

UNTIL WE ARE ALL FREE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Dear Friends,

When seminal American Jewish poet and activist Emma Lazarus wrote these prescient words in 1883, she could not have imagined just how true they would ring today.

Earlier this year, we, like many of you, experienced renewed hope after a period of unprecedented loss, grief and hardship. Through the promise of vaccines, we were able to hug our loved ones, visit with friends and resume some of the activities that fill our lives with meaning. Meanwhile, the reinstatement of responsible leadership in our halls of power made us optimistic that a brighter, more just future was possible—both at home and abroad.

And yet.

As we write this letter, strong variants of COVID-19 are once again raging in our communities, making our hoped-for return to “normalcy” more tentative than it seemed just months ago. Too many people around the world lack the vital protection that vaccines have afforded us, and the death toll continues to rise. What’s more, our world is gripped by global uncertainty: Waves of political violence have torn through multiple countries, destabilizing democracies, deepening inequalities, and throwing the communities we support into chaos. And brutal hurricanes, floods, heat waves and fires have swept the globe—clear signs that the climate crisis is escalating, destroying the homes and lives of people around the planet.

That is why, during this moment of great global suffering, we must do everything in our power as American Jews to secure a more just future—for everyone.

And thanks to your support, we are doing just that. Because of your partnership, courageous activists and grassroots organizations in

“Until we are all free,
we are none of us free.”

—EMMA LAZARUS, 1883

the 18 countries we serve have deftly adapted to the harsh realities of COVID-19. In spite of innumerable challenges, they are building movements for democracy, fighting to advance the rights of women, girls and LGBTQI+ people, and defending our planet so that the next generation can flourish. And here at home, your generosity is ensuring that AJWS’s advocacy team and Jewish leaders across the U.S. can influence our government to utilize its power to support this same agenda for justice—helping to create a world where human rights are paramount and all people can live with dignity.

Our work is more crucial than ever, and with you by our side, we are refusing to rest and say “we are free” until we are all free.

We are proud to share this annual report with you. Thank you for your support in 2021 and beyond.

With our deepest gratitude,



Robert Bank

Robert Bank
President and CEO



Bradley Abelow

Bradley Abelow
Chair of the Board
of Trustees



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INVESTING IN A MORE JUST WORLD

In 2021, thanks to your generosity...

AJWS invested **\$37.1 million*** in our grantmaking and social change strategies.

We supported **502 social justice organizations** promoting human rights in **18 countries**. These activists have built movements for change that are fighting for freedom for all—from safeguarding democracy, to ensuring that rights and resources are shared equitably, to tackling longstanding injustices exacerbated by COVID-19.

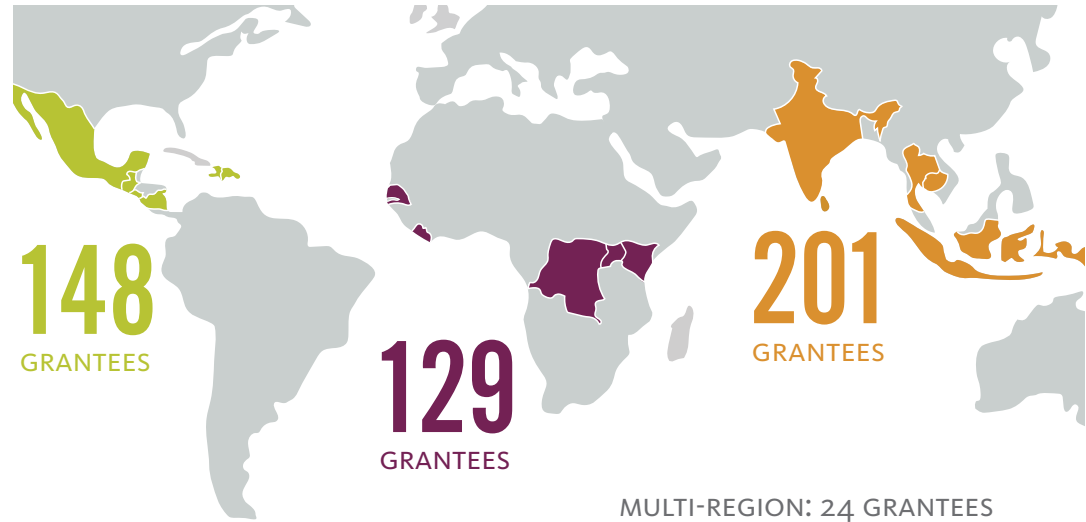
**Including \$3.6 million invested through a donor-advised fund program administered by AJWS.*





In India, as a deadly second wave of COVID-19 swept the country, AJWS grantee Kashtakari Panchayat helped “waste pickers”—women who clean and sort garbage and recyclables—survive the pandemic. “We are cautious,” says their sign, “Corona has not yet gone.” Photo by Tanvee Salavi.

In 2021, AJWS supported **502 grantees** around the world...



LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

- Dominican Republic
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Mexico
- Nicaragua

AFRICA

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Senegal
- Uganda

ASIA

- Cambodia
- India
- Indonesia
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand

NOTE: Two countries have been omitted to protect the security of our staff and grantees working in regions of intense political upheaval.

Making an impact on four key issues:

CIVIL & POLITICAL RIGHTS

159 grantees

- Building peace
- Promoting democracy
- Challenging authoritarian regimes
- Defending religious and ethnic minorities
- Empowering women leaders

SEXUAL HEALTH & RIGHTS

157 grantees

- Advancing gender equality
- Ending gender-based violence
- Stopping child and early marriage
- Empowering adolescent girls
- Defending LGBTQI+ rights
- Ensuring the safety and health of sex workers

LAND, WATER & CLIMATE JUSTICE

132 grantees

- Protecting Indigenous and rural lands
- Mitigating impacts of the climate crisis
- Stopping harmful development projects
- Reducing hunger and ensuring food security

DISASTER & HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

54 grantees

- Recovering from tsunamis and earthquakes
- Rebuilding after storms, flooding and mudslides
- Aiding communities displaced by drought, hunger and conflict

502

Social change organizations advancing human rights



Activists petition a member of parliament to defend women's land rights in Uganda. (See page 18 for more.) Photo courtesy of NAPE.

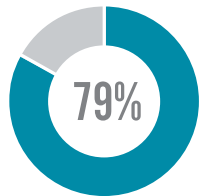
As **COVID-19** continued to wreak havoc in 2021, AJWS supported nearly 200 of our grantees to respond. They're working to slow the spread, defend human rights under fire, and lay the groundwork for a more sustainable future.

IT TAKES A MOVEMENT

Every human being has the power to make change—and when we come together, our power multiplies exponentially. In 2021, in the face of the pandemic and a multitude of human rights challenges, the social movements AJWS supports persisted in their efforts to change how vulnerable groups are viewed and treated in their societies, bring public attention to issues of social justice and secure human rights for persecuted communities.



90% of our grantees **engage in advocacy** to advance just laws and policies and promote human rights.



79% of our grantees are engaged in social movements—and **44% of our grantees are leaders** of networks or coalitions supporting social movements.



100% of our **in-country staff and consultants** work with the organizations we support to develop their strategies, leadership and financial security, and to create opportunities for networking and collaboration.

With your tremendous support this year, we invested in thousands of activists, strengthened the organizations they run and facilitated collaboration among them. Together, they are creating and participating in robust movements for social change that are moving the needle toward achieving a more equitable world for all.



On International Women's Day, AJWS grantees join thousands of protesters on the streets of San Salvador with banners, flags and masks to speak out against widespread violence against women in the country. Photo by Alfredo Carías.



UNTIL WE ARE ALL HEALTHY

Responding to the Ongoing COVID-19 Crisis

When COVID-19 first emerged, devastating communities the world over and upending all of our lives, AJWS mobilized swiftly to help our grantees survive the crisis. With your unyielding support, they were able to tend to the urgent needs of their communities, disseminate life-saving information about the virus, defend human rights under attack and prepare themselves to be more resilient for whatever lies ahead.

Indeed, the pandemic has exacerbated many of the existing inequities that our grantees have been fighting for years—from the rise in dictators dismantling democratic institutions to widening wealth gaps between rich and poor; from a spike in early and forced marriage to threats and violence levied against human rights defenders.

And as COVID has spread in 2021—with virulent variants claiming lives and people on the margins left behind in the race to vaccinate—AJWS was there. With your help, the activists we support met each new crisis with courage, strengthening communities against this ongoing threat.





FIGHTING A DEADLY SECOND WAVE IN INDIA

In the spring of 2021, when a highly contagious new variant of COVID-19 tore through India, the country's fragile healthcare system burst at the seams—leaving millions of people to fend for themselves, searching without success for oxygen and hospital beds.

In the face of this profound humanitarian tragedy, the AJWS community stepped up. Thanks to an outpouring of generosity, we responded quickly to support over 80 local organizations and activists to meet the mounting needs of their communities—even as they themselves reeled from the virus's impact on their families, friends and colleagues.

With your support, these organizations were able to deliver food to families suffering from COVID-19, orchestrate virtual consultations with doctors, provide mental health support—and so much more...



Kashtakari Panchayat supports women who work as waste-pickers—sorting garbage and recyclables—in Pune, India. When the second wave hit, they provided thousands of women with urgently-needed personal protective equipment and help accessing vaccines—to ensure that this vulnerable group can survive the crisis. Kavita Fasage (left) said: "I was scared of transmitting the virus to my family—but the gloves, masks and sanitizer I received reduced my anxiety. Someone called me a 'corona-warrior' the other day. If that means I help the city fight the virus, then I am one!"

Photos by Abhijeet Khandagale and Amogh Bhongale, respectively.



Abhivyakti, an organization that works with marginalized girls and young women, uses their social media platforms to disseminate accurate information about COVID-19, spread awareness about vaccines and support women and girls to coordinate relief work in their villages.



