



30 at 30

Celebrating 30 Global Leaders,
Honoring 30 Years of Change





Girls at a school run by AJWS grantee MBBCDS in rural West Bengal, India, learn to be confident, ambitious women equipped to resist early marriage and pursue their own goals (see story 6). *Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik*

30 at 30

Celebrating 30 Global Leaders,
Honoring 30 Years of Change

1985–2015

*In Memoriam: We dedicate this journal to our co-founder,
Larry Phillips, who passed away in September of 2015.
His legacy lives on in the work he helped make possible.*



DEAR FRIENDS,

We are deeply gratified to celebrate AJWS's 30th anniversary and enter our fourth decade of promoting human rights in the developing world.

For 30 years, the activists, organizations and movements we support have demonstrated tremendous leadership in struggles that matter. Our international grantees have waged courageous campaigns to stop poverty and persecution, bring peace to war-torn countries, end genocides and ensure that the rights of the most vulnerable communities are defended. By their side, the passionate American leaders whom AJWS has called to action—our allies in Congress, celebrities, writers, rabbis and hundreds of thousands of donors and supporters—have used their dollars, signatures, votes and voices to build a better world.

We invite you to join us and celebrate these remarkable people who have made and continue to make a difference worldwide. Their visionary leadership has taken various forms and tells the story of AJWS.

On these pages, you will meet:

- *Our founders, who believed Jews must act proudly—as Jews—to stop the horrors of history from repeating*
- *A Congolese activist who refused to accept sexual violence against women as a way of life*
- *Ugandan human rights attorneys who risked their lives to overturn a hate law*
- *A Mexican activist who died fighting for his indigenous community's land*
- *A Jewish philanthropist whose support is helping AJWS's grantees end child marriage in India*
- *An indigenous Guatemalan who demanded justice for the massacre of his people*
- *A Liberian survivor of Ebola who is helping fellow survivors heal*
- *A Jewish congressman who uses legislation to repair the world*



The 30 leaders profiled in this book are just a sampling of the thousands who have raised their voices with AJWS, and the millions whose lives have been changed for the better because of their leadership.

As an AJWS supporter, you are also among our most cherished leaders, and we could not have reached this milestone without you. Thank you for believing in our mission and for helping us support the changemakers and movements pursuing justice, peace and equality—these past 30 years and in the years to come.

With gratitude,

Kathleen Levin
Board Chair

Ruth W. Messinger
President



Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik

30 at 30

- 1 LARRY PHILLIPS AND LAURENCE SIMON • *Boston*
- 2 JULIENNE LUSENGE • *Democratic Republic of Congo*
- 3 BARBARA AND ERIC DOBKIN • *New York*
- 4 CARLOS CHEN OSORIO • *Guatemala*
- 5 DENA KIMBALL • *Atlanta*
- 6 SONALI KHATUN • *India*
- 7 RABBI RICK JACOBS • *New York*
- 8 KHUN KHIT SAN • *Burma*
- 9 RABBI STEPHANIE RUSKAY • *New York*
- 10 HANNAH SKVARLA • *Los Angeles*
- 11 MARISOL BAEZ • *Dominican Republic*
- 12 CONGRESSMAN ELIOT ENGEL • *Washington, D.C.*
- 13 BEA AND SAM WILDERMAN • *Boston*
- 14 MEENA SESHU • *India*
- 15 BINTA DIAO • *Senegal*
- 16 GOPAL KUMAR NAKARMI • *Nepal*
- 17 BENDU MUSAH • *Liberia*
- 18 BERNARDO VASQUEZ SANCHEZ • *Mexico*
- 19 ALEJANDRA ANCHEITA • *Mexico*
- 20 SUPREME COURT JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG • *Washington, D.C.*
- 21 RABBI SHARON BROUS • *Los Angeles*
- 22 GIGI PRITZKER PUCKER, MICHAEL PUCKER AND ABBY PUCKER • *Chicago and Los Angeles*
- 23 SEYNABOU MALE CISSÉ • *Senegal*
- 24 THE WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND • *San Francisco*
- 25 NICHOLAS OPIYO AND ADRIAN JJUUKO • *Uganda*
- 26 BILL RESNICK AND MICHAEL STUBBS • *Los Angeles*
- 27 AUNG MYO MIN • *Thailand*
- 28 THE BLAUSTEIN FOUNDATIONS • *Baltimore*
- 29 PRAYONG DOKLAMYAI • *Thailand*
- 30 GAMAL PALMER • *Los Angeles*

LARRY PHILLIPS AND LAURENCE SIMON

In the mid-1980s, two visionary American Jews created American Jewish World Service.

Businessman Larry Phillips,* head of a major fashion conglomerate that began with his great-grandparents' pushcart business, felt isolated as

the poor and hungry in sub-Saharan Africa, invited him onstage to announce AJWS's first major grant—an airlift of medical supplies to Mozambique. "That really helped to put us on the world stage," he said. "There was suddenly a wide recognition."

Founding AJWS so Jews can stand up proudly—as Jews—for justice worldwide

the only Jewish trustee of an international relief organization. Laurence Simon, a young, idealistic international aid worker, had encountered sub-Saharan Africans who were surprised to learn that he was Jewish, leaving him with a strong desire to work openly as a Jew to aid others. Phillips and Simon both noticed groups of other faiths doing global humanitarian work and wanted to see American Jews do the same.

In 1985, they brought their skills and resources to the effort, and AJWS was born.

Operations started out of Simon's apartment near Boston. As founding president, he spent the earliest days getting the word out to Jewish organizations and synagogues, recruiting leaders and laying the groundwork for programs in Africa and Latin America. Phillips served as AJWS's earliest financial investor and first board chair. "It took a great deal of time," Phillips said. "We slowly recruited dozens and then hundreds and then thousands of people who were interested in the cause philosophically and then monetarily."

Simon recalls feeling like a rock star when the organizer of Live Aid, a historic concert benefitting

**Of blessed memory*

Under their leadership, AJWS soon sent aid and support to some of the poorest countries in the developing world. AJWS funded organizations creating economic opportunities for the "untouchable" Dalit caste in India; responded to the 1986 volcano disaster in Colombia; and promoted new technology and methods for safely storing grain that helped small-scale farmers worldwide save their crops to stave off hunger.

During these early years, AJWS distinguished itself from other humanitarian organizations by supporting local people to create change—and doing so proudly and publicly as a Jewish organization inspired by the Jewish obligation to repair the world—*tikkun olam*.

"This was funded by Jews primarily, but the work in the field was done by local people, and that's what became important," Phillips said. "It's not something you could impose from the outside. Primarily, working between the people in the U.S. and the local people in each of those countries helped spur the idea and spurs it to this day."

Simon added, "When we entered humanitarian operations, it was with long-term commitment. There are very few [quick] victories in development.



AJWS founders Larry Phillips (center) and Laurence Simon (right) celebrate AJWS's founding in 1985 with author Elie Wiesel, a founding board member. *Photograph courtesy of Laurence Simon*

The organizations that really make a difference are those that are able to go into a situation and stay. Charity is important, but justice is the best guarantee that problems will be dealt with.”

After launching AJWS, Simon went on to become a professor of international development at Brandeis University, where he has founded programs and research centers and trained and inspired generations of human rights scholars.

Phillips, who died at the age of 88 in September of 2015, left a long legacy of leadership and lived a life dedicated to philanthropy and justice. He was the retired chair and chief executive of the fashion conglomerate Phillips-Van Heusen and was a proud and generous supporter of AJWS—with long periods as a board member—until

the end of his life. “There is so much more hunger and poverty in the world,” he said in an interview. “We haven’t scratched the surface, but we’ve had, I think, considerable success.”

AJWS does all of its work today—from fostering emerging leaders in the developing world to taking leadership ourselves on issues of justice and human rights around the world—in the footsteps of our founders.

Watch our video tribute to Larry Phillips at ajws.org/phillipstribute



A tireless advocate for women in a country where rape is used as a "strategy of war," activist Julienne Lusenge counsels her community to protect women and girls in DRC's bloody conflict.
Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik

JULIENNE LUSENGE

When war erupted in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998, Julienne Lusenge was working as a humanitarian radio broadcaster tasked with delivering critical health and human rights information to families in remote areas. In the course of her work, Julienne travelled from village to village to interview wives and mothers about their lives and share their stories over the airwaves. As the conflict escalated, these women began describing shocking abuses perpetrated by the warring parties—including rape, sexual slavery and the forced recruitment of children as soldiers.

Outraged by the stories pouring in from the villages, Julienne and seven other women founded an organization called Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development (SOFEPADI) in 2000. In the early years, Julienne and the other founders pooled their own resources to pay SOFEPADI's bills—driven by their sheer will and tenacity to help women caught in the crossfire of war.

"We sacrificed a lot in those first years," recalls Julienne. "We would walk 15 kilometers by foot to reach women in war-torn villages. We did not have money, we did not have transport, we did not have anything. We would contribute small amounts among us for this to be possible."

Today, with support from AJWS, SOFEPADI helps survivors of sexual violence in Beni, Bunia and

all of Eastern DRC navigate the judicial system and bring perpetrators of rape and sexual assault to national and international courts.

With her unshakeable commitment to peace and justice, Julienne has become one of the strongest and most respected advocates on behalf of women and girls living in eastern DRC. In 2007, she launched a second organization, the Fund for Congolese Women (FFC), which works to strengthen Congolese women's rights groups and help them secure funding from international donors.

Raising a voice for women amid the horrors of war

Thanks to FFC's support, one of these groups recently convinced 14 child soldiers to put down their weapons and return to their communities.

