



Evaluation of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels in Graz (Austria) – Category 2

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Final Draft Report

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Abstract

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in Graz, Austria as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre. Conducted between March and June 2025, the evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach following the Terms of Reference that were based on the 2019 Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the Auspices of UNESCO (40 C/79) and the OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, autonomy) and included cross-cutting themes aligned with UNESCO's strategic priorities. Methods included extensive desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs), a focus group discussion (FGD), and a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) to investigate the Centre's operations from its establishment as a C2C in 2020 until early 2025.

The evaluation certifies the Centre's relevance to UNESCO's strategic programme objectives and expected results given its credibility and close alignment with UNESCO's fields of action, notably those addressed by SHS. The evaluation assesses the Centre as highly effective in achieving its objectives, consistently with delivering impactful projects, and confirms its technical added value in advancing human rights implementation at the local level. It highlights the Centre's role in translating international human rights frameworks into locally adapted tools and platforms, such as the ECCAR Equality Toolkit, the Human Rights Go Local (HRGL) Academy and Outcome Documents, and collaborative efforts in the Arab States and Africa. While the Centre has developed significant networks and expertise in Europe, the evaluation identifies the need for broader geographic reach and stronger inclusion of marginalised groups in programme design and evaluation. The Centre's lean but efficient governance model, anchored in strong cooperation with the University of Graz, the Foundation, and public authorities, enables robust delivery, though some areas (e.g. visibility, strategic outreach, staff workload, and coordination mechanisms) could benefit from further development.

To strengthen the Centre's impact and sustainability, the evaluation provides several operational and strategic recommendations, including enhancing regional engagement beyond Europe, fostering co-creation with local rights-holders, pursuing the formalisation of partnerships and feedback loops, improving visibility, and expanding knowledge-sharing efforts across UNESCO's broader ecosystem. Overall, the evaluation supports the renewal of the Centre's status as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team wishes to thank the Centre's staff for their comments on this report. All the comments and suggestions offered by them were duly reflected in the report, as appropriate.

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Acronyms

ALGA	African Local Governance Academy
C2C	Category 2 Centre
CoE	Council of Europe
ECCAR	European Coalition of Cities Against Racism
ETC	European Teaching and Research Centre for Human Rights
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GCHR	Global Campus of Human Rights
GDHRNet	Global Digital Human Rights Network
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRGL	Human Rights: Go Local
ICCAR	International Coalition of Cities Against Racism
IR	Inception Report
KII	Key Informant Interview
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
RWI	Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
SHS	Social and Human Sciences
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Executive Summary

Background.

The International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in Graz, Austria, was officially established as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre (C2C) following a formal request by the Austrian government in 2016 and the signing of an agreement with UNESCO in 2019, which entered into force in September 2020. The Centre builds upon the ETC's 25 years of expertise and experience in human rights research and capacity-building in Graz and Austria more broadly. As a UNESCO C2C, the Graz Centre is mandated to support the implementation of international human rights standards at the local and regional levels. Its work is aligned with UNESCO's strategic objectives, particularly in:

- **Capacity building:** Providing technical assistance and training to local and regional governments, supporting them in human-rights-based policymaking and implementation.
- **Research & knowledge production:** Conducting interdisciplinary research on human rights mainstreaming at the local level, including monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- **Clearing-house functions:** Systematically collecting, analysing, and disseminating best practices in local human rights implementation, enabling peer learning among cities and regions.
- **Cooperation & networking:** Building partnerships with international and regional organizations, UN agencies, academic institutions, and city networks (such as ICCAR, UCLG, and the Conference of Human Rights Cities).

The Centre operates under a unique governance model, reflecting the complexity of its institutional history. It is built on two key entities: (1) the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz), the legal and operational entity, responsible for research, training, and project implementation; (2) the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, the financial and governing entity, which oversees funding and strategic direction.

Evaluation objectives.

The external evaluation assesses the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in Graz, Austria. The evaluation was conducted between March and June 2025 to determine the Centre's performance, its contribution to UNESCO's strategic priorities, and its alignment with the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for C2Cs, in the view of the renewal decision of the Centre's C2C status under the auspices of UNESCO.

Methodology.

Adopting a mixed-method approach, the evaluation design was based on a reconstruction of the Centre's Theory of Change (ToC) and built around an assessment aligned with UNESCO's Evaluation Policy, the 2019 Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the Auspices of UNESCO and the OECD-DAC criteria: relevance, internal and external coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness, as well as autonomy and cross-cutting themes regarding its clearing house function. Key data collection methods included:

1. **In-depth document review:** A comprehensive analysis of the Centre's documents, including project reports, financial reports, work plans, and UNESCO strategies and initiatives, provided foundational context and initial insights into programme activities and outcomes and their alignment with UNESCO objectives.
2. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Conducted with 39 stakeholders, these interviews

encompassed the Centre's management and staff, UNESCO partners, and key external partners and beneficiaries such as government officials, human rights educators, and members of civil society. Approximately 60% of the interviews were conducted remotely, with in-person sessions facilitated by the local evaluation expert to ensure accessibility.

3. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** A FGD was held with a group of trainers, lecturers, and implementers of the Centre's activities, gaining insight on the different experiences depending on the project and the geographic area.
4. **Field mission:** A five-day visit to Graz and Vienna from the 24th to the 28th of March 2025 enabled an in-depth analysis of the Centre's activities, through the conduct of KIIs, and on-site observations.

Challenges encountered included the reduced application of some data collection methods (e.g., FGD, cancelled benchmarking). These were mitigated through adaptive strategies, such as leveraging a significant number of stakeholders involved, focusing on the qualitative insights from the interviews, and a thorough analysis of documents and platforms beyond those provided.

Findings and conclusions.

Relevance. The Centre's activities align closely with UNESCO's SHS outcomes, as set out in strategic documents such as the Medium-term Strategy 2022-2029 (41C/4, hereafter MTS) and the Roadmap Against Racism (SHS/2021/PI/H/6), especially in advancing inclusive education, anti-discrimination, and lifelong learning. Through tools like the Human Rights School and the GUARANTEED project, the Centre localises human rights effectively and supports SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda. Its work is also aligned with UNESCO's Global Priorities on Africa and Gender Equality, while also providing space for improvement in terms of gender mainstreaming. The Centre translates international standards into municipal action, with strong impact through tools, training, and the HRGL Academy. Given that representation gaps exist, particularly concerning marginalized groups, the Centre has a key role to play in closing these gaps and promoting a human rights-based approach at the local level.

External coherence. The Centre engages effectively with global networks like ICCAR, UCLG, and UN agencies, co-developing impactful tools and promoting peer learning across regions. Its Human Rights Go Local Academy (HRGL) fosters strategic dialogue with partners including OHCHR, UN-Habitat, and the EU FRA (Agency for Fundamental Rights). Locally, strong collaboration with the City and University of Graz and the Styria government supports its role as a regional-international connector. While praised for its convening power and outputs, stakeholders suggest having a broader global outreach and a stronger strategic coordination. Overall, the Centre supports UNESCO outcomes as captured in the MTS and the biennial programme (42C/5) through inclusive, structured partnerships.

Internal coherence. The Centre maintains a well-defined internal structure, with clear roles and responsibilities among the governing bodies, Foundation, and Project Commission, which facilitates effective decision-making and project implementation. While the integration of various components ensures cohesion, some partners and beneficiaries express confusion about the Centre's complex governance model. This uncertainty is not reflected internally, however, as the staff clearly distinguish the different governance structures and the Centre has a strict

separate policy for ETC projects that are not aligned with the Centre's mandate and therefore do not draw on its funds and resources. Moreover, the responsive staff and efficient coordination ensure smooth operations and successful outcomes in human rights projects.

Effectiveness. The Centre is highly effective in achieving its objectives, evidenced by consistent delivery of impactful projects, particularly in human rights capacity-building, interdisciplinary research, network and collaboration. Its alignment with UNESCO's strategic goals strengthens its credibility and expands its network. While resource limitations occasionally constrain its scope, the Centre's focused approach, leveraging both internal and external funding, has allowed it to maintain a significant influence in promoting human rights at local, regional, and national levels.

Efficiency. The Centre's governance is efficient, ensuring smooth operations and robust accountability despite its structural complexity remaining insufficiently clear to some external partners. Close cooperation between the Centre and the UNESCO Chair enhances communication, and the staff's effective management of partnerships contributes to achieving objectives. However, limited staff capacity leads to high workloads, and increased visibility and resource allocation are needed to expand its scope. While the Centre operates with limited resources, its efficiency in delivering impactful projects remains notable.

Autonomy. The Centre enjoys significant political and operational autonomy, supported by a robust governance structure that balances local government involvement with independent decision-making. It benefits from clear legal and financial autonomy through its Foundation, ensuring stable funding and minimizing external political influence. A clear separation between the Centre's work and ETC work outside the Centre's mandate mean that funds and resources are also clearly separated, ensuring the ETC can act as an independent entity when required. This autonomy allows the Centre to maintain long-term human rights goals without political or external interference. However, reliance on key individual staff might pose risks for continuity and autonomy in case of staff turnover, highlighting the need for further institutional sustainability.

Cross-cutting themes. The Centre has established a clearing house for collecting, analysing, and disseminating human rights practices, particularly at the city level, through tools like the HRGL series and the European Yearbook of Human Rights. Its work supports municipal actors with evidence-based guidance and fosters peer learning across various networks. However, visibility could be improved. By expanding its communication tools and strategy to new targeted groups, the Centre could expand its range of action and further its alignment with UNESCO's Global Priority Africa. Furthermore, improving its visibility to beneficiaries already in their roster could help to expand awareness of the Centre outside the human rights field.

Recommendations.

The evaluation proposes the following recommendations, developed in consultation with the relevant data and the evaluation's team expertise.

1. Adopt a predetermined strategy to guide the Centre's work plans and project implementation towards its strategic outcomes, including geographical focus according to UNESCO priorities.
2. Strengthen participation of marginalised groups in programme design and evaluation.

3. Consolidate strategic coordination with UNESCO Field Offices and other Category 2 Centres.
4. Operationalise research-to-policy translation throughout targeted outputs, notably beyond Europe.
5. Reinforce visibility and communication to expand stakeholder engagement.
6. Enhance the resource mobilisation strategy.
7. Continue to safeguard the Centre's collaborations and network by institutionalising partnerships.
8. Systematise monitoring the local use of clearing house outputs.
9. Reinforce support to gender equality with a pointed strategy.

Management Response

(To be integrated upon receipt from UNESCO HQ)

Overall Management Response	
Recommendations	Management response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Adopt a predetermined strategy to guide the Centre’s work plans and project implementation towards its strategic outcomes, including geographical focus according to UNESCO priorities.</p> <p>While the Centre successfully implements a wide range of projects, the selection process does not always follow a linear strategy. We recognise that the Centre’s project selection relies on calls for applications that do not follow a foreseeable pattern, yet we suggest that the Centre should define a predetermined strategy as a guide to choosing applications. While the current process has proven to be effective, as the Centre evolves this predetermined strategy would help the Centre follow its long-term objectives when selecting projects in the short-term and to align itself with its ToC more concretely. This would further drive the Centre to impact its global objective to promote and support human rights at the local level, increasing its strategic coherence and driving its funds allocation, especially extra-budgetary funds. This strategic orientation should also inform the Centre’s geographic outreach. Although the Centre has a strong presence and network within Europe, its activities are less evenly distributed outside the continent, leaving some room to improve its impact on UNESCO’s universal mandate and global priorities. Many of the Centre’s tools and methodologies are recognised as adaptable and context-responsive, yet their application in non-European regions can be optimised. To reinforce global inclusivity and better align with UNESCO’s international scope, the Centre’s strategy should strengthen engagement in underrepresented regions, notably Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.</p> <p>Suggested Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflect on its strategy and vision, which may include an updated ToC, identifying key, practical objectives that would guide project selection in the future; ● Map the current projects and activities as well as the countries of intervention to help define strategic objectives it wants to pursue; ● Establish regional focal points or partnerships with universities, human rights networks, or UNESCO Field Offices in target regions to contextualise programme content and ensure cultural and political relevance in alignment with its global scope; 	<p>Accepted/Partially Accepted/Not Accepted</p> <p>(Description of response)</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>The renewal of the Centre’s mandate as a Category 2 Centre will certainly allow the opportunity to re-negotiate the overall programme lines and the selection criteria for projects in order to fulfil the Centre’s mandate and the Foundation’s purposes. Stakeholder cooperation is one of the Centre’s work programme chapters. It includes the establishment of new stable and long-term cooperative arrangements with International (and regional) Organizations, and local authorities’ networks, as well as the continuation of existing partnerships. In order to broaden its outreach and, at same time, to contextualise it at the local level, these partnerships are seen as regional hubs and multipliers. A core capacity in this respect is the UNESCO’s network of partners, i.e. Chairs and C2C Centres, as well as the International and Regional Coalitions of Sustainable and Inclusive Cities. The Centre has been negotiating and cooperating with institutions and networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America on the regional implementation of its programmes, and will certainly continue its efforts in this respect.</p> <p>Accepted (UNESCO SHS)</p> <p>UNESCO SHS notes the good work done by the Centre in accordance with the objectives set in the 2019 Agreement and through the implementation of its annual workplans. UNESCO HQ is ready to contribute to a discussion on strategy and vision, including the development of a corresponding ToC, that builds on lessons learned and good practice from the Centre’s work and to share in this context its own tools and experiences. In this regard, UNESCO HQ notes with appreciation the emphasis on its global priorities in recommendations 1 and 9 and the positive response on the part of the Centre’s management.</p> <p>UNESCO SHS notes the Centre’s efforts to expand its global work and welcomes dialogue to design a systematic and realistic programme that enhances engagement in underrepresented regions, particularly Africa in line with UNESCO’s global priorities, but also Asia-Pacific and Latin America, while considering available resources and maintaining flexibility.</p> <p>Furthermore, UNESCO SHS will facilitate at the</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversify further the roster of speakers and contributors in core events and publications to better reflect regional diversity and lived experiences. <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre and UNESCO SHS <i>Time frame:</i> by 31 December 2027</p>	<p><i>Centre's request and in line with its own programmatic priorities contacts with UNESCO Field Offices as well as other affiliated institutions such as UNESCO Chairs.</i></p>
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Recommendation 2

Strengthen the participation of marginalised groups in programme design and evaluation.

The Centre’s outputs are broadly aligned with human rights-based principles, particularly in terms of promoting inclusion, non-discrimination, and accountability. While the efforts to include all marginalised individuals as part of the centre’s scope to promote human rights across different groups are commended, the evaluation found some areas that still require strengthening. Although the Centre’s main target is local government representatives, activities should employ participatory methods that allow marginalised communities to be involved and shape programmes that ultimately affect them. Although the Centre is often sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups, evidence suggests that representation of these groups in needs assessments, design phases, and feedback loops could be further improved. Addressing this gap would not only enhance the legitimacy and responsiveness of the Centre’s work but also support the co-creation of more contextually grounded and sustainable solutions.

Suggested Action Points

- Include and facilitate the participation of grassroots civil society and marginalised group representatives in consultation processes and HRGL participation, with efforts to diversify the speakers with a more participatory approach;
- Develop inclusive engagement protocols and integrate them into project design;
- Reinforce its needs assessment methodologies to systematically capture the experiences and aspirations of rights-holders at the local level, integrating community-driven indicators and participatory tools;
- Continue building partnerships with local advocacy organisations or networks that have trusted access to these communities, to improve outreach and feedback loops;
- Adopt a more partnership-based (less customer-based) approach by positioning rights-holders, marginalized groups, and civil society organizations as active collaborators and sources of expertise, such as involving them as speakers, co-creators, or facilitators in relevant activities.

Addressed to: the Centre

Time frame: by 31 December 2026

Accepted

Where possible, groups at risk of being marginalised have been approached to participate in whatever role they choose for themselves in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Centre’s programmes and projects. The Centre will seek to increase the overall diversity of inclusion in consultation processes and HRGL participation along with efforts to diversify speakers. As appropriate, partnerships with local advocacy groups and rights-holders will be established or continued in the next term of its mandate. The actual engagement in partnership-based relations depends on the resources which will be available for this purpose.