These photos show the girls and women of Abhivyakti shooting video for social media, reading in their village library, and sharing their research on the impact of COVID on girls in their community. Photos courtesy of Abhivyakti.



SPREADING THE WORD IN KENYA

This year, as the pandemic proliferated around the world and eventually took hold in Kenya, residents of Lamu, a remote island in northern Kenya, were skeptical that the threat was real. Save Lamu, an environmental organization supported by AJWS, realized they had a role to play in spreading the truth. They recruited the island's "town crier," Shee Kibwana Shee, to circle public areas with his megaphone and educate communities about COVID-19. By using this age-old local form of communication and distributing protective equipment, they were able to dramatically slow transmission of the disease. "I'm so proud that the message I spread has reached people here in Lamu," says Shee. "I feel like I have saved so many."

Photo courtesy of Save Lamu.

GUARANTEEING VACCINE ACCESS FOR ALL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

All around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled flare-ups of bigotry and magnified racism and deeply rooted social and economic inequities—making it even harder for people already facing discrimination in their communities to survive the crisis.

This is especially true in the Dominican Republic, where Dominicans of Haitian descent have faced discrimination based on their origin and skin color for decades, and were stripped of their citizenship in 2013. They were dealt a double blow this winter, when the Dominican federal government announced that only Dominican citizens and documented migrants would be given access to COVID-19 vaccines.

But AJWS grantee **OBMICA** would not let this stand. OBMICA met with local public health officials—who run vaccination campaigns with little oversight from



the Dominican federal government—to persuade them to vaccinate all people equitably, regardless of citizenship status. And they partnered with hundreds of other organizations to demand free and equal access to the vaccine—launching a movement for vaccine rights. In January, they delivered a joint statement with over 400 signatories to the Dominican government, stating: “The right to health must be guaranteed on the basis of the principle of equality, and not discrimination.”

In June, OBMICA’s work paid off: After a meeting with officials from seven different government agencies, Vice President Raquel Peña de Antuña’s administration committed to supporting universal access to vaccines. Government officials agreed to assemble

mobile vaccination centers to reach remote communities across the island. And OBMICA was asked to join forces with UNICEF to implement the COVAX vaccine initiative for difficult-to-reach populations—all with approval from the Dominican government. Through their leadership, OBMICA is ensuring that the right to health is safeguarded for all people.

In addition to fighting for vaccine equity, OBMICA has also worked to address another major roadblock: Dominicans of Haitian descent are wary of taking the vaccine because the Dominican government has been hostile to them and their best interests for generations.

OBMICA is getting their community on board by distributing t-shirts and masks, running social media campaigns and even releasing a jingle, all with the message: “Beating COVID-19—A Fight That Includes All of Us.” Photos courtesy of OBMICA.

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The right to health must be guaranteed on the basis of the principle of equality, and not discrimination.

JOINT STATEMENT
FROM OBMICA AND
ITS ALLIES



APPLYING LESSONS FROM EBOLA TO THE COVID CRISIS IN LIBERIA

During Liberia's harrowing Ebola epidemic in 2014, community-led organizations trusted by the people were instrumental in defeating that devastating virus. And so when COVID-19 hit, local organizations were better prepared to step up again. Not surprisingly, when the country's government denied grassroots groups participation in the official COVID-19 response, they refused to sit on the sidelines. AJWS grantee **Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI)** launched media campaigns to raise awareness about prevention, and they distributed protective materials in vulnerable communities. Inspired by FCI's initiative, a movement of grassroots groups began to sprout across Liberia, with communities working at the local level to protect their friends and loved ones.



UNTIL OUR VOICES ARE HEARD

Speaking Out for Democracy and Justice

As the COVID-19 pandemic grew, another sort of pandemic was lurking and spreading around the world this year: the rise of unchecked authoritarianism. Bolstered by rising chaos and instability, despotic leaders and totalitarian regimes decimated democratic institutions, from the collapse of democracy in Haiti to power plays by leaders around the world. But AJWS's grantees refused to accept this assault. At great personal risk, they built movements calling for an end to corruption and violence, advocating for freedom of expression and demanding democratic and fair elections.



DEFENDING A NATION SHAKEN BY AUTHORITARIANISM AND DISASTERS

IN HAITI

Haiti is in crisis. This year, the country was struck by a series of seismic disasters—the collapse of its government, the assassination of its former president, and the second catastrophic earthquake to rip through Haiti’s bedrock in just over a decade. The fallout has been enormous, and AJWS’s grantees are on the frontlines of an ongoing struggle to restore democracy, achieve justice and rebuild their nation.

Haiti’s recent political turmoil long pre-dated the assassination of Jovenel Moïse in July of 2021. During his turbulent rule and that of his predecessor in his political party, Moïse dismantled democratic institutions, dismissed supreme court justices and refused to step down when his term ended. He also empowered armed gangs to roam the country with impunity, causing kidnappings and assassinations to skyrocket, and allowing terror and insecurity to rock the country unchecked.