In 2014, AJWS supported Julienne and four grassroots women activists working with FFC to speak on a panel at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. They alerted global leaders and organizations about the sexual violence continuing to plague their country and the need to include women's voices in peacemaking efforts.

AJWS is proud to support both SOFEPADI and FFC, helping Julienne realize her vision of peace and equality.

BARBARA AND ERIC DOBKIN

“It’s not about what you’ve accomplished in life. It’s about who you are and how your values translate into the deeds you do to help others.” This family motto beautifully illustrates Barbara and Eric Dobkin’s tremendous generosity of time, energy and funding over more than 15 years of dedicated support to AJWS.

The couple has put their values into action at every turn—from their first gift in 2000, to Barbara’s outstanding term as chair of the board of trustees from 2009 to 2012, to the couple’s romantic philanthropic gesture that brought their dearest friends and family together to toast their 50th wedding anniversary at AJWS’s gala celebration in New York in 2015.

Barbara’s zest for AJWS has taken her around the globe to witness our work in India, Thailand, Cambodia, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Liberia, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. “I was blown away,” she said of her first trip to India in 2004, where she observed women from the poorest slums learning to weave so they could earn money and send their children to school instead of making them work.

“You have to get over there and see what’s happening and the resilience of these people and

what they have to go through—not only to eke out a living, but to change the status quo to build more equitable societies,” Barbara said. “It’s truly amazing. I realized my money could have a real impact.”

Leading AJWS with vision, verve and values

Eric agreed: *“We give to AJWS because we can see that our gift is able to make a substantial difference in people’s lives at a scale that we can afford. When I see how far my funding goes in the hands of remarkable grassroots leaders, I am inspired to keep giving, and to urge others to add fuel to the impact we can make together. That is what philanthropy is all about.”*

Barbara has served on AJWS’s board of trustees since 2008, drawing particular respect and admiration for her four-year term as chair. She steered AJWS through an intensive strategic planning process that strengthened and focused our work both internationally and in the U.S. “We revamped the organization,” she recalled. “AJWS grew and became far more strategic, as a result.”



Barbara also elevated the role and commitment of her fellow trustees. “We built a very strong board where people became more and more committed. I’ve been on many boards, and I’ve chaired many boards, and I don’t think any other board runs the way this one does. Members are extremely engaged. I’m very proud.”

Eric started the Dobkin Family Foundation in the ‘80s, and he says that “supporting AJWS is the most important financial, philanthropic—and even human—effort the foundation has had.”

Together, he and Barbara have favored charities focused on women and girls. She appreciates that at AJWS, “women are a priority from inside out—from supporting NGOs led by women in Africa to adopting a progressive parental-leave policy for its own employees. This is a place that values and empowers women at its core.”

They also embrace AJWS’s philosophy of trusting local leaders in the developing world to lead movements for change: “It’s not so much what we do, but it’s how we do it,” Barbara said.

“As grantmakers, it’s easy for us to project what we think recipients need; AJWS doesn’t make this presumption. It gives local leaders the means to articulate and pursue their own goals.”

AJWS president Ruth Messinger lauds the Dobkins for their dedicated partnership:

“Barbara and Eric have shaped AJWS with their extremely generous financial support, their shared interest in the many dimensions of our work and their hospitality to our staff, grantees and supporters. Barbara has been a visionary and an extraordinary ambassador for AJWS and our mission. She has led and participated on our board of trustees with a willingness to do the hard work of governance. She and Eric have involved friends, inspired giving and been available to this organization in a thousand ways. They have been true and powerful partners to AJWS.”



Barbara and Eric Dobkin are pioneering leaders whose generosity, energy and unflagging dedication have helped usher AJWS into its fourth decade—stronger and more strategic than ever before. *Photographs courtesy of Barbara and Eric Dobkin*

Thanks to the tireless advocacy of activists like Carlos Chen Osorio (opposite), the Maya Achi people of Guatemala (pictured here in a funeral procession) are finally able to bury their dead and attain some measure of justice for the massacre that occurred on their land. *Photographs by James Rodriguez*



CARLOS CHEN OSORIO

Seeking justice for bloodshed in the name of development

After the Guatemalan military massacred his wife and children and hundreds of other Maya Achi civilians in 1982 to make way for the Chixoy hydroelectric dam, Carlos Chen Osorio vowed to seek justice. Justice for the murder of his family and thousands of other civilians. Justice for the destruction of his ancestral farmland, drowned by the dam's floodwaters. Justice for the thousands of survivors—Carlos included—whom the military forced out of their homes and plunged into lasting poverty.

"The water is filled with the tears and blood of our people," Carlos said.

With support from local and international allies like AJWS grantee RedLAR (The Latin American Network Against Dams and for Rivers, Communities and Life), survivors like Carlos have spent decades advocating for reparations and official recognition of the killings. In the 1990s, they pushed Guatemala's new government to exhume mass graves and investigate the crimes—a success that has allowed Maya Achi families to hold long-delayed funerals for people who disappeared during the massacres.

In the past few years, Carlos and other activists joined forces with RedLAR's network of human rights advocates and communities harmed by dam projects throughout Latin America, generating international attention for their story and putting pressure on the Guatemalan government to take action.

In November of 2014, their tireless advocacy and organizing led to a historic result: Former Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina publicly apologized to the survivors of the Chixoy massacres and officially promised more than \$150 million in aid and reparations for their communities. Now, Carlos and his peers are working to make sure that the government makes good on this promise so that the communities of Maya Achi can prosper and the families of those massacred can obtain some measure of justice.



DENA KIMBALL

Every year around the world, 15 million girls enter into early marriages. Thanks to Dena Kimball, a young philanthropist and foundation executive, AJWS is working hard to end this centuries-old practice.

In 2012, after traveling to India with AJWS, Dena introduced us to The Kendeda Fund, which has since invested \$15.3 million over three years in our efforts to end child marriage in India. With Dena as its executive director, The Kendeda Fund's girls' rights portfolio aims to give girls "the skills, choices and authority to fully realize their human potential... transforming how families, communities, and governments value girls."

When asked why The Kendeda Fund selected AJWS for this grant, Dena praised our "relentless curiosity" and described what she saw as an opportunity to work in partnership with us at



Dena Kimball (center), executive director of The Kendeda Fund, travelled with AJWS to India to learn about our strategy to address early and child marriage. *Photograph courtesy of Dena Kimball*

a moment of explosive growth: "AJWS was just coming out of a new strategic plan and looking to prove what it could accomplish by going deeper in certain issues. We wanted to be your partner in achieving the overall vision for the organization."

Ending child marriage through philanthropy

"Ideally," she said, "we're creating an inspiring example of what change in this area can look like. There's an increasing interest in child marriage around the world, and AJWS is operating with a specific visionary point of view about how to bring about this change that's grounded in feminism and equality. If we can inspire others to approach the issue in a similar way, we can really make a difference."

Years earlier, Dena served as the first chair of Global Circle, AJWS's group of emerging philanthropists. For Dena, inspiring her peers to give to a cause they believe in and supporting Indian teenagers in shaping their own destinies have one thing in common: They are inherently Jewish things to do.

"The opportunity to express my faith and to personalize my philanthropy connected to my Judaism has been paramount. AJWS is a vehicle for exercising my responsibility to engage in repairing the world—tikkun olam—and to help address the challenges that people around the world are facing."

**Who decides about
marriage?
WE decide, WE
decide !**



MahilaSanghat (MASUM)

घरकाम नव्हे फक्त मुलींचे
काम
शकतील ते मुलेही छान



MahilaSanghat (MASUM)

मनाविरुद्ध विवाह नको,
बालविवाह तर

**NO
insid**

Youth from AJWS grantee MASUM march through rural Maharashtra, India, to protest early marriage and promote gender equality. Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik



SONALI KHATUN

Escaping child marriage and guiding girls to choose their own paths

One afternoon when Sonali Khatun was only 14, she returned home from school in her small village of Sahanagar, India, to find rows of chairs set up in her family's mud house. She asked her mother what was going on, and the reply shocked her: "Your husband's family is coming to see you."

Sonali panicked and protested, but her parents insisted the stranger would be a good match. Just two weeks later, she was married.

One of millions of girls worldwide who are wed against their wishes before they turn 18, Sonali dropped out of school. She found herself under the thumb of unwelcoming in-laws and an abusive husband—and soon fled their house in terror. Fortunately, her parents stood by her as she obtained a divorce, despite the slurs hurled at her from the community.

Sonali found new hope when she discovered MBBCDS, an organization supported by AJWS that empowers girls to take the reins of their own futures. With MBBCDS's help, Sonali resumed her studies and eventually began teaching girls in local villages about reproductive health—a topic they

would otherwise learn almost nothing about. These workshops help them gain the confidence to stand up for themselves when it comes to marriage.

"In the village, I work with adolescent girls," she told AJWS staff in India. "Here at MBBCDS, my job is to look after their education and health. The goal is to make them self-reliant. I can earn my own living."

Now a young woman with a bright future, Sonali also speaks to mothers' groups about how girl brides are at higher risk of committing suicide and dying from childbirth. She urges them to let their daughters marry later.

"I used to be afraid," Sonali said, "but slowly, I gained confidence. Now, I don't have any doubt. I can do anything and work anywhere. I want to study more and do work that matters for society."

Visit www.ajws.org/childmarriage to watch our new video about Sonali.

