

GOOD GOVERNANCE, EVALUATIONS AND LEARNINGS

ISHR is deeply committed to principles of good governance, transparency and accountability.

- In 2021, ISHR's finances and financial management and reporting systems were independently audited by Beau HLB. There were no reported or investigated breaches of ISHR's Code of Conduct or Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy in 2021.
- The ISHR Board met on four occasions during 2021, with an average attendance of 75% per meeting, addressing issues including the external environment, governance, strategy, policy, risk, holistic security, outcomes and impacts, evaluations and learnings, and human and financial resource management.
- ISHR acknowledges the outstanding pro bono contribution of Florian Pollner of McKinsey & Co to the facilitation of our 2021 staff strategy retreat and the refinement and enhanced implementation of our Strategic Framework.

ISHR is also deeply committed to monitoring, evaluation and learning.

- In 2021, ISHR commissioned and received an independent external evaluation of our programme to support defenders working in a highly restrictive environment. The evaluation found that the programme significantly supported and enabled defenders to engage strategically and effectively with the international human rights system, contributed to developing and strengthening networks of solidarity and support, and achieved impacts 'widely outsized in comparison with the resources at its disposal'. Key factors identified as contributing to the impact and effectiveness of the programme included: resilient, adaptable and committed staff; a highly collaborative approach; a very high level of expertise; and long-term commitment and investment.
- In terms of recommendations, the evaluation considered that the programme would benefit from the further development of clear benchmarks to assess progress towards longer-term goals, continued attention to risk management, and further support to beneficiaries to systematically assess risk.

We consider that holistic security and a focus on wellbeing are paramount to the safety and sustainability of defenders and their work, as well as that of ISHR staff.

- Throughout 2021, ISHR continued to strengthen its approach on these vital issues, implementing an updated policy on Holistic Security as well as advice and recommendations from our Working Group on Digital Security.
- We continued to implement our organisational Wellbeing Policy under the leadership of the Wellbeing Working Group and convened regular sessions on wellbeing, resilience, stress management and sustainability. ISHR's staff strategy retreat included dedicated sessions on wellbeing and workload management, with the ISHR Board, Senior Management Team and Staff Representative all collaborating on initiatives to monitor and address workload issues as a priority within the organisation.

ISHR is committed to addressing all forms of discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion, both internally and through our programmatic support to women human rights defenders, defenders of the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, and anti-racism defenders, among others.

- ISHR's Working Group on Non-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion, which reports to the Director and directly to the ISHR Board, continued to monitor and make recommendations on ways to better address structural and systemic discrimination and promote diversity and inclusivity. In 2021, 100% of the Working Group's recommendations were accepted and implemented by senior management. Among other matters, the Working Group recommended an update of recruitment policies, and is finalising development of a disability policy.
- In 2022, the Working Group will oversee an independent expert audit of ISHR policies and practices to ensure they promote and reflect values of diversity, equity and inclusion. They will also continue to organise personal and professional development sessions for staff on anti-racism.
- Of ISHR's Board members, seven of ten are women (including the Chair and Vice Chair), while four of six members of ISHR's Senior Management Team are women.
- The composition of ISHR's Board reflects organisational values of diversity and representation, with members from the Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America, North America, and Western and Eastern Europe. Their work as human rights defenders across various sectors - NGOs, government, courts and private sector - brings considerable insight to ISHR. ISHR's Executive Director is a member of the International Gender Champions initiative.
- In addition to receiving written and oral reports from the Working Group, the Board received a briefing from Dr Karine Genevey, Head of Diversity and Inclusion with Pictet Group, on good practices and developments from the corporate sector.

We are committed to climate justice and to a healthy and sustainable environment. We stand with and support environmental human rights defenders. ISHR also recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements.

- In 2021 we continued to implement our Environmental Policy, setting out our commitment to promoting biodiversity and a healthy and sustainable environment, reducing our environmental impact, and continually improving our environmental performance.
- ISHR's Strategic Framework 2021-25 identifies defenders working on issues of environmental justice and sustainability as a priority group for support.
- ISHR is proud to have contributed to the successful adoption of historic resolutions at the Human Rights Council in 2021 recognising the right to a healthy environment and mandating a new Special Rapporteur on Climate Change, with each of these resolutions recognising the vital importance of the work and protection of environmental human rights defenders.