In this period alone, the **National Network for the Defense of Human Rights (RNDDH)**—an AJWS grantee and Haiti’s leading human rights monitoring institution—has documented 11 instances of politically motivated gang massacres in poor communities that resulted in hundreds of deaths, disappearances and rapes. And as RNDDH documented, these gangs operated with Moïse’s “blessing—if not his full support.”

Pierre Esperance, executive director of RNDDH, reports: “Despite this series of abuses, no one has been brought to justice.” But AJWS’s grantees are determined to



Top to bottom: 1. Throngs of protestors in March demand that Jovenel Moïse step down. 2. Haitians take to the streets after the assassination. 3. Destruction from the earthquake. Photos by Dieu-Nalio Chery, Valérie Baeriswyl, and courtesy of AJWS grantee Obsèvatwa pou Egalite.



Crowds fill Port-au-Prince after Jovenel Moïse's assassination in early July. Photo by Valérie Baeriswyl.

change that. Even under the threat of violence, scores of activists bravely took to the streets to protest Moïse's unchecked corruption—and have persisted in their demands since his death. To move their country forward, they want a democratic process, led by a civil society commission, to choose a transitional government that can re-generate trust in state institutions, create stability during this transition and prepare for elections.

Ultimately, they want leaders who will respect democracy and address the massive inequality and violence in their country.



On August 14th, Haitians were dealt another devastating blow. A 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the south, destroying entire neighborhoods and killing more than 2,200 people. Just two days later, Haiti was hit by Tropical Storm Grace, which inundated the country with torrential

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Haitians have had enough of living in a climate of violence, which has touched us all.

ROSY AUGUSTE DUCENA,
*National Network
for the Defense
of Human Rights*





*RNDDH's leaders Rosy Auguste Ducena (Head of Programs) and Pierre Esperance (Executive Director).
Photo by Valérie Baeriswyl.*

rain and flooding, compounding the devastation and impeding search and rescue efforts. An earthquake of this magnitude would have caused terrible damage to any nation, but in a country with limited government to respond, it was nothing short of catastrophic.

In this void of leadership, AJWS grantees and other local organizations have been a vital lifeline to communities. They launched critical relief campaigns to aid families near the epicenter, all while continuing to lead crucial work to resuscitate Haiti's democracy and pull the country out of this current crisis.



On Capitol Hill and in the media, AJWS has advocated for the U.S. government to follow the guidance of Haitian pro-democracy activists—bringing AJWS partners from **RNDDH** and **Nou Pap Dòmi** to testify at a hearing in front of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee. And while the U.S. has called for elections in Haiti to take place this year, our Advocacy team has urged the Biden administration to listen to Haitian activists—who have made it clear that elections must take place next year, only after a transitional government restores the infrastructure, security and faith to make them fair and free.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN GUATEMALA

Human rights advocates in Guatemala—from community leaders pushing for Indigenous Peoples' rights to independent judges upholding the rule of law—have long been threatened and even murdered for their work. And for years, organizations like AJWS grantee **UDEFEGUA** have worked to protect these activists, document abuses against them and safeguard the fragile democracy in their country.

In June, UDEFEGUA was invited to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris when she visited Guatemala to address the underlying crises in the country. In a powerful statement, they made clear to her that silencing human rights defenders undermines democracy and prevents a free and just society from flourishing. UDEFEGUA urged the Biden administration to change its diplomatic approach in the country, which has long been anchored by political relationships with powerful players.

"If the United States wishes to prioritize good governance and anti-corruption efforts in Guatemala," they stated, "it is crucial that they collaborate closely with the people, organizations and communities that are committed to promoting human rights."



SEARCHING FOR THE DISAPPEARED IN MEXICO



Over the last 15 years, more than 80,000 people in Mexico have been officially recognized as “disappeared”—abducted and likely murdered—as an increased wave of violence continues to flow from the so-called “war on drugs.” Due to the Mexican government’s historic failure to recover and identify the bodies of the disappeared, bereaved families have taken matters into their own hands—forming organizations like AJWS grantees **Regresando a Casa Morelos**, **Caravana Internacional** and **Sabuesos Guerreras**—to search for their loved ones. Even in the midst of COVID-19, these brave groups are continuing their quests to find the missing and help families achieve closure with dignity and support.



Photos clockwise from top: 1. AJWS grantee Caravana Internacional participates in a search for the “disappeared” in Guanajuato, at a site where they suspect they will find remains. 2. Edith Hernández Torres looked for years for her brother Israel, who disappeared in 2012. With help from the collective Regresando a Casa Morelos, his remains were finally found in the mass grave of Tetelcingo. 3. Bereaved families hold signs with photos of their lost loved ones at a demonstration in Sinaloa by Sabuesos Guerreras. Photos courtesy of Caravana Internacional, Regresando a Casa Morelos and by Regina López, respectively.



