of corporations, have shifted power relations in ways that undermine enjoyment of human rights and in particular ESC rights, which are the basis for women's economic justice.

Miguel Bruna | [unsplash.com/photos/TzVN0xQhWaQ](https://unsplash.com/photos/TzVN0xQhWaQ)

GI-ESCR believes that substantive equality is a precondition of realising women's rights. Not all paths to economic empowerment lead to gender equality. While formal equality is reflected in laws and policies, substantive equality depends on outcomes. Progress towards it can be seen in women's entitlement to organise, participate in decisions, own land, enjoy health care and decent working conditions as well as a healthy environment, and live without violence. This is why GI-ESCR will continue to have a strategic gender focus across our different programmatic priorities.

Recently, GI-ESCR's work has focused on securing land rights for women. We believe we have expanded understanding of women's rights in this area. We have also researched and advocated for a gender-just transition to low-carbon economies and women's economic autonomy, through employment but also remuneration for care and household support (see Programme Priority 2.2).

Building on the lessons we have learned and the networks we have developed, in the coming period we will extend our work on the green transition to include a review of the fiscal space required to support public services that underpin substantive equality for women and girls. Priorities include economic opportunities, remuneration for care and domestic work, and a just transition to low-carbon and sustainable societies.

#### Long term goal

Public policies are studied and designed using a human rights gender lens, with the effect that all genders secure equal rights.

#### Medium term goal

Progressive fiscal policies are in place: these invest in public services; finance a just transition to sustainable and low-carbon societies; recognise the value of care and domestic work and reduce and redistribute the burden they represent.



## Gender perspective tools

### **Perspective Tool 1. GI-ESCR integrates gender-responsive analysis and practice and advocacy on women's rights in all its work.**

#### **We will**

- Develop a comprehensive analysis of non-discrimination and equality, focusing on ESC rights that are especially important to women, including gender-sensitive interpretations of human rights standards that relate to GI-ESCR's areas of work. This analysis will address the issues of fiscal space and women's economic autonomy.
- Prepare resources and materials that explain how power imbalances between persons of different gender cause structural gender inequality in the main areas of GI-ESCR's work.

### **Perspective Tool 2. We amplify the voices of women, particularly marginalised and disadvantaged women, in key decision-making spaces, and promote women's meaningful participation in GI-ESCR's main areas of work, including advocacy.**

#### **We will**

- Develop collaborative community-based participatory methodologies, tools and channels to strengthen the voices of women and enable them to articulate their specific needs and demands in decision-making spaces at every level.
- Identify, collect and disseminate the rights-based work of women's rights organisations, feminist social movements and grassroots women in GI-ESCR's areas of activity.
- Actively identify opportunities to advance women's rights and gender equality in all our work.

### **Perspective Tool 3. We work in cross-constituency networks and social movements to realise women's ESC rights and environmental justice for women.**

#### **We will**

- Develop and sustain strong connections with feminist organisations, social movements, academics and advocates. Their work inform our work and we will promote their knowledge and experiences.
- Share knowledge, discuss ideas and develop strategies with women's rights and feminist organisations, feminist social movements and grassroots women, enriching the coalitions in which we are active.

### **Perspective Tool 4. We ensure all GI-ESCR's internal policies and practices are gender-equal and promote women's rights. We guarantee equal opportunities, apply gender-sensitive approaches to human rights advocacy and analysis, and ensure gender balance in GI-ESCR.**

#### **We will**

- Train staff as required and mainstream gender-responsive approaches to advocacy and programme implementation.
- Implement methods, values and practices that fully integrate an intersectional approach to gender in all our work. We will ensure that opportunities and working conditions are gender equal and that the organisation is gender-balanced.
- Ensure that the GI-ESCR's planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring processes incorporate a gender perspective.

## **B. Economic value perspective and progressive fiscal policies**

Two principal obstacles to recognising the ESC rights obligations of States are austerity narratives and economic theories that deny or ignore the economic value created by the public sphere. Neoliberal advocates assert that the State and public services can only exist by extracting value created by the private sector. In fact, the public sector is also capable of generating value. Fiscal policies need to recognise this and align with societal objectives by seeking to continuously invest, not least in a green transition and public services.

In recent years GI-ESCR has begun to include a fiscal policy perspective in its work on public services. We have also argued for the inclusion of human rights perspectives in fiscal policies to address the climate emergency. In coming years, we expect to continue to develop a strong human rights and fiscal policy perspective that will add value to the work we do in different fields, including our work on public services, the green transition, and governance and institutions. The arguments we develop can help to shift the focus of economic policy from fiscal balance to generating value and achieving societal goals.

