

**International Service**  
Human Rights Awards

7th December 2009

Presented at the River Room  
House of Lords

by kind permission of the Lord Speaker

# Thank you to our sponsors

Mr Bryan Sanderson CBE



We gratefully acknowledge our strategic partnership with DFID

## International Service

International Service is an overseas development charity working in Latin America, West Africa, and the Middle East.

Working at a grassroots level with the world's most vulnerable communities, we support them in practical ways to combat poverty and oppression.

We have a special focus on women, children and people with disabilities because we know from experience that they are most in need of support and solidarity.

Human rights are at the heart of what we do.

We believe that being denied basic human rights is what keeps people in poverty.

Our goal is to help people understand and exercise their rights so they can guide or change their lives for the better.

By sharing skills and expertise that doesn't yet exist in local areas overseas, we support change that is long-lasting – whether we are working with projects that stop child trafficking in Mali, that improve the quality of life for children with disabilities in the mountains of Bolivia, or that promote women's rights in Palestine.

[www.internationalservice.org.uk](http://www.internationalservice.org.uk)

## The International Service Human Rights Awards

Now in their seventh year, our Human Rights Awards recognise the achievements of organisations and individuals around the world who work at a grassroots level to promote human rights and change the things that cause people to be excluded, impoverished or disempowered.

Grassroots development workers, activists and development organisations often work in very politically, economically and socially challenging circumstances.

Our Human Rights Awards celebrate the commitment and tenacity of these often unsung heroes. Boosting the winners' confidence and morale, the awards also seek to raise the profile of the winners' work at national and international levels.

The following awards are made:

- Award for the defence of the human rights of women
- Award for the defence of the human rights of children
- Award for the defence of the human rights of disabled people
- Award for the defence of the human right to sexual & reproductive healthcare

A fifth award is also made in recognition of high-profile work that promotes or defends human rights on a global scale.



## Award for the Defence of the Human Rights of Women

# The Extractive Women's Secretariat

### Brazil

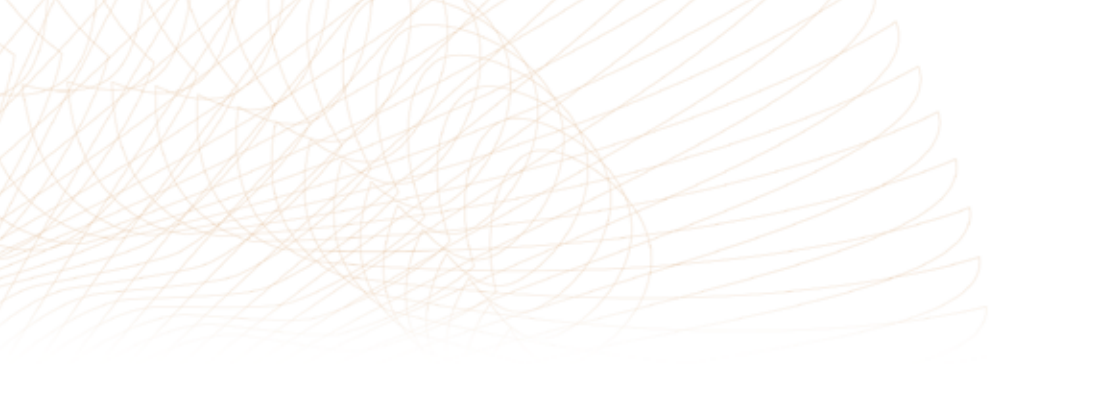
The Extractive Women's Secretariat was founded in 1995 as part of the National Council of Rubber Tappers. The Secretariat works to defend the rights and interests of women working in the extractivist reserves of the Amazon forest.

Extractivist women work as babaçu coconut breakers, rubber tappers, nut collectors, fisherwomen and small-hold farmers. In many cases they are single mothers and the sole provider for their families. Extreme isolation and a lack of access to healthcare, information, education, and public policies are the norm. As a result, many women are unaware of their rights as human beings and citizens.