UNTIL WE CAN LIVE SUSTAINABLY

Protecting Our Planet in a Changing Climate

In 2021, the climate crisis accelerated at a dizzying pace. Powerful hurricanes, monsoons, droughts and heatwaves fueled food and electricity shortages, destroyed homes and ecosystems, threatened access to clean water and endangered millions of lives and livelihoods. And with the pandemic still raging and no safety nets to rely on, vulnerable communities continued to suffer the worst effects of climate change. Yet around the world, AJWS's grantees fought to mitigate these compounding crises by protecting endangered land and water and ensuring that they are shared equitably. Together, they are leading movements to pursue climate justice with courage and resolve.

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO WATER

IN EL SALVADOR

When COVID-19 first reached El Salvador, the government's response was to mount a handwashing campaign—a cruel suggestion for the 1.1 million Salvadorans who lack access to clean water in the first place.

But for the past five years, AJWS has supported a growing movement to ensure that all Salvadorans have access to clean water.

This movement is waging a courageous battle to protect El Salvador's dwindling water supply and ensure that everyone has a fair share. In 2017, they secured a landmark ban against metal mining that was poisoning the country's groundwater. And the following year, several AJWS grantees launched the National Alliance Against the Privatization of Water, a coalition to bring clean water to all. Since then, their ranks have grown even stronger.

On March 22, six AJWS grantees played a leading role in organizing a national march to celebrate World Water Day—and over 6,000 people hit the streets of San Salvador to show



Salvadoran activists from Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES) march to defend their country's natural resources. Photo by Alfredo Carías.

their support. The protestors demanded that El Salvador's government pass the General Water Law—which would protect water as a common public good—before congress changed hands to the far-right loyalists of President Nayib Bukele, a populist who has used the armed forces to intimidate legislators.

Though they were met with heavily armed police and barbed wire barricades, the protestors were undeterred. The march was the latest action of this swelling movement to recognize water as a basic human right—a wave that will not stop until water is equitably shared among all Salvadorans.

Agua es vida
El agua es derecho

No a la
privatización

Water is life
Water is a right
Say no to
privatization



To celebrate World Water Day, AJWS grantees marched together to protect the right to water for all Salvadorans. Featured here are Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña, Indigenous Unification Movement of Nahuizalco, Mesa Nacional Frente a la Minería Metálica de El Salvador, Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho, Foro del Agua and Asociación Comunitaria Unida por el Agua y la Agricultura. Photos by Alfredo Carías.



PROTECTING LAND FROM EXPLOITATION IN UGANDA

In Uganda, oil companies have been permitted by the government to conduct exploratory drilling without the consent of the people who own the lands. But women—who represent the majority of agricultural workers in Uganda and suffer the most from the oil industry’s damage—are fighting back, protesting the destruction that oil extraction wreaks on their soil, water and communities. Leading the charge is AJWS grantee **National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)**, a key player in the movement to strengthen the political and economic power of women to protect the country’s ecosystems. NAPE has helped to launch a network of more than 5,000 women across Uganda—and despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, this movement has continued to grow as women join together to demand justice.

Ugandan women mobilize a bike caravan to defend their rights to their ancestral land. Photo courtesy of NAPE.

SECURING INDIGENOUS LAND RIGHTS IN LIBERIA

This year, the Fessibu community of northern Liberia became the first Indigenous group in the country to obtain legal ownership of the land that they have farmed for more than 400 years. As this community worked to secure the deed to their land, AJWS grantee **Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)** stood by them every step of the way—supporting them to achieve this monumental victory. Their triumph was made possible by SDI’s years of advocacy, which led to the passage of the 2018 Land Rights

Act—a historic law acknowledging the right of Indigenous communities to own their ancestral lands. The act was finally implemented successfully this year.



ABOVE: Members of the Fessibu community mark the borders of their territory, and gather with the SDI team after a meeting on women’s land rights. Photos courtesy of SDI.



UNTIL WE CAN ALL DETERMINE OUR OWN FUTURES

Women, Girls and LGBTQI+ People Demand Agency

As COVID-19 continued to escalate this year, so did devastating spikes in abuses against women, girls and LGBTQI+ people around the world. Domestic violence continued to rise, millions of girls and women were forced out of schools and the work force, and financial strain rolled back hard-won progress in reducing early and forced marriage. Despite these setbacks, the activists AJWS supports grew movements that made clear: Everyone deserves the right to choose their own future, to have agency over their body, and to live with safety, dignity and health.

MOBILIZING FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN INDIA

The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged tens of millions of Indian families into crushing poverty. The crisis has also delivered a major blow to the movement to end child, early and forced marriage in the country: After years of major advances toward achieving greater agency for women and girls, many families are, once more, arranging early marriages to lessen economic hardship.