<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Consolidate strategic coordination with UNESCO field offices and category 2 centres</p> <p>While this evaluation commends the Centre for its cooperation with UNESCO through its field offices, Chairs, and other Category 2 Centres, it has found that these interactions often remain ad hoc. This limits the potential for long-term strategic alignment and reduces opportunities to leverage complementarities across the broader UNESCO system. Strengthening structured cooperation would enhance programme coherence and increase the collective impact of UNESCO’s decentralised human rights programming, especially in underrepresented regions beyond Europe. It is nonetheless important to note that this recommendation is not only directed at the Centre but also at UNESCO’s field offices and C2Cs, given that strategic coordination requires efforts from both sides.</p> <p>Suggested Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Map the comparative mandates, tools, and geographical strengths of thematically related Category 1 and 2 institutes and centres, with a view to identifying areas of complementarity, and facilitating cross-centre learning on HRBA localisation and capacity-building methodologies; ● Establish regular strategic planning dialogues between the Centre and relevant Field Offices (e.g., through biannual coordination calls) to align on programming priorities, thematic focuses, and regional entry points; ● Develop joint work plans or MoUs with select Field Offices and centres where objectives align (e.g., on gender-responsive governance, urban inclusion, or local-level SDG implementation), ensuring shared ownership and clearer division of labour; ● Leverage UNESCO HQ support to institutionalise these mechanisms across centres. <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre and UNESCO SHS <i>Time frame:</i> by 31 December 2027</p>	<p><i>Accepted, with the support of UNESCO SHS</i></p> <p><i>The Centre cooperates with UNESCO’s field offices, Chairs and Category 2 Centres on a regular basis. However, the realisation of projects depends on available resources and capacities, as well as on the programmatic decisions of these entities. The Centre has cooperated with UNESCO field offices in Egypt, and has approached field offices in Kenya and Morocco for cooperation. Cooperation with the field office in Bangkok and with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace (MGIEP), a Category 1 Centre in India, have been envisaged. The Centre, when re-mandated, will establish a dialogue with UNESCO HQ to draft a cooperation plan which will include the form and envisaged extent of collaboration with Field Offices, Chairs and Centres. The Centre’s HRGL Academy will continue, given its considerable success and positive assessment by the Evaluation Report. On this occasion, the Centre will facilitate cross-centre learning on HRBA localisation and capacity-building methodologies, as well as aligning objectives, particularly on gender-responsive governance, urban inclusion, local-level SDGs implementation, and ensure shared ownership.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted (UNESCO SHS)</i></p> <p><i>The Centre already cooperates with UNESCO field offices, Chairs, and Category 2 Centres, and UNESCO HQ welcomes the opportunity to assist the Centre in doing so systematically after renewal of its mandate. The Centre has already approached field offices in Kenya and Morocco and cooperation is also envisaged with the field office in Bangkok and the Category 1 Centre in India. UNESCO HQ welcomes these approaches and will endeavour to assist in ensuring these programmatic relationships are created and sustained. UNESCO HQ welcomes a dialogue with the Centre to establish a cooperation plan which will include the form and envisaged extent of cooperation with field offices, Chairs and Centres in light of programmatic decisions of UNESCO’s governing bodies and available resources.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Operationalise research-to-policy translation through targeted outputs, notably beyond Europe</p> <p>The Centre demonstrates a strong capacity for generating evidence-based knowledge and facilitating academic-practitioner dialogue. However, beneficiaries’ opinions vary on its potential to inform concrete municipal decision-making, particularly beyond Europe, suggesting that there is still room to strengthen the translation of research outputs into policy-relevant tools tailored to the operational needs of local authorities. While its toolkits and HRGL outcomes are valued</p>	<p><i>Accepted</i></p> <p><i>Whenever possible the Centre establishes contacts and cooperation with local authorities and other local level actors in order to implement human rights capacity building. One strategic framework is the create-test-standardise cycle of human-rights-based policy models created within the LABS! Chapter of the workplan. The Human Rights City Accreditation Hub within UNESCO’s Global Alliance is one of the strands directly translating international human rights agendas to the local level; another is ‘pathways of accountability’ through which a human rights-based approach to budgeting and public finance is applied.</i></p>

<p>for their depth, certain materials could more directly align with the political contexts, notably beyond Europe.</p> <p>Suggested Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold systematic scoping meetings to understand local needs, especially at the city level, including consultations with beneficiaries and policymakers to inform project relevance; ● Integrate structured peer-learning opportunities between cities (including stakeholders beyond mayors) following a partnership-based approach to leverage local knowledge and expertise, enabling the contextual adaptation of tools, particularly in settings where the Centre lacks in-depth familiarity; ● Continue formalizing feedback loops by documenting pilot applications of tools (e.g., in Graz or other partner cities), and refining them into standardized, adaptable resources for broader dissemination; ● Where relevant, position the Centre as a facilitator, mobilizing external expertise (especially from affected communities) and reinforcing efficiency in light of staffing and budgetary constraints; ● Constitute, in line with its clearing house function, a list of Human Rights Cities to be shared with partners cities and facilitate network creation; <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre <i>Time frame:</i> by 31 December 2027</p>	<p><i>The city-twinning projects are peer-learning formats, facilitated by the Centre. Different cities exchange and learn from each other on topics like participation by women in local politics, women’s participation in science, or facilities for girls in undertaking sports. Mutual learning is facilitated in the frame of the HRGL academy. UCLG took up maintenance of the network of human rights cities and the Centre is part of this network. A list of human rights cities to be shared with partners cities exists as part of that network. The Centre has established a cooperation on the HRGL academy, as well as on individual capacity building for human rights cities and those who want to become one.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Reinforce visibility and communication to expand stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Despite producing high-quality tools and convening well-regarded events, the Centre faces a few obstacles in its visibility for external audiences. Its profile tends to be more oriented towards individuals already in the field of human rights, constraining the Centre’s potential to scale its activities, attract new collaborations with local governments, and disseminate its outputs more widely, particularly in underrepresented regions internationally. Within its existing network, several stakeholders noted they had limited awareness of the Centre’s full range of activities, while others highlighted difficulties in navigating its digital platforms or accessing updates on recent outputs.</p> <p>Suggest Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquire staff to manage communication, potentially part-time depending on budgetary constrictions, in order to develop a comprehensive, gender-sensitive and inclusive outreach and visibility strategy that includes tailored stakeholder mapping, and content adapted to regional and thematic audiences; 	<p><i>Accepted</i></p> <p><i>The Centre will employ additional capacities for public relations. The PR strategy will be revised and adapted to new channels of communication and social media. Its social media campaigns on training for local authorities recorded around 100,000 clicks within one year; its youth/next generation platform records 50,000 users a year. The products and services will be advertised in a more visible way. Digital presentation will be reviewed as much as resources allow for. Translation tools will be applied wherever feasible, although we note this has become significantly easier and more effective in recent years through AI. Dissemination agreements will be concluded with all relevant partners, specifically with local level platforms, networks or associations, such as ICCAR, UCLG, ALGA, and the Congress. The Centre, together with its partners, is constantly looking to extend the circles of target groups by profound analyses. Partners are invited to support the analyses, as well as working as dissemination hubs. Further, the Centre collaborates in major events around the world, as the World Urban Forum, the World Human Rights City Forum, the Latin-American Forum on Human Rights, the Global Forum against Racism, organises its own academy with hundreds of participants each year.</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Upgrade its digital platforms, particularly the Centre and the HRGL websites, to ensure: 1) intuitive navigation, 2) timely updates on events, tools, and publications, 3) systematic translation to other languages (English, maybe French), 4) accessibility for persons with disabilities. ● Develop a communications strategy, which includes a review of the visibility strategy for its newsletters to ensure that they reach the expected audience: the newsletter targeting rights-holders and locals would benefit from including new partners and beneficiaries, and the newsletter destined for the international audiences could also include non-academic audiences. Such a plan should also explore additional opportunities to seek new partners and collaborators that might benefit from the knowledge and experience gained by the Centre and the city of Graz. ● Leverage UNESCO’s communication channels, including the SHS sector and regional Field Offices, to promote the Centre’s outputs more systematically to Member States, city networks, and civil society organizations and local communities; ● Continue disseminating its work through strategic city and human rights networks, such as UCLG, ICCAR, and ECCAR, using both targeted messaging and peer-sharing formats (e.g. case studies, webinars, testimonies), while also leveraging existing partnerships with their own network to increase the visibility of the Centre and of its activities. <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre <i>Time frame:</i> by 31 July 2027</p>	
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Enhance the resource mobilisation strategy</p> <p>The Centre’s ability to scale its activities and sustain engagement, particularly in non-European contexts, is constrained by its reliance on project-based funding and a lean staffing structure. While the Centre has effectively leveraged European funding instruments, these mechanisms often entail complex reporting obligations and relatively short funding cycles, which reduce flexibility and limit follow-up capacity.</p> <p>Suggested Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarify the current financing mechanisms, allowing partners and beneficiaries to understand how funding is obtained; ● Consider developing a more resource-based, systematic approach focused on long-term and flexible funding. This should include targeted donor mapping, and cultivating partnerships with donors that support multi-year, core funding; ● Adopt enhanced resource management or budgeting tools to track and obtain real-time feedback on the 	<p><i>Accepted</i></p> <p><i>If granted a renewed mandate, the Centre will set up a new resource mobilisation strategy including assets, project grants, development grants, service contracts and business contracts.</i></p>

<p>efficiency of its activities, facilitating the establishment of a clear resource mobilisation strategy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider pursuing co-financing arrangements with municipalities and UNESCO Field Offices, enabling shared human resources or joint project implementation in target regions. <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre <i>Time frame:</i> within 3-5 years</p>	
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Continue to safeguard the Centre’s collaborations and network by institutionalising partnerships</p> <p>As smaller institutions often require, the Centre has used the network of its staff to build a strong collaborative ecosystem, also using connections previously developed by the ETC prior to the C2C Agreement with UNESCO. Although these personalised relationships were necessary in the beginning to allow the Centre to gain a wider audience and recognition in its field, as an established institution it is important to tie these collaborations to the Centre rather than to individuals. And while efforts have been made in this direction, for instance through MoUs and joint action plans with recurring partners, there is still room to further protect the Centre’s partnerships. The Centre should put in place strategies to ensure its partnerships, even the more occasional ones, are institutionalised to insulate it from staff turnover or organisational change. The sustainability and scalability of the Centre’s work, particularly as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO, depend on more formalised and systematised partnership management.</p> <p>Suggest Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue formalising MoUs and joint action plans with recurring partners (e.g., cities, institutions, networks); ● Further develop the existing tools, including the centralised stakeholder database and contact registry, completing them with the project partners and other relevant contacts, and ensuring shared access among staff. This system would support coordinated communication, institutional memory, and reduce disruption during transitions; ● Consider developing a Partnership Plan to ensure continuity in partnerships and reaching out to beneficiaries in case of staff turnover. This plan would allow the Centre to ensure its legacy on the long term; ● Clarify and publicly communicate internal governance structures and roles, particularly the division of tasks and resources between the UNESCO Chair, the Foundation, and ETC – particularly the difference in funds provided to ETC and those reserved for the Centre’s Mandate. This would improve external understanding of the Centre’s entry points, clarify to 	<p><i>Accepted</i></p> <p><i>All relationships were built on professional functions, contact and collaboration. They do not and never did depend on personal relationships. However, we agree that safeguarding the Centre’s collaborations and partnerships is essential. MoUs exist with some partners and are regularly renewed if possible and necessary. Most of the established partnerships are contractually ensured.</i></p> <p><i>MoU with partners in Asia, Africa and Canada are planned and will be negotiated after the renewal of the Centre’s mandate.</i></p> <p><i>The existing stakeholder database is also available on the web, as well as in the annual report, and is updated regularly. We will take measures to assess its ease of use and visibility.</i></p>

<p>partners what entities they are collaborating with, and enhance transparency in engagement processes.</p> <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre <i>Time frame:</i> by 31 December 2028</p>	
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Systematise monitoring of the local use of clearing house outputs</p> <p>The Centre’s clearing house function is recognised for its scientific rigour and practical orientation. However, the extent to which these outputs inform local decision-making, especially in developing contexts, remains difficult to measure. Without systematic feedback mechanisms, it is challenging to assess the relevance, uptake, or adaptation of these tools by local actors.</p> <p>Suggested Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a lightweight, proportionate monitoring framework that captures how local authorities and practitioners engage with the Centre’s tools, training materials, and policy guidance. This could include follow-up surveys or structured feedback from Academy participants and toolkit users; • Collect and analyse case studies and user testimonies that document how specific HRGL outputs, such as toolkits or conference insights, have influenced local governance practices or informed concrete policy changes; • Integrate monitoring insights into the HRGL outcome documents and other dissemination channels, thereby creating a learning loop that reinforces the quality, relevance, and usability of future outputs. <p><i>Addressed to:</i> the Centre <i>Time frame:</i> by 31 December 2027</p>	<p><i>Accepted</i></p> <p><i>A monitoring framework will be elaborated and introduced to improve our means of learning from users about their experiences and receive their suggestions for amendments. In the framework of ICCAR, such reporting and user feedback loops have been developed and will be in place within the next academies.</i></p> <p><i>Case studies are of utmost importance as our “brand” is By Cities For Cities – all toolkits build on real cases selected by the criteria of convincing solutions on challenges faced by more than five other municipalities. This approach will be strengthened and continued.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>Reinforce support to gender equality with a pointed strategy</p> <p>The Centre adopts a HRBA in its very structure and in all its activities, projects, operations. Regarding Global Priority Gender Equality, the Centre has integrated a gender lens into multiple outputs, including the Toolkit for Equality and Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities, with specific chapters focused on the inclusion of women and girl.¹ The Centre also collaborated with the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) to conduct tailored workshops and consultations, which informed these toolkits and ensured</p>	<p><i>Accepted, with remark:</i></p> <p><i>Systematic and mainstreamed gender-disaggregated analysis of all projects is annually reported in the C2C annual activity reports 2020-2024, submitted to the digital reporting platform maintained by UNESCO HQs.</i></p>

¹ Toolkit publications 2021–2023

participatory development. These initiatives contribute to UNESCO's objective of empowering local actors to institutionalise gender equality across policy and planning processes, especially in regions where systemic gaps persist. However, the promotion of gender equality by the Centre could be more structurally mainstreamed throughout all activities – including European projects. Other activities and structures occasionally lack a systematic integration of gender-specific considerations.

Suggested Action Points

- Develop a gender equality strategy embedded in the HRBA that is based on a systemic consideration of gender, includes gender-specific objectives, indicators and monitoring systems (especially when cooperating with the local communities and affected women and girls);
- Conduct a gender analysis to assess the contexts of the activities, collect information on how genders are affected differently, and create a baseline on gender disparities, needs and priorities;
- Mainstream the results of the gender analysis throughout the complete programming cycle and all areas of work (capacity-building, interdisciplinary research, and networking);
- Collect and expose disaggregated data by sex in its research and clearing house function;
- Adopt specific tools to promote gender equality such as UNESCO's Gender Equality Tools, UN Women's Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results, and the European's Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Mainstreaming Cycle.

Addressed to: the Centre

Time frame: by 31 December 2027

1. Introduction

Background.

The International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in Graz, Austria, was officially established as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre (C2C) following a formal request by the Austrian government in 2016 and the signing of an agreement with UNESCO in 2019, which entered into force in September 2020. The Centre builds upon 25 years of expertise and experience in human rights research and capacity-building in Graz and Austria more broadly.

The idea of a human rights centre in Graz dates back two decades, when stakeholders recognized the need for a specialized institution focusing on human rights training and education at the local level. While Austria already had other human rights centres in Vienna and Salzburg, the initiative in Graz sought to fill a gap by focusing on training and education. An association – the ETC – was first created under Austrian law as an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO), separate from the University of Graz. However, their close collaboration led to a dual structure within the ETC, combining academic expertise from the University with the operational flexibility of an NGO.

To scale up the ETC's expertise, a decision was made to transform the Centre into a UNESCO C2C. However, the ETC could not, by law, transform into another legal entity, thus the C2C became part of the ETC's dual structure, working in symbiosis. This change was catalysed by Graz's self-declaration as a Human Rights City and the willingness of the City of Graz and the regional government to finance a dedicated institution. The resulting structure ensured both institutional independence and financial sustainability, enabling the Centre to operate effectively within UNESCO's global framework.

Governance.

The Centre operates under a unique governance model, reflecting the complexity of its institutional history. It is built on two key entities:

- 1. The European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz):** The legal and operational entity, responsible for research, training, and project implementation. Governed by a General Assembly and a Board, ETC Graz provides the core expertise and human resources behind the Centre's activities. Being the original source of knowledge and expertise, the ETC undertakes operational activities both within and outside the C2C's mandate. The Evaluation sought to verify that adequate systems exist to ensure that ETC operational work does not draw on the C2C's funds and resources.
- 2. The Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels:** The financial and governing entity, which oversees funding and strategic direction. It includes representatives from UNESCO, the Austrian government, the City of Graz, and the regional government of Styria.

These two entities are linked through a Project Commission, which ensures coordination and decision-making between the operational and financial structures. The Director of the ETC Graz also serves as the Director of the UNESCO C2C Centre, maintaining continuity between

research, capacity-building, and international cooperation efforts.

This governance model provides financial stability by allowing access to diverse funding sources with its NGO and academic background (from UNESCO, the city, and the region), while the NGO's legal framework ensures flexibility and credibility with certain donors.

Mandate and strategic priorities.

