

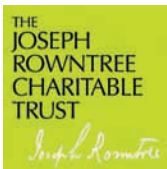


# 8th Annual International Service Human Rights Awards ceremony

Tuesday 7th December 2010  
York Minster  
by kind permission of the Dean & Chapter

Ceremony host Harry Gration  
Keynote speaker Professor Francesca Klug OBE

Thank you to our sponsors



Mr Bryan Sanderson CBE



# The International Service Human Rights Awards

December 2010 is an exciting development in the story of the International Service Human Rights Awards, as we bring our awards to our home town – the City of York – for the first time.

Yorkshire's rich tapestry of cultures, communities, faiths, backgrounds and traditions makes it one of most vibrant parts of the country. We believe that makes it the natural place to celebrate what unites us as human beings, and a place where human rights are truly valued.

For eight years, the Human Rights Awards have recognised the achievements of international development workers and volunteers, local figureheads and activists, development organisations and grassroots groups – those who are devoted to promoting human rights, and changing the things that cause people around the world to be excluded, impoverished or disempowered.

We also know that incredible work happens every day on our own doorstep in Yorkshire. For the first time we are making awards to local organisations doing formidable work towards a more equal society.

Although some of our award winners are working thousands of miles away, they are heroes within their own local communities – like our Yorkshire region award winners – changing things on the ground for thousands of ordinary people.

In a world where reports of human rights abuses, conflict, and oppression are all too familiar, the good news about the positive changes, the progress and the inspiration can get buried.

The International Service Human Rights Awards provide a space for the good news.

## Award for the Defence of Women's Rights

# Women in Action against Gender-Based Violence, Cameroon

*"Men and boys play a vital role in promoting the rights of women, and therefore need to be involved and educated towards an understanding of gender equality."*



Life in Cameroon in general, and its North West region in particular, is strongly patriarchal. Physical, sexual and psychological violence against women form the bedrock of traditional values and customs.

Women in Action against Gender-Based Violence are working relentlessly to build a culture that respects women's rights. From local communities to national policies, Women in Action are a strong voice for gender equality.

Working with men and boys is central to their work as they educate communities about gender-based violence and women's rights. By working with traditionally male professions such as taxi-driving, and reaching young men and boys via social groups such as youth football teams, Women in Action are successfully transforming opinions and attitudes. They also put the local



media to effective use in order to get their messages across in an accessible and relevant way.

Women in Action lobby the government to change their policies, and act in a way that protects and promotes the rights of women. Working with local authority figures such as politicians, religious leaders, and traditional clan leaders, has been crucial in campaigning for policy reforms. Some religious leaders now include issues about women's rights in their weekly sermons.

Women in Action ensure that violent crimes against women are reported properly. They play an international role in documenting the abuse of women's rights, and present reports to UN bodies such as the Campaign on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

By producing and distributing simplified handbooks and information materials, they have succeeded in translating the complex, legal language of human rights into accessible, everyday language. This has enabled victims of abuse to understand their rights and fight for justice. And it has helped local communities to easily understand women's fundamental rights, so that they can play their part in building a more equal and just society.



## Award for the Defence of Disabled People's Rights

# Youth with Physical Disability Development Forum, Uganda

*"Disability is not inability"*



The Youth with Physical Disability Development Forum is a pioneering voice for disabled people in Uganda, and a positive role model both for other disabled young people, and for wider society.

Co-ordinated and led by young, disabled people, the Development Forum lives out the motto of the worldwide disability movement "nothing about us without us." They seek to end discrimination against disabled people, and build a society in which disabled people can play a full and active part.

Working with everyone from disabled people to public authorities such as the police, the Development Forum carries out education training about the rights of disabled people to promote better understanding and awareness across society.



Promoting disabled people's right to education is a central area of their work. Many parents do not take their disabled child to school, and many schools do not make the changes necessary in order to give young disabled people the opportunity to learn. As a result of the Forum's work with parents and schools, 15 disabled children have been able to access education.

The Development Forum was also successful in lobbying the government to provide 64 university scholarships for disabled young people. So far, ten young people have graduated with degrees in Law.

Crucially, the Youth with Physical Disability Development Forum supports disabled people and their families to understand the legal language of human rights in an

accessible way so that they are able to seek justice in cases when they have experienced discrimination or abuse.