Forced to marry at 14, Sonali Khatun (in blue) found the strength to leave her husband and carve out her own path. AJWS's support of Sonali and her organization, MBBCDS, is part of a \$15 million initiative to end child marriage in India. Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik

RABBI RICK JACOBS

Leading a Jewish movement with faith in global justice

Rabbi Rick Jacobs' activism springs from his heart and his soul—and so it's no surprise that he wears a token of this activism each time he prays. Every day, the leader of the Union for Reform Judaism wraps himself in a prayer shawl, or *tallit*, crafted from fabric he purchased just outside Darfur in 2005 on an AJWS mission to witness the devastation from the genocide then raging there.

Soon after that transformative journey with four other Jewish leaders led by Ruth Messinger, Rabbi Jacobs joined the AJWS board of trustees, enriching our work with his sharp mind, generous spirit and ceaseless commitment to pursuing justice.

In 2010 when a massive earthquake struck Haiti, he again went to the frontlines of our relief efforts, joining a delegation of American Jewish leaders who traveled with AJWS to Haiti to assess our response.

As the former longtime rabbi of Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, New York, and today as head of the Reform movement—the largest Jewish religious movement in North America—Rabbi Jacobs has constantly led his communities to work for social justice, both in the U.S. and around the world. His dedication is now having a ripple effect on the American Jewish landscape, shaping a generation of Jews who instinctively equate their Jewish identity with their responsibility to build a better world.

Of AJWS, he said:

“The Jewish world is blessed by the continued prophetic leadership of AJWS in making the world more just. From Darfur to Haiti to Burma to Washington—and beyond, AJWS is a powerful force for good, leaving a trail of goodwill and respect wherever they work. I can't imagine a bright Jewish future without AJWS.”





Rabbi Rick Jacobs visits a refugee camp just outside Darfur with AJWS in 2005 (above and opposite). Soon after, he became an AJWS trustee and a leading Jewish voice against the genocide. *Photographs courtesy of Rabbi Rick Jacobs and Ruth Messinger, respectively*

KHUN KHIT SAN

A new generation of activists is determined to lift the shadow of authoritarian rule and violence that has veiled Burma for decades. Ever since a military junta seized control in 1962, the government has attacked ethnic minorities, suppressed dissent and isolated the nation from the rest of the world. These abuses continue today despite some of the steps Burma has taken toward becoming a more open and democratic country.

Twenty-seven-year-old activist Khun Khit San witnessed this violence, persecution and repression as a child in Shan State in eastern Burma. “I grew up very poor,” he said. *“There was lots of fighting in my village. My parents always had to run from the violence. I saw people beaten by soldiers. I felt like, one day, I might be able to change this situation. This is what motivates me.”*

Khit San has dedicated his life to promoting peace. As a teenager, he learned English, attended university and won a scholarship to study at the American Center in Rangoon. In 2010, he returned home and co-founded Kaung Rwai Social Action Network (KSAN), which trains Shan State youth like himself to become activists, community leaders and human rights educators.

With an annual budget of just \$35,000, KSAN has sparked a growing youth movement that is now achieving impressive results. In 2015, KSAN activists campaigned on behalf of displaced people who had fled fighting between the government and ethnic

groups who were vying for control of the area’s natural resources. With KSAN’s support, the youth held community discussions and crafted demands for the safe return of displaced people. These young activists appeared on local and national media to bring this cause to the country’s attention.

Mobilizing youth to challenge authoritarian rule

KSAN also engages youth to solve pressing local problems related to violence, land rights and the government’s authoritarian control. In just a few years, it has trained young leaders to work in 25 villages. In one area, where the Burmese police had seized land from the communities to build a new police station, more than 100 KSAN youth signed a petition requesting the government in Shan State to intercede. As a result, the authorities ordered the police to release the land—more than 400 acres—back to the villagers.

Khit San knows there is a hard road ahead for Burma to overcome its history of oppression and become a democracy that respects the rights of all of its citizens. But he sees great potential in his generation: “We need a lot of young people to be part of this movement, and AJWS’s support is making that possible.”



27-year-old activist Khit San is leading his generation to build a more just society in Burma. *Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik*

RABBI STEPHANIE RUSKAY

When Stephanie Ruskay led AJWS's first group trip of rabbinical students to El Salvador in 2004, she was experimenting with a powerful new way to train future clergy. Years later, her idea to send emerging Jewish religious leaders to developing countries to train and inspire them to become agents of social change has become a hallmark AJWS program, the Global Justice Fellowship.

Stephanie had joined AJWS soon after college as Ruth Messinger's assistant. Quickly, she distinguished herself as an innovator and helped Ruth and AJWS develop a new global justice travel program for young supporters that launched in 2000. A few years later, she entered rabbinical school and began to imagine how a similar program could transform the world views of her classmates.

"As I was trying to explain to a group of rabbis why they should care about global human rights

work," she said, "I started to think, wouldn't it be different if part of the preparation to become a rabbi included training in how to become social justice and anti-poverty leaders?"

Inspiring a generation of Jewish leaders for justice

Inspired, Stephanie worked with AJWS to launch the AJWS Rabbinical Students' Delegation. She enlisted highly-respected educators like Leonard "Leibel" Fein—the editor of *Moment Magazine*—as scholars-in-residence and began to cultivate what has since become a generation of leaders who are educated, passionate and vocal about the importance of social justice and global awareness in Jewish life.

Today, she is associate dean of the Rabbinical School at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where she weaves these values into the curriculum. From their first days at the seminary, her students participate in an orientation program designed to spark inquiry and action to end injustice in New York neighborhoods and oceans away.

"A lot of what I learned at AJWS I'm bringing here to my work at the rabbinical school," she says. "And I'm not alone. There are so many people who have seen what was possible through AJWS, and are now out in their own communities organizing Jewish responses to poverty and injustice."



Rabbi Stephanie Ruskay (far right, 2nd row) with the first AJWS Rabbinical Students' Delegation in El Salvador in 2004.

Photograph courtesy of Lisa Rubin Neuthaler

HANNAH SKVARLA

Repairing the world through philanthropy and social entrepreneurship

As a student seeking to learn about social justice, Hannah Skvarla spent a spring break in high school in 2000 traveling with AJWS to Ciudad Romero, El Salvador. A few years later, as a young adult drawn to repairing the world and making a difference through philanthropy, Hannah joined AJWS's Global Circle community of young professionals in Los Angeles.

Traveling and witnessing AJWS's work to promote the human rights of local communities in the developing world inspired her to co-found The Little Market, an online marketplace for fair trade handmade goods that are ethically produced. The Little Market partners with artisan groups who provide a range of services, including health care and education, for their artisans.

"I have seen how Ruth Messinger's ideal of 'faith in our capacity to make a difference' has become a reality. Whether protecting land and water, empowering girls to define their futures, or securing freedom of speech for all members of society, AJWS undertakes the work of repairing the world now and for the future. Supporting this work is our responsibility."



Hannah Skvarla (center) with partners of The Little Market, the fair-trade company she founded to promote global goods. *Photograph courtesy of Hannah Skvarla/The Little Market*



MARISOL BAEZ

Aiding Haitian earthquake survivors

When a devastating earthquake struck Haiti in January of 2010, activist Marisol Baez left her family behind in the Dominican Republic and crossed the border into the beleaguered country. With AJWS's support, she helped her organization, Movement of Dominican-Haitian Women (MUDHA), organize an ambulance caravan of 120 doctors and volunteers who spent weeks traveling the Haitian countryside treating wounds and saving lives.

In the months after the disaster, Marisol remained in Haiti. In the camps for displaced earthquake survivors, she taught women skills in self-defense and in trades that would lead to jobs. In rural communities, she encouraged local peasant groups to launch their own earthquake recovery efforts.

Now, more than five years later, Marisol's commitment to strengthening the role of women in post-disaster Haiti has endured. She continues to travel monthly between the two countries to support the operations of MUDHA's center for women in Léogâne—a Haitian town hard-hit by the quake—and help survivors rebound. At home in the Dominican Republic, MUDHA is also working to stem the current citizenship crisis that erupted when the Dominican government revoked citizenship and threatened to deport all Dominicans of Haitian descent living within its borders.

As a member of the Dominican-Haitian community, Marisol feels the pain of this crisis acutely. She first encountered MUDHA more than two decades ago, when she was a beneficiary of its services. Today she is one of the organization's most passionate leaders. To the women she supports now in Haiti, she is living proof that they have the power to change their lives.

With support from Marisol Baez, women in Haiti's camps for displaced earthquake survivors learn skills to rebuild their lives. Over the past five years, AJWS has granted \$5.7 million to aid relief efforts in Haiti. *Photograph by Evan Abramson*



More than 150 AJWS supporters went to Washington, D.C., for the 2015 AJWS Policy Summit (this page). Congressman Eliot Engel (pictured opposite with AJWS executive vice president Robert Bank) called on the group to continue its advocacy for women's rights.

Photographs by Richard Greenhouse and Jeff Zorabedian, respectively

CONGRESSMAN ELIOT ENGEL

AJWS has many strong and committed allies in the Senate and the House of Representatives who have been integral partners in our advocacy campaigns. Among these leaders, Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY) has distinguished himself as a major voice for human rights and international development in Congress. He has used his position

Farm Bill that authorized up to \$400 million more to buy life-saving food from local farmers to help the hungry.

Congressman Engel is also a leading voice on two cornerstone pieces of our *We Believe* campaign to end violence against women, girls and LGBT people. He was an original co-sponsor of the

Championing justice on Capitol Hill

as the Democratic leader of the House Foreign Affairs committee to make progress on the wide range of issues that AJWS works on, from disaster relief to food aid reform to gender equality.