Facing these rising challenges head on amidst the pandemic, courageous AJWS grantees like **Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association** are finding innovative ways to embolden women and girls to take charge of the decisions that affect their lives and expand their communities' perceptions of what girls and women are capable of achieving. This spring, for International Women's

Day, Shaheen organized a bicycle rally to empower dozens of women and girls to make a bold statement: Girls deserve freedom of movement and independence.

And Shaheen is not alone. They are pursuing agency for women and girls alongside hundreds of other activist organizations—76 of them supported by AJWS—as part of India's movement for gender equality.

For women and girls in Hyderabad, India, riding a bike is a powerful symbol of freedom and agency. Photos courtesy of Shaheen.



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We want to increase girls' mobility. We want the girls to be confident enough to proceed in their lives independently.

JAMEELA NISHAT,
*Shaheen Women's Resource
and Welfare Association*



USING DATA TO CHANGE HEARTS AND MINDS FOR LGBTQI+ RIGHTS IN KENYA

In Kenya, AJWS is supporting a growing social movement to fight discriminatory laws, curb violence and change cultural stigmas against LGBTQI+ people. In February, after three years of working with a coalition of grassroots organizations to make change in their communities, AJWS and our grantee **Public Health Innovations (PHI)** published the results of a multi-year research project

that investigated mainstream attitudes toward LGBTQI+ people in Kenya. This research, which AJWS grantee **National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC)** is disseminating to the movement at large, is helping to develop a collective vision and a roadmap to change the norms in Kenyan society and cultures that fuel homophobia, transphobia and oppression.



Members of the NGLHRC team (left) and a PHI meeting in progress. Photos courtesy of NGLHRC and PHI.

WOMEN AS THEY WANT TO BE SEEN: PORTRAITS OF DIGNITY IN UGANDA

In Gulu, Uganda, women living with disabilities were used to being seen as victims. Whether they had lived with these disabilities from birth or had survived war and violence, in the eyes of their neighbors and the Ugandan media, their disabilities defined them—and often prevented their communities from seeing them as they see themselves.

But last year, with support from AJWS and our partner, the Magnum Foundation, Ugandan photojournalist Esther Ruth Mbabazi traveled to Gulu to photograph members of AJWS grantee **Gulu Union for Women with Disabilities (GUWODU)** and help change this pervasive narrative. Through her photographs, Esther sought to portray the women not as victims, *but as they want to be seen*: people with agency, dignity and full lives.

Esther invited these women to co-direct the shoot with her—and determine how they would appear. She photographed them in clothing that they themselves helped design, with artwork that they created, and against traditional print backdrops called *kitenge* that represent their cultures. Through this collaboration, the women were able to project

their vision of themselves—resulting in proud, radiant portraits. Esther explained, “I want someone to first see the woman, before they see her disability.”

The remarkable women of GUWODU reached a global audience when Esther’s portraits appeared in *Vogue* in June.

Florence Akwede has not let her speech and hearing impairments stop her. With the help of her five children, she has developed creative ways of communicating so that they can serve as her interpreters in the community.

Irene Odwar Laker chose to be photographed with artwork that represents her life experiences—she knits, runs a small shop and braids hair to support her two children.

Nancy Ayaa is a passionate knitter, and her skill is displayed for all to see in her vibrant portrait.

Joyce Auma, a mother of two, has a degree in business administration—but because of her disability, she’s faced discrimination in hiring. “There are no accessibility services for people with disabilities,” Joyce shares.

Flavia Lanyero is studying banking, and at just 21 years old, she is optimistic about her prospects for a good job once she graduates. “I am a very hardworking and unique lady,” she says. “The photoshoot made me realize how important I am.”



FLORENCE AKWEDE



IRENE ODWAR LAKER



NANCY AYAA



JOYCE AUMA

“

This is me in full. I like for people to see me as a whole.

FLAVIA LANYERO



FLAVIA LANYERO

ENSURING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS FOR ALL



In 2021, after four years of fighting the Trump administration's attacks on sexual and reproductive health and rights, AJWS and a coalition of partner organizations called on the incoming Biden administration to reverse course. In response, as one of his first acts in office, President Biden rescinded the draconian global gag rule, a policy put in place by every Republican president since Reagan, that blocks U.S. global health assistance to organizations that provide counseling, information and referrals for abortion services.

But the temporary rescinding of this rule is not enough. To secure its permanent repeal, AJWS's team on Capitol Hill is garnering vigorous, record-breaking support for the Global HER Act, legislation that would end the global gag rule once and for all.

In addition, AJWS is setting its sights on permanently repealing the Helms Amendment, another harmful policy that prevents foreign assistance from funding safe, legal abortion services overseas. In March, when a group of U.S. Representatives reintroduced the Abortion Is Health Care Everywhere Act—legislation that would do away with the Helms Amendment—AJWS's advocacy team played a major role in ensuring that the bill was inclusive of transgender and non-binary individuals, who often face stigma in accessing healthcare.

The team also worked to garner support—and so far, over 160 members of Congress have backed this key legislation.



