

Theory of Change

Changing the Law, Changing Lives: From Action to Impact

We will use the power of law to advance reproductive rights as fundamental human rights...

...by using our expertise in...

Human rights, comparative & constitutional law

Transnational strategies for law reform & accountability

...and by...

Catalyzing partnerships & networks at the local, national, regional & global levels

...to deliver strategies which...

BUILD
an enabling legal & policy environment

ENFORCE
progressive law & policy

DEFEND
against retrogression in law & policy

Grounded in international human rights, public health, & gender equality standards

...in order to achieve our long-term and ambitious goal...

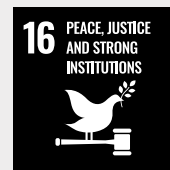
By 2030, half the world's population will be living under stronger legal protections for reproductive rights

...contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals which aim to...

Ensure universal access to sexual & reproductive health services without discrimination

Challenge & change gender discriminatory laws & policies

Increase access to justice for reproductive rights violations



...and realize lasting change in people's lives.


People worldwide can make decisions about their reproductive health and lives and have access to the full range of reproductive health services and information

Changing the Law, Changing Lives: From Action to Impact

We use the power of law to advance reproductive rights as fundamental human rights.

Applying our expertise and partnerships, we build, enforce, and defend legal guarantees aiming to ensure that by 2030 half of the world's population will be living under stronger legal protections for reproductive rights.

We seek to create lasting change so that people worldwide can make decisions about their reproductive health and lives and have access to the full range of reproductive health services and information.

WHO WE ARE

The Center for Reproductive Rights (the Center) is the only global legal advocacy organization dedicated to advancing reproductive rights as fundamental human rights. For 30 years, our game-changing litigation and advocacy has transformed how reproductive rights are understood and applied by courts, governments, and human rights bodies worldwide.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Restrictive and punitive laws and discriminatory and abusive provision of health care deny people their right to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives and create gross inequities in access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The pervasive use of criminal law regulating SRHR creates climates where law-abiding health providers, individuals seeking services, and advocates face harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, and detention. Further, SRHR is perpetually and increasingly under attack by opponents putting forth a coordinated, transnational effort to weaponize law, policy, and human rights. We meet these challenges with expertise in human rights, law, and policy to ensure reproductive rights are protected in law as fundamental human rights for the dignity, equality, health, and well-being of every person.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Theory of Change provides a description and illustration of the resources, change strategies, and desired outcomes needed to meet the ambition of the Center's Strategic Plan. It also sets out the assumptions and values driving our work in the complex landscape in which we operate.

OUR ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Expertise in human rights, comparative, and constitutional law

Our legal and advocacy experts around the world have unparalleled expertise in the use of international and regional human rights law. We have pioneered the development of legal standards on SRHR and apply those standards to compel governments to meet their human rights obligations and political commitments.

Long-term transnational strategies for law reform and accountability

Our geographic footprint across five continents fosters cross-regional engagement including a strong presence and relationships in international and regional political and human rights arenas. Partnerships, the provision of technical expertise, and direct legal representation is managed and led from our regional units. We are uniquely positioned to connect international, regional, national, and sub-national strategies, which makes us a go-to partner on reproductive rights law and policy.

Extensive pro bono network

Our network of pro bono lawyers is an unmatched asset that creates greater impact. Since 2013 we have worked with over 2,000 pro bono attorneys in more than 80 countries. In FY22, this in-kind contribution totaled over \$31 million and is projected to grow to \$40 million by the end of the Strategic Plan. Pro Bono partnerships represent significant value for money and further extend our global operating environment.

Partnerships and networks at the local, national, regional, and global levels

We build strong partnerships with local civil society organizations that are integral to our ability to center the experiences of those most impacted by restrictive legal and policy environments in our partnerships with other organizations, institutions and networks working in national, regional, and international spaces.

Our Issues

Across the globe, we focus programmatic efforts on issues of:

- ▽ Abortion
- ⊖ Maternal health
- ⊕ Assisted reproduction
- ⊙ Adolescent SRHR
- ⊙ Comprehensive SRHR

Our work is designed to benefit all people, and particularly those who experience structural inequities and are most at risk from reproductive rights violations and restrictions.

OUR STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS

Build

We have a powerful toolbox grounded in constitutional and human rights standards for building a progressive body of new laws and jurisprudence, strengthening existing laws, clarifying untested laws, and dismantling discriminatory laws. Even when we do not win specific cases, our legal strategies lay the groundwork for future reform.

Enforce

Building enabling legal frameworks is not complete without reproductive rights being available and accessible in practice, particularly for those facing multiple levels of discrimination. We apply the strengths of our partnerships and regional and international human rights expertise to hold governments accountable to implementing existing progressive laws and policies.

Defend

Opponents of reproductive rights weaponize law, policy, and human rights language in a coordinated and transnational effort to roll back existing obligations and protections. We meet this opposition by correcting the record and defending reproductive rights through litigation and policy advocacy.

ACHIEVING GLOBAL CHANGE

We aim to deliver an ambitious organizational goal by 2030: Half the world's population will be living under stronger legal protections for reproductive rights than they were in 2021. This global change will span at least 35 countries across 5 continents and target changes that result in:

- › **Decriminalization:** The regulation of abortion, age-mate consensual sex among adolescents, and gestational surrogacy arrangements is removed from criminal codes.
- › **Retaining and expanding access:** Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and information is available, accessible, acceptable, and of quality.
- › **Legal right to decide:** Individuals have autonomy and agency to make their own decisions related to their sexual and reproductive health.

These legal protections align with and contribute to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically ensuring universal access to comprehensive SRH services and information (SDG3), challenging and changing gender discriminatory law and policy (SDG5), and increasing access to justice for reproductive rights violations (SDG16).

We are committed to pursuing this global change, ultimately leading to people worldwide being able to make decisions about their reproductive health and lives and having access to the full range of reproductive health services and information.

SRHR at a Glance



41%

of women live in countries with restrictive abortion laws



94%

of maternal deaths occur in low and middle income countries



186 million

individuals live with infertility globally



1 in 4

adolescent girls aged 15-19 has an unmet need for contraception

Adapting Our Organization to Meet Our Vision

We will only accomplish our mission by centering our organizational values – globally inclusive, excellence, impact, integrity.

These values are critical to evolve the way we support people across the globe and shape our work culture to embrace the power of diversity.

We are becoming a better learning organization by using evaluation from our programs and operations to achieve our goals by driving continuous improvement, stimulating innovation, and informing ongoing organizational strategy and development.

OUR ASSUMPTIONS

- › The right to make decisions about one's body, reproduction, and pregnancy without discrimination is fundamental to individual freedom and to being treated as an equal person in society. Every human being should have this fundamental right.
- › Ensuring this right requires a commitment to gender equality and non-discrimination as foundational principles of strategy development, including outreach and collaboration with partners and duty-bearers (those obligated to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights).
- › The human rights framework is a universal and effective tool for holding duty-bearers like national governments and others to account because global and regional human rights treaties and their respective monitoring bodies set forth clear obligations that all governments must comply with to ensure non-discriminatory access to SRHR.
- › The Sustainable Development Goals demonstrate a strong global commitment to achieving “a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination.” It is within this framing that duty-bearers are obliged to respect, protect, and fulfil SRHR as human rights.