### **Long term goal**

Public services are designed to maximise the value they generate, and financed through progressive fiscal policies that recognise enjoyment of human rights is a societal priority.

### **Medium term goal**

Long-term fiscal commitments and value-creating capacity are integrated in discussions of human rights, public services, the green transition, and institutional governance.

### **Perspective Tool 1. We propose a post-neoliberal value perspective and catalyse action to achieve it.**

**We will**

- Align around a vision that values human rights and solidarity.
- Strengthen the ability of human rights and social justice coalitions to influence how fiscal policy-makers act on their human rights obligations.

### **Perspective Tool 2. We incorporate value analysis in the formation of our team and in our collaboration with partners.**

**We will**

- Improve understanding of the links between economics and human rights.
- Increase our own capacity to apply and develop thinking on economic value and fiscal policy, and consolidate and reframe our methodological tools.

## 4. GI-ESCR's programmatic priorities

### Programme priority I. Reverse the commercialisation of public services

#### Context and analysis

Since 2015, this programme has worked to reverse the harmful effects of commercialising education. We have been a leading organisation in this field, coordinating global mobilisations, developing a global response network, and promoting a normative framework, now articulated in the Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education. In the next strategy cycle, we will build on these achievements in education and will start progressively to work in similar ways to reverse the harmful effects of commercialising other public services, notably in health, water provision, social protection and care.

In this context, 'commercialisation' means the adoption of market-driven approaches and practices to deliver public services. 'Public services' (also called 'social services') are services that are essential to the realisation of ESC rights. They include education, healthcare, social security, care, housing, water and sanitation, and land.

In recent decades, many States have taken steps to commercialise public services and associated resources. They have frequently commodified what were public rights, placing in private hands services and resources that were publicly owned and managed. Private activity has a role in certain economic transactions. However, the commercialisation of public services is associated with specific human rights concerns. It increases inequalities and segregation; disproportionately harms the poorest; often lowers quality; and diminishes democratic control in areas essential for human dignity.

The commercialisation of public services has often gone hand in hand with increased corporate capture of public decision-making. On one hand, commercialisation has opened the governance of services such as education, healthcare and water to powerful multinational corporations that increasingly influence sectors critical for functioning democracies, such as education curricula and the production of vaccines. On the other hand, the private sector's presence at the heart of social services has influenced policy-making in ways that advantage corporations, typically by favouring public-private partnerships that transfer funds from public to private actors despite clear evidence of their ineffectiveness.

GI-ESCR believes that, grounding ourselves in examples of success, we must create a new social contract that delivers public services in ways that will guarantee every person in society a future that is sustainable, gender-inclusive and fair. Properly funded and effective public services are an essential component of fiscal justice and a fair economy; they underpin efforts to promote equity and redress inequalities; and they are foundational to achieving ESC rights. In addition, a persuasive conception of public services, supported by a solid and coherent narrative, can convince large numbers of people to mobilise for a fairer economic system, enabling us to do away with a neoliberal narrative that has largely failed, and the harmful effects of commodification.

Public services are also critical and closely connected to GI-ESCR's programme on the climate crisis. By offering more effective and better regulated transportation, energy, and water systems, public services are essential to efforts to mitigate climate breakdown; in addition, they address the effects of the crisis, by organising sectors such as



healthcare and education in a resilient and sustainable manner. Fair access to clean fresh water will be particularly critical for the enjoyment of all human rights in coming decades, because it is a resource essential for life that will become increasingly scarce.

In short, a new and ambitious vision of public services is a core element of the new social contract that we must imagine and put in practice. We need to discover, and make real, ways to organise and deliver public services that are demonstrably effective and promote the common good. To conform with human rights norms and aspirations, they must operate for public benefit, involve meaningful participation, and be accountable to and eventually controlled by the public.

Solutions that meet these criteria can take different forms, depending on context, history, and political culture. Much work has already been done, not least in the education, health, and water sectors. A cross-sectoral approach is now required, to confront the powerful interests and institutions that benefit from and promote commodification of public services, and create a new narrative that will persuasively argue the case for effective public services based on values of justice, equality and solidarity. In addition, this narrative must address the specific needs of women, as economic actors and as carers, and the gendered discrimination to which they are subject.

In the next phase, we will apply GI-ESCR's experience to stimulate new thinking on delivery of public services, connected to and in support of social movements, beginning in the fields of education, health, and water and ultimately including care systems and social security, housing, land, energy, and telecommunications. This work will address fair and progressive taxation, take a comprehensive approach to governance, and cover financing, mode of delivery, and access.

## Pathway to change

### Long-term outcomes

- Public services realise and promote ESC rights and the common good of everyone, in a renewed social contract.
- The trend to commercialise public services is reversed.
- Public services are well financed by progressive taxation, reducing inequality; innovative economic policies promote fair and sustainable economic outcomes.