As a UNESCO C2C, the Graz Centre is mandated to support the implementation of international human rights standards at the local and regional levels. Its work is aligned with UNESCO's strategic objectives, particularly in:

- **Capacity-building:** Providing technical assistance and training to local and regional governments, supporting them in human-rights-based policymaking and implementation.
- **Research & knowledge production:** Conducting interdisciplinary research on human rights mainstreaming at the local level, including monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- **Clearing-house functions:** Systematically collecting, analysing, and disseminating best practices in local human rights implementation, enabling peer learning among cities and regions.
- **Cooperation & networking:** Building partnerships with international and regional organizations, UN agencies, academic institutions, and city networks (such as ICCAR, UCLG, and the Conference of Human Rights Cities).

Since its establishment, the Centre has achieved significant milestones, including work in 48 countries, 38 research and cooperation projects, 124 publications, and the creation of key resources such as the Toolkit for Equality and the Human Rights Go Local Academy and Conference series.

Evaluation objective, use, scope and parameters.

The main objective of the evaluation is to assess: 1) the Centre's performance, and its contribution to UNESCO's strategic programme objectives; and associated SHS strategies, priorities and themes; 2) the conformity of the agreement concerning the Centre with the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for C2C under the auspices of UNESCO. The findings were intended to inform the Director General's recommendations to UNESCO's Executive Board for the renewal of the Centre's designation as a C2C under the auspices of UNESCO. The conclusions shall be shared with the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Centre and will be disseminated on the website of SHS Sector of UNESCO.

The evaluators assessed the evaluation questions indicated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), concerning the effectiveness, relevance, external coherence, internal coherence, efficiency, autonomy and cross-cutting themes (specifically on contributions to the SDG 11 and New Urban Agenda; the implementation of HRBA, and the dissemination of Human Rights practices. The evaluation specifically focused on 1) the Centre's contribution to UNESCO's 42 C/5 expected outcomes in the SHS Programme and MTS, 2) the collaboration with relevant actors (UNESCO entities, the Council of Europe, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, OHCHR, and other UN agencies), 3) impact of the Centre's governance structure on its effectiveness and goal achievement.

2. Evaluation approach and methodology

Scope of evaluation.

The evaluation was conducted from March 25, 2025, to June 30, 2025, adopting a mixed methodology approach. It covers the Centre's operations between its establishment as a C2C in September 2020 until early 2025. The evaluation design was based on a reconstruction of the Centre's Theory of Change (ToC) (see Annex 2). The main evaluation questions aligned with an evaluation framework, stemming from the OECD/DAC criteria but adapted to this case (see Annex 3):

- **Relevance:** the extent to which the UNESCO Centre and its outputs are aligned with UNESCO's strategic programme objectives and global priorities, as well as their insertion in global development agendas for inclusive and sustainable cities.
- **External coherence:** relating to the Centre's cooperation and position within international, regional and local governments, organisations, and networks.
- **Internal coherence:** the Centre's coordination with UNESCO and other C2C.
- **Effectiveness** of the Centre's programmes and activities to achieve its objectives.
- **Efficiency:** functional performance including resource allocation and management (financial and human), governance, organisation and accountability of the Centre.
- **Autonomy** within its territory to carry out its activities.
- **Cross-cutting themes:** the capacity of the Centre to set up a clearing house for good human rights practices at the local level.

Stakeholder engagement and consultation.

The process for stakeholder engagement and consultation involved several key steps. The process began with careful planning and scoping to define the evaluation's objectives, scope, and purpose, and to identify relevant stakeholders. A stakeholder mapping was prepared and presented as a list of the Centre's key stakeholders. A tailored engagement strategy and communication plan were then developed to involve stakeholders effectively. Various engagement activities, such as interviews, in person and online were conducted to gather input and feedback. Each activity was designed in a way to maximise the participation, with regular reminders set for all data collection methods. Finally, each data collection method was tailored to the types of informants (e.g., questionnaires prepared for each type of informants and the focus group, enabling language preferences, etc.). The evaluation adopted the following methods:

Desk study and documentation review. Starting from the inception phase, a thorough review of the documentation provided by the Centre provided crucial contextualisation of its work, as well as a first body of evidence to answer evaluation questions and an orientation on existing documentation gaps to further orient data collection. The documents consulted during the desk study phase can be found in annexes.

Semi-structured interviews. The main source of qualitative data for the evaluation were interviews with key actors. Through interviews the evaluation gathered the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of stakeholders both within and outside the Centre. In the inception phase, a scoping interview was conducted with the two key staff from the Centre to better contextualise the evaluation and provide a more solid understanding of the Centre. The rest of the interviews were conducted according to semi-structured protocols derived from the evaluation matrix and tailored to specific types of interviewees.

The evaluation conducted a total of 30 interviews, of which 24 involved key informants and 6 were grouped ones, and one focus group, overall reaching 42 stakeholders (22 men and 20 women). Approximately 60% of the interviews were conducted remotely, while the remaining 40% were conducted by a local evaluation expert in person both in Graz and Vienna. These interviews encompassed the Centre’s management and staff, UNESCO partners, founders, and key external partners and beneficiaries such as government officials, human rights educators, and members of civil society. The choice of interviewees to involve in the evaluation was coordinated in collaboration with the Centre and driven by two considerations: on one side, it was important for the review to adequately engage with all voices, including a broad range of actors that contributed to the activities; on the other hand, given time and political constraints interviews had to capture the points of view of those actors that are most informed about the processes, themes and issues on the programme.

Focus Group Discussion. To gather perceptions on specific topics, the evaluation also facilitated a Focus Group Discussion with selected trainers, lecturers, and implementers involved in specific and varied activities within the Centre’s work. Due to different geographical locations of the invitees, this discussion was held virtually.

The table below summarises the types of stakeholders reached by the evaluation by data collection method.

Table 1 – Actors involved, by data collection methods

Stakeholder group	Scoping interviews	Semi-structured interviews	FGDs
UNESCO Partners	-	1	-
Centre staff and management	1	5	-
Founders	-	4	-
Partners/stakeholders	-	10	-
Trainers, lecturers, implementers	-	-	1
Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	-	10	-
Total	1 interview	30 interviews (39 informants)	1 FGD (3 informants)

Data analysis.

The data collected from document reviews was triangulated with the semi-structured Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) and the FGD by both source and respondent type. Data was analysed in alignment with the evaluation questions and methodology that had been developed. To strengthen the findings, the evaluation team examined the whole body of evidence gathered during the assignment and produced a synthesis and overall assessment based on the evaluation questions.

A systematic approach to triangulation allowed us to determine whether findings from various sources were conflicting, if they could be influenced by other factors, or if they contradicted lessons learned elsewhere. Throughout the evaluation process, and in the final report, a clear distinction was maintained between opinions, expert analysis, and objectively verifiable

evidence. By applying the criteria outlined in the evaluation matrix, the team interpreted the findings and formulated responses to each evaluation question. Conclusions were drawn based on the evidence gathered, and any contradicting evidence was explicitly addressed in the report.

Limitations of the methodology and challenges met.

Despite the robustness of the data collected, an important limitation was faced during the evaluation, namely the limited participation during the FGD. Originally intended to have 6 to 8 participants, scheduling and timing issues reduced the participants to 3. This challenge was nonetheless mitigated by the information leveraged from KIIs and by the difference in geographical areas of work from the FGD participants, ensuring a diversity of input.

Compliance with UNESCO standards.

The evaluation complied with the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029 and UNEG norms and standards, on planning, design, management and resources, considering parameters such as relevance, resources, timing, knowledge gaps, evaluability risks, replication or scaling up, accountability, joint and system-wide evaluation, by mobilising adequate financial resources and evaluators with adequate competences, by following robust mechanisms of quality assurance and by ensuring an effective evaluation dissemination and use through a clear presentation of the findings for learning, accountability and decision-making.

A Quality assessment checklist for evaluation report² was verified during the preparation of the report, with limitations observed concerning the Gender and Human Rights section, due to the absence of systematic sex-disaggregated data on these key thematic areas. Moreover, the IOS Evaluation Office will review the final report.

The evaluation methodology explicitly addresses issues of gender equality and Human Rights.

The evaluation approach, methodology and data collection and analysis methods are gender responsive and appropriate for analysing the gender equality and inclusion issues identified in the scope. This included an approach where 1) the data collection was collected from a wide variety of stakeholders who can provide adequate knowledge on those aspects as part of the KIIs' list, as well as ensure balanced perspectives and fair representation of different points of views, including relevant gender specific and inclusion/exclusion questions on the evaluation matrix, interview guides, 2) gender data analysis was conducted where relevant.

² The criteria are Structure and Clarity of Reporting, Executive Summary, Design and Methodology, Reliability of Data, Findings and Analysis, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Meeting Needs.

3. Findings

1.1. Relevance

Finding 1: The Centre’s programmes and activities demonstrate a significant contribution to UNESCO’s 42C/5 expected outcomes articulated in the SHS Programme and the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), particularly in advancing human rights education, promoting gender equality, and supporting inclusive governance at the local level. The Centre notably contributes to UNESCO’s 42C/5 SHS Outcome 1 and Outcome 7.³

- Under **Outcome 1**, the Centre has promoted inclusive education and lifelong learning through a range of capacity-building activities tailored to local needs. Examples include targeted training for elected councillors, municipal staff, youth workers, and educators, as well as the development of strategic plans by Comorian stakeholders during workshops focused on human rights and sports for inclusion.⁴ Initiatives such as the Human Rights School (reaching 1,800 students) and the Know Your Rights youth platform further illustrate efforts to embed human rights education in formal and informal learning environments, aligned with the SHS focus on lifelong learning.⁵
- In relation to **Outcome 7**, the Centre’s actions directly address the promotion of inclusion and the fight against discrimination. The GUARANTEED project contributes significantly to breaking down stereotypes, building trust between Roma and non-Roma communities, and fostering participation through sports-based activities.⁶ The Centre also supported the development and dissemination of key policy tools such as the Toolkit for Equality and the ECCAR Online City Reporting Tool, enhancing local governments’ ability to measure and address racism and discrimination. Concurrently, its research and engagement in initiatives such as the Global Digital Human Rights Network and the NoHate@WebStyria project strengthen local responses to hate speech and digital discrimination.⁷ Interviewed stakeholders confirmed the practical and context-responsive nature of these tools and initiatives, particularly for local governments seeking operational strategies for anti-discrimination. Overall, the Centre's programmatic work shows significant and targeted alignment with the SHS MTS outcomes, reinforcing UNESCO’s normative agenda at the local level through both innovation and applied impact.

Finding 2: The Centre’s outputs show a clear and consistent alignment with UNESCO’s two global priorities, Africa and Gender Equality, through targeted and context-specific initiatives.

- Global Priority Africa: The Centre has established long-standing partnerships with African stakeholders, notably the African Local Government Academy (ALGA) and UCLG-Africa, to strengthen human rights implementation at the local level. Activities such as capacity-building workshops for African municipalities, training of local officials (e.g., in Comoros), and the development of a Toolkit for African Cities contribute directly to the localisation of human rights in the region.⁸ Moreover, strategic academic partnerships, such as with

³ [UNESCO 42C/5 Document](#)

⁴ Centre documentation; Workshop Comoros

⁵ Annual Report 2024

⁶ Annual Reports; GUARANTEE Final Report

⁷ UNESCO Chair reports; SHS documentation

⁸ Work Programmes 2020–2024; Interviews

Ethiopian universities under the Advanced Academic Partnership for Legal and Human Rights Education (AAPLHRE), demonstrate a commitment to sustainable institutional strengthening through research and training.⁹

- **Global Priority Gender Equality:** The Centre has integrated a gender lens into multiple outputs, including the Toolkit for Equality and Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities, with specific chapters focused on the inclusion of women and girl.¹⁰ The Centre also collaborated with the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) to conduct tailored workshops and consultations, which informed these toolkits and ensured participatory development. These initiatives contribute to UNESCO's objective of empowering local actors to institutionalise gender equality across policy and planning processes, especially in regions where systemic gaps persist. It is appreciated that the Centre emphatically promotes gender equality in its core principles. However, the absence of a systematic approach to include gender mainstreaming based on a gender strategy including gender analyses in the Centre's overall work can be noted.

Finding 3: The Centre has made meaningful contributions toward empowering local and regional authorities to mainstream human rights and gender equality, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly SDG 11, which calls for inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities, and with relevant commitments to the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

The Centre has developed and disseminated practical tools, such as the ECCAR Toolkit for Equality, and provided methodological support for local human rights action plans, including through the Human Rights Go Local Conference and Academy series. These initiatives have offered concrete guidance to municipalities on integrating human rights into urban governance frameworks and have emphasized participatory processes and inclusive.¹¹ This aligns with key principles of the NUA, such as inclusive urbanization, social cohesion, and participatory urban planning.¹² Furthermore, the Centre's sustained engagement with the Council of Europe and local governments, such as in Georgia, shows tangible influence in embedding rights-based approaches into local development plans and participatory democracy structures.¹³

Stakeholders consistently recognize the Centre's added value in translating international human rights norms into local action, particularly through tailored guidance for city officials and frontline public servants.

The national goal of the HRBA to implementation at the local level is wholly fulfilled to the extent that the Centre not only develops projects for Graz and the Steiermark but has a worldwide network through the academy and the toolkits it has developed, and the resulting recommendations can be applied in the sense of standards globally and at the local level. This is especially evident in initiatives like the Action project and the city twinning initiative with Hawassa, Ethiopia, where the Centre provided technical assistance on human rights-based governance. Several partners also noted the Centre's pragmatic approach, with outputs grounded in both academic research and operational realities of municipalities. This dual expertise has

⁹ Feasibility Study 2017; Annual Report 2024

¹⁰ Toolkit publications 2021–2023

¹¹ HRGL Outcome Documents 2021–2024; ECCAR collaboration

¹² NUA

¹³ Work Programme 2022; Interviews

enabled local administrations to identify structural challenges, design inclusive policies, and apply evidence-based methods for planning and monitoring. Notably, the Centre's publications and training activities promote the HRBA as a core element of municipal planning, resonating with both SDG 11 targets (e.g. 11.3 on participatory planning and 11.7 on inclusive public spaces) and NUA commitments to rights-based urban development.

Beyond technical contributions, the Centre plays a symbolic and structuring role in advancing the human rights city concept globally, building on Graz's long-standing engagement and its role as a model for rights-based local governance. The Centre's procedural design, particularly in the HRGL Academy, prioritises global-local exchange through curated, accessible formats and a focus on strategic implementation methods.

Nonetheless, while the Centre's efforts are largely seen as aligned with the goals of SDG 11 and the NUA, some partners called for broader geographic outreach beyond Europe to enhance global inclusivity and better reflect UNESCO's universal mandate.

Suggestions include establishing regional teams and adapting annual planning to localized contexts. While this points to a gap in operational reach, it does not detract from the Centre's strong conceptual and methodological contribution to embedding human rights into local governance. On balance, the Centre has played a distinct and effective role as a knowledge hub and facilitator of human rights mainstreaming at the municipal level, contributing directly to the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of the NUA.

Finding 4: The Centre demonstrates a consistent commitment to applying a HRBA as per its mandate, particularly in translating international human rights principles into practical tools and capacity-building initiatives for local and regional authorities.

Its methodology, reflected in the Human Rights Go Local (HRGL) series, training toolkits (e.g., ECCAR's Toolkit for Equality), and conferences, places emphasis on accountability, participation, non-discrimination, and empowerment, which are key principles of the HRBA.¹⁴ Moreover, several beneficiaries/clients confirm that the Centre's expertise improved their understanding of inclusive urban governance and helped professionalise their work through contextualised, peer-informed strategies. In some instances, such as the GUARANTEE project, the Centre actively promoted inclusive participation of marginalised groups (e.g., Roma children and girls), aligning with the HRBA's focus on "leaving no one behind".¹⁵

However, **several interlocutors highlighted gaps in participation and consultation mechanisms for marginalised populations within the Centre's programming**, despite Centre's unique mandate on human rights implementation with main target groups being local authorities. While the Centre's outputs often reference the rights and needs of vulnerable groups, certain beneficiaries/clients as well as trainers noted that some initiatives lacked direct representation or engagement of these communities in needs assessments, programme design, or evaluation (e.g., HRGL Academy and related research projects did not always directly include grassroots civil society or marginalized voices).¹⁶ Furthermore, there is a perceived tendency

¹⁴ Centre documents; HRGL Outcome Documents 2021–2024

¹⁵ Project documentation

¹⁶ FGD

toward an academic tone, which may reduce the accessibility of the Centre’s expertise for practitioners and rights-holders without legal or academic backgrounds. Several informants stressed the importance of co-creation and peer learning as core features of effective HRBA implementation.