After a massive earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, Rep. Engel welcomed AJWS grantees from Haiti to Congress to tell their stories of survival and recovery. Understanding, as AJWS does, that long-term development is as important as emergency aid, he worked with AJWS and representatives from both sides of the aisle to ensure passage of the 2014 Assessing Progress in Haiti Act, a law that now insists on transparency and accountability for U.S. aid to Haiti.

A powerful partner in striving to end global hunger, Congressman Engel championed a major success in our *Reverse Hunger* campaign. In 2013, in careful coordination with AJWS's advocacy team, he pushed for a historic, first-ever vote in the House to reform U.S. food aid policy so it does more to alleviate poverty and foster the survival of small-scale farmers in developing countries. The congressman's outspoken support for reform helped pave the way for new provisions in the 2014

International Violence Against Women Act and he backed our bid to create a special envoy for global LGBT rights at the Department of State—a dream that became a reality in February of 2015.

Congressman Engel's Jewish values inform much of his work, and he is a proud supporter of AJWS:

"Jewish identity is closely associated with assisting the sick and poor. It is not only a good deed but a duty, a mitzvah. American Jewish World Service is a shining example of how regular people can make an enormous difference. Their efforts have proven to be invaluable and their leadership courageous."



BEA AND SAM WILDERMAN

Telling the AJWS Story

In 2006, Bea and Sam Wilderman were looking for a way to join the fight against the genocide in Darfur. Devastated by the news coming from Sudan and Chad, they discovered AJWS as a leader of the movement to stop the genocide and have remained committed donors ever since.

Bea joined the AJWS board of trustees in 2013 and now heads the board's communications committee, where she applies her extensive expertise as a marketing consultant to help share AJWS's story with new audiences.

In 2014 she made these marketing efforts personal when she celebrated her 40th birthday

by bringing friends on a trip with AJWS to Haiti. Reflecting on this trip, she said: "Seeing earthquake survivors still living in tent cities—four years after the disaster—only strengthened my commitment to AJWS's response. The work to rebuild Haiti is nowhere near complete and we must do our part to help."

Bea and Sam are especially passionate about stopping violence and fostering equality for women and LGBT people throughout the world:

"If we're going to have a society where there is social justice," Bea said, "every human being needs to have their rights fulfilled. That's why AJWS is so important in our world."

AJWS board members Bea Wilderman (left), Judy Stern (right) and board chair Kathleen Levin (center) take to Twitter in AJWS's social media campaign to pass the International Violence Against Women Act.



MEENA SESHU

In the early 1980s, Meena Seshu was a young feminist activist seeking to stop violence against women in India's Maharashtra State. Her focus changed over the next decade, as AIDS began to take a deadly toll in the poor areas where she worked. Determined to fight the disease, she began working with a community of women who suffered from alarming rates of both violence and HIV: sex workers.

Meena soon learned about the litany of abuse that India's sex workers experienced: rape by clients, violent raids of their homes by the police, assault by citizen vigilantes who disapproved of the practice. Clients refused to use condoms, and local health centers refused to care for them when they were pregnant or HIV-positive. To Meena's surprise, most of these women told her they had chosen their work willingly. They wanted to reform, rather than leave, the sex trade. This insight sparked a radical shift in Meena's thinking—as well as her career.

"The atrocities I witnessed," she said, "led me and others to found a collective of sex workers and women's rights leaders dedicated to changing

Advocating for the dignity and human rights of sex workers

this reality." Her organization, SANGRAM, now empowers thousands of sex workers to advocate for their right to earn a living without the constant threat of violence and disease. The women distribute condoms, teach their peers self-defense, protest police brutality, and advocate for new laws that would create a safer work environment overall.

According to UNAIDS, Meena and SANGRAM have accomplished a marked improvement in the availability of HIV treatment, care and support for sex workers in India, helping slow the virus's spread.

Meena wants the world to see sex workers as people with the same humanity, dignity and right to safety as anyone else. "Sex workers choose the best possible option available to them," she said. But "because sex work is so deeply stigmatized, people in power don't want to listen to them. With AJWS's support, we at SANGRAM are organizing them to get a voice."



Meena Seshu (second from left) at a vigil with SANGRAM.
Photograph courtesy of SANGRAM



AJWS was an early and long-time funder of Tostan—now recognized worldwide for its groundbreaking work to end female genital cutting and child marriage in Senegal. Binta Diao (opposite) was one of Tostan's early pioneers and today spreads its messages via radio. The girls pictured on this page (at a Tostan rally in 2015) are among its next generation of leaders. *Photographs courtesy of Corrie Commisso and Binta Diao, respectively*

BINTA DIAO

When Binta Diao was a young girl in the village of Medina Cherif in southern Senegal, she experienced the terrible fate that earlier generations of Senegalese girls had encountered. Binta underwent life-threatening female genital cutting and was forced to leave school to get married. Remarkably, as an adult, she turned her personal experience into a force for transforming society.

Binta joined with Tostan, a powerful grassroots organization supported by AJWS—and together, they ensured that thousands of Senegalese girls would be spared cutting and forced marriage. Tostan, which was founded in 1991 and received its first AJWS grant in 1995, has played a crucial role in educating Senegalese women about their health and human rights and has catalyzed a powerful movement that has changed the course of history.



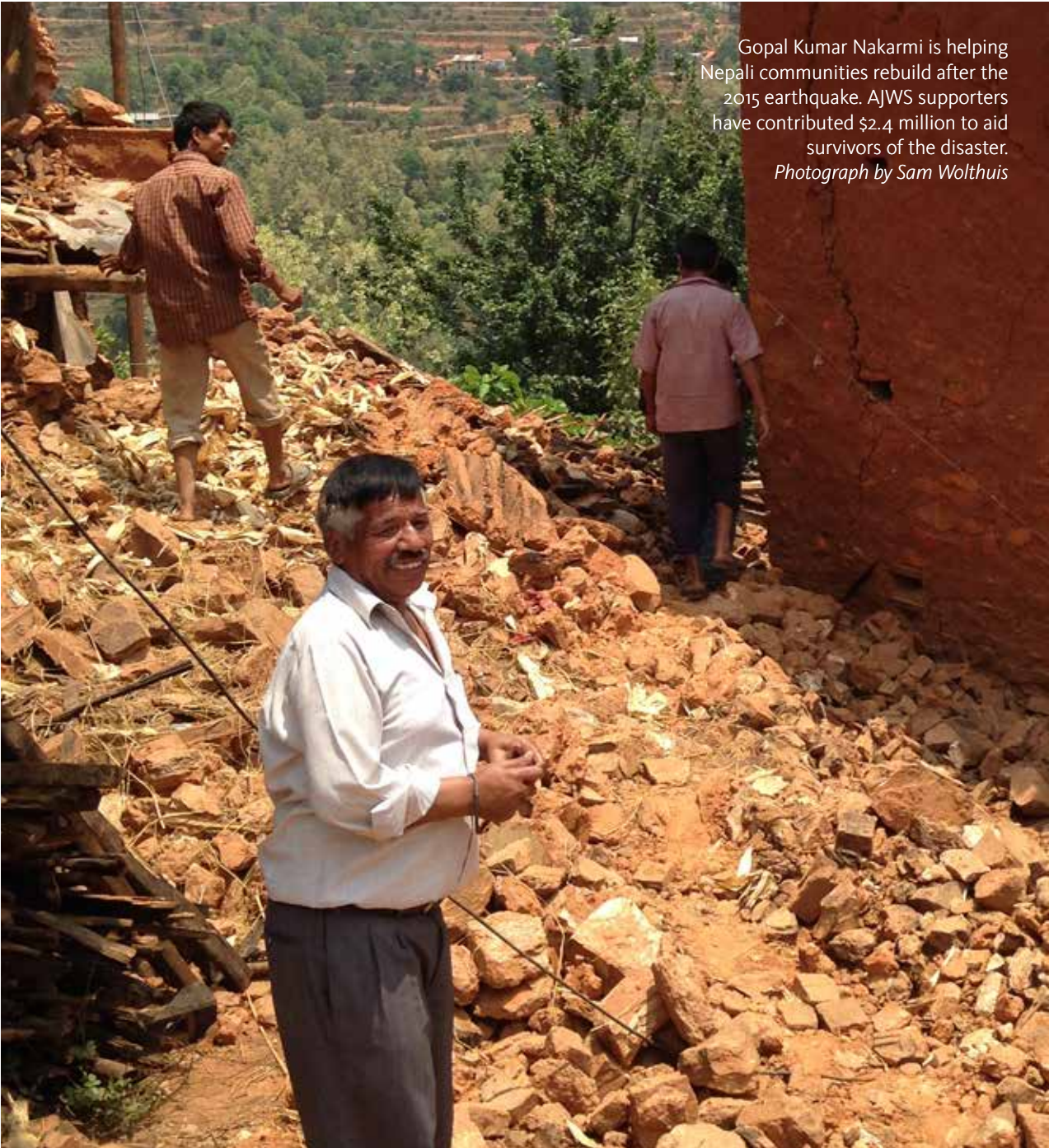
Giving girls control over their bodies and futures

Binta's role began in 1990. Eager to see a better future for herself and women like her, she enrolled in Tostan's classes and drank up knowledge on human rights, bolstering her burgeoning desire to become a leader. She was soon chosen as a program facilitator. In 1998, with support from her extended family, she persuaded 18 villages surrounding Medina Cherif to end the practices of female genital cutting and child marriage. Since

that time, 5,761 communities throughout Senegal have declared their intention to end cutting, thanks to the Tostan program.

