

## **Supporting Defenders | Launching our Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme 2019**

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**ISHR's flagship Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme begins on Monday 17 June, with 18 inspiring human rights defenders from around the globe travelling to Geneva to learn how to use the UN mechanisms for even greater impact on the ground.**



On Monday 17 June 2019, ISHR will welcome human rights defenders to the 2019 edition of its [Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme \(HRDAP\)](#). The programme equips defenders with the knowledge and skills to make strategic use of the international human rights system. It provides an opportunity for participants to directly engage in lobbying and advocacy activities at the UN level to effect change back home, with defenders able to rely on the ISHR team for on-going advocacy support.

'These 18 committed human rights defenders are travelling from around the globe - including Australia, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Fiji, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Turkey, Venezuela and Zambia - to spend two highly intense weeks gaining practical advocacy experience in Geneva,' said Nolan.

The human rights defenders work in many areas, reclaiming civil society space for women human rights defenders, defending the rights of LGBTI persons and migrants, in the context of business and human rights, and beyond.

The selection process for HRDAP is extremely competitive, with only about 10% of applicants accepted to participate, so ISHR has developed the [ISHR Academy](#) to complement HRDAP and reach even more human rights defenders, including those who may not be able to travel to Geneva for safety reasons.

'This innovative online training and tactical toolkit for defenders will help them build their capacity to use the UN human rights mechanisms effectively, and develop and pursue advocacy strategies plans with ISHR's expert input,' explains Nolan.

HRDAP coincides with the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council, and as well as receiving training modules on all the UN human rights mechanisms from a range of experts, participants will have the opportunity to build networks in Geneva and around the world, carry out lobbying of UN member States and UN staff, and learn from peers from a range of regions working on a range of human rights issues.

'Crucially, we know the programme works,' said Nolan. 'Last year, 100% of our participants felt they'd be able to put what they learnt into practice and that they'd achieved their primary advocacy and learning objective.'

In 2018, HRDAP enabled:

- Defenders from Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia to highlight the issue of closing civil society space for women human rights defenders 20 years after the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders
- Defenders to engage in dynamic discussions with 6 UN Special Procedures: independent experts on freedom of assembly & association, extreme poverty, discrimination against women, health, business and human rights, and sexual orientation and gender identity
- Defenders from Botswana, Myanmar, Peru and the Philippines to work together to sound the alarm at the Council on the situation of persons defending environmental and land rights

'After months of preparation, we can't wait to meet these 18 committed human rights defenders in person,' says ISHR's Diego Villanueva.

'Our training alumni become our partners, and we're looking forward to seeing what our trainees achieve during the two weeks, as well as how we can work together beyond HRDAP,' adds Villanueva.



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**Helen Nolan** @Helen\_ISHR

Find out why you should apply for our Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme - @AdaUfonduEgboka from #Nigeria shares her experience! More info here: [ishr.ch/news/hrdap-ishr...](https://ishr.ch/news/hrdap-ishr...) #HRDAP19 #HRDs [youtube.com/watch?v=3uZdWR...](https://youtube.com/watch?v=3uZdWR...)

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