

Right Livelihood

Stockholm, September 2026

Impact Report 2026

With a focus on events during the calendar year 2025

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Vision & relevant target group

Right Livelihood exists to honour and support courageous change-makers who are building just, peaceful, and sustainable societies. Since our founding in 1980, we have sought to create a world where visionary individuals and organisations are not only recognised for their contributions but also equipped to thrive, despite the enormous challenges they face. We believe that by amplifying these voices, we can shift global narratives and inspire systemic transformation.

Our primary target group and the focus of our activities are the Right Livelihood Laureates. In 2025, we awarded the Emergency Response Rooms in Sudan, Justice for Myanmar, Julian Aguon from Guam together with the Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC), and Audrey Tang from Taiwan. These five new Laureates are the first from their respective countries to receive the Award, marking a significant expansion of our geographic reach. They joined an extensive network of 203 Laureates from 81 countries whom we continue to support in their struggles. Each Laureate exemplifies the power of grassroots courage to inspire change, from digital democracy to climate justice and emergency humanitarian response.

Since the Laureates do not work in isolation, our expanded target groups are much broader. They include decision-makers who can implement the solutions Laureates propose, students and educators who carry knowledge forward into new contexts, and the general public, whose awareness and solidarity strengthen the conditions for change. By engaging this broader ecosystem, we ensure that the innovative solutions proposed by our Laureates find fertile ground for implementation and growth.

Our communications work aims to raise the visibility of Laureates, their work, and the Foundation among these diverse audiences. The goal is to present visionary solutions and our outlook to the world in an easy-to-understand, engaging, and inspiring way, shifting the narrative from despair to agency. Complementing this outreach, our Support Team provides tailored protection and advocacy for the Laureates, while our education initiatives empower students and academics to integrate these grassroots perspectives into formal learning and future leadership. Through this holistic approach, we strive to create the political, social, and cultural conditions necessary for lasting change.

Implementation

We believe that lasting change requires many people acting together on many different solutions. We do our part by building a growing community of courageous change-makers, connecting them and their solutions worldwide.

In 2025, Right Livelihood advanced its mission to honour and support courageous people solving global problems through four interconnected areas: We **honoured** changemakers, **supported** them in their struggles, **communicated** about their ideas and solutions, and gave others a deeper insight into these through our **education** initiatives.

HONOUR

The award lies at the core of our work as a Foundation. In 2025, we received 159 nominations from 67 countries, with women representing a strong proportion of candidates. Following rigorous research conducted by our team and extensive deliberations by our international jury of experts, five new Laureates were selected: the Emergency Response Rooms in Sudan, Justice for Myanmar, the Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change together with Julian Aguon, and Audrey Tang. This selection reflects both emerging global priorities, such as the intersection of technology and democracy, and an expansion of recognition to new geographies, underscoring our commitment to identifying transformative change worldwide.

The research underpinning the selection combined in-depth desk studies with research visits conducted across multiple continents. Throughout 2025, the team also focused on strengthening the research methodology, clarifying core themes, and further developing our research standards to ensure the highest quality of information presented to the jury who selects the Laureates.

The 2025 Award Presentation took place on December 2 in Stockholm under the theme, “Reshaping power, together.” The event highlighted that struggles for peace, justice, and sustainability are interconnected worldwide. Organised in collaboration with more than 50 TV professionals, the ceremony was hosted by British-Iranian journalist Nazanine Moshiri, with performances by Swedish musicians Janice and Loney Dear. More than 650 guests, including previous Laureates and civil society representatives, attended in person, while snippets of the event reached millions globally through broadcasts by BBC News, Taiwan Plus, Euronews, and social media channels.

SUPPORT

In 2025, our support strategy was defined by a deepened commitment to those operating in the most hostile environments. We directed resources toward Laureates at risk, prioritizing women human rights defenders, environmental justice, and those facing arbitrary detention, reprisals, or exile. Recognizing that the sustainability of a Laureate’s work is often tied to their personal safety, we also addressed cases where the well-being of family members was a critical factor. This approach ensured our support was not only reactive but also proactive in safeguarding the long-term impact of their movements.

To operationalize this strategy, we maintained regular engagement with approximately 40 Laureates. A key development was the consolidation of a hub-based approach, grouping Laureates by thematic area to strengthen peer exchange and improve coordination, among them the Women Laureates Hub as the first active network. Through these structured exchanges, we connected Laureates with relevant diplomatic, civil society, and multilateral actors.

Advocacy at the international level remained a central element of our work. Five members of the Women Laureates Hub participated in the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, where we co-hosted a side event with the EU Delegation and the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN. This ensured that the perspectives of women human rights defenders were directly represented in such an important high-level multilateral space.