### Intermediate outcomes

- A persuasive collective narrative convinces the public and mobilises civil society action to demand public services that promote and comply with human rights.
- A strong cross-sectoral movement challenges the commercialisation of services and demands improved access to public services that comply with human rights.
- The role of fiscal policies in achieving human rights, including the allocation of resources to public services, is better understood.

## Programme goals

**Programme goal 1.1. Working with communities and local governments, we will explore ways to deliver public services that meet people's rights. We will disseminate examples of success in our advocacy.**

### We will

- Work with civil society partners, grassroots movements, experts, and communities to identify examples of non-commercialised service delivery that meet people's needs and promote ESC rights.
- Explore human rights and other innovative social and economic approaches, including 'the commons', the social solidarity economy, public-public and public-common partnerships, the green economy, and feminist economics. We will promote effective alternatives that we find.
- Encourage the progressive interpretation of existing norms and standards. We will engage with human rights monitoring bodies to push for new standards that enlarge access to public services in accordance with human rights principles.

**Programme goal 1.2.** We will document, through data collection and partners, where commercialisation of public services harms the enjoyment of ESC rights, and identify alternative models aligned with human rights.

**We will**

- Document and monitor, with our partners, instances in which the delivery of commercialised services has threatened enjoyment of ESC rights, and instances in which non-commercial approaches have promoted ESC rights and delivered services more efficiently and effectively than commercial models.
- Use the data to promote models of public service delivery that promote ESC rights, and challenge the claims made for commercial models of service delivery.
- Collect data working with and through partners; and jointly develop a methodology for data collection and monitoring that local partners can use and grow on their own.
- Address issues of gendered economic and social discrimination that occur in the context of commercialised and non-commercial public services.

**Programme goal 1.3.** We increase mobilisation and advocacy, against commercialisation of public services and for public services that promote ESC rights and are financed in a fair and progressive manner.

**We will**

- Advocate and campaign to create a central role for public services in recovery packages and other post-COVID efforts to ‘build back better’.
- Play an active role in collective campaigns to demand the realisation of public services that promote and protect human rights.
- Consolidate and expand alliances and collaboration to promote fiscal justice in provision of public services.

## **Programme priority 2.**

### **Address the environmental breakdown and ensure a just transition to sustainable low-carbon societies**

#### **Context and analysis**

The UN Secretary General has recognised that the climate emergency is “an existential threat to humanity” and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has said that the world has never before seen a threat to human rights on this scale. It is one of several interconnected crises that are driving the planet towards environmental breakdown, fundamentally threatening ESC rights.

Climate change is just one dimension of the larger environmental breakdown. GI-ESCR has decided initially to focus on it but will progressively seek opportunities to tackle threats to biodiversity and habitat loss that significantly impair the rights of present and future generations.

To protect ESC rights now and in the future, States and economic actors must act swiftly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) (mitigation measures), assist people to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change (adaptation measures), and address the losses and damage they generate. Stabilising the climate while protecting rights holders and communities involves a profound shift in the way we power, manage and organise our societies. We will need to re-conceive the economy and ensure that the transition to low carbon, sustainable societies is guided by human rights principles and gender equality.

However, climate policymakers have traditionally taken a scientific and technocratic approach and have resisted integration of a human rights approach, while human rights actors have only recently begun to treat climate change

as a human rights issue. To build bridges, we need to facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders and create spaces for communities and rights holders to voice their needs. To effectively address climate change and the wider environmental breakdown, we will also need to extend the frontiers of the international human rights framework.

In these efforts, the energy transition presents a unique opportunity to advance social justice, gender equality and environmental sustainability. It has become evident that renewable forms of energy (solar, hydroelectric, wind, and geothermal) can in most cases replace coal, oil and gas, reducing GHG and preventing the worst effects of climate change. Moreover, renewable technologies now make it possible to produce clean, affordable energy almost anywhere in the world, and their modular technologies allow energy systems to be more decentralised, adopt locally accountable and cooperative forms of generation and distribution, and ensure more socially just and gender-equal outcomes.

In practice, however, there is no guarantee that the switch from one form of energy to another will realise these benefits. Steps will need to be taken to ensure that the renewable energy sector does not reproduce the extractive practices and gender biases that have characterised the fossil fuel industry, and accommodates the specific needs and interests of women and disadvantaged rights holders. Affected communities, and in particular women, must meaningfully participate, and their interests must be central in energy solutions, decisions, and investments. The new energy economy that is forming to address the climate crisis should not exacerbate gender disparities but contribute to removing them, including by increasing women's economic opportunities, meeting their specific needs, ensuring access to sustainable energy, and supporting democratic decision-making processes.

