

A New Global Fund to Combat Statelessness

HRFN WEBINAR

Thursday 15 February 2024

11 am ET / 8am PT / 5pm CET

An estimated 15 million people are considered stateless around the world. Tens of millions of others live with precarious and unequal nationality. Stateless people live at the intersections of most major social issues of our time: conflict and crisis, rising authoritarianism and xenophobia, climate change and the environment, racial and gender justice, economic inequality. Without the protections of citizenship or nationality, their legal status and claims to human rights are often left unheard or unanswered.

If you fund in the realm of social justice or human rights, you are most likely engaging with stateless communities. And yet, stateless people are at the periphery, either unnamed within larger movements or afforded only token opportunities to 'share their stories' rather than leading change efforts, even within the statelessness field.

Stateless people, civil society organisations and donors are joining forces to co-create a Global Statelessness Fund that will provide the mechanism through which traditional and new philanthropy/donors can channel sustainable, unrestricted funding to increase the agency and independence of stateless-led organisations. It will also strengthen their capacity to advocate, organise, educate and mobilise to advance their own agendas and shape the work of others, while supporting the much-needed transformation of the wider field. The Fund will model the change we seek – through an ethos of equal collaboration and centring lived experience, including through adopting a participatory model for the selection of grantees.

Join the webinar to learn more about this new Global Fund to combat statelessness. **Speakers:**

- © Kellea Miller – *Human Rights Funders Network*
- © Bina Ramanand – *Family Frontiers, Malaysia*
- © Yassah Kimei – *Nubian Rights Forum, Kenya*
- © Subin Mulmi – *Nationality For All*
- © Amal de Chickera – *Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion*
- © Martin Dunn – *Dunn Family Charitable Foundation / Blue Sky Social Justice Fund*

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More about the webinar

- ✓ Hear directly from stateless changemakers about their strategies for affecting change and learn about how access to more secure and flexible resourcing will unlock important opportunities for the growing statelessness field.
- ✓ Join the conversation with civil society and donor allies who are already working with and supporting stateless-led groups, to enhance the agency of stateless people and facilitate their meaningful participation in regional and global initiatives.
- ✓ Discover how the often-overlooked issue of statelessness intersects with critical human rights crises that philanthropy is committed to addressing, and how investing in a statelessness-specific fund offers a fresh route to achieving meaningful impact.

More about statelessness

Nationality is the gateway through which people access rights and services in our state-centric world. It is also an important part of a person's social identity, offering a place to call home and a community to belong to. 'Statelessness' – being denied any nationality – is an extreme form of exclusion and a growing global problem, made worse by increasing authoritarianism, racism and the erosion of democracy. Stateless people are routinely denied fundamental human rights to education, healthcare, housing, employment, social protection, family life, documentation, free movement, political participation and access to justice.

Conservative estimates place the global stateless population at 15 million and rising. Countries with significant statelessness issues include Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Kenya, Madagascar, the Dominican Republic, Kuwait, Lebanon and Montenegro. In addition to those who are stateless, tens of millions of others live with precarious and unequal nationality – when, for example, a government is ever-reviewing citizenship status, not permitting people to transmit nationality to their children (as is the case for women in 24 countries) or instrumentalising the revocation of citizenship as a means to silence and sideline human rights defenders. Protecting the right to a nationality is necessary to realise other human rights, reduce poverty and inequality, counter discrimination and intolerance, and protect civil society space.

Since the right to a nationality was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 75 years ago, academics, advocates, diplomats and bureaucrats with no lived experience, have been setting policy discourse, conducting research, speaking on and trying to 'solve' statelessness. These efforts have largely centred the very states and structures that cause and perpetuate statelessness through discriminatory laws and practices. They haven't been successful.

To bring about this change, we must find a way to reach frontline, stateless-led organisations who face the most pervasive financial insecurity. Often already operating in hostile environments, amidst serious threats to their security, stateless-led groups face additional obstacles to accessing funding – including lack of documentation or legal status, or inability to register their organisation.

In recent years, stateless activists from around the world and their allies have come together to centre and be led by stateless people. Stateless communities best understand their realities, can prioritise which problems to address, and how, and this leads to real tangible change. Success stories include the [Kenya's Makonde March](#) and [Malaysian women's rights activists campaigns and litigation](#).

Join us to build on these successes and learn more. [Register for the webinar here](#).

The 2024 World Conference on Statelessness (26-29 February, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) is also open for registration, see the [conference website](#) for details.