

## Supporter profile 1 Patricia Schulz

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**Patricia Schulz is a Swiss lawyer specialised in international human rights law and gender equality. She is a Senior research associate at [UNRISD](#), the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development, and a former member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.**



As a young woman, I participated in feminist organisations in Geneva and also financially supported Geneva-based organisations engaged in achieving gender equality. I value social justice, equality, respect, fairness and dignity. **Later, donating was for me a 'compensation' for not being an activist myself anymore** - due to my profession and subsequent lack of time.

My parents didn't attend university, but they created an enterprise and worked together. They always told me and my brother that if we wanted to study, they would support us. They were happy and proud that both of us succeeded in our university studies and went on to have interesting careers. I don't have children, but **I am aware that due to poverty and inequality, far too many parents must experience desperation at not being able to provide their children with good education, food, health care**, as my parents could. This thought has been with me all the time and that's why I engaged with children's sponsorship programmes, as well as projects for rural development, water and literacy, especially for women and girls.

About five years ago, I decided to donate 10% of my income each year to local, Swiss and international non-governmental organisations as an expression of solidarity and gratitude for the luck I've had in my life. To have an impact, NGOs need money.

I first came across ISHR in 2011, when I joined the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ([CEDAW](#)), tasked with monitoring how States implement the Convention on non-discrimination of women and gender equality. I discovered and admired the work of ISHR and decided to become a regular donor two or three years ago.

When I was the director of the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality, I collaborated with women's organisations and valued their contribution to the realisation of gender equality and non-discrimination in Switzerland. As a member of the CEDAW Committee, I dealt frequently with the appalling retaliation against women human rights defenders by States, private corporations and various armed groups. **I measured how vital the voices of women human rights defenders were, and how profoundly NGOs help the treaty bodies accomplish their mission** to support implementation of human rights in all countries.

**The work of NGOs like ISHR is indispensable**, even if they cannot fully compensate for the lack of, or insufficient, public policies and competent State institutions in a country to ensure civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all the people. **Donating makes me feel connected to other donors and mainly to the people at the receiving end**, who resist acts of violence, engage to overcome climate change and extreme weather conditions, and fight to obtain basic necessities and rights such as food, good education and health systems or decent housing and access to justice. I wish to share with others - and to do this by supporting NGOs I trust, such as ISHR, because I know that their work has an invaluable impact on the ground.

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