In this context, GI-ESCR has helped propel climate change up the human rights agenda by unpacking its human rights dimensions, developing the legal framework, and building capacity to monitor, thereby helping to ensure that States mobilise resources to address these challenges and that rights holders have access to accountability mechanisms. In the next four years we will build on this work, focusing on:

**Mitigation and adaptation.** We will develop the legal framework and build the capacity of civil society and international mechanisms and fora to: use human rights to monitor; mobilise resources; shape policies and legal frameworks to address the climate emergency; and ensure rights holders have access to accountability mechanisms in this context.

**Just transition.** We will explore the gender and ESC rights dimensions of the transition to renewable energy; explicate what a 'just and equitable transition' to sustainable low carbon and sustainable societies means, paying particular attention to the needs of women; and articulate responses to inequality in the context of the climate and biodiversity crises.



## Pathway to change

### Long term outcomes

- States take urgent, ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation measures that respect, protect and fulfil rights and ensure a just transition to a low-carbon, sustainable and equitable social and economic model.
- Energy transition policies and frameworks apply an intersectional gender and human rights lens, enabling them to achieve substantive gender equality.

### Medium term outcomes

- Informed by the perspectives of rights holders and affected communities, the human rights framework evolves to respond to the climate crisis and gives climate and rights advocates tools and the capacity to progress their climate and energy justice demands.
- People understand and become more aware of how climate change exacerbates systemic and intersectional inequalities. The voices of women are encouraged and further amplified.
- The elements of a just, equitable energy transition that promotes ESC rights are articulated, alongside the correlative responsibilities of States and economic actors.

## Programme goals

### Programme goal 2.1. We strengthen the capacity of human rights mechanisms and institutions to respond to the climate emergency and give climate and rights advocates tools and capacity to progress their climate justice demands.

#### We will

- Monitor, analyse and influence the development of international and regional human rights norms on climate change.
- Build the capacity of human rights mechanisms to address the climate crisis in their work.
- Strengthen the capacity of human rights mechanisms and institutions to support mitigation and adaptation and provide tools that enable climate and rights advocates to use the human rights framework to advance their mitigation and adaptation demands.
- Increase the capacity of civil society partners, particularly from the Global South, to advance their climate justice demands by engaging with human rights mechanisms and institutions.

### Programme goal 2.2. We articulate the elements of a just and equitable transition that promotes ESC rights, and the correlative responsibilities of States and economic actors.

#### We will

- Collaborate with civil society partners to document and deepen understanding and awareness of how the climate crisis exacerbates systemic and intersectional inequalities.
- Work with partners and human rights mechanisms to make known the needs and demands of rights holders, climate advocates and affected communities.
- Work with partners, particularly from the Global South and marginalised communities, to describe in more detail what a just and equitable transition implies from an ESC rights perspective. We will focus mainly on the transition to renewable energy and gender inequalities in this context.
- Articulate and promote actions that States, other economic actors, policy makers and human rights bodies can take to advance a just transition to low carbon, sustainable and equal societies.

## Programme goal 2.3. We promote renewable energy while ensuring substantive gender equality.

### We will

- Collaborate with partners, through participatory grassroots approaches, to document how the current energy model generates unjust energy outcomes for women and girls, and how renewable energy could catalyse gender equality and promote human rights.
- Communicate to policy makers and other audiences the human rights risks and opportunities that the transition to renewable energy presents for women and girls.

## Programme goal 2.4. We collectively identify the key elements of a gender-just energy transition and present them as demands to key decision-makers.

### We will

- Strategise, learn, and build solidarity in cross-constituency social movements and articulate collective demands for a gender-just energy transition.
- Mobilise communities and rights-holders to monitor energy systems; ensure States mobilise resources to mainstream renewable energy; and hold decision-makers accountable, to ensure that energy policies and frameworks protect the environment and meet gender equality and human rights standards.
- Develop advocacy tools on the key elements of a gender-just transition to renewable energy, and use them to inform and influence strategic advocacy spaces.

## Programme priority 3.

### Reinforce the capacity of international and national institutional frameworks to tackle social and economic injustice effectively and hold States and economic actors accountable

#### Context and analysis

Unfair social and economic systems that deny a significant part of the population full access to ESC rights generate social and economic inequities and lie behind many of the political protests against neoliberal policies that have taken place in many countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere.

The ESC rights framework provides norms and accountability mechanisms that can give force to public demands for equal treatment and economic and social justice. To do this effectively, the framework must be strengthened, recognised in national laws and constitutions, and responsive to ESC rights defenders, advocates, social movements and rights holders.

