



AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE

INVESTING IN
SOCIAL CHANGE



Ugandan girls practice their debate skills with help from GWED-G, which offers programs at local schools to bolster girls' confidence and skills so they can pursue their aspirations.

Photographs by Jonathan Torgovnik unless otherwise noted.





A Venture Funder for Social Change

In many ways, AJWS thinks like a startup investor. Like many successful venture funders, we:

- Invest early
- Take risks and look for game-changing opportunities
- Bet on passionate, promising people
- Strengthen investments through networking
- Help social change ventures grow, merge and expand into movements for change

“So what’s the bottom line? For the venture firms, it’s finding the next Google or Instagram. For American Jewish World Service, the bottom line is in helping people build a firm foundation of rights and seeing them build on that foundation to improve their lives and those of many like them in their countries and around the world. It’s a good investment!”

—TERRY WINOGRAD, Professor Emeritus, Stanford University

AJWS has invested \$412 million
to promote human rights and end
poverty in the developing world.

AJWS supports 487 social change organizations in 19 countries each year, led by smart, entrepreneurial activists who work to solve the most pressing problems of poverty and affronts to human rights. Our investments make a lasting impact because we identify and cultivate ambitious and talented local leaders who are committed to making change in their own communities. We support the growth of their organizations, network them together, and help them build powerful social change movements to protect the rights of the world's most vulnerable people.

Together, our grantees are leading local, national and international efforts to reduce poverty, overturn unjust laws, bring peace to countries at war and promote justice and equality wherever they live and work. We have responded to some of the worst human rights crises and disasters of our time, from Ebola to HIV/AIDS, and the genocides in Darfur and Burma.

By investing in social change entrepreneurs, we change the lives of millions of people.

“Jewish tradition teaches that if a person saves one life, it is as if they’ve saved the entire world. By that measure, over these past 30 years, [AJWS has] saved the world many, many times over.”

—PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, 2015

In Uganda, Pamela Acrico makes a living through collective farming launched by AJWS grantee GWED-G. As a result of her new income, Pamela's children can stay in school.



Impact on Issues that Matter

AJWS promotes human rights on four key issues:

Civil and Political Rights

We support 164 entrepreneurial social change organizations in their work to fight for justice and equality, recover from conflict, promote the just rule of law, and pursue the right to be heard, vote and participate in political life.

Sexual Health and Rights

We support 161 organizations empowering women, girls and LGBTQI people to stop violence and discrimination, gain control over their lives and bodies, and live with dignity and in safety and health.

Land, Water and Climate Justice

We support 135 organizations that are responding to climate change and protecting the land, water and natural resources that rural and indigenous people depend on for survival.

Disaster and Humanitarian Response

We support 27 organizations that provide immediate humanitarian aid and long-term support to the hardest-hit and most vulnerable communities struck by earthquakes, hurricanes, epidemics and other disasters.



AJWS BY THE NUMBERS

\$36 MILLION* Invested this year in our grantmaking and social change strategies to advance human rights and end poverty in the developing world

487 Social change organizations supported today

19 Countries in Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean

170,000 Supporters

**Including \$5.4 million invested through a donor-advised fund administered by AJWS*



WHY WE PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

AJWS strives to overcome deep inequalities and injustices in society that are the root causes of poverty and oppression and hinder equitable development. This means that in addition to addressing immediate needs like food, jobs and healthcare, our grantees in the developing world advocate for people's essential rights—like the right to live without violence; the right to earn a fair wage and have access to food; the right to have a say in the laws that govern society; and the right to express one's views, religion, culture, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We believe that realizing these rights and empowering local people to shape solutions to the problems they face are the essential first steps to ending poverty, promoting positive development and building just societies.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP CENTER 1. *In Haiti, Françoise Inocent aided fellow survivors of Hurricane Matthew. 2.* *Rekha Milind Sapkal, of Pune, India, seeks fair pay and better treatment for her labor. 3.* *A trans woman stands up for her human rights in the Dominican Republic. Photo by Christine Han 4.* *Activists from villages across Thailand are building a movement to fight against threats to their ancestral land. Photo by Allison Joyce*

Investing Early in Promising Social Entrepreneurs

**We invest in extraordinary local leaders.
They dedicate their lives to changing the world.**

AJWS supports and cultivates more than 480 of the most innovative social change organizations in 19 countries each year that are forging new and effective responses to critical global challenges.