The local culture is highly patriarchal, and throughout private and public spheres women are regarded as inferior. But projects run by the Extractive Women's Secretariat in the areas of gender equality, healthcare, political participation, and domestic violence are supporting forest women and communities to work towards greater rights and equality for women.

In 2000, the Extractive Women's Secretariat (EWS) embarked on The Forest Women's Baggage – a project that reaches even the most isolated Amazon communities in order to provide education about the female body, reproductive health, family planning, and HIV prevention. In wooden huts, on river shores, under trees and in people's homes, communities gather to build bridges towards happier family and community lives. Slowly, EWS has won the confidence of communities and begun discussions about women's rights and equality.

EWS makes sure to include the men at every meeting in order to build understanding about women's rights and involve them in building relationships based on mutual respect. The Baggage project uses a 'forest pedagogy' which is sensitive to the culture of the forest communities, and uses local music, tales and images in order to create videos and resources in a language that can be readily understood.



EWS have also presented data about human rights abuses against women to the Brazilian Ministry of Health, and the Special Secretariat for Public Policies for Women. Among the most notorious of abuses are:

- The denial of medical treatment. The rate of women dying from cancer of the cervix is very high; a major cause, besides a lack of medical staff, is husbands refusing to let their wives have gynaecological exams.
- Domestic violence, which is frequently aggravated by the excessive prevalence of alcoholism in some regions.
- Sexual coercion among the older generations, and the sexual abuse of young girls. When this results in pregnancy it is often disguised with the legend of the river dolphin that turns into a handsome man on moonlit nights and seduces girls and women.

The Ministries had not been aware of the degree of rights abuses. As a result, the work of EWS has had a significant impact on the Public Health Policy for Field and Forest Populations, getting it to positively address the specific issues and needs of the forest women.

To ensure that profound change happens within communities, EWS train local men, women and young people to continue the work of the projects. They also support women's organisations to form regional networks, helping bring them out of isolation. And because EWS has delegates working in all the Amazonian states and they participate in state and federal government working groups, their work has an impact beyond grassroots communities.

A major success for EWS came when Sandra Regina Pereira Gonçalves – a woman who had benefited from participating in the activities of EWS – was elected as the first ever female President of an extractivist reserve.



## Award for the Defence of the Human Rights of Children

# Agence Evangélique de Développement du Mali

## Mali

The team at Agence Evangélique de Développement du Mali (AEDM) are staunchly committed to securing the health, well-being and future potential of children in the Circle of Koro in Mali.

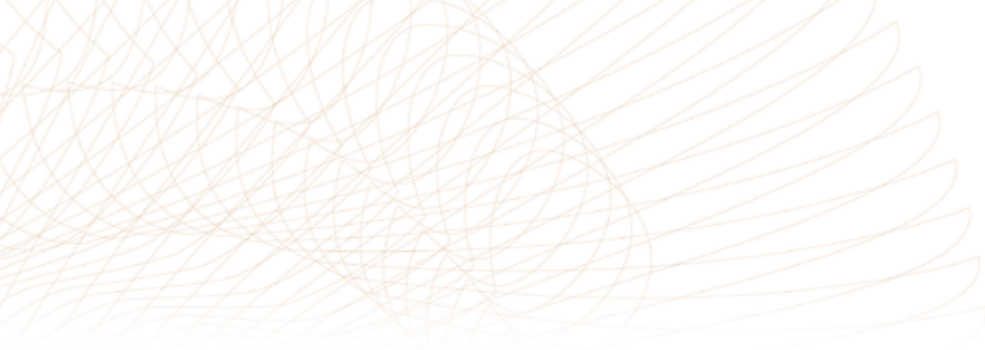
Mali is the second largest country in West Africa. It suffers extreme poverty, and because a large area of the country falls within the hostile environment of the Sahara Desert, there is an abundance of poor quality soil but precious little rainfall. Add to this the fact that 48% of the population is under the age of 15, and the challenges seem enormous.

AEDM's vibrant programme ensures that children can grow and develop in an holistic way by addressing the conditions of their immediate environment. Their 3-fold programme is based on a simple premise: what child can live without *food*, *education*, and a strong *family* to look after them?