GI-ESCR works to extend the frontiers of ESC rights and ensure that they are legally enforced. We identify opportunities to undertake legal advocacy at domestic level (as in Chile, see below), intervene where we can empower local actors to take action on their own behalf, and support human rights advocates to build a body of progressive national, regional, and international jurisprudence that protects ESC rights, especially the rights of disadvantaged and marginalised communities (see, for example, Programme Priority 2.2).

GI-ESCR believes that, to protect marginalised and disadvantaged groups, human rights mechanisms must remain connected to everyday ESC rights mobilisations, including the perspectives of social movements, grassroots groups, and persons living in poverty. They must also address the fiscal dimension, and establish fair public financing and progressive taxation, so that corporations and wealthy individuals pay their fair share and the most disadvantaged have access to education, healthcare, food, social protection and other services in a manner that respects and promotes human rights.

To achieve these outcomes, ESC rights mechanisms must be accessible to all ESC rights defenders, including the most disadvantaged groups and women. This implies a readiness to respond to their experiences and demands and

equip them with the tools and capacities to engage with the ESC rights framework and mechanisms in a manner that meets their needs.

To respond appropriately to the needs of people and communities, regional and domestic ESC rights institutions and laws must take account of the contexts in which they operate. This is especially important in regions where neoliberal ideas are deeply embedded in social and legal norms. Social movements in this region and elsewhere have highlighted the harm that privatisation has done to public services in recent decades (see Project Priority I).

In the coming period, GI-ESCR will work to strengthen ESC rights frameworks, and relevant monitoring and accountability mechanisms, to ensure that ESC rights are enjoyed by the population and that relevant monitoring and accountability mechanisms are responsive to rights holders, especially those from disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

## **Pathway to change**

### **Long term outcomes**

The ESC rights framework and mechanisms address social and economic injustice and inequalities, provide a foundation for just social policies, hold States and other actors accountable for violations, and ensure every person and community lives in dignity.

### **Medium term outcomes**

- The international human rights framework and mechanisms are effective in realising ESC rights and holding States and other actors accountable for violations and abuses. Mechanisms are connected, accessible and responsive to ESC rights mobilisations and the demands of ESC rights defenders.
- National laws and policies ensure that every person enjoys ESC rights without discrimination.
- National fiscal policies are in place that ensure ESC rights are financed in a fair and progressive manner.
- ESC rights defenders and advocates, especially disadvantaged groups and women, have the information, tools and capacity they need to work with human rights mechanisms to achieve their ESC rights demands.

## **Programme Goals**

**Programme goal 3.1. We facilitate cross-movement alliances and knowledge-sharing for transformative change, encourage participation by excluded and disadvantaged groups, and amplify their demands.**

### **We will**

- Build strong alliances with civil society organisations at national, regional and international level and create alternative narratives to explain and promote ESC rights and gender equality.
- Make available to social movements, organisations and advocates the information, tools, and capacity they need to work with national, regional and international ESC rights mechanisms to advance ESC rights.
- Seek to leverage international human rights spaces and provide support for training and capacity building, to foster connections, for orientation and accompaniment, and strategy development and implementation.

**Programme goal 3.2. We ensure that international and regional ESC rights frameworks and mechanisms effectively protect and promote ESC rights and hold States and other actors accountable.**

### **We will**

- Engage with human rights monitoring bodies to ensure that their interpretation of human rights law is progressive and aligned with rights holders' demands for economic and social justice; and advise and assist other organisations that wish to influence human rights monitoring bodies.
- Monitor, analyse and advocate to strengthen ESC rights mechanisms and institutions and to influence policies, procedures, decisions and outputs relevant to ESC rights.
- Analyse and disseminate developments in the ESC rights framework and the work and outputs of ESC rights mechanisms, to give them prominence and make them accessible.

## GI-ESCR engagement with UN Treaty monitoring bodies

For over a decade GI-ESCR has worked closely with UN treaty monitoring bodies in Geneva. We seek to influence their work where it relates specifically to our programmatic areas of work and more generally to protection of ESC rights. For instance:

- We actively engage with UN Committees to push for a progressive interpretation of standards relevant to climate change, renewable energy and public services.
- We report on ESC rights activity at each session of the Human Rights Council, and before and after each session of the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).
- We publish a report on the CESCR's activities in an engaging format, ensuring that it is accessible to CSOs, academics, States and other actors with an interest in ESC rights.
- We maintain a popular CESCR Jurisprudence webpage. This summarises every individual communication the Committee addresses, compiles statistics on the CESCR's decisions, and analyses significant trends in CESCR jurisprudence.
- We host the Individual Communication Guide, which explains the individual communication process and provides useful resources for activists and rights-holders.