SAFEGUARDING THE SAFETY OF SEX WORKERS IN KENYA

For years, AJWS grantee **Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme (BHESP)** has ensured that sex workers in Kenya have access to healthcare by running drop-in clinics and providing education and safe-sex materials in bars where sex workers work and meet. When the pandemic struck, the bars closed their doors and the clinics could not risk overcrowding—so BHESP had to find another way to support local sex workers. They created a mobile phone delivery app to distribute condoms, face masks, food, and medicine to prevent HIV to sex workers at their homes—keeping them safe and healthy during COVID-19.

Photo courtesy of BHESP.

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When I invest in AJWS, I'm funding changemakers who are transforming their own futures. From young women in India choosing their own paths, to community leaders in Haiti striving to rebuild their country after devastating natural disasters, it's their courage and perseverance that makes all the difference.

FELICIA HOROWITZ,
Founder, Horowitz Family
Foundation, and AJWS Supporter



Felicia Horowitz hugs activist Rosario Asencio on a visit to the Dominican Republic with AJWS in 2019. Rosario is a leader of Junta de Mujeres Mamá Tingó, which is cultivating a new generation of young female leaders to take action against gender-based violence and early and forced marriage in their country. Photo by Christopher Dilts.



OUR AJWS COMMUNITY

Pursuing Justice Together, Until We Are All Free

In our effort to ensure that every person of every background can live with health, safety, dignity and freedom, our AJWS community is transforming millions of lives together.

Your generosity has lived up to our ancient mandate of “*tzedek, tzedek tirdof*”—justice, justice you shall pursue. You’ve enabled 502 grantees in 18 countries to work toward more just and equitable futures.

They—and we—can’t thank you enough.

Until all people can live with freedom, we will continue to fight for the rights of marginalized communities around the globe and fulfill our duty as Jews and global citizens to repair the brokenness in our world.

“

By supporting AJWS, I'm putting my Jewish values into action, transforming the principles of our tradition into a practice of activism to build a better world. Dollar for dollar, AJWS does an almost unimaginable amount of good.

ELLIOTT LEVY, *AJWS supporter*



200,000 SUPPORTERS



**Made a donation or took action between 2019-2021*

JEWISH LEADERS FOR JUSTICE

100+

PARTICIPANTS IN THE GLOBAL JUSTICE CHAVURAH

AJWS's learning and action circle for rabbis and cantors advocating for justice and human rights.

1,700

JEWISH CLERGY IN OUR ACTION NETWORK ACROSS THE U.S.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

American Jewish World Service, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position as of April 30, 2021

(with summarized comparative financial information as of April 30, 2020)

ASSETS	2021	2020
Cash and cash equivalents	\$15,395,727	\$10,837,309
Contributions receivable, net	27,656,553	17,250,703
Investments	33,395,341	24,058,381
Prepaid expenses and other assets	879,941	826,791
Property and equipment, net	1,236,508	1,443,801
Total assets	\$78,564,070	\$54,416,985
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
<i>Liabilities:</i>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$815,514	\$1,062,138
Grants payable	4,407,808	2,428,537
Loan payable	2,132,540	2,132,540
Deferred rent	1,044,730	971,509
Unearned revenue	6,950	88,227
Charitable gift annuity obligations	377,338	361,468
Total liabilities	8,784,880	7,044,419
<i>Net assets:</i>		
Without donor restrictions:		
Undesignated	13,962,098	9,163,314
Designated for donor-advised fund	1,706,374	1,781,803
Board-designated for reserve fund	19,616,146	14,645,105
Board-designated for working capital fund	4,522,449	4,022,449
Total without donor restrictions	39,807,067	29,612,671
With donor restrictions	29,972,123	17,759,895
Total net assets	69,779,190	47,372,566
Total liabilities and net assets	\$78,564,070	\$54,416,985

AJWS's total assets vary year-to-year due to the timing of the receipt and usage of commitments and payments for multi-year grants.

American Jewish World Service, Inc.

Statement of Activities for the year ended April 30, 2021

(with summarized comparative information for the year ended April 30, 2020)

	2021		2020	
	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL	TOTAL
REVENUES AND SUPPORT				
Contributions:				
Individuals	\$15,230,485	\$6,035,111	\$21,265,596	\$19,701,169
Donor-advised fund	3,600,000	-	3,600,000	3,240,000
Bequests	411,822	-	411,822	662,764
Foundations and corporations	846,146	36,344,179	37,190,325	19,815,121
Government agencies	411,771	-	411,771	585,474
Donated services and goods	631,995	-	631,995	558,018
Investment income, net of expenses of \$172,108 in 2021 and \$65,113 in 2020	5,438,162	27,747	5,465,909	60,531
Study tour fees and miscellaneous revenue	103,243	-	103,243	410,780
Net assets released from restrictions:				
Satisfaction of purpose restrictions	24,613,041	(24,613,041)	-	-
Satisfaction of time restrictions	5,581,768	(5,581,768)	-	-
Total revenues and support	56,868,433	12,212,228	69,080,661	45,033,857
EXPENSES				
Program services:				
Programs	32,744,168	-	32,744,168	27,771,197
Communications	3,298,845	-	3,298,845	3,591,083
Strategic learning, research and evaluation	1,100,787	-	1,100,787	2,361,018
Total program services expenses	37,143,800	-	37,143,800	33,723,298
Supporting services:				
Management and general	2,850,717	-	2,850,717	2,949,978
Fundraising	6,679,520	-	6,679,520	6,317,407
Total supporting services expenses	9,530,237	-	9,530,237	9,267,385
Total expenses	46,674,037	-	46,674,037	42,990,683
Change in net assets	10,194,396	12,212,228	22,406,624	2,043,174
Beginning net assets	29,612,671	17,759,895	47,372,566	45,329,392
Ending net assets	\$39,807,067	\$29,972,123	\$69,779,190	\$47,372,566