Children cannot grow and develop properly if they are hungry and their nutrition is poor. But the harsh climate makes it difficult to cultivate food, and so AEDM is addressing family nutrition through its food security programme. They work with children, parents and villagers by training them in good farming techniques such as combating soil erosion, fighting pests, making compost, and market gardening. As a result, 6 villages were able to increase their crop yields by a quarter in just one year, meaning that 90% of children received more and better meals.

AEDM is one of the few organisations in the region working to improve educational opportunities. Their innovative *Passerelle* scheme is an education programme that provides a second chance for children who either never started school, or left school early.

Extreme poverty means that 40% of children aged 8 to 12 leave their homes in search of opportunities to earn money and support their families. They become vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, and even violence or prostitution. *Passerelle* helps children catch up with their peers and return to mainstream school in the



space of 9 months. In the last 5 years, over 1723 children have been able to enrol back into school – over 1000 of those children were girls. AEDM has provided shoes and clothing to over 50 children who could not afford even these basics. And they have also provided over 500 children with birth certificates and registration documents – without these, people are denied access to many vital services, including education.

AEDM supports families to become stronger and more prosperous by focusing on developing the potential of women. A literacy programme helps build their skills, and a business training programme is helping over 600 women acquire the skills and finance needed to establish and run small businesses. This means they can play a fuller role in securing the health and well-being of their families, as well as building their own potential.

To ensure that all of the progress made is long-lasting, local people are trained to help deliver the *Passerelle* programme, and AEDM campaigns within communities about the importance of enrolling children – especially girls – in school. They also work to ensure that local governments will commit to taking responsibility for the education of children, and for maintaining and equipping schools. Most importantly of all, AEDM helps children and families to understand their basic human rights so they are able to stand up for their rights, and challenge discrimination and inequality.



## Award for the Defence of the Human Rights of Disabled People

### Rima Canawati

#### Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation

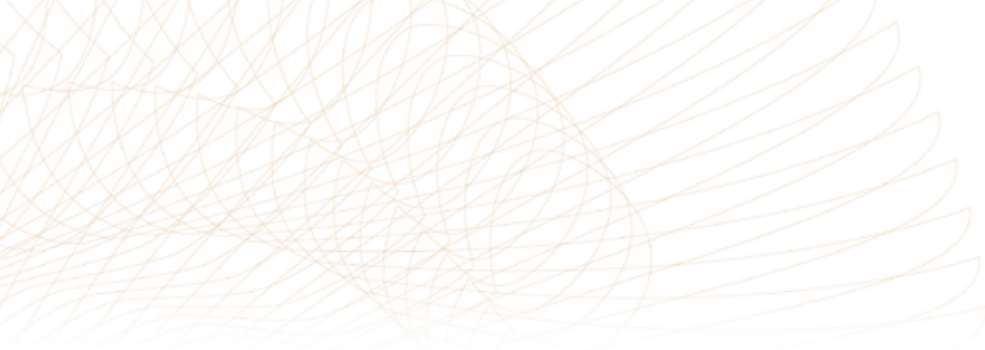
Rima Canawati has dedicated her professional life to the needs of disabled people in her community and throughout Palestine. She lost her own sight completely in her late teenage years, but has overcome this disability to rise to the top of her profession where she is now Head of Special Education and Community Programmes at the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation.

Life in the Occupied Palestinian Territories remains harsh across all aspects of life, and within the wider context of daily survival little emphasis is placed on the needs of disabled people.

Rima supervises the work of 5 day care centres which are located in different villages and refugee camps within Bethlehem. The centres provide children with rehabilitation and special education in the areas of self help skills, behavioural modification, motor skills development, language development, and cognitive and personality development. The centres also provide services such as toy libraries, summer camps, drama lessons, and vocational training which are generally unavailable for children and young people due to a lack of public spaces and public support.

In particular, one day care centre is dedicated to the needs of mentally-disabled young people, helping them gain vocational training in skills such as agriculture, loom weaving, olive wood carving, and making quality products from recycled paper. This has improved the quality of life for many young adults, and has helped foster positive attitudes amongst families and the wider community.