## 5. Strategic areas of intervention

Based on our reading of global trends and the global context of human rights, taking account of issues that can be leveraged, we will select geographic locations for intervention, develop organisational capacity, and assemble resources to pursue the issues we highlight. In the next four years period, we have identified three specific areas of intervention: our work on constitutional reform in Chile, scaled up to include other Latin American countries; our work on reversing commercialisation in West Africa; and our work in education and public services in East Africa, particularly Kenya and Uganda.

### Chile and regional scaling up

In Chile we will work to support the mobilisation of national partners, and the inclusion of norms and institutions that promote economic, social, cultural, environmental and gender-related rights in Chile's new constitution and its subsequent implementation. We will identify lessons from the Chilean process and bring them to other countries in the region.

We will

- Reclaim the role of State in the provision of services related to enjoyment of ESC rights.
- Campaign for progressive fiscal policies and economic justice in the constitutional context.
- Support national women's movements and organisations to advocate nationally, sub-nationally and internationally for the constitutional proposals and the changes to Chile's economic system that they favour.
- Assist constitution-makers (directly or through partner organisations) to develop alternative constitutional proposals that comply with norms of gender equality and ESC rights.
- Connect Chilean discussions with international debates on economic justice and encourage a two-way exchange on rights-based approaches to economic and social policy-making.
- Assist Chilean partners to engage with human rights monitoring bodies, including the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, UN treaty monitoring bodies and special procedures, to hold the State accountable for economic, social and environmental justice.
- Use quantitative and qualitative tools (such as public opinion surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews) to document Chile's constitutional process at different stages and analyse public expectations of and attitudes to ESC rights.

- Monitor the substantive constitutional discussions that take place in the Constitutional Convention and beyond.
- Work with regional and international partners to co-operate and share knowledge, skills and best practices related to the substance and the process of Chile's Constitutional Convention.
- Disseminate useful experiences from Chile in other countries that are exploring constitutional or legal reform or would like to reverse neoliberal policies.
- Provide support in selected countries from the region, drawing on our experience in Chile.

## Why we focus on Chile

Chile's current Constitution was imposed in the 1980s by then dictator Augusto Pinochet. It is widely considered to be the cornerstone of Chile's neoliberal experiment. Consequently, its reform became the target of a massive social uprising in October 2019 that led to a referendum in which almost 80% of voters supported drafting a new Constitution through the first democratic Constitutional Convention in Chile's history. The constitutional convention is expected to work from June 2021 to June 2022.

Elections in May 2021 created a constituent assembly in which progressives have a strong majority. However, many members are new to politics and may initially lack technical skills to push through their proposals. Furthermore, the Convention is highly fragmented. A two-thirds majority is needed to agree a draft text and Chileans will then vote again either to accept the draft or revert to the previous constitution. Strong alliances and technical assistance will be required to reach a draft within the timeframe.

**GI-ESCR** has already played an influential role in promoting a rights-respecting, gender-inclusive and transformative constitution in Chile. We have built strong national, regional and international alliances with civil society organisations; developed tools and analyses; and co-created a digital platform that enables individuals, movements, and civil society organisations to participate actively in Chile's constitutional process. We held seminars, workshops and campaigns on education and housing, and helped trade unions, social movements, local communities and grassroots organisations to mobilise on a numerous issues, including women's rights, feminism, tax justice, housing, education, and care (examples [here](#)). To date, we have started eight major projects relevant to the constitu-

tional process, and involved Chile's most disadvantaged communities in this work. In this sense, the Chile project has been very cost-effective. It has achieved many 'strategic wins' with few resources.

However, our work is not done. The opportunity for a profound institutional reform puts the Chilean case at the convergence of GI-ESCR's strategic plan, bringing together public services, the green transition, fiscal policy, and a gender perspective, under the umbrella of major governance reform. We aim to include the most recent principles of strong public services aligned with human rights, a fiscal policy framework that guarantees long-term commitment to progress and equality, an environmental transition process that respects human rights, and an approach to women's rights that focuses on the social responsibility of care and the importance of economic opportunities. In coming months we expect to play a critical role in promoting a progressive vision in these areas, creating a holistic model of governance and institutional performance that connects these core questions to the thematic work of dozens of local organisations.

Chilean citizens have overwhelmingly demanded a new social pact that recognises their right to education, healthcare, housing, social protection, a minimum wage, water, and social security, loosening the neoliberal grip on global politics. Other countries in Latin America and the world may find in Chile an example of governance and institutions that can face up to inequality, discrimination, climate change, and other challenges of the 21st century. We will therefore document and monitor lessons from the constitutional process and communicate what we learn to other countries and organisations that work on similar issues.