We reinforced solidarity mechanisms for arbitrarily detained defenders by establishing coordinated groups advocating for the release of Laureate Ales Bialiatsky in Belarus and Reza Khandan in Iran (husband of Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh). In parallel, we filed a petition with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concerning members of Laureate organisation Mother Nature Cambodia, amplifying with a communications campaign marking one year since the imprisonment of five of their members.

The team also expanded engagement in emerging thematic areas. For the first time, we participated in the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, organising a side event on Indigenous women human rights defenders and corporate accountability. We further engaged with Laureate Ritwick Dutta (of LIFE India) during negotiations on a legally binding global plastics treaty. In Geneva, three Laureates participated in the Human Rights Week at the University of Geneva, which concluded in a diplomatic briefing at our office attended by eight state missions. We also supported Laureate Vladimir Sliviyak in launching a petition urging the European Court of Human Rights to prioritise the Russian Climate Case, which his organisation initiated together with other Russian activists.

Within the fellowship programme “Reconceptualising Exile” in partnership with the Global Campus for Human Rights, we support several human rights defenders forced to live and work in exile. This year, as part of the project, a workshop in Berlin brought together eight fellows to develop a roadmap for research on human rights defenders in exile, strengthening both strategic clarity and peer support.

Protection work remained a core pillar of our activities, with holistic security assessments conducted for eight Laureates and targeted support provided to three. Our methodology integrates physical and digital security, psychosocial factors, and individual risk perception. In specific cases, emergency grants were

extended to family members to contribute to the Laureate's overall security and resilience.

EDUCATE

Throughout 2025, educational work helped translate frontline solutions into learning that can be shared through university partnerships, public lectures, and sustained collaboration with the Global Campus of Human Rights network and Right Livelihood College campuses.

Within the Right Livelihood College, the Zurich Spring Lecture Series titled *Sustainability Now!* featured Joan Carling, the Seikatsu Club Consumers Cooperative, and Cecosesola. The series highlighted decades of Laureate experience in building alternative economic models. Coinciding with the UN International Year of Cooperatives, these lectures served as a timely reminder of the cooperative model's proven success in scope and longevity. Four Laureate lectures were part of the lecture series in 2025. The Annual Right Livelihood Lecture in December was held by Laureate Audrey Tang and generated a lot of interest and high attendance. The two-day International Conference hosted at the Santa Cruz campus hosted Laureates Joan Carling, Seikatsu Club and Reema Nanavaty of SEWA (India) for lectures and engagement with students and faculty. Students from the Santa Cruz campus attended the Award presentation in Stockholm and shared their experience from interactions with the Laureates on social media.

Our partnership with the Global Campus of Human Rights on child rights saw a successful start to its new five-year cycle, introducing fresh thematic focuses including, for the first time, the impact of AI on human rights. This new direction generated significant enthusiasm among partners and participants.

Child participation activities increased as part of the new cycle. An example of this is in South-East Europe, where our Child Leadership Team (consisting of individuals aged 14-18) designed a research project on *Addressing Cyberbullying Among Children and Its Impact on Mental Health*, a topic which was deemed the most important to young people from the region. This two-year child-led research has been co-authored and peer-reviewed throughout 2025 and continued to be promoted in 2026.

In addition, Laureates were able to seek funding for educational activities through the Laureate Activity Fund, which saw increased engagement in 2025. Funding went to Laureates contributing to project initiatives ranging from peer-reviewing publications to mentoring master's students and hosting interns.

The Climate Justice Fellowship programme advanced strategic nonviolent action learning, including a final cohort with participants from Asia, this time intentionally selected from Laureate organisations.

INFORM

In 2025, our communications work continued to focus on generating engaging content through both media outreach and our own social media channels. We produced original content with 27 news items, 11 visual stories, 16 press releases, two opinion pieces and many videos, all adapted for diverse digital audiences.

The announcement of the new Laureates on October 1 and the Award Presentation in December were the highlights of the year in our outreach, commanding most of our communications resources. As in previous years, we emphasised collecting audio-visual material of Laureates from the ground ahead of the announcement.

In 2025, we continued to work with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to carry not only our live announcement press conference over satellite, but also to distribute our video material to TV stations across Europe.

Our social media channels (X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn) featured high-quality content throughout the year, driving strong engagement and expanding the reach of Laureates' stories to a global audience.

Outcomes

The selection process remains the foundation of our work. In 2025, thorough research and a broad pool of nominations allowed the Jury to select four Laureates from regions and contexts not previously represented, from Sudan to Taiwan. The new Laureates told us the Award gave them a shield of visibility, brought their voices into international forums and gave global recognition to their grassroots work.

