

[Impact | Independent external evaluation of ISHR](#)

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The real measure of any organisation's work is its actual impact for people and society. This year, ISHR commissioned an independent evaluation of its work. The findings provide a genuine and thorough insight into the results and relevance of ISHR's activities.



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Undertaken by human rights and organisational expert Holly Cartner, a former director with Human Rights Watch and Chair of the Advisory Board of the Open Society Foundations Human Rights Initiative, the evaluation draws on over 50 interviews and a comprehensive document review. It considers the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of ISHR's work, together with our approaches to planning, evaluation and risk management.

'According to the evaluation, ISHR is a sophisticated and influential human rights actor that possesses a wealth of expertise, deep networks of partners, and a relationship of trust with many actors within the United Nations system', Cartner said. Interviewees underscored the special niche that ISHR occupies in supporting, training, and advocating on behalf of human rights defenders.

Many of ISHR's partners and beneficiaries see the organisation as playing a critical role both in terms of its training and capacity-building programs, as well as its work to strengthen standards for the protection of human rights defenders. Particularly pleasing for Phil Lynch, director of ISHR, is the finding that many interviewees see the organisation as a 'bridge' between human rights defenders operating at the grassroots or national level on the one hand, and policymakers and others operating at the international level on the other hand.

'Human rights defenders themselves stressed that ISHR's training, as well as its ongoing strategic partnership, makes their work more effective' said Lynch. 'Defenders also recognised that our services makes them more confident and assertive in their engagement with the UN, as well as with regional mechanisms. More importantly, it helps their work when they return home and makes them more confident in their interaction with their own government.'

Interlocutors also appreciate that ISHR has thoughtfully adapted to the ever-changing political environment, evaluating its impact and adjusting its objectives and strategies as the context has shifted.

The evaluation report further highlights key results in terms of:

- **Effectiveness:** ISHR is recognised as an influential organisation that has strongly contributed to positive outcomes for the protection of human rights defenders
- **Relevance:** the organisation is seen as responding to the needs of its main audience, namely human rights defenders
- **Efficiency:** external interlocutors praised ISHR for achieving a significant impact on relatively few resources
- **Sustainability:** initiatives such as the [Model Law](#) where pointed for their lasting support to human rights defenders

Key recommendations to ISHR focused on further developing internal processes for monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, planning, security and risk assessment. The evaluation report also includes recommendations towards ISHR's key donors.

Read the full evaluation report [here](#).

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