Another group that is occasionally not included is women and girls, who are part of the Centre’s HRBA but often fail to have dedicated tools, measures, activities, etc. It is appreciated that the Centre emphatically promotes gender equality in its core principles. However, the absence of a systematic approach to include gender mainstreaming based on a gender strategy including gender analyses in the Centre’s overall work can be noted. In fact, the absence of a gender equality and mainstreaming strategy in the Centre’s programme indicates that only limited attention is dedicated to gender, not always aligning with SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. Although gender equality is often included in the Centre’s efforts and support to human rights and inclusivity, it is not often considered on its own (e.g., most mentions of gender equality in HRGL outcome documents include it in a list of other inclusive measures, without encouragements dedicated specifically to gender¹⁷). Therefore, a profound gender mainstreaming could receive more attention in the Centre’s programme, but significant efforts have nonetheless been made to promote gender equality.

1.2. External Coherence

Finding 5: The Centre has demonstrated a substantial degree of collaboration with international and regional governments and organisations especially within the framework of key UNESCO-led networks such as ICCAR, ECCAR, and UCLG.

Notably, its longstanding engagement with UNESCO’s International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) and its European chapter (ECCAR) has led to the co-development of widely used tools such as the Toolkit for Equality, peer-review systems, and policy dialogues. These initiatives have facilitated cross-city learning and standard-setting on anti-discrimination and inclusion policies and were credited by local partners such as the City of Bonn for directly supporting strategic and funding-related outcomes (e.g., development of Bonn’s Anti-Discrimination Network). In parallel, collaborations with UNESCO Cairo and UN-Habitat (e.g., TISCA Toolkit, online MOOC development) have enabled the Centre to extend its reach to the Arab region, supporting 17 Arabic cities and fostering regional knowledge exchange.¹⁸ The Centre also plays an active role in joint initiatives and consultations with UNESCO Chairs and offices (e.g., Policy Dialogue on Racism with UNESCO HQ and ICCAR), while leveraging its dual institutional structure (ETC and University of Graz) to ensure both scientific and applied contributions to global partnerships.

From the perspective of beneficiaries/clients and partner organisations, the Centre’s convening and multiplier functions have been broadly acknowledged, especially via the Human Rights Go Local Academy and Conference series, which facilitate structured interaction between local governments, international organisations (e.g., OHCHR, Council of Europe), and academia. Beneficiaries underlined that this platform enabled them to expand their international networks

¹⁷ HRGL Outcome Documents 2021-2024

¹⁸ Project documents

(e.g., access to municipal actors in Argentina, Sweden, and Comoros), share experience on localising human rights, and co-develop practical strategies (e.g., HR city twinning between Graz and Hawassa). Nonetheless, several stakeholders noted limitations in visibility and outreach, and stressed the need for more proactive and decentralised engagement with cities in Latin America, Asia, and Africa (e.g., via localised project consortia and regional focal points). This weakness is mainly a matter of limited resources and capacities, as well as a question of available opportunities to cooperate with institutions – international and local – present in the field.

The Centre’s cooperation with public authorities varies in depth and visibility.

While some municipal administrations expressed appreciation for its practical and context-sensitive support, others perceived the Centre’s approach as more academic and less aligned with operational needs, resulting in engagement that is limited to broader networks or occasional project-based collaboration. At the national level, stakeholders acknowledged the Centre’s contributions to local human rights implementation through initiatives such as the Winter Academy, but characterised the overall collaboration as sporadic, with limited public visibility. Multiple interlocutors highlighted the Centre’s relatively low profile among European municipalities and recommended greater outreach and more tailored, demand-driven partnerships.

Finding 6: The Centre has developed a strong and multi-dimensional engagement with the City of Graz, the University of Graz, and the Provincial Government of Styria, with notable synergies at both strategic and operational levels:

- **The University of Graz** has contributed to reinforcing academic legitimacy and visibility, with the UNESCO Chair providing a bridge between research and applied local practices, particularly in legal and governance areas, including course delivery, conferences, and collaborative research. In return, the Centre’s positioning also strengthens the visibility and international profile of the University of Graz, particularly through joint academic outputs and initiatives such as the Human Rights Award, which reinforce the science-to-public bridge.
- **The City of Graz** has played an important supportive role to the Centre’s cause through its long-standing advocacy role and cooperation with ETC, and its commitment to the Human Rights City agenda. This is evidenced by joint initiatives such as the Human Rights City Reports, the “Know Your Rights” platform, and the City’s participation in the Winter Academy and the Human Rights Lab Styria. Graz is seen as a testing ground for local HR implementation (e.g., pilot initiatives on housing or youth engagement), with broad political support noted at both administrative and municipal levels.
- **Engagement with the Provincial Government of Styria** is structurally formalized through representation on the Governing Board and is perceived as supportive by many stakeholders. Partnerships have evolved positively, particularly through the Children’s Rights Monitor and thematic studies on discrimination. Some stakeholders from both the provincial and national levels highlighted that the Centre’s work strengthens links between international human rights agendas and local implementation. There is acknowledgment of the Centre’s added value as a regional-international interface, though improvements are suggested to ensure that regional identity.

Finding 7: The Centre’s contribution to UNESCO’s C/5 expected outcomes, has been developed through ongoing collaboration with key international partners such as the UNESCO Chairs, the Council of Europe (CoE), the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), OHCHR, UN-Habitat, and UCLG.

The Human Rights Go Local Academy serves as the principal coordination mechanism, providing a structured platform for exchange, and the co-development of guidance documents. Its iterative process, from research and local consultation to international validation, ensures that contributions align with UNESCO’s objectives while responding to local realities. Notably, projects such as the TISCA initiative (in partnership with UNESCO Cairo and ICCAR), the cooperation with OHCHR under HRC Resolution 51/12, and participation in the EU Fundamental Rights Forum exemplify the Centre’s integrative and field-informed contributions to shared goals. The Centre’s role in shaping city-level indicators for anti-discrimination (e.g., ECCAR 10-point action plan) also illustrates its relevance for practical implementation. In addition, stakeholders consistently return to HRGL Academy, recognising it as a space for mutual learning and relationship-building across regions. This long-term convening capacity reinforces the Centre’s contribution to the UNESCO’s C/5 outcomes, not only through outputs, but also through institutionalised processes that promote continuity, cross-regional dialogue, and shared ownership.

The Centre’s approach is well-aligned with UNESCO’s MTS priorities and contributes to international agendas through a grounded, locally contextualised human rights-based methodology, but enhanced mechanisms for continuity and coherence would further strengthen its strategic positioning. While the Centre has successfully convened key stakeholders and demonstrated capacity to facilitate high-quality research and dialogue (e.g., with the EU FRA, OHCHR, and UNESCO Field Offices), some interviewees suggested there is room for improved strategic coordination and formalisation of partnerships to avoid duplication and strengthen synergies. The UNESCO Chair’s academic expertise complements the Centre’s applied focus, yet there remains potential to deepen systematic joint planning across the UNESCO ecosystem and with other category 2 centres or Field offices. Additionally, while the Centre’s events were consistently praised for their quality and inclusiveness, the virtual format of the HRGL Academy, though accessible, was seen by some as limiting for long-term engagement and collaboration-building.

1.3. Internal Coherence

Finding 8: The Centre demonstrates a moderate but evolving degree of coordination with UNESCO Headquarters, Field Offices, National Commissions, and other thematically related Category 1 and 2 Centres.

Several joint activities with UNESCO entities, including the Field Office in Cairo, have led to co-developed outputs such as the “Manuel des villes arabes pour l’inclusion urbaine” and participation in initiatives like TISCA and policy dialogues under ICCAR.¹⁹ The HRGL platform serves as the Centre’s main operational mechanism for strategic engagement, offering a structured and recurring format that includes joint planning and output validation with UNESCO

¹⁹ 2017_Draft document on the Establishment of the Centre

and affiliated actors. These events regularly involve UNESCO HQ, Chairs, and Category 2 Centres and have helped build synergies around localising the SHS Programme and SDG 11 implementation. Other forms of coordination between the Centre and UNESCO include UNESCO's seat in the board where work programmes and their implementation and impact get approved, the regular meetings between the Centre's Management and UNESCO representatives, as well as joint publications. Stakeholders noted that the Centre is seen as reliable, responsive, and professional in its collaboration, with a comparative advantage in translating normative frameworks into municipal-level strategies.

Nevertheless, the analysis reveals gaps in certain areas on a systematic and formalised coordination mechanisms, particularly in terms of sustained collaboration with Field Offices and with other Category 2 Centres. While some projects have demonstrated strategic alignment, notably in the Arab States, the engagement remains project-based and primarily reliant on personal networks rather than institutionalised channels. Certain interviewed stakeholders noted that collaboration with UNESCO Field Offices in Africa and Asia-Pacific could be improved and that more deliberate alignment of programming cycles and geographic priorities would be beneficial to further operationalise the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Centres.

The Centre's consistent application of a HRBA aligns with UNESCO's broader interventions, particularly in the areas of gender equality and the localisation of international human rights frameworks.

This coherence is illustrated by its joint contribution with the UNESCO Chair to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council, as well as through HRGL conference and publication series, which explicitly reference and operationalise UNESCO's normative texts, including the 2017 Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers and the Education 2030 Agenda. These efforts contribute to the Centre's bridging role between global human rights standards and their application in local governance contexts.

1.4 Effectiveness

Finding 9: The Centre's activities effectively contributed to achieving its stated objectives and functions, particularly in capacity-building, interdisciplinary research, and networking and cooperation, meeting the basic requirements and standards of output delivery.

Firstly, capacity-building is one of the Centre's main achievements, having successfully set up trainings, technical assistance and guidance, and developed tools that allow city and regional governments to improve their human rights implementation. The Centre has carried out workshops to train members of local government and experts in Austria but also in other European countries by means of ECCAR actions, extending in some cases to other continents like the REFELA project that trained female mayors in Africa. In addition to these trainings, the Centre also created or was a main partner in larger programmes aiming to develop the capacities of local actors and experts to support human rights such as the GUARANTEE project in Hungary

and Bulgaria²⁰, the SCORE project²¹ and training local networks on human rights in the Comoros²², all striving to train and support teachers and implementors to develop social inclusion and human rights of children through sports. Moreover, the involvement of the Centre in ECCAR, ICCAR, and the Arab Coalition of Cities against Discrimination gave it a significant role in the development of tools including Ten-Point Actions Plans, the Toolkit for Equality, the Online City Reporting Tool, and the Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities, helping cities and civil society to strengthen their capacities in terms of human rights. Other capacity-building activities undertaken by the Centre include the provision of city reports and evaluations with recommendations and future action plans, support in the drafting of a methodology to implement human rights at the city-level, a wide range of other training (for example, for experts, NGOs, and municipal councils), consultancy, and supporting universities by teaching modules, workshops for students and participating in university journals.

In parallel with capacity-building, setting up cooperation and networking opportunities was achieved by the Centre through two dimensions: the wide and diverse network of experts developed by the Centre, and the Academy and Conference for the Human Rights: Go Local initiative.²³ The former stems from the longevity of the Centre’s actions for local human rights, already active before it became a UNESCO C2C. As such, the Centre disposes of a network of experts and partners that have been developed over more than 15 years through the ETC. In fact, multiple partners and beneficiaries detailed how the Centre was able to put them in contact with the experts fitting to the needs of their work. And it is likely in this spirit that the Centre thought of the Academy and the Conference, both organised in a way that human rights experts can present their research and professionals can expand on their projects to other colleagues in the field. More importantly, these events also welcomed emerging human rights experts and students, involving them in the networking circles, an operation deemed as a success by the majority of the informants. As such, the HRGL events successfully present a platform for different stakeholders to interact, facilitated by the online format that allows participation from different areas and reduces some socio-economic limitations. It is however important to note certain limitations regarding the inclusion of marginalised communities, notably beyond Europe, within the HRGL (cf. evaluative question 11 below).

“Networking is very important, and the Centre does it very well; they are very good at creating and opening a space to develop relations.”

a partner

The Centre’s third objective, namely the conduct of interdisciplinary research, is also a key pillar for the actions and projects undertaken. Overall, the Centre’s publications, collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, and the transfer of knowledge, gives it a uniquely advantageous position to conduct interdisciplinary but also longitudinal research, a feat that is rather rare in the field of human rights. Its focus on research and academia, exemplified by the HERAS+ project in Kosovo²⁴ and FreeAc in Ukraine²⁵, are also operationally applicable via practical projects or sharing of best practices, (e.g., Graz’s example as a Human Rights City).

²⁰ [GUARANTEE Guaranteeing the Right to Education for Roman Children in Selected European Cities](#)

²¹ [SCORE Project Strategic Planning Model Combatting racism in and through sports](#)

²² Note Conceptuelle - Atelier de formation en ligne en renforcement de capacités dans les 54 communes en Union des Comores

²³ Human Rights: Go Local, Outcome Documents, 2021-2024

²⁴ Centre Annual Report 2021

²⁵ Centre Annual Report 2023

In other terms, the Centre is praised by many stakeholders for the practical application of its research and publications. The services offered by the Centre in this pillar are grounded in its long-standing legacy as ETC Graz, which has enabled it to carry out longitudinal analyses such as benchmarking and comparative studies among Human Rights Cities. These analyses have led to publications that have been operationalized by local municipalities. The Centre has also supported civil society actors by clarifying budgetary allocations related to human rights, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability. Moreover, it continues to promote the use of the “Understanding Human Rights” manual, originally developed by ETC and now available in over 20 languages, which provides technical guidance and practical exercises to support the mainstreaming of human rights in monitoring and evaluation systems at the local and regional levels. This integrated approach contributes significantly to the effective implementation of a human rights-based approach.²⁶ While it also faces some limitations such as a lack of visibility of some research or lack of gender mainstreaming or gender-sensitive analysis, this pillar nonetheless offers unique and valuable services to experts, civil society, local government, and a wider public alike.

With all three of its key objectives fulfilled, a process of correlation can be witnessed through which **the Centre has a global effect on human rights, in line with the revised Theory of Change**. Having met the conditions identified in the ToC – including political support, quality of expertise and research, and the prioritisation of HRBAs in strategies – while overcoming the risks of divergent understandings, resistance to change, and weak cultures of mentoring, the activities of the Centre have obtained the expected effect. Signs of impact can already be seen on a mid-term scale, with trained local and regional governments, available human rights data, and developed partnerships between local, national, and international stakeholders. Supported by encouraging conditions and without notable risks, the Centre’s actions are laying the field ready for long-term impacts:

- Local and regional governments with enhanced institutional capacity and expertise to design and implement human rights-based policies and programmes;
- Robust research, data, and monitoring tools that reinforce human rights implementation and policy-making at the local level;
- Enhanced policy coherence and continuous learning within local governance systems on key issues of inclusion and resilience.

Thus, if the Centre is able to continue operating in line with its objectives and developing its abilities to train and promote human rights to local and regional governments, a positive global impact should be witnessed in the integration of human rights, gender equality, and inclusion into regional and local policies and practices.

Finding 10: The Centre has made significant contributions to support human rights at the local level since the beginning of the Agreement despite certain challenges.

The strengths of the Centre can principally be found in its all-encompassing approach to support human rights and help local actors on the long term. This was notably allowed by the development of capacity-building tools that can be used directly by local actors. Although the Centre also offers assistance to best implement these tools (e.g., toolkits, action plans...), their

²⁶ 2017 Feasibility Study - Establishment of an International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2) in Graz (Austria)

applicability and practical implementation – with step-by-step guidance – has allowed cities to use the tools without needing to involve the Centre.²⁷ These tools have the potential to expand the reach of the Centre to other cities and potentially new continents, without necessarily requiring additional resources as they can be applied without external assistance. Although some limitations can be noted such as the absence of translated versions in Arabic or other non-European languages,²⁸ despite the fact that there have been efforts to make them more inclusive and adaptable, such as the update of the Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities in 2022 with a new chapter on women’s inclusion in cities.²⁹

Moreover, the legitimacy of the Centre among the government officials is a key strength that allows it to obtain funds and have a lasting impact on the implementation of human rights locally. It stems from the quality outputs and tools,³⁰ its large research database as well as its status as a C2C with the UNESCO label.³¹

“The toolkits are developed with representatives from the practical world (implementors) and enable the implementation of human rights standards for local and regional politics. [...] The importance of the Centre therefore lies in the setting of human rights standards from a practical perspective.”

a founder

The Centre encountered two main challenges when carrying out its projects, activities and objectives, (1) limited inclusivity in some projects, and (2) a hindering visibility strategy.