And Binta did not stop there. For the past 13 years she has hosted a regional radio program launched by Tostan that informs her listeners about leadership, health and human rights and the importance of allowing girls to attend school.

"I learned that I did not have to be cut, to be taken out of school or forced to marry a man chosen by my parents ... [Learning about] human rights changed my entire life. Since then, I have been promoting all girls and women [to know] their human rights in my region and everywhere. Through my radio broadcast, I have reached thousands of rural girls and women who suffered the way I did, and they now have been able to change and abandon those practices."

A photograph showing a man in a white shirt and dark trousers standing in the foreground, smiling. He is positioned in front of a large, chaotic pile of reddish-brown rocks and debris, which appears to be the remains of a destroyed building. In the background, two other people are visible: one man in a striped shirt and light-colored pants standing further back on the left, and another person in a pink shirt and dark pants walking away on the right. The setting is a hillside with green vegetation and a small village visible in the distance under a clear sky.

Gopal Kumar Nakarmi is helping
Nepali communities rebuild after the
2015 earthquake. AJWS supporters
have contributed \$2.4 million to aid
survivors of the disaster.

Photograph by Sam Wolthuis

GOPAL KUMAR NAKARMI

In April 2015, when the first of two powerful earthquakes struck Kathmandu, Gopal Kumar Nakarmi clung to his trembling wife and daughter. As soon as the tremors stopped, he checked on their home and then immediately thought of the villagers in 20 remote Nepal districts where he is deeply involved in community development work. These communities, which are home to some of the poorest people in all of Nepal, were devastated by the disaster but too far or inaccessible to be reached by mainstream international aid efforts.

Gopal's organization, BBP-Pariwar, reached these villages before anyone else. What they found there was tragic: 30 people and 643 animals had perished, 94 people sustained injuries, 395 houses and 258 barns collapsed, and 153,000 kilograms of crops were damaged. This story of death and destruction repeated in village after village across the countryside.

In keeping with our mission to aid the poorest and most vulnerable communities affected by disasters, AJWS began funding BBP-Pariwar almost immediately after the earthquake. With our support, the group quickly helped scores of families build shelters. It also provided food and other support in the days and months that followed.

While so much was lost and the people struggled to find refuge and sustenance in the initial days of trauma, Gopal was clear that "hope is not finished. We know that if we work together, we can come out of this problem."


Gopal's optimism is all the more remarkable because the people BBP-Pariwar aids are part of Nepal's "untouchable," or Dalit, class, making them Nepal's poorest and most oppressed citizens. Gopal grew up one notch higher in the caste system than the Dalit, and sympathizes with the hardships untouchables face. His family of eight lived in a cramped house in Kathmandu.

Restoring hope after disaster shatters Nepal

"Sometimes we had to go to bed without eating anything," he said. As a child, Gopal repaired bicycles to fund his education, and went on to earn a management degree in college. Today, through his role with BBP-Pariwar, he provides health services and teaches villagers how to make a living and grow food to feed their families.

From first-hand experience, Gopal understands the power of grassroots change: "If the planning comes from the bottom, the rate of success is higher."

"Without AJWS funding," he said, "we would not have been able to support these earthquake victims, and families would have had to spend days in a small tent, even in the rainy season, without sound sleep at night. It would have reduced the number of [shelters we could build] or the number of families we could help. We are very thankful to AJWS because it has shown confidence in us, and we can help fulfill our promises to the community."

A photograph of a woman in a white lace dress and headwrap crouching on the floor in a room with a barred window. The woman is looking down, and her hands are resting on the floor. The room has a plain, light-colored wall and a window with vertical bars. The floor is dark and appears to be made of dirt or concrete. The woman's headwrap is white with a patterned band. The dress is white with a lace pattern. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

A woman in Liberia during the height of the Ebola outbreak. AJWS has granted nearly \$1 million to stop the spread of Ebola and help communities heal.

Photograph by Kieran Kesner

BENDU MUSAH

Promoting healing after Ebola

Bendu Musah lost her husband, three of her four children and two siblings to Ebola. She, too, was infected, and at one point she nearly died in the streets of Banjor, a suburb of Monrovia, on her way to seek treatment. When she returned home after surviving the disease against all odds, her neighbors couldn't contain their fear. "People were not coming around or talking to me at all," she said. "When they saw me, they ran away from me and started crying."

With help from Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Program (THRP)—one of almost a dozen community-based organizations receiving Ebola relief funding from AJWS—Bendu found the support she needed to grieve and recover. She then began to counsel other survivors in her community to help them overcome the stigma they faced. The experience shaped Bendu as a leader and motivated her to found a women's group committed to ensuring that women have access to funding to start or run small businesses.

Bendu is grateful to THRP for *"visiting me, counseling me. They showed love to me. They were concerned about me. Now, I feel happy. Change has come into my life."*

Bendu Musah survived Ebola and then helped other survivors regain their health, dignity and livelihoods.

Photograph courtesy of Bendu Musah



BERNARDO VASQUEZ SANCHEZ

Defending the land with his life

When a Canadian silver mining company rapidly expanded operations near Bernardo Vasquez Sanchez's rural home in San Jose del Progreso, Mexico, he started asking questions—and the answers were alarming. The company was diverting much of the indigenous community's scarce water to the mine, polluting drinking water and local farm land and causing an uptick in disease. So Bernardo took action, going door to door across the valley to rally other indigenous farmers and organize opposition to the project. In 2012, he was shot and killed—allegedly by supporters of the mine—in order to silence him and quash dissent.

Despite this tragic loss, Bernardo's community, the indigenous Zapotec people, have continued his brave work with support from five AJWS grantees: Colectivo Oaxaqueño, UNOSJO, Ser Mixe, Flor y Canto and EDUCA. Together, they have brought international attention to the Zapotec's plight throughout Oaxaca and pressured the Mexican government to respect the rights of this indigenous community to make decisions about its land.

Thanks to the community's advocacy, two Oaxacan towns have banned mining since 2012. In Bernardo's memory, indigenous residents of San Jose del Progreso are working to do the same.

Before he died, Bernardo explained why the land is so important to his community:

"For us, the idea of development is a battle ... The government has one idea of development, and the people have another. And the people say, 'We need water for our crops, we need food. That's all we want.'"

Bernardo Vasquez Sanchez lost his life fighting against a mine that was poisoning his village. Today, his community and his mother Rufina (pictured here with a mural that reads "If you love life, fight the mine") continue the struggle in his memory.

Photograph by Evan Abramson



Si amas
la vida;
lucha contra
la mina.

AJWS grantees Colectivo Oaxaqueño, UNOSJO, Ser Mixe, Flor y Canto and EDUCA (described in the previous story) lead a group of activists and journalists to document and expose the damage and violence caused by a mine in Bernardo Vasquez Sanchez's village. Alejandra Ancheita (opposite) brings similar cases of land exploitation to justice in the courts. *Photographs by Evan Abramson and courtesy of ProDESC, respectively*



ALEJANDRA ANCHEITA

Mexican land and labor rights champion Alejandra Ancheita has brought hope to some of her country's poorest and most disenfranchised citizens—migrants, workers and indigenous people. During her 17 years on the frontlines of her country's land rights struggle, she and the organization she founded, ProDESC, have joined hands with indigenous communities to fight illegal mines and hold companies accountable for the damage they are causing to the land and the people who depend on it for survival.

Thanks to ProDESC's advocacy, one company that had been mining land without the consent of local residents was forced to sign a groundbreaking agreement with

the local people. The company committed to pay for initiatives to counteract the devastating effects of the mine, stop evicting residents and hire them to fill jobs on the project. After this victory, ProDESC helped workers organize their own union and continues to pressure the company to uphold its obligations.

Chillingly, several of Alejandra's friends and family have been killed for their work. Her own life has been threatened repeatedly and in 2013, ProDESC's offices were broken into. In a 2014 interview, Alejandra spoke about the efforts of members of the Mexican media to vilify her: "This article is saying I am the lawyer of the devil," she said. "The defamation campaign against me and other activists is creating public permission for violence."

In 2014, in recognition of her remarkable contribution to the Mexican human rights movement, Alejandra received the international Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, often referred to as the Nobel Prize for human rights.

According to Alejandra:

"AJWS has been a key ally in achieving our vision and mission. [AJWS's] uninterrupted solidarity, energy and encouragement have been vital in enabling us to carry out our work, despite the violence and threats we face."

Prosecuting powerful adversaries of indigenous rights



SUPREME COURT JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg put a feminist spin on the Passover story for the AJWS family in 2015. Collaborating with Washington-based Rabbi Lauren Holtzblatt, she wrote an essay to be read at the Seder that recalls the heroism of five “women of action” who helped the Jews escape bondage from Egypt.

From *The New York Times* to NPR, this latest chapter in the “Notorious RBG” meme garnered unprecedented media coverage and sparked conversations about justice and equality for women at Seder tables around the country.

Justice Ginsburg’s words resonate beyond Passover and inspire all of us who kindle hope for the possibility of a more just and equitable world:

“While there is much light in today’s world,” she wrote, “there remains in our universe disheartening darkness, inhumanity spawned by ignorance and hate ... The Passover story recalls to all of us—women and men—that with vision and action we can join hands with others of like mind, kindling lights along paths leading out of the terrifying darkness.”

Amplifying women’s
voices from the
Supreme Court to
the Seder table



Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg gave women a strong voice at the Passover table in her essay written for AJWS in the spring of 2015.