## West Africa

Since 2017, GI-ESCR has been expanding its work in West Africa. GI-ESCR offered its expertise to several projects in different countries to counteract increasing privatisation of public services. Thanks to our capacity to connect actors at global, national and local levels, we played a leading role in building the [Réseau francophone contre la marchandisation de l'éducation](#) (Francophone network against the commercialisation of education). This is the only network that addresses the privatisation of public services in the sub-region and in francophone countries globally. It has become a key advocate against privatisation of education.

We have also helped increase mobilisation and research work in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone, generating momentum on issues related to the education sector. We will build on this activity and these partnerships to consolidate our work in the region.

We will

- Support domestic civil society organisations in their efforts to monitor the provision of public services, particularly education and health.
- Mobilise, together with national actors, to strengthen normative frameworks that provide ESC services related to rights.
- Build the capacity of local organisations to develop methods and tools for holding governments and economic actors accountable.

## Kenya, Uganda and East Africa

GI-ESCR has been working for several years in Kenya and Uganda. Partnering closely with the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) in Uganda, and the East African Centre for Human Rights (EACHRights) and Hakjamii in Kenya. Since 2014 we have regularly had staff based in Nairobi, Kenya, and have worked together with partners to (inter alia) organise sub-regional convenings on the privatisation of education and public services; monitor and respond to abuses by commercial private education companies; and conduct and apply research on regional and international monitoring and accountability bodies.

As in West Africa, in these countries we will support the efforts of national civil society to reverse the commercialisation of public services. We will specifically encourage policy changes in Kenya and Uganda.

## 6. Partnership priorities: Harnessing collective power

---

GI-ESCR is well positioned to harness collective power and to break down silos between disciplines. We will continue to collaborate with organisations, movements and groups to consolidate our role as a bridge, providing grassroots actors and communities access to global fora in particular.

We will connect with new constituencies; continue to develop horizontal forms of collaboration; explore innovative strategies (in addition to traditional 'naming and shaming'); and use narratives that resonate with people's feelings to give technical concepts meaning. To build collective power we need counter-narratives that influence public opinion and change citizens' perceptions of rights and human rights organisations. We will strengthen our legitimacy by forming new and deep alliances with other NGOs that have robust links with communities and non-NGO actors.

We value relationships and partnerships highly. They are at the core of GI-ESCR's methodology and are critical to establishing and realising human rights. We are committed to cultivating solidarity and more equitable partnerships – to forms of collaboration that value the knowledge brought by every partner, share resources fairly, practise equitable decision-making, and cultivate mutual learning and respect.

Our strategy is to facilitate the access of partners, to strengthen human rights standards, and ensure that experts in the human rights mechanisms understand the perspectives of the public, and of marginalised communities in particular. We learn from community-based organisations, and disseminate their alternative approaches; when requested, we work with them to increase their capacity by providing training and facilitating their access to human rights experts, decision-makers and other influential actors, thereby enabling them to shape ESC rights standards.

We also value partnerships with other human rights and ESC rights actors, including networks, international organisations, UN agencies, States, and experts.



## **Partnership goals**

**Partnership goal 1. We strengthen and increase our collaboration with local, national, regional and international organisations and connect with new constituencies.**

### **We will**

Foster, maintain and strengthen collaborative, respectful and mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide range of organisations. We will contribute to coalitions as well as lead them; support national ESC rights organisations seeking to influence international human rights fora; and provide training, capacity building, orientation and accompaniment.

**Partnership goal 2. We assist those who are affected by ESC rights violations to design solutions.**

### **We will**

Seek to amplify the voices of people whose ESC rights have been violated, to enable them to influence development of the international human rights framework and ensure that it reflects their experiences, needs, and aspirations.

## 7. Communications priorities: changing the narrative

---

GI-ESCR has helped to raise awareness, build a collective narrative, and mobilise around asymmetries of power and ESCR-related services. Our aim is to create a more sustainable, gender-inclusive and just future for all.

GI-ESCR's work is grounded in solidarity, and therefore collective action. No organisation can achieve a large goal on its own; it makes progress by working actively with others. We will always seek collaboration and offer mutual support.

Building a collective narrative and increasing mobilisation are at once consecutive steps and interdependent objectives. We raise awareness to build a collective narrative that can drive mobilisation. The narrative we aim to create with partners will be based on human rights. Our work will seek to

- Debunk myths about social and environmental injustice and asymmetries of power, and the roles of public and corporate actors.
- Showcase alternative approaches that demonstrate another way is possible (and needed).
- Start from the perspectives and experiences of rights holders.
- Provide our audiences with pathways and tools to mobilise and engage, showing the impact that each of us can have.