This significant progress has put Uganda on a journey that moves towards ending discrimination against people with disabilities.

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

# Talowadag Coalition, Somaliland

*“We began our work with one lady who lived in a shack, having been thrown out of her home by her family. Today we care for people who have HIV and AIDS, we sit and eat with them, we touch them. When others see this, it sends a powerful signal to them.”*



The Talowadag Coalition may only be 4 years old, but it has quickly found its feet and now leads the fight against stigma and discrimination.

Talowadag means ‘in consultation with one another.’ This idea of people talking together and supporting each other runs through all of their work.



Comprised of the only three organisations in Somaliland who are supporting people with HIV and AIDS, the Talowadag Coalition currently supports and cares for over 1500 people who are either infected with HIV, or affected by AIDS in some way – for example, the families of those who are ill. Many of these people live in abject poverty, and the majority are women.

HIV and AIDS are taboo subjects in Somaliland – they are not talked about openly. Fear and misunderstanding surrounds these



diseases. Many people who learn they are infected are abandoned by their families and quickly become destitute – no-one will touch them or talk to them, neighbours will not let their animals graze together any longer, and often they are thrown out of their homes.

The Coalition provides home-based care and emotional support for people who are ill, and support groups help them to share their experiences with others. The Coalition also works to educate the wider community on how to take responsibility for their sexual health so that they can avoid becoming infected with HIV or AIDS.

Working with religious leaders, and clan leaders in particular, has been a successful way of educating the community, and spreading positive messages of compassion and support. This is a sound beginning

in addressing the traditional cultural practices and attitudes which have long-discriminated against people living with HIV and AIDS.

The Talowadag Coalition are pioneers, leading the fight against discrimination and working to promote and protect the fundamental employment, healthcare and family rights of people who are living with HIV.

## Award for the Defence of Children's Rights

# Sylvia Reyes Fundación JUCONI, Ecuador

*"At some point the parents will have the insight that what they are doing to their children is what was done to them. That's when we can start talking about how to repair the damage. That's when things really start to move."*



Sylvia Reyes, an educational psychologist, left Britain in 1994 to help Fundación JUCONI set up a branch in the slums of Ecuador's Port Guayaquil. The aim was to address the large numbers of children who are abused and neglected by their families, and who have dropped out of education and turned to the street.



JUCONI, which is short for Junto Con Los Niños, means 'together with the children.'

A short while after beginning work in Guayaquil, Sylvia realised that children weren't turning to the streets simply because of poverty, but because violence, abuse and neglect were being passed from one family generation to the next.

Children already experiencing abuse and neglect within the family, were suffering still more damage when they took to the streets to exist amid exploitation, crime, and drugs.



As a result, Sylvia has developed a strong methodology for working with these impoverished and fragile families. This sees the team at Fundación JUCONI working closely with all family members, taking time to earn their trust so that they can help everyone understand the root of the problems.

The team has become expert in supporting parents to understand the needs and rights of their children, and helping them build a more caring and respectful home environment. JUCONI's services also support children on the streets to improve their emotional and social skills, build their self-confidence, and tackle the gaps in their education.

Since 1994, Fundación JUCONI has supported over 1200 children and families in Guayaquil to break the cycle of abuse and neglect. In addition, 92% of children participating

in JUCONI's programme have successfully returned to formal education.

Sylvia's understanding of how the home environment plays a crucial role in children's wellbeing, and her model for working with entire families, has inspired other organisations from Brazil to Afghanistan. She is a strong believer in addressing the causes of problems, not just the symptoms.

Find out more at <https://juconi.org.mx>

## Yorkshire Region Awards

# Sharron Smith York Young Carers Centre



For 10 years Sharron has led the way in supporting young people aged 8 to 18 who care for a family member at home. Young carers are a relatively hidden sector of our society, and in the City of York there are over 400 young people looking after family members who have an illness, disability or mental health problem.



Sharron has led the way in recognising young carers as children first. Such responsibility at a young age means young carers regularly develop emotional, psychological or eating problems. But Sharron and her team provide one-to-one support, trips and activities that enable young people to have a break from caring, and support groups where advice, fun and friendship are high on the agenda.