Over the years, Rima's work has contributed greatly towards changing negative societal attitudes towards disability, and people with disabilities. Rima educates families in order to increase their understanding of disability, and support them to better cope with disabled family members. This has encouraged many more families to recognise the signs of disability at an early age and to seek support and advice. She has pursued ongoing dialogue with the Palestinian Authorities, seeking support for the basic social integration and education of children and young adults with disabilities.



At a national level, Rima has been lobbying universities to establish degree-level courses in special education so that there can be a supply of trained professionals to meet the needs of people with disabilities. She has also successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education to set a national policy for special needs provision and support, which has resulted in many disabled children being able to attend regular schools following thorough preparation at one of the day care centres.

Rima works extensively with local and international organisations in the field of disability: she is deputy Chair of the Middle East Regional Committee of the International Council for the Education of People with Visual Impairments; is a member of UNICEF working groups; and is on the steering committee for the Disability Monitor Initiative in the Middle East.

In addition, Rima has presented papers and participated in many international conferences that seek to address the human rights of people with disabilities, travelling to the Far East, USA, Europe and Bangladesh.



## Award for the Defence of the Human Right to Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare

### Instituto PAPAI

#### Brazil

Instituto PAPAI are pioneers, aiming to deconstruct the machismo of Brazilian society by promoting public policy that aims to abolish gender inequality. They are the first NGO in Latin America to work with men and boys from the perspective of gender.

To achieve this, Instituto PAPAI actively engage men and young people from low income communities in the fight for gender equality.

Their work covers 4 key areas:

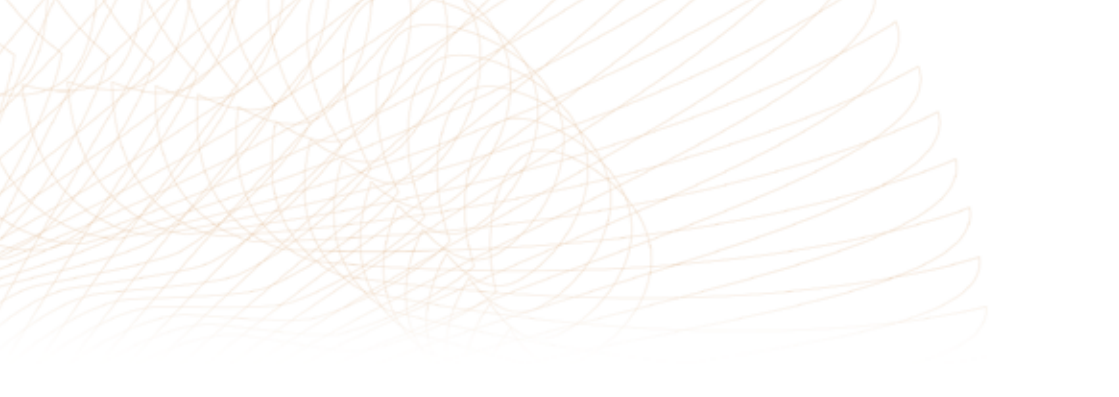
- Young men and healthcare
- Fatherhood, care-giving and reproductive rights
- Men and gendered violence
- Sexual diversity as a human right

Instituto PAPAI began in 1996 as a project that grew out of the Masters thesis of founder Jorge Lyra. The project aimed to create a space for young fathers to discuss their experiences, and educate health professionals about the needs of adolescent fathers. This later became the Support Programme for Fathers, and eventually grew into Instituto PAPAI.

PAPAI's ground-breaking work involving men and boys in care-giving and preventing the transmission of HIV and AIDS was recognised by UNAIDS in 1999 as a model for social change.

One of their most effective strategies in revealing human rights abuses and bringing about social change has been the use of vibrant campaigns during carnival, public holidays, and gay pride marches.

PAPAI co-ordinate 3 national campaigns. *The Seahorse Campaign* involves men in care-giving and fatherhood within the context of health and reproductive rights. *Diversity is Cool* uses art and culture to work with young people to prevent homophobia. And the *White Ribbon Campaign* not only engages men and boys in ending violence against women, it also works with women's institutions to lobby for a change in the law and undertake educational and political action in order to prevent women suffering domestic violence at the hands of current or ex partners.