- Firstly, the Centre has a very good understanding of the Austrian and many European contexts, being able to adapt its activities and recommendations to the local situation. However, as it has widened the geographic scope of its actions (e.g., in Africa with REFELA, a Human Rights City in Ethiopia, and a project against discrimination in the Comoros), the Centre has occasionally faced challenges when adapting their outputs to the local context. A recurring perception of beneficiaries and some partners is that the Centre is excellent in taking action in Europe, but that also means that its approach remains Euro-centric and fails to adapt sufficiently well to other geographic areas, either in terms of language or understanding of local challenges.³² Another limitation of the Centre’s approach is the rather strong focus on the use of online platforms for HRGL events and workshops. Despite having many advantages such as reduced costs, lower carbon footprint, inclusivity of some marginalised individuals that would not have the opportunity nor funds to participate in person; the online format is found not to be adapted to all contexts, particularly for workshops in regions where local experts and trainers need in-person support and guidance to carry out activities.³³ Furthermore, speakers at the Centre’s events are often already well-established experts within familiar professional networks, which can inadvertently reinforce an ‘experts bubble’ in the field of local human rights. As a result, opportunities for emerging voices, particularly from underrepresented or marginalised groups, remain limited. This lack of inclusivity in speaker selection and presentation formats may hinder broader knowledge exchange and restrict networking opportunities for

²⁷ Interviews

²⁸ Idem

²⁹ Centre Annual Report 2022

³⁰ Interviews, Annual Report 2023

³¹ Interviews

³² Idem

³³ Interview

less-established professionals or grassroots actors seeking to engage in the field.

- The Centre faces challenges related to the limited visibility of certain aspects of its work, particularly within its research and networking functions. This reduced visibility may affect the dissemination, uptake, and potential partnerships stemming from these key areas of activity. Several beneficiaries and partners highlighted the absence of a centralized, publicly accessible platform hosting the Centre’s research and publications. Instead, access to certain outputs often depends on individual contact with staff members, which creates barriers to wider dissemination. As a result, despite the recognized quality and relevance of the Centre’s research, its visibility and accessibility remain constrained. In addition, the absence of a clear and proactive visibility and outreach strategy may limit awareness among existing partners and beneficiaries regarding the full scope of the Centre’s services and ongoing initiatives.³⁴ This gap also reduces opportunities to attract new partners who may otherwise benefit from the Centre’s expertise but remain unaware of its existence or contributions.

Nonetheless, **a key sign of the Centre’s effectiveness is its ability to adjust to some of these challenges and to the changing panorama of human rights.** A concrete example of its propensity to adjust is the HRGL Academy, established in 2021.³⁵ As noted by some participants, the content discussed in the Academy has evolved over the years, learning from previous challenges and adapting to the shifting demand, for instance discussing the needs of rights-holders in the latest edition when it had never been before.³⁶ Furthermore, the Centre’s proactive attitude extends to a more practical aspect of its activities, given that it uses its expertise to obtain funding when facing unforeseen circumstances, being able to complete all their projects despite a relatively low amount of resources available. The Centre’s open, proactive and willing-to-learn approach is a positive indicator towards the minimisation of challenges it currently faces.

“Thanks to their exchanges, the Centre’s staff listen to what works there and adapt their recommendations of best practices. This allows to develop minimum standards in Human Rights.”

a staff member

Finding 11: The Centre adopts an approach deeply oriented towards human rights throughout all the phases of the programming cycle in its various projects, both locally and regionally, with however some limitations on gender and diversity inclusion.

The majority of the informants underline that the Centre has adopted a HRBA during the all-project cycles, from needs assessments to evaluation phases.³⁷ Yet, its highly valued interventions have occasionally been portrayed as being limited in some aspects of inclusivity. While the efforts to include all marginalised individuals as part of the Centre’s scope to promote human rights across different groups are commended, the evaluation found some areas that still require strengthening. Although the Centre’s main target are local government representatives, activities need to follow participatory methods that allow marginalised communities to be involved to shape programmes that ultimately affect them.

³⁴ Idem

³⁵ Academy Concept Notes, 2021-2024

³⁶ Interview; Academy Outcome Document 2024

³⁷ Interviews; Annual Reports

In some collaborations especially in Europe, or within its research and publications, the attention dedicated specifically to women and girls, how to support them in their own contexts, or even disaggregated data by sex, is not always predominant. It is appreciated that the Centre is often sensible to the needs of vulnerable groups. However, evidence suggests that representation of the affected groups in needs assessments, design phases, and feedback loops could be further improved. Addressing this gap would not only enhance the legitimacy and responsiveness of the Centre's work but also support the co-creation of more contextually grounded and sustainable solutions. Even though many initiatives of the Centre contribute to UNESCO's objective of empowering local actors to institutionalise gender equality across policy and planning processes, especially in regions where systemic gaps persist, a systemic assessment/analysis of the needs or interest of marginalized groups concerning the Centre's programmes, nor specifically formulated measures, dedicated staff members, tools or strategies for ensuring that could not be identified. Gender mainstreaming ensuring that gender equality has been integrated in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Centre programmes can't be confirmed.

The promotion of gender equality by the Centre could be more structurally mainstreamed throughout all activities – including European projects. This finding does not reflect a shortcoming of the Centre's overall efforts in terms of gender equality but rather presents an opportunity to develop its stance as more gender inclusive. This would reinforce the Centre's already commendable efforts in regard to their HRBA, developing better tools to monitor and create specific objectives and strategies dedicated to gender equality.

1.5 Efficiency

Finding 12: The Centre demonstrates a well-functioning governance model, marked by effective coordination between its constituent entities, strategic and competent human resource management, and clear accountability mechanisms.

The Centre's organisation and management is based on a well-defined structure, via a balanced representation of members in its Governing Body (e.g., UNESCO, Austria, Styria, Graz). This structure allows the four entities that are closely involved in the development of the Centre to have a clear view of the Centre's activities without compromising its autonomy (cf. Autonomy). This body is hosted by the Foundation which, as a separate body, ensures that the management of the Centre evolves smoothly without external influence. The Foundation adopts a results-oriented and transparent approach. Annual Work Programmes consistently demonstrate that financial resources are strategically deployed in support of the Centre's core objectives, ensuring both accountability and alignment with its mandate.³⁸ Moreover, the Foundation serves the crucial purpose of allowing the Centre to meet the requirements under the ICS and the model agreement to become a C2C³⁹, working in parallel with the ETC Centre. A distinction is drawn and enforced with ETC projects that are not aligned with the Centre's Mandate, which should not draw on the Centre funds and resources – including staff. The balance between the two entities is both necessary and well-executed, and together they agree to establish the Project

³⁸ Work Programmes 2019-2024

³⁹ 2017 Feasibility Study - Establishment of an International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2) in Graz (Austria)

Commission to coordinate joint decision-making in the implementation of projects. A cornerstone of the Centre’s effective governance is the close and dynamic collaboration between its Director and the UNESCO Chair, who jointly guide the strategic and academic direction of the Centre through regular and complementary engagement.

This close cooperation is widely recognised by staff, partners, and beneficiaries as a core strength of the Centre. The Centre’s commitment to open communication and transparency ensures that stakeholders feel heard, informed, and supported; fostering trust and responsiveness. Indeed, the smooth internal communication is consistently highlighted as key assets of the Centre’s human resource capacity, reinforcing its overall operational effectiveness. The operationalisation of these relations between the Centre and various stakeholders tends to occur via a contact person that clarifies interactions and avoids having too many points of contact that could lead to confusion. There are multiple reports of beneficiaries and partners being redirected by their focal point to other experts more appropriate for their project.

Finally, **the accountability is ensured by the very structure of the Centre’s governance**, notably via the independent project commission coordinating and implementing projects. Moreover, the involvement of UNESCO in the Governing Board and in the UNESCO, Chair ensures that their objectives are pursued, and their standards respected. The Centre’s involvement in regional and international initiatives—such as ECCAR, TISCA, and the Arab Coalition of Cities—also embeds additional layers of accountability, as these networks apply their own monitoring and evaluation frameworks, contributing to external oversight and quality assurance of the Centre’s activities.

“If UNESCO is involved, there is more certainty, it’s a guarantee that it makes sense, that they are doing work ethically and properly.”

a partner

Finding 13: The Centre’s distinct governance structure contributes effectively to the realisation of its objectives but is not always clearly understood by partners and beneficiaries.

The Centre’s distinct governance structure help achieve its objectives. For example, the division of the management body and the implementation entities ensures a clearer distribution of tasks that facilitates the realisation of projects with limited obstacles. Additionally, funding clearly covers all four objective areas, with specific sums dedicated to stakeholder cooperation, the clearinghouse, capacity-building tools and activities, and research and publications like the HRGL Paper series.⁴⁰ Upon a decision of the Governing Board, all UNESCO Member States and associate members who wish to cooperate with the Centre can participate to the Board, thus gaining important visibility on the Centre’s actions.⁴¹

The advantages of being a C2C and being under UNESCO’s auspices are not limited to collaboration opportunities with its Member States but importantly extend to all activities carried out by the Centre. In fact, being associated with UNESCO, an important and widely recognised institution, gives the Centre an important degree of legitimacy that matters especially when working with government representatives and members of civil society that do not know the

⁴⁰ Annual Reports 2019-2024

⁴¹ 2017 Feasibility Study - Establishment of an International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2) in Graz (Austria)

Centre beforehand. The presence of the UNESCO Chair therefore allows to widen the Centre's network and strengthen the validity of its actions. Keeping the ETC alongside UNESCO's partnership allows the Centre to ensure a continuation of the ETC's past initiatives and collaborations – hence legitimacy – but also for this entity to keep on realising its objectives to strengthen human rights at the local level in case it were to stop being a C2C and return to its original scope. Thus, the structure of the Centre mirrors a willingness to realise objectives oriented towards local human rights above all.

Despite its efficiency and advantages, the governance structure of the Centre is rather complex and often not understood by partners and beneficiaries. Most stakeholders that have worked with the Centre manifested some confusion regarding the difference between ETC Graz, the UNESCO Chair, the University, or the Foundation. This lack of clarity has only sometimes been addressed by the Centre, for instance with staff members elucidating its structure at the beginning of workshops. Nevertheless, limited understanding of the Centre's governance structure has not posed a significant barrier to collaboration, largely due to the efficiency and responsiveness of the team, and partners appeared unconcerned by it. The Centre's practice of assigning dedicated focal points ensures seamless communication, with staff members proactively facilitating connections and guiding external stakeholders toward the appropriate contacts, thus mitigating potential confusion.

Finding 14: Several areas for improvement have been identified, notably in the Centre's external communication strategy, the distribution of staff workload, and the availability of resources to support its expanding scope of activities.

There remain some opportunities to increase the efficiency and the organisation of management and monitoring structures:

- In terms of **external communication**, the Centre faces a limitation that is closely interlinked with that of visibility previously mentioned. In fact, the lack of awareness by partners and beneficiaries of the Centre's structure and activities is impacted by its communication strategy. Inclusion of a newsletter, for example, or a regularly updated blog to inform other stakeholders about its actions might ameliorate this problem. There is therefore an opportunity to increase the efficiency of the Centre's communication and visibility strategy to external partners and beneficiaries, without necessarily using more resources. Another opportunity for improvement lays in the **internal communication** with UNESCO – the Centre has much less visibility at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris than it does in Graz. Thus, planning opportunities to promote the Centre within UNESCO, and new opportunities for collaboration, would increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of the Centre. It would also impact future activities through additional funding and new partnerships, while ensuring current partners can make use of the entirety of wide range of tools available.
- The **staff members' workload might be a source of concern.**, impacting occasionally follow-up tasks with certain experts and collaborators in times of overload. For a rather small structure, the Centre takes on a lot of projects – although praiseworthy for their many successes, it also brings concerns on the quantity of work that the staff are submitted to. This has not yet impacted the quality of the service and support offered by the Centre, but it offers the opportunity to take preventative measures to avoid negative future consequences, notably regarding the communication flow with certain experts and collaborators.
- Moreover, **the Centre has developed a number of partnerships that were in place when it was only the ETC and that as a result have become rather linked to individual members of staff.** These personal relationships were a natural outcome of working within a small structure with few staff, and allowed the Centre to develop a strong base of long-term partners. However, it is now important for these stakeholder

partnerships to be insulated in order to preserve the Centre’s long-term actions in case of staff turnover. Developing a strategy to institutionalise all partnerships, including the more occasional ones, will help the Centre to protect its partnerships and limit the impact of internal changes on its global objective.

- **Limited resources remain a key concern.**⁴² This has led to difficult trade-offs, such as limiting activities to one island in the Comoros rather than all three, or being unable to conduct follow-ups after trainings in projects like REFELA in Africa. While some partners believe additional resources could expand the Centre’s reach, many also recognise the challenges of securing such funding and the potential complexities of scaling up the structure, notably concerning the well-functioning team with transversal roles and competences. An important difference must be made between what *could* be done in an ideal scenario (e.g. securing more resources to expand to other continents) and what *should* be done with their current available resources (follow-ups, which can be done online and with limited costs, are fundamental to check the effectiveness and challenges of trainings, especially if the Centre gets involved in new contexts).

Finding 15: The data from the Centre’s Work programmes, shows that a **substantial share of the Centre’s budget has consistently been allocated to activities rather than management/stakeholder cooperations costs** (e.g., 80% in 2024, 66% in 2023, and 63% in 2022).⁴³ This prioritisation of operational spending reflects a strong investment in implementation efforts, which includes activities advancing human rights and gender equality. The Centre supplements its core budget through external funding, notably from the European Union, enabling it to design and implement its projects.

The intervention resources appear to have been used efficiently, as reflected in the high percentage of funds consistently directed toward programme activities and the Centre’s ability to leverage external project-based funding. Despite limited staffing and financial constraints, the Centre has delivered partner-driven initiatives. The REFELA project and peer-learning platforms (e.g., HRGL) demonstrate also high cost-effectiveness by reaching diverse stakeholders with limited management overhead, suggesting an efficient use of resources relative to outcomes achieved.

1.6 Autonomy

Finding 16: Within its territory, the Centre enjoys a rather extensive political autonomy, granting it the ability to execute its activities independently from external influence.

⁴² Annual Reports 2019-2024 & Interviews

⁴³ Work Programmes 2019-2024

The presence of representatives from the municipal, regional, and national authorities in the Governing Board gives them a supervisory role where they can approve decisions but does not yield them the right to initiate decisions or exert influence on the day-to-day work. Thus, the Centre seems to have struck a stable balance between involving and receiving support from government officials and maintaining autonomous decision-making abilities. An important proof of this autonomy is that, **despite changes in the political spectrum of various government offices in the past, the Centre has been able to carry its projects without difficulties from a political perspective.** Being a UNESCO C2C might have helped the Centre remain unbiased in their analyses and recommendations, and to focus on long-term promotion of human rights instead of short-term political considerations – some posit that the UNESCO label can act as a deterrent to political influence and corruption. The Centre has therefore succeeded in maintaining an important level of autonomy without isolating itself from local politics. In fact, one of its very valuable characteristics has been its ability to keep government figures engaged, independently of their political alignment with its objectives, sustaining constructive relations with local representatives while continuing its effective work locally, regionally, and nationally. Moreover, the existence of the Foundation involved in its management not only conforms the Centre to legal standards, but it also creates a system where it receives annual funding in advance and can then decide which projects to invest in. Having this lump sum helps safeguard project implementation from potential contextual or political changes, or any attempt to sway resource allocation throughout the year. Additionally, the separation between the Foundation and the Project Commission guarantees that funding is secured and monitored by the former but then effectively used by another body that is not in direct contact with actors that could influence it.

“For us, it really was particularly valuable that the center acts independently of political interests, and that the recommendations and analyses are based on scientific standards and human rights principles and not on short-term political considerations. And it is precisely this autonomous, independent and fact-based perspective that has helped us.”

a beneficiary

Finding 17: The Centre appears to be broadly in conformity with the autonomy principles outlined in UNESCO’s Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres (ICS).

- **Legal and operational autonomy:** The Centre operates through a dedicated legal entity (the Foundation), which ensures its capacity to manage its own budget, sign contracts, and independently implement activities.⁴⁴ This structure also allows the Centre to exist in conformity with the Austrian Association Act, the ICS, and the model agreement.
- **Financial autonomy and stability:** The Centre benefits from annual and upfront funding through the Foundation, which ensures financial continuity and limits exposure to political or budgetary fluctuations during the year.⁴⁵ This financial arrangement supports autonomous decision-making and is compliant with the Strategy’s emphasis on financial sustainability without dependence on UNESCO’s regular budget.

⁴⁴ 2017 Feasibility Study - Establishment of an International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2) in Graz (Austria)

⁴⁵ Work Programmes 2019-2024

- **Programmatic autonomy within a Strategic Framework:** While UNESCO sets broad priorities, the Centre retains control over its work programme, which is discussed within the Project Commission involving local and national partners. This reflects a balance between autonomy and alignment with UNESCO’s strategic goals, as encouraged by the Strategy.
- **Governance clarity and risks:** Some interviewees noted that the Centre’s governance structure is not fully clear to external partners and is highly reliant on a few key individuals.⁴⁶ This introduces a potential risk to institutional continuity and perceived autonomy in the event of staff turnover.