Sharron campaigns to ensure that young carers have the same opportunities as their peers. York Young Carers has helped open up life chances for young carers; against the odds, many are supported into employment or university making a long-lasting difference to the pathway of each individual and of future generations.

# ASSIST, Sheffield



Thousands of people claiming asylum in the UK are refused, despite their claims being genuine. Asylum seekers are legally prevented from seeking work, registering themselves as homeless, or using local authority night shelters. Thousands become destitute and turn to the streets, struggling each day for food, accommodation and clothing. Even in Sheffield – a City of Sanctuary – it is estimated that over 1000 asylum seekers are destitute.

ASSIST (Asylum Seeker Support Initiative Short Term) has over 100 volunteers working to provide emergency support and care for destitute asylum seekers – in particular those who are elderly, pregnant or unwell. Around 80 people receive emergency overnight accommodation, food, clothing, and small grants. Providing one-to-one advice and access to transport, ASSIST also help people access the support and assistance that is available to them, and often help people pursue their claim for asylum. ASSIST strive to provide dignified support so that asylum seekers do not have to rely on hand-outs and food parcels.



## Highly Commended

### **Meera Malek, Centre for Development - Ahmedabad, India**

In India's fastest growing city, thousands of people already in poverty have slipped through the net and are confined to living on the city's deprived outskirts. Thousands of displaced children miss out on school and are compelled to earn less than £2 a week as kite makers, rag pickers or domestic servants. Meera and her team have set up seven education centres which have helped over 5000 children receive an education, and over 1200 to enrol into mainstream schools. Meera also works hard to promote respect for diversity in an area where religious tensions run high.

### **Study for the Defence of Women's Rights 'DEMUS' – Peru**

The team at DEMUS have over 20 years' experience in addressing the abuses of women's rights which grew out of the country's civil war (1980-2000). The conflict saw around 70,000 people killed or disappeared, with many women suffering sexual abuse. DEMUS offers social and psychological support to women who have survived abuse, and also support their search for justice. They monitor the government's policies, and have successfully used international legislation to hold the government to account for crimes committed against women during the civil war. DEMUS have had great success using radio, social networking and popular cartoons to campaign for women's rights.

### **CHANGE – UK**

CHANGE is a disability-led organisation working to promote, protect and secure equal rights for people with learning disabilities. Staff and project managers with learning disabilities are supported by a non-disabled member of staff, and CHANGE also uses volunteers and trainers with learning disabilities.

CHANGE believes that people with learning disabilities cannot be fully empowered unless they are informed, understand the issues that affect them, and have full access to guidance and services. They specialise in producing accessible information and resources, and campaign heavily for the parenting and employment rights of people with learning disabilities.



## Award for Global Defence of Human Rights

# Annie Lennox, UK

*One of the finest musical voices of our time, Annie Lennox is also a tireless campaigner on the issue of HIV/AIDS and its impact on women and children's lives.*



In 2007, she founded the "SING" campaign to help prevent the spread of HIV in South Africa.

Annie is also an Ambassador for Oxfam, Nelson Mandela's 46664 Campaign, Amnesty International, The British Red Cross, Special Envoy for HIV and AIDS in Scotland and also London Ambassador for HIV and AIDS.

Most recently, Annie Lennox was given the prestigious role of UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador.

[www.annielennoxsing.com](http://www.annielennoxsing.com)

# Our sincere thanks go to

The Dean & Chapter of York Minster  
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Stephanie O’Gorman  
Lesley Dellagana  
Helen Wooldridge  
Lena Barrett  
Stephen Pittam

The judging panel for the  
International Service Human Rights  
Awards:

- Bryan Sanderson CBE
- Marika Freris, Galliard  
Healthcare Communications
- Candy Whittome
- James Savage, Amnesty  
International
- Professor the Baroness Afshar  
OBE, University of York

The judging panel for the  
International Service Yorkshire Region  
Awards:

- Margaret Sentamu
- Julia Lewis, Joseph Rowntree  
Foundation
- Michele Miller
- Chris Green
- Claire Bennett, Common Purpose



International Service is an international  
development charity.

We work in Latin America, Africa, and  
the Middle East.

Our goal is to support the most  
excluded and impoverished people to  
build a more equal society. We do this  
by supporting people to understand  
and exercise their human rights so that  
they can improve their lives, and the  
lives of those around them.

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