Extensive research into social attitudes and behaviours – from paternity leave to homophobic violence – forms the foundation of PAPAI's work. This strong basis enables them to work at a government level, where they have been helping shape policies for adolescent and men's health.

In 2006, Instituto PAPAI were honoured by the Brazilian Federal Ministry for their contribution towards preventing the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, reducing the levels of domestic violence, and increasing male participation in family-planning. In 2009, they co-organised the global symposium *Engaging Men in Achieving Gender Equality*, which was supported by the UN and featured a speech from the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon.



## Award for the Global Defence of Human Rights

### Dr Shirin Ebadi

#### Iran

Shirin Ebadi, J.D., was awarded the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote human rights - in particular, the rights of women, children, and political prisoners in Iran. She is the first Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, and only the fifth Muslim to receive a Nobel Prize in any field.

Dr. Ebadi was one of the first female judges in Iran. She served as president of the city court of Tehran from 1975 to 1979 and was the first Iranian woman to achieve the status of Chief Justice. She, along with other female judges, was dismissed from that position after the Islamic Revolution in February 1979. She was made a clerk in the court she had once presided over, until she petitioned for early retirement. After obtaining her lawyer's license in 1992, Dr. Ebadi set up private practice.

As a lawyer, Dr. Ebadi has taken on many controversial cases defending political dissidents and as a result has been arrested numerous times. In addition to being an internationally-recognized advocate of human rights, she has also established many non-governmental organizations in Iran, including the Million Signatures Campaign: a campaign demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iranian law.

Dr. Ebadi is also a university professor, and students from outside Iran often take part in her human rights training courses. She has published over 70 articles and 12 books dedicated to various aspects of human rights, some of which have been published by UNICEF. Dr. Ebadi's most recent book, *Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope*, was published by Random House in 2006 in English, French and German. Its publication in 13 other languages is also underway.

In 2004, she was named by Forbes Magazine as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world. In January 2006, along with sister Laureate Jody Williams, Dr. Ebadi took the lead in establishing the Nobel Women's Initiative.

## A special note about our caterers

# HOXTON

apprentice

International Service is pleased to be working with the Hoxton Apprentice in the catering of this year's awards ceremonies.

The Hoxton Apprentice is a restaurant with a social and environmental conscience. Located in a former Victorian Primary School, the restaurant was the brainchild of Training for Life's Chief Executive, Gordon D'Silva and the celebrated chef, Prue Leith.

Prue and Gordon's philosophy was to create a top quality eating experience that was also a training restaurant for unemployed people. Since its launch in 2004, the Hoxton Apprentice has:

- won several awards, including Michelin recommendation
- trained over **150** unemployed or homeless people
- enabled **80%** of apprentices to secure jobs in some of London's top restaurants, and international hospitality groups such as Hilton, Compass Group, Whitbread and... Buckingham Palace

The Hoxton Apprentice re-invests 100% of their net profits to help more people who have been unemployed long-term become better cooks, waiters and managers. This is achieved through the Hoxton Apprentice's parent charity: Training for Life. Since 1995, Training for Life has returned over 12,000 people to full-time education and employment.



## Previous winners of the International Service Human Rights Awards

### 2008

Mr Daniel Barenboim  
Ms Cherifa Kheddar, Algeria  
Mr Christopher Mulenga, Zambia  
Luapula Foundation, Zambia  
Ms Asipa Musaeva, Kyrgyz Republic

### 2007

Unreported World, UK  
Najia Haneefi, Afghanistan  
Operation Sirigu, Ghana  
ADAC, Mali  
Rosangela Berman-Bieler, Brazil

### 2006

Dominga Vásquez & Helen Woodcook, Guatemala and UK  
Phomolong Support Group, Lesotho  
Nomakuze Solwande & the Masonwabisane Women's Support Centre, South Africa  
AKASA, Sri Lanka

### 2005

Benjamin Zephaniah, UK  
REN-LAC, Burkina Faso  
Ross Georgeson, Scotland  
Prof. Dora Akunyili, Nigeria