Photograph by Steve Petteway, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States

RABBI SHARON BROUS

Rabbi Sharon Brous, a prominent Jewish leader, thinker and teacher, is recognized nationwide for her work to energize the Jewish community and infuse Jewish life with a dedication to social justice. Rabbi Brous was chosen to bless President Obama and Vice President Biden at the Inaugural Prayer Service in 2013 and was named that year as the #1 most influential rabbi in the United States by *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast*.

Rabbi Brous has supported AJWS for nearly two decades, beginning with an internship in her early years of rabbinical school. She has traveled with AJWS to Liberia as rabbi-in-residence on our Study Tours program and organized a trip to El Salvador for Los Angeles high school students.



Preaching justice from the pulpit

At IKAR, the renowned congregation she founded, she has mobilized her community to take action in our advocacy campaigns to persuade the U.S. government to adopt laws and policies that fight poverty and uphold the human rights of people in the developing world.

In recognition of her passion for social justice, Rabbi Brous is a member of the inaugural cohort of senior fellows at Auburn Theological Seminary, a national multi-faith network of justice leaders.

She reflected on AJWS's contribution over the past three decades:

"In a time of immense brokenness and catastrophic human suffering, it has become too easy to hide behind our privilege or allow ourselves to lose hope. We are all indebted to Ruth and the whole team at AJWS for demonstrating what it means to walk toward a life not only of personal meaning, but also of global purpose."

On an AJWS Study Tour to Liberia in 2012, Rabbi Sharon Brous inspired thought and dialogue about the Jewish commitment to justice. *Photograph by Cathe Kobacker*

GIGI PRITZKER PUCKER, MICHAEL PUCKER AND ABBY PUCKER

Supporting AJWS is a family affair for long-standing, generous donors Gigi Pritzker Pucker and Michael Pucker—and their daughter, Abby. “We’re just huge fans,” Gigi said. *“For us, it has to do with the ability to give in a Jewish context to an organization that extends our giving out into the world.”*

Gigi, a film and theater producer who owns production companies, and Michael, a lawyer, have devoted themselves to AJWS since the late 1980s. Michael served on our board as a trustee from 1994 until 2002. Together, they have opened their home for AJWS events and were integral to the development of our Chicago office.

Abby shares her parents’ enthusiasm for AJWS. She currently serves on the steering committee of

Supporting AJWS across the U.S. and across generations

Global Circle in Los Angeles, where she advises the staff on strategy for attracting young donors, develops program content and identifies venues for events.

The mother-daughter pair recently traveled with AJWS to Guatemala, a place where the family’s engagement with AJWS is rooted. Gigi initially became a donor nearly three decades ago because she was impressed by AJWS’s response to an earthquake in the country. “AJWS didn’t just give them money to rebuild. They helped them build a brick factory so the effort would be sustainable. I remember thinking that was hugely innovative.”



Gigi Pritzker Pucker and Abby Pucker on an AJWS Study Tour to Guatemala in 2015 (pictured left). The group visited an array of AJWS grantees funded with their support, including CODECOT, which organizes more than 700 Guatemalan midwives (opposite) to advocate for better health care policy for women. *Photographs courtesy of Gigi Pritzker Pucker and Stefanie Rubin, respectively*



SEYNABOU MALE CISSÉ

Mobilizing women to make peace

Twenty-eight years of deadly armed conflict in Casamance, the southernmost region of Senegal, have left many women feeling powerless. Powerless to stop the frequent deadly bursts of guerilla violence. Powerless to feed and educate their children amidst the chaos of the conflict. But Seynabou Male Cissé believes women have the power to stop the bloodshed, and she is doing all she can to make peace a reality.

In 1999, she launched USOFORAL (“let’s join hands”)—a grassroots organization that has mobilized thousands of Senegalese women to strive for peace in Casamance through dialogue and conflict mediation. In 2010, she made it possible for these women to raise their voices even louder. With AJWS’s support, she co-founded Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC), a coalition that united 210 local civil society organizations and more than 40,000 women who have since rallied, marched and advocated for peace together.

Seynabou recently said: *“I am convinced that if we have the resources necessary to carry the torch of peace in Casamance with the involvement of rural women, this region will experience the most exciting moments showing our commitment to creating a fair and equitable society in Senegal.”*

Her dream may soon become a reality. After intense pressure from Seynabou and her organizations, the warring factions agreed to come together with President Macky Sall to negotiate peace. In recognition of the women’s peace movement’s role in achieving this momentous progress, Sall has promised Seynabou and the members of PFPC a seat at the table to represent the women of Casamance during the peace talks.



Seynabou Male Cissé has pioneered a women’s movement—now 40,000-women strong—to end the civil war in Casamance, Senegal. *Photograph by Stefanie Rubin*

THE WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND

In its early years, AJWS was a small, grassroots operation with a single office in New York City. But in 1999, the Walter & Elise Haas Fund gave us the inspiration and the seed money to set our sights on the West Coast. With their unflagging support we launched an office in San Francisco, which has since become a thriving hub of Jewish activism and philanthropy for human rights in the Bay Area.

“The San Francisco Bay Area community has a rich heritage of supporting transformational movements and organizations,” said Stephanie Rapp, the fund’s senior program officer for Jewish life. “We believed that AJWS could play an integral part in galvanizing support and action—from the

Taking AJWS to new frontiers on the West Coast and in the aftermath of disasters

Jewish community in San Francisco and beyond—to help people suffering from discrimination, oppression and poverty realize their rights.”

In addition to championing AJWS’s growth in San Francisco, the Walter & Elise Haas Fund has also anchored our disaster relief efforts around the globe. After the tsunami in Southeast Asia, the famine in Sudan and the recent earthquakes in Nepal, their support enabled AJWS to save thousands of lives and give survivors a new lease on life.

“AJWS enables us to fulfill our responsibility as global citizens—especially during disasters,” Stephanie said. “When a disaster occurs, we seek the organizations we think have the greatest potential to make an immediate and lasting difference, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable communities that often suffer deeply during such dire emergencies. AJWS has been an important partner in this work.”



The Walter & Elise Haas Fund’s support is currently fueling our efforts to aid earthquake survivors in Nepal.
Photograph by Aaron Acharya

Hate speech in the press (pictured) and violence in the streets both escalated when Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Law passed in 2013. AJWS grantees Nicholas Opiyo and Adrian Jjuuko challenged the law in court—and won.
 Photograph by Evan Abramson



Ugandan Males
 ART or lesbian...
 March in...
 they are the first...
 Ugandan home couple...
 investigators contend...
 that the gay circles are...
 deeply entrenched into...
 our society. They have...
 a sophisticated way of...
 operating, recruiting...
 boys and girls, camo-
 flagging and mingling...
 amongst heterosexual...
 members of society...
 to co-exist. Several...
 cheery, lyrical, teach-
 ers and lay members of...
 society have been cited...
 in sodomy scandals and...
 Salt & Pepper...
 reveals how the gay...
 community operates in...
 Uganda, including...
 organizations that fund...
 them.



The Ugandan Gay Community in a group photo



Jacqueline Kacha dances on stage as Grace Mubiru performs at a gay event



Frank Mugisha of Spectrum Uganda

If the Ugandan government and community are homophobic, which is not true. This is because Mugisha and his cohort organizations spearhead a campaign of promoting homosexuality in a counteractive technique, by appearing to be persecuted.

The Foreign Organizations
 There are several Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) which backdoor gay activities in Uganda. Ethics Minister, Simon Lokodo told reporters that the organizations being targeted receive

money across borders, the organization receives that funds for travel expenses and accommodation are available for all participants. Insiders in the gay community reveal that the other organizations closely working with Spectrum to promote homosexuality in the country include: Freedom and Roam Uganda, which is run by Jolly Abang, 29, who is programme manager of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex human rights organizations. Abang is an open lesbian activist in

BUSTED

How Gays Operate In Uganda



Lesbians during a LGBTI meeting in Kampala

John Akenda Wambabya a.k.a Long-John at National Theatre

perform at gay functions. Services they also run the music industry studios and managing best selling artists. There are several hundred agents for gays in Kampala but the most prominent are The Uganda Cultural Centre, named David David



Long-John getting tips from a senior Home



Some of the Lesbians in the Social Mission Uganda (SMTU)



Some of the Ugandan gay men with their European counterparts

Kacha Jackson of SMTU, a well connected lesbian

performing, which theatre or film festival they choose, which means the gay community, which means they are a gay with a huge network of agents. These agents refer to a network of agents who are all at all times ready to assist in the promotion of gay activities. They are the

and other gay organizations. Due to their extensive network the gay activities in the country and world over. Uganda received a Bill (Uganda Bill) signed by the President. The second step is registration of the agency of promoting the activities of gay men. The third step is to register the activities of gay men.

NICHOLAS OPIYO AND ADRIAN JJUUKO

LGBT Ugandans have long faced fear, violence and criminal charges for expressing who they are and whom they love; but when the country's parliament introduced a draconian Anti-Homosexuality Bill in 2009, they faced a new threat: the death penalty.

When the law passed in 2013 despite years of advocacy, many people feared the worst. But Ugandan human rights attorneys Adrian Jjuuko and Nicholas Opiyo didn't lose hope. With AJWS's support, they led a team of activists and lawyers who challenged the law's constitutionality in court. Thanks to their efforts, it was annulled—to the great relief of LGBT people and their allies throughout the nation. Human rights activists have since remained vigilant and are continuing to fight against the bill's return.