Many are nascent groups looking for their first funder. Members of our team in each country identify charismatic, effective leaders. We train and support them to be financially secure, develop programs and scale up so they can transform their communities and society overall.

One of the keys to our success is investing in local visions for change, rather than imposing solutions from afar. We believe that the people experiencing complex human rights challenges know best how to solve them—and we support them to implement their plans.

“AJWS is different than other organizations. They have a heart to reach out to the individuals they support, and the soul for ensuring the survival of the institutions and people they fund. AJWS made the difference for us.”

—LEYMAH GBOWEE, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner,
Liberian peace activist and AJWS grantee





INVESTMENT IN ACTION: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Julienne Lusenge was a radio broadcaster during Congo's brutal civil war in the 1990s. Callers to her program reported the kind of violence against women that led the media to call Congo "the rape capital of the world."

Julienne decided to help women fight back. In 1999, she founded SOFEPADI—Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development. She received funding from AJWS and, today, represents thousands

of women in Congo's courts. In a country where rule of law has been all but absent for decades, SOFEPADI is winning cases, holding people accountable for violence, and insisting that police, the courts and the government intercede.

Over three decades, AJWS has supported thousands of leaders like Julienne. They have brought hope and justice to millions.

ABOVE In a country once known as the "rape capital of the world," Congolese activist Julienne Lusenge counsels her community to protect women and girls from sexual violence. *LEFT* Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate, thanks AJWS for its support. Photo by Christine Han

Networking Changemakers to Maximize Impact

In each country in which we work, we fund constellations of organizations—some small and nascent; and some larger, more established and more influential—that are working on the same issues and goals. We bring them together to incubate ideas, teach one another skills, build united social movements, and launch ambitious local, national and international campaigns for change.

Together, our grantees make systemic, large-scale change—like overturning laws, stopping civil wars, helping bring democracy and peace, and making communities more resilient in responding to natural disasters.



Photo by Ben Beringuela

FOR EXAMPLE:

In **EL SALVADOR**, a coalition supported by AJWS achieved a nationwide ban of gold mining. The mines had poisoned the water supply (with 9x the acceptable level of cyanide and 1,000x the acceptable level of iron) and caused cancer and kidney failure to rise. Twelve grassroots organizations funded by AJWS organized tens of thousands of local people over 11 years to pressure the government to intervene. Thanks to this advocacy, in 2009, El Salvador halted the operations of a Canadian mining company. In March of 2017, the government outlawed metallic mining altogether to protect the land, water and rural people from toxic waste and exploitation.

In February 2017, AJWS brought together 34 community leaders from 17 organizations in the **PHILIPPINES, INDIA, NEPAL, SRI LANKA** and **BURMA** to improve their ability to respond to disasters. We know that disasters tend to strike frequently in the most vulnerable places, and that the key to sustained change is resilience and preparation. At this four-day workshop, disaster response experts equipped this network of community leaders with tactics and safety plans, which they then used to shore up communities across Asia for future crises.



Measuring Success

To ensure that our approach is working, our research staff rigorously evaluate our work and adjust our strategies:

- **We monitor our progress, on each issue and country, toward strategies** that include 10-year goals, three-year outcomes and annual milestones toward each outcome. This allows AJWS to monitor and evaluate what our grantees and activists are accomplishing collectively. We track successes, shortfalls and opportunities and use this data to fine-tune our strategies each year.
- **We facilitate ongoing learning with staff and grantees**, using the analysis of our data to respond to challenges and opportunities.
- **We collaborate with our grantees to conduct original research and external evaluations to investigate AJWS's impact** and better understand the issues on which we work. We share our findings with our grantees and other funders so they can apply what we have learned in their strategies for change.