AJWS's revenue and expenses fluctuate year-to-year based on variations in multi-year gifts and the donor-advised fund program.



OUR SUPPORTERS

The following pages acknowledge our generous donors who have contributed to AJWS during our 2021 fiscal year (May 1, 2020–April 30, 2021).

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\$1 million and above

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Foundation for a Just Society
The Horowitz Family Foundation
The JIB Fund at National
Philanthropic Trust
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\$1-\$999

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Thank you to all those who have contributed to our reserve fund, launched in 2016, ensuring the continuity and strength of AJWS's programs.

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Thank you to our donors, of blessed memory, whose contributions from their estates leave an enduring benefit to AJWS.

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Thank you to the following supporters, who have demonstrated long-term commitment to AJWS with a planned gift, which will enable us to advance our work for future generations.

Ellen J. Alexander
Drs. Roberta Apfel and Bennett Simon
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Carol M. Joseph
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Thank you to our committed donors who, over the course of AJWS's history, have contributed over \$500,000 to support our ongoing fight for human rights around the world.

\$10,000,000+

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The 11th Hour Project,
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Special Thanks

*Special thanks to the law firms
Proskauer; Paul Hastings LLP;
and Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen
& Loewy LLP, for providing AJWS
with pro bono legal services.*

“

We're giving a legacy
gift because it permits
us to live our values
worldwide. We're
commanded by our
tradition to pursue
social justice—to care
for the stranger.

SUZI AND MARTIN
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ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

At AJWS, we are guided by Emma Lazarus's powerful words: "Until we are all free, none of us is free." We recognize that working toward the liberation of the most marginalized peoples liberates us all—and this philosophy drives us not only in the 18 countries we serve, but also within our own walls.

As we live our Jewish values as an organization, rooted in the belief of *b'tselem Elohim*—that each one of us has inherent and infinite value—we have embarked on a journey to shift our consciousness from within. Anchored by the philosophy and practice of anti-racism, and through learning from diverse teachers and one another, we seek to ensure that AJWS is an organization that is both fully Jewish and fully inclusive and

multicultural. We believe that our internal culture must truly reflect our mission—and that in order to dismantle systemic inequity and pursue justice around the world, we must do the same within our organization and within ourselves.

That is why, since 2019, we have invested deeply in an effort to prioritize Diversity, Equity and Inclusion among our staff and Board of Trustees. In the past year, we have launched a DEI Statement and Roadmap, which are serving to thoughtfully guide our organization to a place where each member of our team feels welcomed in their full humanity, is treated equitably and with respect, and is able to lead and thrive. We are confident that this will make us even more effective in our work.

“

My Jewishness and my Blackness are deeply intertwined. The Jewish values of welcoming the stranger and pursuing justice for the most vulnerable, values that drew me to American Jewish World Service and motivated me to become a trustee at this organization, also fuel my activism for racial justice.

GAMAL J. PALMER,
*AJWS Trustee and Global Diversity
and Inclusion Specialist*



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AJWS has 28 in-country experts working around the world.

Their names don't appear here due to security risks related to human rights work.

STRATEGIC LEARNING, RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Margo Mullinax, *Director of Strategic Learning, Research and Evaluation*
Muhammad Irfan
Esther Lee

AJWS staff as of September 15, 2021. We express deep gratitude to former members of our staff who contributed greatly to AJWS's success this year.



BEHIND THE SCENES:
Irene Odwar Laker (left) from our story on Gulu Union for Women with Disabilities (page 22) views shots from her photoshoot with Esther Mbabazi (right). While Esther was behind the camera, her subjects led the way, yielding radiant portraits that show them as they want to be seen: confident and proud. Photo by Esther Ruth Mbabazi.



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A mural painted by youth trained by AJWS grantee Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES) celebrates the convergence of the feminist and environmental movements in El Salvador. "We want our Mother Earth alive and free," their message reads. UNES is teaching these local teens to protect the ecosystems their community depends on and to ensure that women are treated equitably in their society. Flip back to the cover page to meet some of these remarkable youth. Photo courtesy of Asociación Comité Microcuenca Río Aguacate/UNES.



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