1.7 Cross-cutting themes

Finding 18: The Centre has established a functional clearing house for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of good human rights practices at the city-level amongst a variety of networks, yet faces gaps in visibility.

This approach combines research, policy dialogue, and documentation, notably through its annual Academy, Conference, and Outcome Documents that offer evidence-based guidance to local authorities, as well as the European Yearbook of Human Rights, and tools such as the ECCAR Equality Data Toolkit.⁴⁷ The HRGL series has facilitated knowledge sharing on diverse themes, from human rights budgeting to accountability, and the Centre’s role in FRANET further reinforces its capacity to generate relevant data on fundamental rights issues across Europe.⁴⁸ Complementing this, the Centre’s engagement in GDHRNet (Global Digital Human Rights Network) demonstrates responsiveness to emerging digital human rights challenges. These efforts are valued for their scientific depth and practical orientation, supporting municipal actors with context-specific tools and fostering peer learning.

However, while the clearing house model enables horizontal learning and showcases a wide array of practices, **the degree to which these outputs systematically influence local policymaking or are tailored to underrepresented regions remains an area for deeper exploration.** Indeed, the interviewees underscore the Centre’s capacity to adapt to diverse municipal contexts as a key asset, yet note that this potential could be more systematically harnessed through platforms enabling direct collaboration among cities, especially in underrepresented regions outside of Austria – a limitation that reaches more acutely their African partners. Furthermore, critiques highlight limitations in the Centre’s external visibility, digital engagement formats, and the inclusiveness of dissemination efforts, with some suggesting the need for clearer public-facing communication strategies.

⁴⁶ Interviews

⁴⁷ HRGL documentation

⁴⁸ FRANET reports

4. Conclusion

The Centre has established itself as a relevant and credible actor in the field of local human rights implementation, offering an array of tools, platforms, and guidance to empower local and regional authorities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 11, and UNESCO's SHS Programme. Its technical outputs (e.g., such as the ECCAR Equality Toolkit, the HRGL Academy and Outcome Documents, and projects like GUARANTEE and REFELA) demonstrate a strong capacity to translate international human rights frameworks into actionable local policy mechanisms. These efforts have been particularly impactful in Europe and select regions in Africa and the Arab States, contributing meaningfully to the realisation of the HRBA, gender equality, and inclusive urban governance.

However, the Centre's geographic focus remains somewhat European and while some projects have been implemented beyond Europe, stakeholders emphasised the need for more deliberate engagement with cities and institutions in Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and Africa (Recommendation 1). Such strategic outreach would reinforce the Centre's alignment with UNESCO's universal mandate and Global Priority Africa.

The Centre's HRBA is consistently applied at the technical level, especially in capacity-building, content development as well as participation mechanisms. Yet, the latter, particularly the inclusion of marginalised groups in programme design and evaluation, are not always systematically embedded in processes. Several interlocutors, especially from civil society and grassroots organisations, highlighted the need for stronger co-creation models and more peer-driven learning formats (Recommendation 2).

The Centre's positioning as a connector between research and practice is one of its distinctive strengths. The HRGL Academy, the European Yearbook on Human Rights, and its work under GDHRNet show a clear commitment to rigorous, applied research. However, the Centre's impact and policy relevance could be further strengthened by enhancing the translation of its research outputs into practical tools that more directly address the operational needs of local authorities (Recommendation 4).

Coordination with UNESCO entities, particularly SHS, Field Offices, and Category 2 Centres, is operational but not yet systematic. Collaboration, for UNESCO entities and beyond, often relies on personal networks, and while this has proven effective in individual projects, it may limit long-term sustainability and institutional memory. There is a need to formalise coordination mechanisms, especially with Field Offices in underrepresented regions, to improve programme coherence and reduce potential duplication (Recommendation 3 and 7).

The Centre's clearing house function is well-developed through its annual HRGL cycle, peer-reviewed toolkits, and engagement in networks like ECCAR. These platforms support horizontal knowledge exchange and have facilitated learning across municipalities. However, systematic tracking of how these outputs influence local policymaking remains limited, allowing to support further learning and inform the design of more targeted and inclusive knowledge-sharing formats (Recommendation 8).

Despite its lean staffing and budget, the Centre demonstrates commendable efficiency in project delivery. However, high workloads and resource limitations occasionally constrain follow-up

activities and the expansion of programming, which could have been leveraged via enhanced resource mobilisation strategies and more strategic external communication (Recommendations 5 and 6).

In light of the findings presented, the evaluation concludes that the Centre has fulfilled its mandate as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre and demonstrated clear added value in advancing human rights at the local level. The evidence supports the renewal of its agreement as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO. The Centre's technical credibility, strategic relevance, and commitment to the HRBA are evident across its programming.

To maximise its potential and reinforce its contribution to UNESCO's global priorities, the evaluation proposes a set of strategic and operational recommendations (cf. Recommendations). These are intended not as a redirection, but as an opportunity to build on the Centre's existing strengths, broadening its geographic engagement, deepening participatory processes, and institutionalising coordination and learning mechanisms to ensure greater inclusivity, coherence, and sustainability.

5. Recommendations

1. **Adopt a predetermined strategy to guide the Centre’s work plans and project implementation towards its strategic outcomes, including geographical focus according to UNESCO priorities :**

While the Centre successfully implements a wide range of projects, the selection process does not always follow a linear strategy. We recognise that the Centre’s project selection relies on calls for applications that do not follow a foreseeable pattern, yet we suggest that the Centre should define a predetermined strategy as a guide to choosing applications. While the current process has proven to be effective, as the Centre evolves this predetermined strategy would help the Centre to follow its long-term objectives when selecting projects in the short-term, aligning itself with its ToC more concretely. This would further drive the Centre to impact its global objective to promote and support human rights at the local level, increasing its strategic coherence and driving its funds allocation, especially extra-budgetary funds. This strategic orientation should also inform the Centre’s geographic outreach. Although the Centre has a strong presence and network within Europe, its activities are less evenly distributed outside the continent, leaving some room to improve its impact on UNESCO’s universal mandate and global priorities. Many of the Centre’s tools and methodologies are recognised as adaptable and context-responsive, yet their application in non-European regions can be optimised. To reinforce global inclusivity and better align with UNESCO’s international scope, the Centre’s strategy should strengthen engagement in underrepresented regions, notably Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. To implement this shift, the Centre could:

- Reflect on its strategy and vision, which may include an updated ToC, identifying key, practical objectives that would guide project selection in the future.
- Map the current projects and activities as well as the countries of intervention to help define strategic objectives it wants to pursue.
- Establish regional focal points or partnerships with universities, human rights networks, or UNESCO Field Offices in target regions to contextualise programme content and ensure cultural and political relevance in alignment with its global scope;
- Diversify further the roster of speakers and contributors in core events and publications to better reflect regional diversity and lived experiences.

Addressed to: the Centre and UNESCO HQ

Duration: within 2 years

Deadline: June 2027

2. **Strengthen participation of marginalised groups in programme design and evaluation:**

The Centre’s outputs are broadly aligned with human rights-based principles, particularly in terms of promoting inclusion, non-discrimination, and accountability. While the efforts to include all marginalised individuals as part of the centre’s scope to promote human rights across different groups are commended, the evaluation found some areas that still require strengthening. Although the Centre’s main target are local government representatives, activities need to employ participatory methods that allow marginalised communities to be involved and to shape programmes that ultimately affect them. Although the Centre is often sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups, evidence suggests that representation of these groups in needs assessments, design phases, and feedback loops could be further improved. Addressing this gap would not only enhance the legitimacy and responsiveness of the Centre’s work but also support the co-creation of more contextually grounded and sustainable solutions. As such, the Centre could

- Include and facilitate the participation of grassroots civil society and marginalised group representatives in consultation processes and HRGL participation, with efforts to diversify the speakers with a more participatory approach;
- Develop inclusive engagement protocols and integrate them into project design;
- Reinforce its needs assessment methodologies to systematically capture the experiences and aspirations of rights-holders at the local level, integrating community-driven indicators and participatory tools;
- Continue building partnerships with local advocacy organisations or networks that have trusted access to these communities, to improve outreach and feedback loops;
- Adopt a more partnership-based (less customer-based) approach by positioning rights-holders, marginalized groups, and civil society organizations as active collaborators and sources of expertise, such as involving them as speakers, co-creators, or facilitators in relevant activities.

Addressed to: the Centre

Duration: within 1 year

Deadline: June 2026

3. Consolidate strategic coordination with UNESCO field offices and category 2 centres:

While this evaluation commends the Centre for its cooperation with UNESCO through its field offices, Chairs, and other Category 2 Centres, it has found that these interactions often remain ad hoc. This limits the potential for long-term strategic alignment and reduces opportunities to leverage complementarities across the broader UNESCO system. Strengthening structured cooperation would enhance programme coherence and increase the collective impact of UNESCO's decentralised human rights programming, especially in underrepresented regions beyond Europe. It is nonetheless important to note that this recommendation is not only directed at the Centre but also at UNESCO's field offices and C2Cs, given that strategic coordination requires efforts from both sides. To address this, the Centre could:

- Map the comparative mandates, tools, and geographical strengths of thematically related Category 1 and 2 institutes and centres, with a view to identifying areas of complementarity, and facilitating cross-centre learning on HRBA localisation and capacity-building methodologies;
- Establish regular strategic planning dialogues between the Centre and relevant Field Offices (e.g., through biannual coordination calls) to align on programming priorities, thematic focuses, and regional entry points;
- Develop joint work plans or MoUs with select Field Offices and centres where objectives align (e.g., on gender-responsive governance, urban inclusion, or local-level SDG implementation), ensuring shared ownership and clearer division of labour;

Leverage UNESCO HQ support to institutionalise these mechanisms across centres.

Addressed to: the Centre and UNESCO HQ

Duration: within 1-2 years

Deadline: January 2027

4. Operationalise research-to-policy translation through targeted outputs, notably beyond Europe:

The Centre demonstrates a strong capacity for generating evidence-based knowledge and facilitating academic-practitioner dialogue. However, beneficiaries' opinions vary on its potential to inform concrete municipal decision-making, particularly beyond Europe, suggesting

that there is still room to strengthen the translation of research outputs into policy-relevant tools tailored to the operational needs of local authorities. While its toolkits and HRGL outcomes are valued for their depth, certain materials could more directly align with the political contexts, notably beyond Europe. To address this, the Centre could:

- Hold systematic scoping meetings to understand local needs, especially at the city level, including consultations with beneficiaries and policymakers to inform project relevance;
- Integrate structured peer-learning opportunities between cities (including stakeholders beyond mayors) following a partnership-based approach to leverage local knowledge and expertise, enabling the contextual adaptation of tools, particularly in settings where the Centre lacks in-depth familiarity;
- Continue formalizing feedback loops by documenting pilot applications of tools (e.g., in Graz or other partner cities), and refining them into standardized, adaptable resources for broader dissemination;
- Where relevant, position the Centre as a facilitator, mobilizing external expertise (especially from affected communities) and reinforcing efficiency in light of staffing and budgetary constraints;
- Constitute, in line with its clearing house function, a list of Human Rights Cities to be shared with partner cities and facilitate network creation;

Addressed to: the Centre

Duration: within 2 years

Deadline: June 2027

5. Reinforce visibility and communication to expand stakeholder engagement: Despite producing high-quality tools and convening well-regarded events, the Centre faces a few obstacles in its visibility for external audiences. Its profile tends to be more oriented towards individuals already in the field of human rights, constraining the Centre's potential to scale its activities, attract new collaborations with local governments, and disseminate its outputs more widely, particularly in underrepresented regions internationally. Within its existing network, several stakeholders noted they had limited awareness of the Centre's full range of activities, while others highlighted difficulties in navigating its digital platforms or accessing updates on recent outputs. To address this, the Centre could:

- Acquire staff to manage communication, potentially part-time depending on budgetary constrictions, in order to develop a comprehensive, gender-sensitive and inclusive outreach and visibility strategy that includes tailored stakeholder mapping, and content adapted to regional and thematic audiences;
- Upgrade its digital platforms, particularly the Centre and the HRGL websites, to ensure:
 - 1) intuitive navigation,
 - 2) timely updates on events, tools, and publications,
 - 3) systematic translation to other languages (English, maybe French),
 - 4) accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- Develop a communications strategy, which includes a review of the visibility strategy for the newsletters to ensure that they reach the expected audience: the newsletter targeting rights-holders and locals would benefit from including new partners and beneficiaries, and the newsletter destined for the international audiences could also include non-academic audiences. Such a plan should also explore additional opportunities to seek new partners and collaborators that might benefit from the knowledge and experience gained by the Centre and the city of Graz.

- Leverage UNESCO’s communication channels, including the SHS sector and regional Field Offices, to promote the Centre’s outputs more systematically to Member States, city networks, and civil society organisations and local communities;
Continue disseminating its work through strategic city and human rights networks, such as UCLG, ICCAR, and ECCAR, using both targeted messaging and peer-sharing formats (e.g. case studies, webinars, testimonies), while also leveraging existing partnerships with their own network to increase the visibility of the Centre and of its activities.

Addressed: the Centre

Duration: within 1,5 year

Deadline: December 2026

6. Enhance the resource mobilisation strategy: The Centre’s ability to scale its activities and sustain engagement, particularly in non-European contexts, is constrained by its reliance on project-based funding and a lean staffing structure. While the Centre has effectively leveraged European funding instruments, these mechanisms often entail complex reporting obligations and relatively short funding cycles, which reduce flexibility and limit follow-up capacity. To enhance financial resilience and long-term impact, the Centre could:

- Clarify the current financing mechanisms , allowing partners and beneficiaries to understand how funding is obtained;
- Consider developing a more resource-based, systematic approach focused on long-term and flexible funding. This should include targeted donor mapping, and cultivating partnerships with donors that support multi-year, core funding;
- Adopt enhanced resource management or budgeting tools to track and obtain real-time feedback on the efficiency of its activities, facilitating the establishment of a clear resource mobilisation strategy;
- Consider pursuing co-financing arrangements with municipalities and UNESCO Field Offices, enabling shared human resources or joint project implementation in target regions.

Addressed to: the Centre

Duration: within 3-5 years

Deadline: between June 2028 and June 2030

7. Continue to safeguard the Centre’s collaborations and network by institutionalising partnerships: As smaller institutions often require, the Centre has used the network of its staff to build a strong collaborative ecosystem, also using connections previously developed by the ETC prior to the C2C Agreement with UNESCO. Although these personalised relationships were necessary in the beginning to allow the Centre to gain a wider audience and recognition in its field, as an established institutions it is important to tie these collaborations to the Centre rather than to individuals. And while efforts have been made in this direction, for instance through MoUs and joint action plans with recurring partners, there is still room to further protect the Centre’s partnerships. The Centre should put in place strategies to ensure its partnerships, even the more occasional ones, are institutionalised to insulate it from staff turnover or organisational change. The sustainability and scalability of the Centre’s work, particularly as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices UNESCO, depend on more formalised and systematised partnership management. The Centre could:

- Continue formalising MoUs and joint action plans with recurring partners (e.g., cities, institutions, networks);
- Further develop the existing tools, including the centralised stakeholder database and contact registry, completing them with the project partners and other relevant contacts, and ensuring shared access among staff. This system would support coordinated communication, institutional memory, and reduce disruption during transitions;
- Consider developing a Partnership Plan to ensure continuity in partnerships and reaching out to beneficiaries in case of staff turnover. This plan would allow the Centre to ensure its legacy on the long term;
- Clarify and publicly communicate internal governance structures and roles, particularly the division of tasks and resources between the UNESCO Chair, the Foundation, and ETC – particularly the difference in funds provided to ETC and those reserved for the Centre’s Mandate. This would improve external understanding of the Centre’s entry points, clarify to partners what entities they are collaborating with, and enhance transparency in engagement processes.

Addressed to: the Centre

Duration: within 2-3 years

Deadline: January 2028

8. Systematise monitoring the local use of clearing house outputs: The Centre’s clearing house function is recognised for its scientific rigour and practical orientation. However, the extent to which these outputs inform local decision-making, especially in developing contexts, remains difficult to measure. Without systematic feedback mechanisms, it is challenging to assess the relevance, uptake, or adaptation of these tools by local actors. To enhance impact and demonstrate value across diverse geographies, the Centre could:

- Develop and implement a lightweight, proportionate monitoring framework that captures how local authorities and practitioners engage with the Centre’s tools, training materials, and policy guidance. This could include follow-up surveys or structured feedback from Academy participants and toolkit users;
- Collect and analyse case studies and user testimonies that document how specific HRGL outputs, such as toolkits or conference insights, have influenced local governance practices or informed concrete policy changes;
- Integrate monitoring insights into the HRGL outcome documents and other dissemination channels, thereby creating a learning loop that reinforces the quality, relevance, and usability of future outputs.