ABOVE Maimuna, in Uganda, saved enough money to buy her land and the livestock she tends with support from Kwataniza Women Farmers Group. Photo by Christine Han

A HIGH-LEVERAGE INVESTMENT: Ending Child Marriage

Our most significant global investment to date is an effort to end early and child marriage in India—where 47 percent of all girls marry before age 18. We are investing \$30 million over six years with funding from The Kendeda Fund, our second-largest donor.

This work demonstrates the full range of our investment model:

50+ GRANTEES. We fund a constellation of pioneering organizations in India working together to change the way activists in India and the global community are tackling this age-old problem. Rather than focusing solely on the important goal of raising the age of marriage, they are also tackling the often-hidden root causes of this practice that rob girls of the agency to make decisions about their lives: gender inequality, rigid social norms that limit girls' aspirations and opportunities, economic insecurity and restrictive views on sexuality.

35+ RESEARCH PROJECTS. By funding and learning from cutting-edge qualitative research, we refine our strategy and influence the way other funders and leaders view and respond to this issue.

TARGETED ADVOCACY. Working with the Girls Not Brides coalition (another leader in the fight against child marriage) and other organizations, we are urging world leaders to take on child marriage as a critical impediment that must be overcome in order to foster lasting development for women. In 2016 we helped secure a new UN sustainable development goal on child marriage.

MULTI-CHANNEL MEDIA OUTREACH. We're producing stories, articles and videos that have been promoted by major media outlets—amplifying the voices of girls in India and attracting new supporters to our big investment.



Girls in Rajasthan, India, look at pictures that depict the careers they dream of. Their tutor is Manju Meghwal (purple scarf), who encourages them to think of possibilities beyond early marriage. Manju was trained to empower girls by AJWS grantee The Hunger Project, which also supported her and other local women to run—and get elected—for office in the local governing council.



Recent Success Stories

AINING SURVIVORS OF DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES:

BURMA & BANGLADESH, 2017-2019 In 2017, after decades of persecuting the Rohingya people, the Burmese military unleashed a genocide. An estimated 740,000 Rohingya civilians fled into Bangladesh, where today they live in crowded refugee camps. AJWS's immediate response included emergency food, shelter and boats to ferry survivors to safety. Today, our grantees have reached over 100,000 Rohingya people, ensuring access to medical help, training healthcare volunteers and more.

INDONESIA, 2018-2019 Throughout 2018, multiple massive tsunamis struck Indonesia, leaving nearly 200,000 people displaced and more than 4,000 dead. AJWS immediately identified local partners to distribute relief packages for mothers, reconstruct durable new homes, and help families launch small businesses.

EAST AFRICA, 2016-2019 In South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda, a brutal drought continues to push millions of people to the brink of starvation and exacerbate longstanding conflicts. Our grantees are helping communities survive and heal. In Uganda, our grantees launched "peace clubs" to encourage conflict resolution among refugees who fled South Sudan's violent civil war.



Photo courtesy of WALHI

DEFENDING LAND, WATER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE:

GUATEMALA, 2019 Many indigenous Mayan families have spent decades uprooted because landowners evict them at their whim, often by force. After navigating a complex government land program, an AJWS grantee secured legal titles for 81 displaced families to own land together. Now, for the first time in generations, they're laying down roots in their own soil.

KENYA, 2019 In a case lodged and litigated by AJWS grantees, a Kenyan environmental court froze plans for a major coal plant. The ruling came just weeks after grantees made national headlines by exposing the harm that the plant would cause. The victory built upon our grantee's success halting a similarly dangerous energy project in 2018.



Photo by Christine Han

PROMOTING CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS:



Photo by Regina López

MEXICO, 2019 An AJWS grantee organized a nationwide protest on the streets of Mexico City and 18 other cities demanding action on behalf of families whose loved ones have been forcibly disappeared (abducted and likely murdered) during Mexico's ongoing armed conflict. The activists delivered a petition signed by over 100,000 people urging the government to strengthen search efforts for thousands of people who remain missing today.