Adrian is director of AJWS grantee Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF), which fights hate crimes against LGBT Ugandans—an ongoing outrage that has intensified since the law was annulled. Under Adrian's leadership, the organization runs the first and only legal aid clinic for LGBT people in Uganda. HRAPF has handled more than 500 cases, ranging from arrests by police to beatings by the public and banishment of LGBT people from their communities.

Adrian has received international recognition for his courageous work, including the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Defenders Award

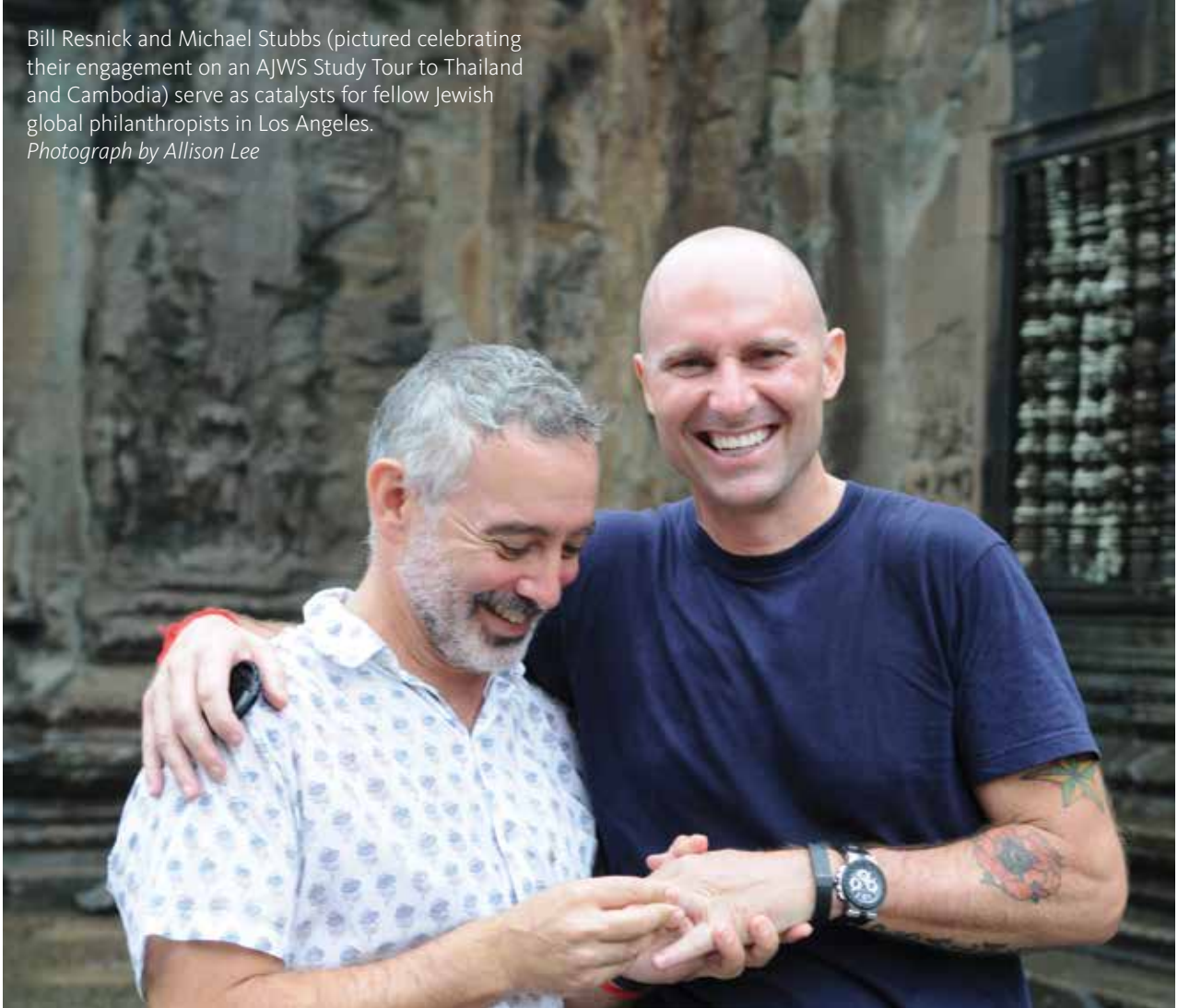
in 2011 for his leadership of the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law, a coalition of groups that fought the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. He calls AJWS a “trusted partner. They do not only fund, but they listen and engage.”

Halting hate legislation and pursuing equality for LGBT people

Nicholas, founder of the human rights organization Chapter Four Uganda, received Human Rights Watch's prestigious Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism this year. While he was in Washington, D.C., for the U.S. Africa Leaders Summit in 2014, AJWS helped Nicholas get the message about the dangers of the Anti-Homosexuality Law to a global audience by securing features published by CNN, BuzzFeed and *TIME* magazine, and arranging meetings with international NGOs.

“We are eternally indebted to AJWS for their unwavering support to our work,” Nicholas said. “Our continued partnership has enabled us to provide the most needed legal support and services to the most vulnerable and underserved in our society, including persons of different sexual orientations and gender identity or expressions.”

Bill Resnick and Michael Stubbs (pictured celebrating their engagement on an AJWS Study Tour to Thailand and Cambodia) serve as catalysts for fellow Jewish global philanthropists in Los Angeles.
Photograph by Allison Lee



BILL RESNICK AND MICHAEL STUBBS

Michael Stubbs says one of the many reasons he fell in love with his husband, Bill Resnick, is that Bill “cares in the same way” Michael does about social justice issues. They both generously support and engage with a variety of local, national and international causes, so it means something special when they say that AJWS is one of their

Michael admires the “spirit and intention and positive outcomes of AJWS’s long-term work. It’s all very intelligent and also equally compassionate and loving. That resonates with me in a way other organizations don’t.” On the Thailand trip, Michael experienced an “aha” moment meeting sex workers in Bangkok, who are organizing to protect

Multiplying the impact of a shared commitment to justice

favorite organizations. Their support of AJWS coincided with a momentous personal moment in 2013, when they got engaged to be married during a trip to witness our work in Thailand and Cambodia.

Bill and Michael now play a leading role at AJWS together. Bill, a psychiatrist who devotes his time to activism and philanthropy, joined the board of trustees in 2012 and recently became an officer, serving as the board’s secretary. Michael, a veteran of the motion picture business, now devotes his full-time efforts to philanthropic ventures and advocacy. He provides essential guidance to AJWS on strategic fundraising as a member of the development committee.

Bill explains their dedication to the organization: “AJWS focuses on some of the communities that are overlooked by other organizations. And AJWS works to change the conditions that are at the roots of communities’ problems, so that the need for charity will eventually be reduced.”

themselves from violence and unfair treatment: “These are people who are just seeking to support their families in the best possible way in the circumstances presented to them,” he said. *“The fact that AJWS speaks for people who don’t have a voice is very appealing to me.”*

Bill and Michael have served as catalysts for AJWS to welcome new supporters and inspire existing donors to deepen their engagement. They have opened their home to an array of AJWS events and will co-chair our Los Angeles gala celebration in March of 2016. They are the architects of a new giving circle model at AJWS LA, which will launch in 2016 and will include local programming and travel to experience AJWS’s international work. And, just last April, the couple challenged their fellow trustees to increase their annual gifts by offering to match additional funds raised.

Bill and Michael’s enthusiasm for AJWS has been infectious. As they have passed their love for the organization on to others, they have multiplied the difference they can make in the world together.

AUNG MYO MIN

Aung Myo Min, a Burmese human rights activist, was in northern Thailand in 2004 when an earthquake in the Indian Ocean unleashed a massive tsunami that killed an estimated 250,000 people in Southeast Asia and wiped many coastal villages off the map. “It was a devastating situation,” he said. “My whole community was washed out.”

Myo had taken refuge in Thailand to escape persecution in his country, along with scores of other Burmese migrants who crossed the border in search of safety and jobs.

After the tsunami hit, Myo remembers receiving a distress call from a friend—a fellow migrant from Burma who had been working as a construction laborer in Thailand. Myo rushed to his friend’s aid but discovered an unexpected kind of devastation when he arrived. Amidst the death and destruction all around, the man was hiding in the jungle—along with 3,000 other Burmese laborers—to avoid arrest. The reason? The Thai police needed a scapegoat for the looting of collapsed buildings and were randomly rounding up Burmese migrants because they were at the bottom of the totem pole of Thai society. The migrants were thus struck a double blow by the tsunami. While many died, many of those who survived lost their homes and thousands were denied disaster aid, stripped of their work permits and forced to hide in fear.

Infuriated, Myo took immediate action. Within two weeks, his organization, the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), testified at the Thai Parliament and stopped the police roundups. HREIB also supplied the migrants with food and building materials and helped them

Ebbing the flood of suffering after the Southeast Asian tsunami

reclaim their work permits so they could participate in the reconstruction efforts.

HREIB emerged as the leading voice for the struggles of the Burmese migrant community. In one horrific example, when the bodies of Burmese who died in the wave were left to rot, Myo and HREIB identified more than 300 people and arranged burials that offered a trace of comfort to surviving loved ones.

AJWS began funding HREIB soon after the tsunami. Over four years, we supported its work to address labor rights violations, poor health,



After the tsunami devastated Ban Nam Khem village in Thailand (pictured), AJWS helped the community rebuild through a grant to a local group called Save Andaman Network. AJWS's tsunami relief fund reached hundreds of communities across the Southeast Asian coastline. *Photograph by Jenna Capeci*

domestic violence and lack of access to education—all epidemics among the poor that existed before the tsunami and were exacerbated in its aftermath.