### 2004

Mark Thomas, UK  
Dr. Sigrid Rausing, UK  
Action on Disability and Development, Mali  
Audrey Bomse, USA  
Esther Chávez, Mexico

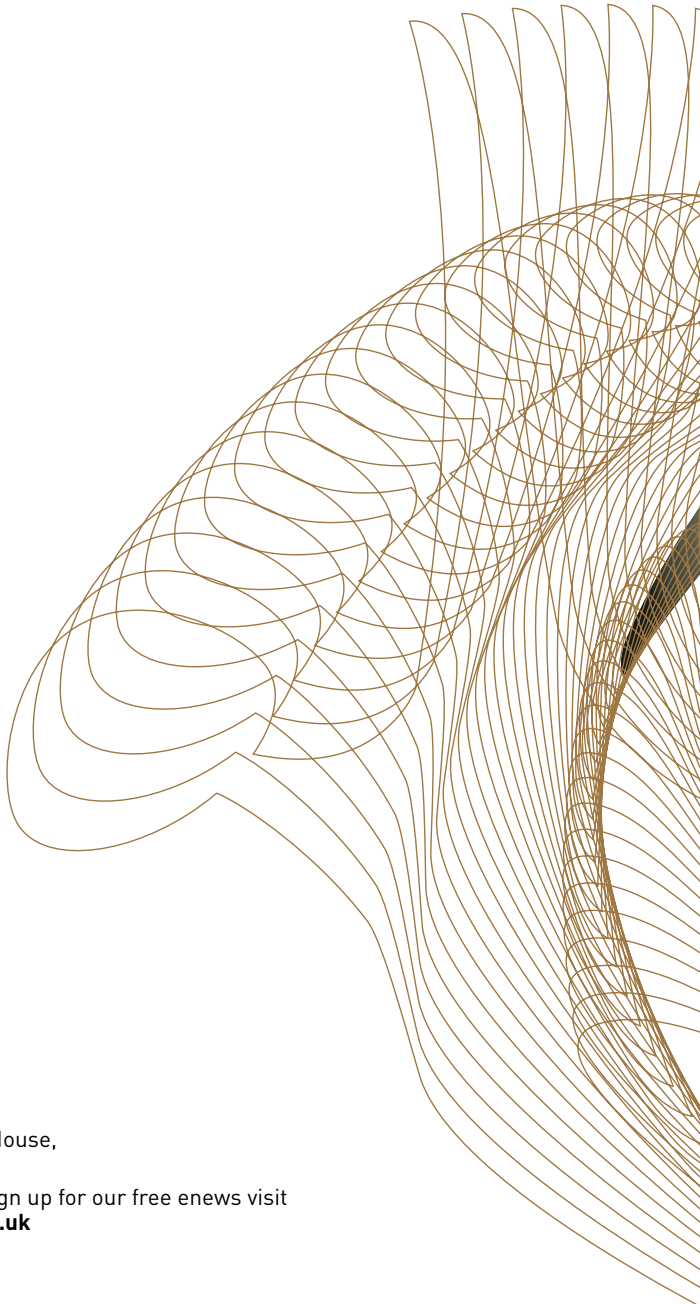
### 2003

Bianca Jagger, Nicaragua/UK  
Raji Sourani, Palestine  
Modibo Sangho, Mali  
Andrea Flores, Bolivia

# Thank you

Our sincere thanks go to

- The Lord Speaker, Baroness Hayman
- Hayley Robson & Terry Eiss at the Office of the Lord Speaker
- The office of Dr Shrin Ebadi
- Joseph Bonner, DfID
- Rt Hon Hugh Bayley MP
- Jenny Stevens, Parliamentary Assistant
- Janet White, University of York
- Jackie Kayler
- Rosemary Cripps Sculpture
- The judging panel for the 2009 Human Rights Awards:
  - Bryan Sanderson CBE
  - Marika Freris, Galliard Healthcare Communications
  - Candy Whittome
  - James Savage, Amnesty International
  - Professor Paul Gready, University of York
  - Professor the Baroness Afshar OBE, University of York



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