Addressed to: the Centre

Duration: within 2 years

Deadline: June 2027

9. Reinforce support to gender equality with a pointed strategy: The Centre adopts a HRBA in its very structure and in all its activities, projects, operations. Regarding Global Priority Gender Equality, the Centre has integrated a gender lens into multiple outputs, including the Toolkit for Equality and Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities, with specific chapters

focused on the inclusion of women and girl.⁴⁹ The Centre also collaborated with the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) to conduct tailored workshops and consultations, which informed these toolkits and ensured participatory development.⁵⁰ These initiatives contribute to UNESCO's objective of empowering local actors to institutionalise gender equality across policy and planning processes, especially in regions where systemic gaps persist. However, the promotion of gender equality by the Centre could be more structurally mainstreamed throughout all activities – including European projects. Other activities and structures occasionally lack a systematic integration of gender-specific considerations. In order to be more aligned with UNESCO's Global Priority gender equality framework as well as the SDG 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" of the 2030 Agenda, the Centre could:

- Develop a gender equality strategy embedded in the HRBA that is based on a systemic consideration of gender, includes gender-specific objectives, indicators and monitoring systems (especially when cooperating with the local communities and affected women and girls);
- Conduct a gender analysis to assess the contexts of the activities, collect information on how genders are affected differently, and create a baseline on gender disparities, needs and priorities;
- Mainstream the results of the gender analysis throughout the complete programming cycle and all areas of work (capacity-building, interdisciplinary research, and networking); Collect and expose disaggregated data by sex in its research and clearing house function;
- Adopt specific tools to promote gender equality such as UNESCO's Gender Equality Tools, UN Women's Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results, and the European's Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Mainstreaming Cycle.

Addressed to: the Centre

Duration: within 2 years

Deadline: June 2027

⁴⁹ Toolkit publications 2021–2023

⁵⁰ Interviews

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation ToRs

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels in Graz (Austria) – Category 2

I. Background

1. On 3 November 2016, the Government of the Republic of Austria requested the Director General of UNESCO to initiate all necessary steps for the establishment of an International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in Graz (Styria, Austria) as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre, in application of the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the Auspices of UNESCO.⁵¹
2. On December 2019, an Agreement was signed between UNESCO and the Austria government. It entered into force on 4 September 2020 in conformity with Article 14 of the Agreement. The main objective of the Centre was to “*contribute to efforts at the global, regional and sub-regional levels aimed at empowering regional and local authorities to mainstream human rights and gender equality and to promote inclusion across their areas of work in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”.⁵²
3. According to the Agreement, the Centre shall promote:
 - a. **Capacity-building**, including the provision of technical advice and training through appropriate methodologies and implementation instruments, at the local and regional level to support the implementation of a human-rights-based approach (HRBA) throughout the programming cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation).
 - b. **Interdisciplinary research** on mainstreaming human rights at the local level, including on monitoring and evaluation to be widely disseminated and also to serve as knowledge base for other functions.
 - c. The setting up of a **clearing-house encompassing**, *inter alia*, the systematic collection, analysis, and wide dissemination of good practices at city-level among various networks.
 - d. **Cooperation and networking** with international, regional, and local governments and organizations (particularly with UN agencies, programs and bodies, UNESCO chairs, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Organization of American States and others) and networks (such as ICCAR, United Cities and Local Governments Conference of Human Right Cities).
4. The Centre's work programme is anchored in the norms, standards, and principles of the international human rights framework and focuses on their implementation at the local level. In its capacity-building efforts directed at local and regional governments, the Centre facilitates the implementation of human rights by generating, managing, and applying knowledge and materials for inclusive and equitable development based on human rights and by offering a laboratory for taking up novel and proven practices for cities and regions on how to deliver on the goals set by the 2030 Agenda and the promise of “Leaving No One Behind”.

II. Status of the Centre

5. The International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels⁵³ under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO Centre) was founded by unanimous vote of

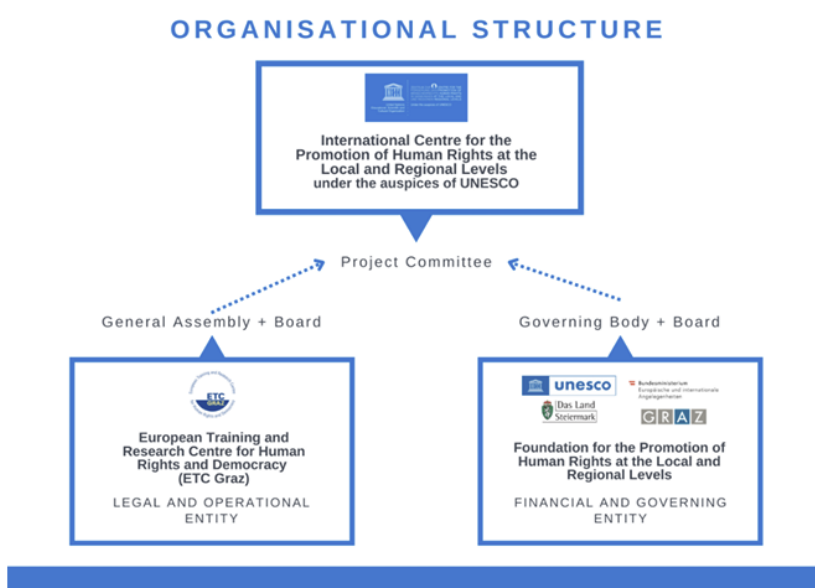
⁵¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252170.locale=en>

⁵² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252169>

⁵³ For more information see: www.humanrightsgolocal.org/about-us/

UNESCO’s General Conference in 2017. The Centre aims to support the implementation of the international human rights agenda at the local and regional levels. Situated in Graz, Austria, the Centre promotes a human rights-based approach to policy-making and practice at the local and regional levels, building on 25 years of experience and expertise. The Centre conducts research, capacity-building, international cooperation, and networking activities.

6. The Centre is hosted by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz), and cooperates closely with the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security at the University of Graz. The ETC with its General Assembly and elected Board acts as the operational and legal body behind the Centre. The Fund with its Governing Body formed by the founding organisations and the Board acts as the financial and governing entity. The two entities are linked by the so-called Project Commission, in which both Boards are represented. The Director of the operational entity is appointed as Director of the International Centre. The below scheme provides a mapping of the Centre’s structures.



7. The Centre has done important and innovative work towards these goals and the implementation of the human rights agenda at the local and regional level. Overall, the Centre has worked in 48 countries, carried out 38 research and cooperation projects, produced 124 publications, offered 25 university courses and 124 master and doctoral theses, and established 5 cooperation agreements with international partners. Highlights include: the Annual Academy and Conference on “Human Rights Go Local”;⁵⁴ the publication series “Human Rights Go Local” Volumes 1-5;⁵⁵ 18 chapters of the Toolkit for Equality; the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) Online City Reporting Tool.⁵⁶

III. Evaluation Objectives, questions and scope

8. The main objectives of this evaluation are: /
 - To evaluate the Centre’s performance with respect to its objectives and functions and its contribution to UNESCO’s strategic program objectives and associated Social and Human Sciences strategies, priorities and themes; and

⁵⁴ For more information about the Annual Academy and Conference see: www.humanrightsgolocal.org/events/academy-and-conference-series

⁵⁵ For more information about the publication series see: www.humanrightsgolocal.org/resources/hrgl-publication-series/

⁵⁶ For more information about the ECCAR Reporting Toolkit see: www.eccar.info/en/reporting-in-eccar

- To assess the extent to which the agreement concerning the Centre is in conformity with the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO and, if needed, to provide guidance on how this can be achieved.
9. The findings of the evaluation will serve as the basis for the Director General’s recommendation to UNESCO’s Executive Board as to whether the agreement with the Government of the Republic of Austria about the Centre should be renewed.
 10. In addition, the evaluation is expected to make recommendations regarding the relevance and effectiveness of the Centre’s activities, its collaboration with other UNESCO entities and partners, and the efficiency and sustainability of its governance, management, and operations. The planning, design, management and resources for evaluations will observe the evaluation norms and standards as stated in the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029.
 11. The evaluation report will be shared with the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Centre and be included in the final report to the Executive Board on the execution of the Program, as specified in the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy. They will also be made available on the website of the Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO. The management response and action plan to the evaluation report will be implemented based on the Strategy for Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (2019), contained in document 40 C/79 and its annexes.
 12. The following evaluation questions and issues shall be explored by the independent evaluation expert(s) (consultant/organisation) (and all other references to a singular consultant) responsible for conducting the evaluation:
 - i. **Effectiveness:** Assess the effectiveness of the Centre’s programmes and activities to achieving its stated objectives, including if the delivery of projects, outputs and outcomes meet the basic minimum requirements and standards
 - i. **Relevance:** Assess the extent to which the Centre’s outputs are in line with UNESCO’s strategic programme objectives and expected results, including the two global priorities of the Organization (Global Priority Africa and Global Priority Gender Equality), and related sectoral or programme priorities and themes and also their contribution to related global development agendas.
 - ii. **External Coherence:** How has the Centre cooperated with international, regional and local governments and organizations (such as UN agencies, programs and bodies, UNESCO chairs, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Organization of American States and others) and networks such as ICCAR, the Conference of Human Rights Cities and in particular United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)? How has the Centre engaged with the City of Graz, the University of Graz and the Provincial Government of Styria as well as academia and civil society organisations active in the field of local and regional human rights implementation?
 - iii. **Internal Coherence:** To what extent is the Centre planning and coordinating the implementation of its programmes with UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Field Offices, National Commissions and other thematically related category 1 and 2 institutes or Centres.
 - iv. **Efficiency:** Assess the efficiency of the Centre’s governance, including organizational arrangements, management, human resources and accountability mechanisms, as for example:
 - Publication of the required Annual reports and established focal points as mandated by the Agreement
 - Regularly updated the relevant Centre website
 - Assess the financial and human resources available for ensuring sustainable institutional capacity and viability.
 - Developed interdisciplinary research on mainstreaming human rights at the local level, including on monitoring and evaluation, to be widely disseminated and

- also to serve as knowledge base for other functions • Developed and maintained partnerships with government agencies, public or private partners and public and private donors of the Centre
- v. **Autonomy:** To what extent does the Centre enjoy, within its territory, the autonomy necessary for the execution of its activities and legal capacity to contract, institute legal proceedings, and to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property?
- vi. **Crosscutting Themes:**
- Has the Centre contributed to empowering regional and local authorities to mainstream human rights and gender equality and to promote inclusion across their areas of work in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and notably Sustainable Development Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and also with relevant commitments of the New Urban Agenda?
 - Has the Centre supported, both locally and regionally, the implementation of a human rights-based approach ("HRBA") throughout the programming cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)?
 - Has the Centre set up a clearing house for the systematic collection, analysis and wide dissemination of good Human Rights practices at city-level among various networks?

IV. Focus Areas for Evaluation

13. In observing these parameters, the evaluator should pay special attention to:
- The contribution of the Centre activities, actions and projects to UNESCO's C/5 expected outcomes articulated in SHS Programme and Medium-Term Strategy (MTS).
 - How this contribution was conducted in collaboration with relevant actors, including stakeholders from the UNESCO ecosystem (i.e. UNESCO Chairs and category 2 centres under the UNESCO auspices, etc.), Council of Europe, EU Fundamental Rights Agency, OHCHR and other UN agencies, etc.?
 - How has the Centre's distinct governance structure contributed to the well functioning of the institution and the realization of its objectives?

V. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

14. The evaluation will utilise a mixed method approach making use of qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation will follow IOS Evaluation Guidelines. All findings will be triangulated from multiple data sources. Possible data collection methods include:
- a) A desk study of relevant documents, provided by the Centre and the SHS sector.
 - b) Interviews the Centre's management and staff.
 - c) Interviews (telephone, online and/or via e-mail and physical visit where possible) with the Centre's stakeholders, including implementing partners, beneficiaries as well as staff SHS Sector and other relevant offices in Headquarters, relevant regional offices and elsewhere, including, where appropriate, focus group discussions each dedicated to one of the Centre's key activity areas: 1) Research, 2) Capacity Building, and 3) Exchange and Networking.
 - d) Conduct on-site visits to the Centre and observation of the Centre itself and its events.
 - e) Benchmarking comparisons with other centres, as appropriate, to identify key areas for improvement, or key areas where other similar Centres may implement successful procedures and strategies employed by the Centre.
15. The selected evaluator(s) will prepare a detailed approach (information collection tools, data sources and data collection methods, people to be interviewed, travel itinerary and duration) and present the methodological approach in the draft evaluation **Inception Report**.

VI. Planning and Implementation Arrangements

16. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be formed to support and inform the evaluation throughout its process: from its preparation, implementation, and finalisation. The ERG will comprise of a designated UNESCO staff member, a contact from the UNESCO IOS Evaluation Office, relevant contacts from the institution under evaluation, a representative from the Government of the Republic of Austria, and an independent human rights specialist. A designated UNESCO staff member will assist in the preparation and implementation of the evaluation exercise.
17. The evaluator(s) will be responsible for being self-sufficient as regards logistics (office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, etc.). However, suitable working space, when necessary, will be provided.
18. The evaluator(s) will be expected to:
 - Keep close communication with UNESCO SHS throughout the review process.
 - Discuss key findings and recommendations with UNESCO and partners.
 - Keep a clear archive of all records of desk reviews, interviews, photos taken and any other documents for the review by UNESCO SHS.
 - Formulate an **Inception Report** that clarifies objectives and methods of the evaluation.
 - Make travel arrangements in coordination with the Centre and submit all original documentation of travel to UNESCO for reimbursement. The evaluator(s) will be responsible for costs of travel, telecommunications, and printing of documentation.
 - A proposed date for a **Mission to Graz and Vienna** has been set for **24-28 March 2025** and the Evaluator(s) should be available for that date, although this may be subject to change.
 - The **Final Evaluation Report** should include actionable recommendations on how the Centre can improve and reinforce its contribution to UNESCO's programme.
 - Therefore, the evaluator(s) should:
 - Prepare and submit to UNESCO SHS (and IOS) for its comments and approval, by **14 March 2025**, an **Inception Report** explaining the evaluation methodology to be implemented.
 - Prepare and submit to UNESCO SHS (and IOS) for its comments and approval, by **9 May 2025**, a draft **Executive Summary Report**. The draft Executive Summary of the evaluation is to be submitted in English. The process for preparing the draft Executive Summary Report should allow sufficient time for a discussion and validation of the findings and the recommendations with the relevant UNESCO SHS programme sector and pertinent stakeholders, including the government(s) that proposed the designation of the Centre and the Centre itself.
 - In consultation with the SHS Sector prepare and submit to UNESCO for its comments and quality assurance, a **Final Review Report** in English by **30 June 2025**. The Final Review Report should be in English language of maximum 10-15 pages, excluding the Executive Summary and annexes.

1.1 Reporting

- The **Inception Report** should be maximum 5 pages explaining the methodology to be used for the evaluation process of the C2C.
- The draft **Executive Summary Report** shall be maximum 2 pages.
- The **Final Review Report** should be structured as follows:
 - Cover page
 - Table of contents
 - Executive Summary, including recommendations (maximum 2

- pages)
- Purpose of the review (maximum 1 page)
 - Scope of the review (maximum 1 page)
 - Methodology (maximum 1 page)
 - Findings, recommendations, and conclusions (the core part of the report), including an assessment of the Centre against each of the criteria for Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (2019), contained in document 40 C/79 and its annexes, and a formal recommendation on the continuation of the category 2 status. The finding, conclusions and recommendations should be structured by evaluation question. (maximum 5 pages)
 - Annexes - including list of interviewees (name, title, contacts and institutional affiliation), key research questions asked, tables and figures (if needed) which provide evidence on main findings, key documents consulted, and the Terms of Reference.

1.2 Qualifications of External Evaluator(s)

The external evaluator(s) will possess the following qualifications:

Mandatory qualifications and experience

- Education: Advanced academic degree (Master's Degree or higher) in human rights, social sciences, development studies, or a related field;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in a relevant field related to UNESCO's mandate;
- Proven experience in leading evaluations, with experience in mixed-methods data collection and analysis including a strong record in designing, conducting, and leading evaluations. At least some of this experience will be in a human rights-related area;
- Ability to engage with officials in the public sector, appropriate Ministries in Austria, and the United Nations;
- Experience working internationally, including with the UN organizations;
- Excellent analytical and demonstrated drafting skills in English: ability to collect and analyse information, to synthesise ideas and feedback and prepare reports in a clear and concise manner;
- Knowledge of and experience in applying gender equality analysis and in integrating gender equality dimensions in evaluation;
- No previous affiliation with the Centre or involvement in the activities under review.

Desirable qualifications and experience

- Expertise in mainstreaming human rights and gender equality and promoting inclusion in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, will be considered an advantage;
- Experience in evaluations of projects in the field of human rights implementation and education;
- Understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights, Inclusion (LNOB), Gender Equality, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Environment;
- Experience with assignments focusing on multi-stakeholder partnerships, coordination and capacity building.