In our support work, we focused on Laureates in high-risk environments. The Women Laureates Hub strengthened peer solidarity and joint advocacy, including at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Solidarity campaigns for detained human rights defenders, including Ales Bialiatski and Reza Khandan, kept international pressure on the authorities holding them. Ales Bialiatski was released in December 2025 after a long campaign by many human rights organisations, which Right Livelihood was part of. Holistic security assessments and emergency family grants helped Laureates under severe threat continue their work.

The 2025 Laureate announcement and Award Presentation reached wide audiences. Our social media clips were viewed at least 11.4 million times, more than 1,400 news articles were published, and the Laureates were covered by BBC News, TaiwanPlus and Euronews. The coverage introduced many people to the Laureates' work on climate justice, digital democracy and humanitarian response.

Our education work reached new audiences, and we planned activities so that one event could reach several audiences. For example, when Cecosesola and the Seikatsu Club lectured on cooperative movements in Zurich, their contribution was also published in BeyondLab magazine and covered by Swiss national press. Thus, a single lecture managed to reach a much wider audience.

During Award Week, Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change and Audrey Tang gave lectures at Stockholm University to students, academics, activists and legal professionals from across the region.

The renewed partnership with the Global Campus of Human Rights led to several new projects on emerging topics such as AI and human rights, bringing Laureates' experience into the training of future human rights professionals. The Child Leadership Team's research on cyberbullying among children and its effect on mental health was published in 2026.

Our communications and education teams hosted two webinars with Maude Barlow and the Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) and published two visual stories on our website on Laureates' approaches to architecture and food systems. These received positive engagement and feedback from younger audiences at the beginning of their career journeys.

Impact of our work

The work of Right Livelihood is built on the belief that lasting change comes from supporting courageous people and connecting their struggles to a wider community. The full impact of our Laureates' work unfolds over decades. Our role in 2025 was to create the conditions for it through recognition, protection and connection.

Our support work rests on the idea that collective action can protect people and strengthen their influence where individual voices might be silenced. Three lessons stood out in 2025. First, coordinated solidarity draws more international attention than isolated appeals, as the Women Laureates Hub and our joint advocacy for detained defenders showed. Second, protection needs to be built holistically: security, well-being and family stability must be addressed together if

Laureates are to sustain their work and avoid the burnout and isolation many human rights defenders face. Laureates tell us they value this approach, not only for the financial support but for being part of a community that cares about them. Third, our first engagements in international for a such as the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women showed the value of Laureates taking part directly in policy processes.

We cannot attribute specific outcomes solely to our efforts. But sustained international attention matters for defenders in detention, and Ales Bialiatski's release in December 2025 followed years of joint campaigning by many organisations, including Right Livelihood.

Our communications work aims to make sure Laureates' messages reach the people who need to hear them. By highlighting practical work such as the Emergency Response Rooms in Sudan and digital democracy in Taiwan, we want to show that workable paths to a liveable future already exist. As a small organisation we cannot measure shifts in public opinion, but sustained interest from international media suggests these stories are reaching a mainstream audience.

In our education work, we aim to connect frontline activism with formal learning. We see the results less in numbers than in the quality of engagement: lively discussions on AI and human rights, high attendance at the annual Right Livelihood Lecture at the University of Zurich, the Child Leadership Team's research on an issue children themselves identified, and academics' willingness to bring Laureates' perspectives into their teaching. Much of this impact will only become visible over time.

Overall, we do not solve any global problems ourselves. Our role is to give Laureates recognition, resources and connections so they can carry out the change they work for. What we saw in 2025 suggests this support matters, while the road ahead remains long.

Strategic Review: 2020–2025

In 2025, we concluded the final year of our 2020–2025 organisational strategy. This period was defined by an ambition to develop Right Livelihood from a prestigious award into a dynamic driver of societal transformation. As we assess the implementation of this strategy, the results are mixed: we met some targets and missed others. Most importantly, Right Livelihood also changed the approach from a model of broad volume to one of strategic depth and resilience, better suited to an increasingly complex global landscape.

HONOUR. The strategy called for a selection process grounded in a unique global overview and demographic diversity. In this regard, we made significant strides. By 2025, nominations of women reached 43%, surpassing our 40% target, while the inclusion of non-binary candidates reflected a more nuanced understanding of the activists considered for an Award. However, the goal of maintaining high research confidence saw a decline to 34%, down from 44% in 2024. This reflects the growing difficulty of verifying work in polarized and closed environments, reaffirming our lesson that rigorous research takes time. Regarding visibility of the Award presentation, while traditional viewer metrics have become less reliable, the potential reach of our work has expanded exponentially. In 2025, broadcast snippets included BBC News, which carries a potential weekly viewership of 120 million, suggesting that our ambition to reach a global audience has been met through high-impact media partnerships rather than raw viewer counts.

