

what accountability can look like. In 2017-2018, the project organized 22 media campaigns to raise awareness about child marriage and violence against women.



INNOVATION

A collective of Latin American women and developers at Coding Rights, a Brazil-based “think and do tank” supported by Canada’s IDRC, is addressing challenges to gender rights for women and LGBTQ2I minorities on the Internet. The collective has helped local women activists protect themselves online. It has also launched Radar Legislativo, a platform that helps civil society monitor all digital rights-related bills being drafted or discussed in Brazil’s legislature. In recognition of their contribution to understanding digital human rights issues, Coding Rights was awarded the 2017 Regional Fund for Digital Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean Award to Women in Technology.

The Nigerian Ekiti State Social Security Scheme is the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa. Implemented between 2012 and 2014, the non-contributory pension scheme targets the elderly in poor households in Ekiti State. There, the majority live in rural areas and work in the informal sector—in other words, in a grey economy where income is neither monitored nor taxed. A team of researchers supported by Canada’s IDRC conducted an extensive study of the scheme’s outcomes. The study informed the development of a National Priority Agenda for the Vulnerable. Drawing on the study’s findings, the Nigerian government also pledged to expand such schemes. It announced a plan to provide social security to 50% of vulnerable population groups, starting with unemployed youth.

Employment and Social Development Canada’s Labour Program negotiates and implements labour provisions of Canadian free trade agreements with other countries. These labour provisions include commitments to protect internationally recognized labour rights and principles. Other commitments vow to enforce domestic labour laws with mechanisms to receive and investigate complaints and impose penalties or trade sanctions, where warranted. The department’s Labour Program also provides technical assistance to partner countries by funding capacity-building projects that:

- support the modernization of labour policy and administration to strengthen institutions of democratic governance;
- promote economic growth while respecting workers’ rights; and
- improve the quality of working conditions in partner countries.

In 2017-2018, the Labour Program funded projects in Peru (\$328,000), Costa Rica (\$200,000), Honduras (\$200,000), Mexico (\$5,000) and Ukraine (\$100,000). It also gave \$200,000 to the Organization of American States to help ministries of labour better implement labour legislation, policies and programs that promote and respect fundamental labour rights. For example, in Honduras, the Fundación del Servicio Exterior para la Paz y la Democracia (FUNPADEM) is implementing a



SERVING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED UKRAINE

One day in summer 2014, as war broke out in eastern Ukraine, Lesia Vasylenko, a young lawyer, headed off to a military hospital in Kyiv. She was carrying an envelope filled with money that she had helped raise, at a friend’s request, for a young soldier. He had lost a limb in combat and required a costly operation. It was a visit that would change Vasylenko’s life. “I started looking into the laws protecting soldiers and I explained to this boy’s family how to claim the benefits he was entitled to,” she says. “Then his family asked me to help the boy’s hospital roommate, and that roommate asked me to help someone else. It was a chain reaction.”

Vasylenko is now the head of Legal Hundred, an influential non-governmental organization with more than 200 volunteer lawyers and representatives in 12 regions of Ukraine. The young lawyer continues to help veterans and their families.

Canada initially supported Legal Hundred through the European Endowment for Democracy. Canada continues to provide funding for the organization’s important work. It drafted a proposal to remove amendments that effectively allowed the army to indefinitely prolong the contracts of soldiers who had enrolled in the military on a temporary basis. These amendments were introduced when the war began.

Legal Hundred was also highly influential in trying to tackle endemic gender discrimination in the Ukrainian army. Their vocal efforts helped convince the parliament to pass a law guaranteeing equal rights for women in Ukraine’s army.

The war shows no sign of easing, but Vasylenko has no intention of giving up her advocacy work. “The people we defend represent a relatively small percentage of the population, but they are the ones protecting our country right now,” she says. “I can’t fight on the front line, so this is my way of helping Ukraine.”