“Many people just see the need for urgent relief only,” Myo said. “But AJWS understands the importance of community organizing and the impact we can make during the second phase of long-term recovery.”

Myo's life-saving work epitomizes the relief efforts made possible by the outpouring of

support by AJWS donors after the tsunami. AJWS granted more than \$10.8 million to 82 grassroots organizations in five countries, helping activists like Myo to meet immediate needs and then enable stronger, more equitable societies to emerge after the floodwaters receded. Today, even though our tsunami response is over, AJWS continues to promote human rights in Southeast Asia and aid Burmese citizens fleeing the ongoing persecution of ethnic minorities in their country.

THE BLAUSTEIN FOUNDATIONS

One Baltimore family is behind a constellation of foundations that is “united by their roots in Jewish tradition and by their concern for social justice.” Two of the Blaustein Philanthropic Group’s six foundations have been devoted and generous funders of AJWS for more than a decade, supporting diverse portfolios of human rights work.

Giving as a philanthropic family with its roots in social justice

The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation has funded our international service programs for Jewish youth, and more recently, our new initiative to end the practice of child marriage. The Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation has supported AJWS’s efforts to address HIV/AIDS and has provided general operating support, which has allowed us to grow and flourish. The staff of the Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation report that, in turn, AJWS has inspired the foundation to explore its own Jewish social justice strategy.

Michael Hirschhorn, president of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation and an AJWS trustee since 2008, says AJWS fits perfectly into the foundations’ philanthropic goals.

“Human rights and Jewish values drive everything here,” he said. “Sometimes, Judaism and human rights are the explicit focus of our grantees; at other times, they are principles woven deep into the fabric of the efforts we support. AJWS is right there, one of just a handful of organizations working explicitly at that intersection—advancing human rights and ‘practicing what we preach.’”

Michael helped bolster AJWS’s financial stability when he served as treasurer of our board from 2009 to 2014, bringing his years of experience leading and managing not-for-profit organizations to the task. Through Michael’s personal commitment and insightful partnership, and the Blaustein foundations’ generosity, their investment has turned their philanthropic family tree into a tree of life for thousands of people worldwide.



Ruth Messinger plants a tree with Festus Wakhungu of Kilili Self-Help Project, a former AJWS grantee in Kenya. Opposite: AJWS board member Michael Hirschhorn, president of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation. Photographs by Evan Abramson and courtesy of Michael Hirschhorn, respectively





PRAYONG DOKLAMYAI

Securing titles to ancestral lands

Prayong Doklamiyai is a local hero in a community of “forest communities” in Thailand. These communities—villages located in the country’s dense forests that sustain themselves by foraging food—face grave struggles today in retaining their hold on the land and trees that are vital to their survival. Few of the indigenous inhabitants have legal ownership of the land their ancestors have called home, and as a result, they are powerless when the government, developers and loggers seek to fell the forests they depend on.

Prayong has dedicated his life to protecting his people’s natural home by advocating for land rights through Northern Development Foundation (NDF), an AJWS grantee that pushes for legislation in Thailand to protect forest dwellers.

In 2011, thanks to Prayong and NDF’s advocacy, the Thai government passed a regulation allowing forest communities to apply for community land use titles—documents that give the people collective rights to the land and make it harder for others to seize it without their consent. Since the law passed, at least 400 communities have registered for the titles.

“Land is the most important element for life, habitat and farming,” Prayong said. “It is essential to empower the poor to realize their power, stand up for themselves, act, speak out for their rights and live with dignity. Not many donors support this. AJWS is one of a kind. AJWS provides opportunities [for forest communities] to express to policymakers that they have been downtrodden and taken advantage of. AJWS helps the grassroots people to see that they are not alone and have a friend to walk together shoulder-by-shoulder.”



With support from Prayong Doklamiyai (pictured here and opposite) and Northern Development Foundation, members of this forest community in Thailand hope to secure a legal title that will protect their ownership of their forest and farms.

Photographs courtesy of Prayong Doklamiyai



Global Justice Fellows spent a week in India in 2015 learning about human rights and strengthening their skills and passion for advocacy. After the trip, Gamal Palmer (pictured opposite with Congressman Adam Schiff, D-CA) and his colleagues lobbied in Washington. *Photographs by Jonathan Torgovnik and Richard Greenhouse, respectively*

GAMAL PALMER

Unlocking the potential of global activism through fellowship

Gamal Palmer felt the power of advocacy course through his veins in May of 2015, when he and more than 150 other AJWS supporters ascended Capitol Hill for AJWS's Policy Summit. As an AJWS Global Justice Fellow, he was there to call on Congress to pass the International Violence Against Women Act.

Feeling the momentum of this moment, he said: "We were inspired to go up the steps of the Capitol to make a difference, to knock on those doors and to give the pushback and the pressure that's needed to make this life-saving law a reality for women around the world."

As the senior director of the Community Leadership Institute at the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, Gamal has a talent for organizing people, and AJWS focused this skill on global justice. During his fellowship year he helped coordinate and recruit participants in AJWS's delegation to the LA Pride Parade and launched a podcast to engage fellow African-Americans to learn about social justice issues and get involved in activism. As a black Jew whose heart is connected to both communities, Gamal hopes to inspire a diverse group of people to believe that they, too, have the power to effect change.



He sees AJWS's campaigns as "opportunities for Jews and people of color to take action in the legislative process," he said. "I hope my program creates a culture of activism and inspires people to believe they can be philanthropists and changemakers, regardless of where they're from."

In Washington, he told members of Congress about women he met while traveling with AJWS in India who experienced the pain and fear of violence, and saw how potent these stories could be when the policymakers agreed to take a stand. "As a Global Justice Fellow," he said, "I discovered the power of sharing personal stories and how that can have impact by changing people's world view—and, in turn, changing the world."

To Gamal, *"AJWS is the epitome of a Jewish organization because it asks questions, engages in dialogues and organizes people to take action—only to ask more questions that will drive us toward our next goals. The work is never done, and that is very Jewish."*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kathleen Levin,
Chair

Monte Dube,
Vice Chair

Judy Stern,
Vice Chair

Jim Koshland,
Treasurer

Bill Resnick,
Secretary

Ruth W. Messinger,
President

Marion Bergman

Marty Friedman

Susan Lowenberg

Jay Cohan

Rabbi Elyse Frishman

Joanne Moore

Rabbi Menachem Creditor

Marc Greenwald

Russ Pratt

Barbara Dobkin

Michael Hirschhorn

Marcella Kanfer Rolnick

James Dubey

Carol Joseph

Eric Sahn

Tom Dubin

Howard Kleckner

Jolie Schwab

Eileen Epstein

Beth Kraft

Bea Wilderman

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Ruth W. Messinger, *President*

Robert Bank, *Executive Vice President and future President, effective July 1, 2016*

Jacqueline Hart, *Vice President for Strategic Learning, Research and Evaluation*

Rona Peligal, *Vice President for Development*

Stuart Shear, *Vice President for Communications*

Kristine Stallone, *Vice President for Finance and Administration*

Shari Turitz, *Vice President for Programs*

This publication was created by Leah Kaplan Robins (Director of Publications), Elizabeth Leih (Creative Director) and Angela Cave (Editorial & Marketing Associate), with support from AJWS staff and grantees worldwide.



At just 27 years old, Burmese activist Khun Khit San is mobilizing a movement of youth determined to bring freedom and equality to their country (see story 8).
Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik

OUR LEGACY AT 30

1985–2015

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is the leading Jewish organization working to promote human rights and end poverty in the developing world.

PAST

\$270 million granted to promote human rights

Tens of thousands of leaders empowered

Millions of lives affected

PRESENT

19 countries

550 grantees

\$39.5 million granted annually

150,000 U.S. supporters

3rd largest funder of security for human rights activists*

4th largest U.S. funder of international LGBT work[†]

4th largest funder of environmental and natural resource rights*

9th largest funder of rights for women and girls*

FUTURE

Together with champions of human rights around the globe, we embark on our fourth decade in pursuit of a more just and equitable world.

*International Human Rights Funders Group 2015

†Funders for LGBTQ Issues 2013



AJWS grantee MBBCDS empowers Indian girls to delay marriage, continue their educations and pursue their aspirations (see story 6). *Photograph by Jonathan Torgovnik*

m through fellowship Founding AJWS so Jews can stand up proudly
justice worldwide Raising a voice for women amid the horrors of war
with vision, verve and values Seeking justice for bloodshed in the m
pment Ending child marriage through philanthropy Leading a Jewi
faith in global justice Defending the land with his life Mobilizing yo
itarian rule Inspiring a generation of Jewish leaders for justice Esc
ge and guiding girls to choose their own paths Repairing the worl
thropy and social entrepreneurship Aiding Haitian earthquake sur
pioning justice on Capitol Hill Promoting healing after Ebola Tellin
Giving girls control over their bodies and futures Preaching justice
cuting powerful adversaries of indigenous rights Restoring hope af
rs Nepal Giving as a philanthropic family with its roots in social jus
across the U.S. and across generations Mobilizing women to make
g hate legislation and pursuing equality for LGBT people Amplifyin
from the Supreme Court to the Seder table Multiplying the impac
itment to justice Taking AJWS to new frontiers on the West Coast
path of disasters Ebbing the flood of suffering after the Southeast A
ating for dignity and human rights Securing titles to ancestral land



American Jewish World Service

45 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018

T: 212.792.2900
800.889.7146

ajws.org

ajws@ajws.org

 /americanjewishworldservice

 /ajws

 /americanjewishworldservice