SUPPORT. Our original target aimed for regular liaison with 150 Laureates. Recognizing that meaningful change requires more than superficial contact, we intentionally shifted our metrics already in 2024 to prioritize quality over quantity. Instead of stretching resources thin, we focused on regular liaison with around 40 Laureates and deep, active engagement with seven key initiatives. This strategic consolidation allowed us to foster the hub-based approach that has become a hallmark of our recent work. The establishment of the Women Laureates Hub stands as a testament to this shift, transforming what were once sporadic meeting outcomes into a sustained platform for solidarity and advocacy. We have moved from counting contacts to cultivating collective agency.

EDUCATE. The strategy envisioned Right Livelihood as a renowned institution for public education, with specific targets for massive open online courses (MOOCs). While we did not meet the target of 10,000 MOOC participants, this reflects a deliberate choice to move away from broad digital dissemination toward more targeted, high-impact formats. Our focus was instead directed into the Climate Justice Fellowship, which successfully concluded three cohorts, training a total of 45 activists across Africa, Europe, and Asia. Similarly, the creation of internal learning spaces within e.g. the Women Laureates Hub has proven to be an important tool for exchanges between the activists we work most with – the Laureates. We have learned that deep, cohort-based capacity building often yields more transformative results than wide-reaching but more superficial digital tools.

INFORM. Our communications strategy aimed to build a global brand independent of the “Alternative Nobel” label and to increase social media engagement by 300%. The results show a divergence in channels. LinkedIn saw explosive growth of over 500%, and Instagram hit our 300% target, indicating successful engagement with professional, policy, and younger demographics. However, overall website traffic and total media clippings did not reach their

original volume targets, which can partially be attributed to a change in metrics and algorithms for online platforms that makes it hard to compare any numbers. Generally, we are less interested in the number of followers than in engagement rates that were not assessed quantitatively in the previous strategy. This suggests that while our broad public reach via general press has faced headwinds from a changing media landscape, our ability to engage specific, high-value audiences has strengthened. We are no longer just broadcasting messages; we are fostering dialogue within the communities that matter most for policy change.

Follow up & Learnings

Moving forward in 2026, we begin our 2026-2031 strategy with a renewed sense of urgency and clarity. The world faces existential threats from authoritarianism, climate collapse, and the erosion of democracy, yet surveys¹ show that a vast majority of people still long for a just and sustainable future. The challenge is not a lack of desire, but a “spiral of silence” where those who want change feel isolated, cynical, or unsure of their role. Our new strategy for 2026–2031 is designed to break this silence.

We are shifting our focus from only measuring our own outputs to accelerating the transformative action that is already taking root around the world. Over the next six years, our work will be driven by three interconnected goals. First, we will continue to ensure that exemplary change-makers such as our Laureates increase their reach, resilience, and influence, sustaining their transformative action in the face of backlash. Second, we will work to strengthen the wider movements around them, fostering connections that make collective action more strategic and powerful. Finally, we aim to contribute to a cultural shift where more people recognize the viability of building a just world, moving from apathy or cynicism to active hope and engagement.

In practice, we will continue to prioritize quality and depth over volume. The hub-based approach and sustained dialogue with diplomatic actors will remain central to how we build collective power. We are committed to refining our support for defenders in displacement and expanding our engagement in emerging thematic areas, ensuring our interventions remain responsive to a rapidly changing global landscape. Our protection work will continue to focus on holistic support,

¹ For example, [almost 90% express a desire for a more equitable and sustainable world, at least 80% see the gap between the rich and the poor as a problem](#), and equally [clear majorities](#) want [more to be done](#) about the climate crisis.

recognizing that the sustainability of a movement depends on the well-being of the people within it.

Our communications will aim to make the pathways to a just world visible and compelling, showing audiences that they are not alone in their aspirations. Our education work will continue to bring Laureates' experience into academic settings and to future leaders. As an organisation, we will keep learning how justice, peace and sustainability depend on each other and use that understanding to connect struggles across borders.

The 2020–2025 strategy succeeded in maturing our approach, allowing us to transition from a model of broad metrics to one of impact coherence and strategic solidarity. The insights gained from that period form the foundation for the new chapter, particularly the strength of our hubs, the diversity of our nominees, and the depth of our advocacy. We do not claim to have all the answers, but by staying committed to celebrating, linking, and supporting transformative action, we strive to be a reliable partner for courageous change-makers. Together, we will work to accelerate the transition toward a just, peaceful, and sustainable world for all.