



Concept Note

Shimmering Solidarity: Global Rights Summit

Background

In recent decades, we have witnessed a global confluence and re-framing of multiple longtime anti-rights movements within the concept of an “anti-gender” movement which claims to defend what is “natural.” This framework is weaponized by conservative political and religious groups in furtherance of ongoing strategies to attack human rights and self-determination, deny climate science, and promote authoritarianism. Enormous financial resources are flowing to these anti-rights movements, leveraged into acceleration across global regions and yielding both the attrition of human rights infrastructures and the increasing rise of authoritarianism.

While civil society movements at the local, regional, and international levels have mobilized a wide variety of responses to the “anti-gender” movement, the philanthropic field has not yet articulated a concerted response.

In March through June 2021, Global Philanthropy Project (GPP) will coordinate a virtual summit event series focused on grantmaker responses to the “anti-gender” movement and related global anti-rights agendas. The summit will provide an opportunity for grantmakers to develop shared analysis, strategy, and collaboration across multiple interconnected grantmaking issue areas including (but not limited to):

- Support for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) people; women and all who face gender-based violence; sex workers; refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers; children and youth; and human rights defenders.
- Support for environmental justice and response to climate crisis including protection of targeted climate activists and opposition to climate change denial and eco-fascism.
- Defense of sexual health and reproductive rights (SHRR).
- Defense of open space/response to the closing space for civil society, including response to increased militarization and surveillance by state systems in times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Support for those mobilizing for racial justice and economic equality.
- Support for those developing affirming religious spaces, and countering faith-based fundamentalisms.

Philanthropic networks Elevate Children’s Funder Group (ECFG), Funders' Initiative for Civil Society (FICS), Peace and Security Funders Group (PSFG), and Philanthropy Advancing Women’s Human Rights (PAWHR) join GPP as co-conveners of the Global Rights Summit series and the future in-person meeting. The series and convening development are also informed by an Advisory Committee including key philanthropic and civil society representatives.

Core Meeting Goals:

- Convene global grantmakers to develop shared analysis, strategy, and collaboration across multiple interconnected grantmaking issue areas in response to a global anti-rights agenda and a number of connected anti-rights strategies.
- Facilitate opportunity to evaluate responses and solutions within a regional context, across philanthropic sectors and disciplines.
- Identify paths to increase and improve funding to support civil society movements for human rights and democracy which are under attack.

Expected Outcomes:

- Shared understanding of the different forces of the global anti-rights movements as operationalized within different regions, including neglected strategic fronts in opposition to this anti-rights agenda.
- Increased awareness of the weaponization of SOGIESC¹ issues/identities in attacks on democratic structures at the international, national, and local levels.
- Increased alignment and understanding of philanthropic response to overlapping movements impacted by and included in these attacks (i.e. climate justice, migration, youth...).
- Identification of joint philanthropic strategies and actions to investigate, disrupt, and expose the work of the far-Right; and to invest in, amplify, and empower civil society movements for human rights and democracy.
- Development and distribution of new reports which track the funding that today finances anti-gender groups globally, and the funding of progressive philanthropic response to the anti-gender movement.
- Meeting attendees will develop contacts and relationships across diverse regions and philanthropic sectors and with key civil society informants, towards effective response to future opportunities and emergent events.
- Create the conditions for donor funding commitments.

¹ Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics.

Shimmering as an organizing metaphor

Honeybees flip their abdomens upwards in split-second synchronicity to produce a wave-like pattern called shimmering in order to repel against predators such as hornets. The shimmering mechanism is both sophisticated and magical, demonstrating the bees' remarkable capacity for rapid communication and coordination for aligned action. Shimmering is an anti-predatory response which works by confusing and disorienting its opponents through collective movement, making the many appear as one. This self-defense strategy is developed to protect the community, not the honey or the queen. Shimmering enables bees to live in hives that are out in the open. Even small scale shimmering is effective.

Honeybees also use a vigorously democratic consensus-building process while seeking and assessing potential new homes for their hive.² This process includes a special dance that the bees use to communicate the possibilities of the homes they have visited. We see this element of honeybee technology as a generative metaphor for our work together imagining, exploring, and sharing ideas about our future-visions and the paths to get there.

The complexity of the global network and intersecting anti-rights agendas of the “anti-gender” movement requires a progressive philanthropic “shimmering.” While we seek new and better futures, how can we better communicate and coordinate to share information and strategies, to protect our movements and communities against those who attack human rights? What have we learned that we can share now? What do we need to learn together? What strengths and strategies can we activate to share our positive future-visions?

We're also thinking about the role of honeybees in cross pollination, and the clear metaphor to the ways our various grantmaking sectors can connect, impact each other, and yield new possibilities beyond the silos of our thematic and geographic separations.

The Global Rights Summit is developed as a space for progressive grantmakers to connect across these different thematic and geographic silos and maximize the conditions for cooperation, coordination, co-learning, and identification of action steps.

Session Tracks

- **Cross Pollinate:** Share knowledge across varied and overlapping grantmaking areas, forge connections, and identify further opportunities.
- **Shimmer:** Share concrete grant craft: skills, tools, approaches, models, innovations, and lessons learned.
- **Disorient and Disrupt:** Build shared analysis about the opposition's funding, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Co-develop progressive philanthropic response in support of effective and promising movements strategies, experiments, and lessons learned for counteraction and community self-defense.

² This process is explored and documented including applications for human democratic processes in the book *Honeybee Democracy* by Thomas D. Seeley (Princeton University Press, 2010).

- **Local Honey:** Hone in on regional collaboration: coordinate regional problem-solving and strategic development across funding sectors, approaches, and practices..
- **Another Hive Is Possible:** Share how we are funding world building work and transformative strategies to develop our visions and movements towards a more just and liberatory future.
- **Honeybee Dance:** Creative and cultural spaces within the summit; a closing party and elements integrated into the larger summit to connect us to what we're fighting for.

Frequently Asked Questions

My foundation is not a member of any of the co-sponsoring networks, can I still attend and participate?

Yes, registration is open to all grantmakers, including public foundations and intermediary funders, private foundations, representatives of donor governments and multilaterals, and individual high net wealth donors. We intend that the virtual series, in person convenings, and Advisory Committee will reflect this diversity as well.

In the case of NGO intermediary funders we ask organizations to limit attendance to one staff member who represents the relevant programmatic grantmaking work.

Please note that this is a private gathering, and a non-solicitation event.

Are civil society representatives invited to attend?

Civil society representatives will be able to attend as content experts. Generally, these representatives will be limited to those speaking as panelists at the invitation of sponsoring funders. In this case, panelist/speaker registration costs are expected to be supported by the inviting funder.