EL SALVADOR, 2018 After years of advocacy by AJWS grantees and others, a major political party introduced a groundbreaking bill enabling Salvadorans to change their gender on official documents. In 2019, elected officials agreed to hold hearings to consider it. This progress comes on the heels of a new policy passed to improve how the Salvadoran justice department treats LGBTQI people.

ADVANCING SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS:

INDIA, 2018-2019

Co-organized by several AJWS grantees, India's Dignity March was a monumental effort to raise awareness of sexual violence and chip away at the stigma survivors face. Over 65 days, thousands of people marched 6,200 miles across 24 states—concluding in Delhi with a massive demonstration featuring prominent lawyers, public figures and supportive officials.

THAILAND, 2016-2019

In conservative southern Thailand, rigid gender roles severely limit women's lives. AJWS grantee BUKU runs a bookstore and community center hosting workshops to expand opportunities for women, girls and LGBTQI people. In 2016, BUKU launched a soccer team open to everyone. Today, the players are cheered by their families and exude newfound confidence—both on and off the field.



Photo by Allison Joyce

Jewish Values, Global Impact

AJWS aims to build a better world for all, inspired by Jewish values, history and tradition. We are inspired by *tikkun olam*—the Jewish mandate to “repair the world”—and biblical teachings to help the poor and care for the stranger. We are also guided by the lessons of Jewish history and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—which was adopted by the UN after the Holocaust to prevent such atrocities from occurring ever again against anyone.

From Silicon Valley to Sudan, New York City to Nicaragua, AJWS strives to act on our values, uphold human rights and honor the dignity and humanity of every person.

“As Jews, we must also consider ourselves part of the human family—the large human family—and therefore try to help. That is what [AJWS] is trying to do.”

—ELIE WIESEL, Nobel Laureate, founding board member of AJWS

OUR STARTUP STORY:

FROM PUSHCART TO PHILANTHROPY

Our story began in 1881—a century before our founding—when Jewish immigrants Moses Phillips and his wife, Endel, began making shirts and selling them on a pushcart. He eventually opened a store in New York City, and as generations passed, the small business grew into the international clothing conglomerate Phillips Van Heusen.

Moses’s great-grandson, Larry Phillips, was CEO of the company in the early 1980s when he met a Jewish international aid worker named Larry Simon. The pair dreamed of a Jewish organization, inspired by Jewish values, that would aid the poorest and most oppressed people in the world by making wise investments. In 1985 they founded American Jewish World Service in Simon’s small apartment in Boston.

Today, we are realizing our founders’ dream. AJWS invests \$28 million annually to promote justice and equality in the developing world.



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a green and red plaid jacket over a red shirt, stands with her arms crossed by a river. The background shows a rocky riverbank and a forested hillside under a cloudy sky.

So what's the bottom line?

For AJWS, it's finding and supporting the changemakers who advance human rights and build a more just and equitable world. The return on our investment is measured in lives saved, laws changed and rights protected.

We invite you to invest in change with us.

In northern Burma, activist Ja Hkawn is leading a campaign to stop construction of the Myitsone Dam on the Irrawaddy River. If built, the dam will flood 47 villages of people.

A collective of girls supported by
AJWS works to end child marriage
in their community.



MAKE A HIGH-LEVERAGE INVESTMENT in ending poverty and promoting human rights.

Following The Kendeda Fund's investment of \$30 million in AJWS to stop child marriage in India, we are ready for our next major challenge. We seek visionary funders to support cutting-edge solutions to the following pressing global issues:

INVESTMENT #1: End Child Marriage

Worldwide, 15 million girls get married annually before age 18. Child brides are more likely to drop out of school, live in poverty, suffer violence at home and die in childbirth. To help end this practice in India, The Kendeda Fund has invested \$30 million in AJWS over six years to support deep exploration of the root causes of the problem and fund local interventions that respond to these causes. This grant now supports 52 innovative organizations working within communities to broaden ideas about what is possible for girls, alleviate gender inequality, and increase girls' access to education and other opportunities that give them choices beyond child marriage to rise out of poverty.