### Communication goals

#### Communication goal 1. We raise awareness, increase mobilisation, and change the narrative.

##### We will

- Discredit mainstream economic policies that worsen underlying systemic crises, condemn social and environmental injustice and asymmetries of power, and highlight the responsibilities of public and corporate actors.
- Collaborate with partners to build new human rights-based narratives that prioritise the wellbeing of peoples and the planet. We will give attention to narratives that appeal to feelings and values.
- We will strengthen our capacity to communicate human rights norms and standards in language that is understandable, accessible and compelling for a wide public. We will use a variety of communication channels, including domestic media outlets; and will highlight stories and examples that show other ways of organising the economy and society are possible and required.

#### Communication goal 2. We improve the impact of our communications work, and first of all its quality, in accordance with GI-ESCR's capacity.

##### We will

- Develop communication tools and strategies to increase awareness of ESC rights and their visibility, and to communicate our impacts and successes more effectively.
- Establish a communications strategy. It will prioritise our audiences, and review messages, channels and tools. We aim to do things better rather than do more, matching our communications capacity to our capacity to deliver work we plan.
- Measure our success in promoting human rights and social and environmental justice by increasing our presence in social media, broadening the distribution and impact of our reports, extending our public audiences, and attracting more visits to GI-ESCR's website.

## 8. Organisational priorities: Strengthening our ability to achieve change

---

Organisationally, we will build a balanced internal structure through slow, managed growth that values effective governance and management, focused and consistent programmatic work, and adequate administrative support. We do not seek growth for growth's sake and intend to remain a small, nimble and effective organisation. Overall, our objectives are to increase staff capacity for specific programmatic priorities; formalise structures where necessary; and improve the organisation's communication functions.

### Organisational goals

#### Organisational goal 1. We improve working conditions, and the diversity and wellbeing of staff.

##### We will

- Encourage a culture of internal leadership and sustain organisational memory. We will formalise all staff contracts.
- Strengthen the collective identity of the organisation by developing a set of internal procedural and substantial guidelines that incorporate new learning acquired by staff.
- Improve operating procedures, by introducing performance reviews and a salary scale.
- Build staff capacities and skills.
- Create a workplace in which staff are motivated, live up to their potential, prioritise quality over quantity, can take strategic decisions on what areas to prioritise, and have balanced workloads.
- Appoint staff to enable us to undertake new areas of programme work. When doing this, we will seek to recruit staff who come from different regions, have a variety of disciplinary competencies, and add to our diversity.

#### Organisational goal 2. We mainstream gender, in our programmatic work, our organisational culture, and internal operations.

##### We will

- Consistently assess the different implications for people of different genders of any planned action or activity to the best of our capacities.
- Invest in strengthening our ability to implement gender mainstreaming, including our ability to collect gender-disaggregated data and to apply them in our work.

## 9. Funding priorities: Growing resources and ensuring sustainability

---

We will consolidate GI-ESCR's solid financial base by seeking support from a more diverse set of funders. Our aims will be to ensure the organisation and its programmes are sustainable, and increase the amount of unrestricted funding.

### Funding goals

#### Funding goal 1. We increase the diversity of funding.

##### We will

- Cultivate prospective new donors, particularly foundations, individuals and States that are sympathetic to ESC rights. We will cultivate new funding contacts and submit applications where priorities align.
- Explore other sources of income (consultancy fees, individual donations) when appropriate.

## Funding goal 2. We achieve longer term funding and operational support.

### We will

- Explore with donors whether they might agree to make multi-year grants, thereby making GI-ESCR's advocacy sustainable.
- Prioritise donors that provide unrestricted grants that will enable GI-ESCR to support its administrative costs and the overheads of a growing organisation. We are hoping that it will be possible to secure unrestricted funds covering 20-25% of the operational budget.

## 10. Governance priorities: Strengthening our governance

---

We will strengthen the fiduciary and strategic roles of the Board of Directors, by establishing in-person board meetings, increasing the geographic diversity of the Board, and formalising the responsibilities, terms and functions of the Board and Board members.

### **Governance goals**

#### Governance goal 1. We increase the Board's diversity.

##### We will

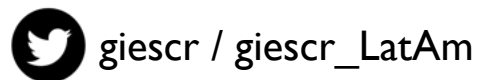
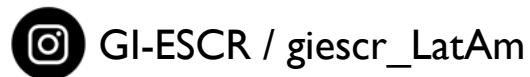
- Increase the Board's geographic representation, notably by adding members from the Global South.
- Increase the overall diversity of the Board in terms of age, race, gender identity, grass-roots work and areas of work.

#### Governance goal 2. We institute a regular management review.

##### We will

- Create protocols that will enable the Board to regularly review the work of the Executive Director. The protocols will set performance goals and identify opportunities for improvement.

## Join us



[www.gi-escr.org](http://www.gi-escr.org)