

The Coalition for Human Rights in Development is a global coalition of over 65 social movements, civil society organizations, and grassroots groups working to ensure that all development finance institutions respect, protect, and fulfill human rights.

Development and Human Rights

Development activities can have a profound impact on the realization of human rights. This impact can be positive, such as improved access and quality of health care, or increased protection of indigenous peoples' and communities' land rights. Impacts can also be negative, as in the case of development related forced evictions, or policy reforms that further entrench discrimination. Without transparent and accountable development processes and policies based in human rights norms, opportunities to contribute to the realization of human rights are missed, and often rights abuses result.

A Global Coalition

Over the years, communities, indigenous peoples, and civil society organizations have won impressive gains in development and human rights. But too often, we work in isolation – fighting against different institutions and policies, with seemingly different demands and interests. By uniting our efforts, sharing strategies and resources, and coordinating our voices, we can build a global movement to ensure that development funding – wherever it comes from – respects human rights. As the landscape of development finance expands with new actors like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank, we need a coordinated global effort to demand and win accountability.

Strategies for Change

The Coalition works to support our members' advocacy at the local, national, and international level. We help to bridge different constituencies and to bring new voices to this work, connecting the human rights, development, environment, and social justice arenas, and ensuring that advocacy is informed by and accountable to frontline grassroots communities. The Coalition provides a platform to leverage members' expertise and resources to support common campaigns and advocacy objectives, amplifying the voices of communities and maximizing the individual strengths of member organizations.

Key Achievements



Built a web of relationships wherein community groups, social movements, and civil society organizations across the globe regularly exchange information and access critical expertise and campaign support around development projects and processes which affect their rights.



United diverse civil society groups and other influential actors behind a common policy platform and advocacy agenda to ensure stronger protections for communities impacted by World Bank-financed activities.



Developed a model methodology that enables development finance institutions and government agencies to identify and address the human rights risks associated with a given development proposal.

Program Areas

Building National-level Accountability in Development Processes

In much of the world, development decisions are made behind closed doors, without the knowledge or participation of the people who will eventually bear the impacts of those decisions. The Coalition strengthens the capacity of local and national civil society organizations to engage in development issues, and works with them to increase the transparency of development decisionmaking and to hold their governments accountable.

Strengthening World Bank Safeguards

The World Bank is revising its suite of policies meant to protect local communities and the environment from project-related harms. Because the World Bank is a global standard-setter in development finance, the outcome of this safeguards review will have an impact on development policy globally. The Coalition is using advocacy, campaigning, and strategic communications to prevent a race to the bottom and to strengthen these critical safeguards.

Shaping the New Development Banks

Two new development banks – the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank – will significantly influence the future of development. The Coalition is monitoring the establishment of these institutions and supporting efforts to shape their policy frameworks and lending to be more transparent, accountable, and rights-respecting.

Defining Human Rights Due Diligence for Development Finance

In order to prevent human rights related harms in development activities, banks and governments must be able to identify and effectively manage human rights risks and impacts. The Coalition is pioneering the development of methodologies and tools for incorporating human rights standards and principles within the traditional social and environmental assessment and management frameworks utilized in development actors.

Facilitating Community Engagement

Communities should be in the driver's seat when it comes to development processes. The Coalition works to ensure that communities have information on the development proposals that might impact them, as well as the capacity to effectively engage decisionmakers and defend their rights. Through our global membership, we strengthen and amplify local development struggles and assist communities in articulating their own development plans and strategies.

Ensuring Safe Participation in Development

Around the world, communities and civil society groups who attempt to defend their rights in the face of harmful development activities increasingly find themselves under attack. The Coalition is working to ensure that development institutions promote an enabling environment for public participation and address shrinking civic space and risks to human rights defenders.