AJWS hopes to replicate this intensive model in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Kenya, where 23–41% of girls marry early. This investment will advance a key UN development goal and change the lives of millions of girls.

INVESTMENT #2: Defend Land and Water

Around the world, indigenous people and rural communities are being pushed off their land to make way for industrial development conducted without their consent. Mega-dams flood and destroy their villages; mineral mines and oil rigs poison their water supply; and illegal logging decimates their forests. Without land, they face hunger and deepening poverty. And the world's fragile ecosystems are suffering irrevocable damage. In response, AJWS supports communities to defend their land and protect the natural resources that they depend on for survival. With AJWS's support, small farmers and indigenous peoples have already achieved major legal land rights victories in Mexico, India and Kenya.

We will scale up in Mexico, India and Kenya, expanding our investment in local groups advocating to restore water sources, stop harmful dams and mines, prevent land grabs and protect the survival of the earth and its most vulnerable inhabitants.

INVESTMENT #3: Save Lives in Disasters and Global Emergencies

Approximately 25 million people are displaced by disasters each year and over 20 million are at risk for starvation and famine. Despite this great need, the U.S. is threatening to pull half—\$5 billion—of its humanitarian funding from the UN. AJWS is stepping up to fill the gap. With 30 years' experience responding to the most tragic disasters of our time, from the Darfur genocide to the Indian Ocean tsunami to the earthquake in Haiti, AJWS is mobilizing to expand its response to large and small disasters, famines and epidemics, ensuring that aid reaches the poorest and most vulnerable communities often overlooked by aid agencies and bolstering their resilience for future emergencies.

You can enable AJWS to expand its unique approach to responding to disasters, filling a major dearth in humanitarian aid around the world. Your investment will be continually replenished through our ongoing disaster fundraising.

INVESTMENT #4: Mobilize Youth for Peace and Democracy

Over the past year, authoritarianism and nationalist populism have intensified across the globe, leaving the poor and marginalized increasingly disenfranchised and facing growing roadblocks to achieving their human rights. But there is a powerful new force coming of age to counter this trend: youth. In Africa, youth are more than 60% of the population—which is expected to double by 2050. In francophone Africa, AJWS supports three youth movements that are using hip hop music, social media, non-violent protest and savvy advocacy campaigns to bring their generation to the streets and the ballot box. In Senegal, the youth vote helped oust a corrupt president; in the Democratic Republic of Congo, young people helped change their constitution to institute term limits. But they need more support—urgently.

AJWS will invest in the most promising youth movements in Africa, marshaling a vital force to promote a peaceful and democratic future for the continent.

TO LEARN MORE, contact Margo Bloom, AJWS Vice President for Development, at mbloom@ajws.org or **212.792.2818**.



Invest with AJWS to
build a better world.

Turn the page to learn about **high-leverage investment opportunities** to foster game-changing solutions to poverty, climate change and other global challenges.

FRONT COVER In Rajasthan, India, Joyti Gadari and her peers take a break from playing sports—an activity often discouraged for girls in this area. Their game was organized by AJWS grantee Vikalp, which builds girls' leadership and self-esteem and encourages their community to think differently about what girls can do and accomplish. Photo by Jonathan Torgovnik
THIS PAGE Women fight poverty and discrimination in Palmarejo Batey, Dominican Republic. Photo by Christine Han



American Jewish World Service

45 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018

T: 212.792.2900

E: ajws@ajws.org

 ajws.org

 [americanjewishworldservice](https://www.facebook.com/americanjewishworldservice)

 [ajws](https://twitter.com/ajws)

 [americanjewishworldservice](https://www.instagram.com/americanjewishworldservice)