1.3 Supporting Documentation

In this section, the ERG has listed all documents that the consultant should review as part of the evaluation.

- [Annual reports 2020 – 2024](#)
- [Work-programme reports 2019 – 2023](#)
- UNESCO C2C reports 2020 – 2023
- Human Rights Go Local: What Works – Academy and Conference Outcome Documents 2020 – 2024
- [Human Rights Go Local: What Works – Academy and Conference Proceedings 2020 – 2024](#)
 - 2024 edition, 5-8 February 2024: [Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments](#)
 - 2023 edition, 1-8 February 2023: [Governing the City by Human Rights Objectives: Management Concepts and Instruments](#)
 - 2022 edition, 1-8 February 2022: [From Intentions to Commitments: Towards the Effective and Sustainable Implementation of Human Rights](#)
 - 2021 edition, 1-9 February 2021: [Building Bridges between Local Governments and the Scientific Community to Promote Human Rights](#)
- [Human Rights Go Local: Publication Series, Vol I-V, 2020 – 2024](#)
- Financial and other official documentation:
 - Minutes of ETC General Assembly 2020 – 2024
 - Audit reports Foundation
 - Audit reports ETC
 - Approving decisions of Governmental Board
- [UNESCO Medium Term Strategy \(2022-2029\)](#)
- [UNESCO Programme and Budget \(2024-2025\)](#)
- [UNESCO Roadmap Against Racism and Discrimination](#)
- [UNESCO Routes of Enslaved Peoples: Resistance, Liberty and Heritage Programme Strategy](#)
- [UNESCO Global Outlook on Racism and Discrimination](#)
- [UNESCO We Need to Talk: Measuring Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Inclusion](#)
- [UNESCO 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development](#)
- [UNESCO 2017 Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers](#)
- [UN Pact for the Future](#)

Formally approved documents are published online: www.humanrightsgolocal.org/about-us/

Please note, further publications and other documents may be provided in addition to the list above. Any other documentation requested by the Evaluator(s) will be provided by the Centre's management.

Annex 2: Theory of Change



Conditions:

1. Stability of the socio-political situation in partner countries.
2. Political support and mobilization of the necessary backing from decision-makers.
3. Prioritization of Human Rights based approaches in national, regional, local strategies.
4. Quality and ownership of the research produced.
5. Quality of the expertise mobilized.
6. Capacity to disseminate resources.
7. Alignment between the program's budgetary and human resource capacities and the planned activities.

Risks:

1. Worsening public health situations in target countries, risks of natural disasters, political transitions, or security crises.
2. Resistance to change among local decisionmakers.
3. Weak culture of professional mentoring and peer learning among decisionmakers.
4. Divergent understandings of research objectives between researchers and policymakers.

Annex 3: Evaluation matrix

This evaluation matrix has been created based evaluation areas stated in the Terms of Reference of the Evaluation of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels in Graz (Austria) – Category 2 under point 12.: **(i) effectiveness, (ii) relevance, (iii.) external coherence, (iv.) internal coherence, (v.) efficiency, (vi.) autonomy** and the **(vii.) crosscutting themes** that have been mainstreamed into the just mentioned areas. To frame the data collection and to serve as a normative reference for the main findings, lessons and recommendations, the following evaluation matrix is used in interview questionnaire design and the analysis of the collected data.

Evaluation Questions	Assessment criteria	Sources
Effectiveness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent do the Centre’s programmes and activities contribute to achieving its stated objectives and functions? To what extent do the delivery of projects, outputs and outcomes meet the basic minimum requirements and standards? 	1. The Centre’s programmes and activities contribute to realising its mission statement and annual work programme as well as the tasks stated in the strategy for Cat. 2 Institutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the strengths and weaknesses in terms of capacity building, interdisciplinary research as well as cooperation and networking? How has this changed since the beginning of the Agreement? 	2. The strengths of the Centre were fully exploited in capacity building, interdisciplinary research as well as cooperation and networking. 3. The Centre has shown its capacity to adapt to unforeseen evolutions, by mobilising sufficient resources (e.g., integration of unforeseen and strategic activities/projects in the programme). 4. The Centre adopted adequate approaches to remedy identified weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs FGD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a human rights-based approach followed? 	5. The Centre supported, both locally and regionally, the implementation of the HRBA throughout the programming cycle (Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review KIIs
Relevance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To which degree do the Centre’s programmes and activities contribute to UNESCO’s C/5 expected outcomes articulated in SHS Programme and Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)? 	6. The Centre’s programmes and activities contribute to UNESCO’s C/5 expected outcomes (SHS) and MTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk Review (KIIs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the Centre’s outputs in line with UNESCO’s two global priorities (Global Priority Africa 	7. The Centre’s outputs are in line with UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa. 8. The Centre’s outputs are in line with UNESCO’s Global Priority Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk Review

and Global Priority Gender Equality)?	Equality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (KIIs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree has the Centre contributed to empowering regional and local authorities to mainstream human rights and gender equality and to promote inclusion across their areas of work in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and notably Sustainable Development Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and with relevant commitments of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)? 	<p>9. The Centre's work contributes to NUA and SDGs (especially Goal 11).</p> <p>10. The Centre's work contributes to empowering regional and local authorities to mainstream human rights and gender equality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • (KIIs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a human rights-based approach followed? 	<p>11. The Centre's programme is formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted stakeholder groups, especially marginalised group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • KIIs • FGD
External Coherence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the Centre cooperated with international, regional and local governments and organisations (such as UN agencies, programs and bodies, UNESCO chairs, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Organization of American States and others) and networks such as ICCAR, the Conference of Human Rights Cities and in particular United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)? 	<p>12. There are MoUs and activities and other forms of cooperation between the Centre and international, regional and local governments and organisations as well as networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the Centre engaged with the City of Graz, the University of Graz and the Provincial Government of Styria as well as academia and civil society organisations active in the field of local and regional human rights implementation? 	<p>13. There are activities, networks and other forms of cooperation between the Centre and City of Graz, the University of Graz and the Provincial Government of Styria as well as academia and civil society organisations active in the field of local and regional human rights implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • KIIs • FGD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the Centre's contribution to UNESCO's C/5 expected outcomes—outlined in the SHS Programme and Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)—developed in collaboration with relevant partners, including 	<p>14. The Centre collaborates with relevant actors, including stakeholders from UNESCO ecosystem, CoE, FRA, OHCHR and other UN agencies in the contribution to the UNESCO C/5 (SHS).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • KIIs

UNESCO stakeholders (such as UNESCO Chairs and category 2 centres), the Council of Europe, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, OHCHR, and other UN agencies?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a human rights-based approach followed? 	15. The Centre has set up a clearing house for the systematic collection, analysis and wide dissemination of good Human Rights practices at city-level among various networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs FGD
Internal Coherence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the Centre planning and coordinating the implementation of its programmes with UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Field Offices, National Commissions and other thematically related category 1 and 2 institutes or Centres? 	16. The Centre plans and coordinates its programmes implementation with UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Field Offices, National Commissions and other thematically related category 1 and 2 institutes or Centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a human rights-based approach followed? 	17. The human rights and gender equality aspects of the Centre’s work comply with other interventions carried out by UNESCO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk Review
Efficiency		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How efficient is the Centre’s governance, including organizational arrangements, management, human resources and accountability mechanisms? 	18. The Centre’s governance functions in an efficient manner for both staff and beneficiaries/partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs FGD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the Centre’s distinct governance structure contributed to the realisation of its objectives? 	19. The Centre’s distinct governance structure contributes positively to the realisation of its objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there opportunities for increasing the efficiency or usefulness of management and monitoring structures? 	<p>20. Skills of the staff for the design and implementation of the interventions allowed for a smooth execution of activities within the planned time frame.</p> <p>21. The operational processes and structure (team organisation, recruitment, administrative management, accountability mechanisms) allowed for the proper execution of activities.</p> <p>22. Management of the resources was designed and monitored so that the cost of activities was justified in relation to the results observed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a human rights-based approach followed? 	<p>23. There are sufficient resources allocated to integrate human rights and gender equality in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the intervention.</p> <p>24. The intervention resources were used in an efficient way to address human rights and gender equality in the implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs

Autonomy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the Centre enjoy, within its territory, the autonomy necessary for the execution of its activities and legal capacity to contract, institute legal proceedings, and to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property? 	25. The Centre implements its activities in an autonomous way and possesses adequate legal capacity to contract, institute legal proceedings, and to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the Centre in conformity with the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO? 	26. The Centre is in conformity with the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk Review KIIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-cutting Themes 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the Centre set up a clearing house for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of good human rights practices at the city-level amongst a variety of networks? 	27. The Centre has a functional operational strategy for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of good human rights practices at the city level amongst a variety of networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs

Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed

The evaluation desk review included the following documentation:

- [Draft Agreement between the UNESCO and the Republic of Austria on the Establishment of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels under the auspices of UNESCO \(Category 2\) in Graz \(Austria\)](#)
- [Feasibility Study - Establishment of an International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the local and regional levels in Graz, Austria, under the auspices of UNESCO](#)
- [Feasibility Study - Becoming a human rights city in Ethiopia](#)
- [GUARANTEE Practitioners' Guide for Implementers of a Sports & Learning program](#)
- [GUARANTEE Guaranteeing the Right to Education for Roman Children in Selected European Cities](#)
- Note Conceptuelle - Les droits humains et l'inclusion sociale par le sport en mettant l'accent sur les enfants et jeunes ainsi que les femmes et filles - Atelier de formation en ligne en renforcement de capacités dans les 54 communes en Union des Comores
- List of Potential Interviewees for Graz
- Protokoll der Generalversammlung des ETC
- Generalversammlung ETC Graz Protokoll
- Generalversammlung , 16 März 2020
- Bericht Über Rechnungsprüfung 2020
- Bericht Über Rechnungsprüfung 2022
- Bericht Über Rechnungsprüfung 2023
- work-programme 2021
- Report on the implementation of the work-programme 2021
- [Combating Racism in and through sports - A strategic Planning model for local authorities](#)
- [Plan d'action ECCAR en 10 points - Boite à outils pour l'égalité](#)
- [Annual Report 2019](#)
- [Annual Report 2020](#)
- [Annual Report 2021](#)
- [Annual Report 2022](#)
- [Annual Report 2023](#)
- [Work Programme 2019](#)
- [Work Programme 2020](#)
- [Work Programme 2021](#)
- [Work Programme 2022](#)
- [Work Programme 2023](#)
- [Work Programme 2024](#)
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Concept note
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Outcome Document and Explanatory Remarks
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Academy programme
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Conference programme
- Outcome Document "Building Bridges between Local Governments and the Scientific Community to Promote Human Rights"
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Concept note
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Conference programme
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Outcome Document and Explanatory Remarks
- Outcome Document "From Intentions to Commitments: Towards the Effective and Sustainable Implementation of Human Rights"
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Academy programme
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Outcome Document and Explanatory Remarks
- Outcome Document "Governing the city by human rights objectives: Management concepts and instruments"

- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Concept note
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Conference programme
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Academy programme
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Call for Registration
- Academy and Conference Human Rights Go Local: What works - Call for Registration
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Concept note
- Outcome Document "Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments"
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Tentative Agenda
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Outcome Document and Explanatory Remarks
- Human Rights Go Local: What works - Programme

- [Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 41 C/4](#)
- [42 C/5 2024-2025 Approved Programme and Budget](#)
- [Global Outlook on Racism and Discrimination](#)
- [Outcome Documents - Summit of the Future, Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations](#)
- [Recommendation on education for peace and human rights, international understanding, cooperation, fundamental freedoms, global citizenship and sustainable development](#)
- [Certified copy of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers](#)
- [Routes of Enslaved Peoples: Resistance, Liberty and heritage](#)
- UNESCO Roadmap against racism and discrimination
- [We Need to Talk - Measuring intercultural dialogue for peace and inclusion](#)

Annex 5: List of Informants

Name	Stakeholder Category	Affiliation	Data collection	Date*
Konstantinos Tararas	UNESCO & Partners	UNESCO HQ	Group interview	24/04/2025
Linda Tinio	UNESCO & Partners	UNESCO HQ		
Pietro DePerini	UNESCO & Partners	University of Padova	KII	23/04/2025
Gerd Oberleitner	Centre Staff & Management	UNESCO Graz	Scoping interview + KII	24/03/2025
Klaus Starl	Centre Staff & Management	UNESCO Graz	Scoping interview + KII	24/03/2025
Markus Möstl	Centre Staff & Management	UNESCO Graz	Group Interview	24/03/2025
Alexandra Stocker	Centre Staff & Management	ETC staff (HR, finance, etc.)		
Isabella Mayer	Centre Staff & Management	ETC staff (Head of social sciences)		
Lisa Heschl	Centre Staff & Management	ETC Deputy Director		
Renate Kicker	Centre Staff & Management	Foundation	KII	24/03/2025
Markus Uitz	Centre Staff & Management	Foundation	KII	26/03/2025
Anna Maria Maljőf	Founders	UNESCO	KII	30/04/2025
Ernst-Peter Brezovszky	Founders	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	KII	26/03/2025
Peter Riedler	Founders	University of Graz	KII	25/03/2025
Wolfgang Wehap	Founders	City Government	Group interview	25/03/2025
Elke Lujanski-Lammer	Founders	City Government		
Heimo Maieritsch	Founders	City Government		
Arthur Winkler-Hermaden	External Partners	Province Government Graz	KII	25/03/2025
Pradeep Wagle	Partners/Stakeholders	UN OHCHR	KII	30/04/2025
Claudia Scheufler	Partners/Stakeholders	UN Habitat	Group Interview	29/04/2025
Robert Lewis-Lettington	Partners/Stakeholders	UN Habitat		
Marite Moras	Partners/Stakeholders	Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional	Group Interview	02/05/2025

		Authorities		
Giulia Nason	Partners/Stakeholders	Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities		
Ivana D’Alessandro	Partners/Stakeholders	Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	KII	28/04/2025
Gyonggu Shin	Partners/Stakeholders	World Human Rights City Forum, Gwangju	KII	23/04/2025
Danijel Cubelic	Partners/Stakeholders	ECCAR	KII	30/04/2025
Regina Ruzs	Partners/Stakeholders	Government Austria Director, Department for Human Rights, International Cultural Affairs	KII	26/03/2025
Ulrike Butschek	Partners/Stakeholders	Government Austria Director, Department for Human Rights, Ethnic Minority Affairs	KII	27/03/2025
Tanja Tajmel	Trainers, lecturers, implementors	Concordia University Montreal	FGD	29/04/2025
Paul Lappalainen	Trainers, lecturers, implementors	University Stockholm		
Najat Zarrouk	Trainers, lecturers, implementors	UCLG Africa		
Shams Asadi	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Government of Vienna	KII	26/03/2025
Theodora Manolakis	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Government of Vienna	Group Interview	26/03/2025
Karin König	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Government of Vienna		
Karina Gomes	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Researcher, Advocate Save the Children Brazil	KII	24/04/2025
Zeynep Pirayesh	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Federal City of Bonn, Office for Integration and Diversity	KII	30/03/2024
Michael Bischof	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Diversity, Integration, and Anti-Racism Office, DIA	KII	07/05/2025

Nuria Lores	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Cidalia, Founding Partner	KII	22/04/2025
Loukman Said El-Hadi	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Institut Comorien pour la formation des élus	KII	17/04/2025
Edilu Shona	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Hawassa University	KII	17/04/2025
Doreen Basiime Kalimba	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	Office Social Affairs and Women in Kigali, Rwanda, Member of the African network of elected women (REFELA)	KII	24/04/2025
Mia Norberg Nguyen	Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)	City Administration Helsinborg, Department for Democracy and Law	KII	23/04/2025

*The dates highlighted in orange were conducted in person.

Annex 6: Interview guides

Interview Guide —Partner/Stakeholders

Interviewee:	
Interviewee's position	
Date & Time:	

Introductory question: What are the collaborations that you have been running with the Centre? Can you explain your involvement and role?

Questions
Relevance
1. How aligned do you feel the Centre's initiatives are with your organization's mission or strategic priorities?
2. What is the added value of the Centre according to you?
3. Does the project/activities with the Centre is formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted stakeholder groups, especially marginalized group?
External Coherence
4. What are the types of collaboration you have with the Centre? In what ways has the Centre facilitated meaningful cooperation among international, regional, and local governments and organizations?
5. In what ways has the Centre's work complemented or added value to your institution's own objectives/work in the field of human rights, urban inclusion, or local governance?
6. How responsive has the Centre been to the evolving priorities and needs of its international, regional, and local partners, including your organization?
Effectiveness
7. To what extent, do you consider the objectives of the project/activity you have collaborated on with the Centre is achieved? What are the factors contributing to or hinder the achievement of the expected results? Notably regarding the Centre's key activity areas on 1) capacity building, 2) interdisciplinary research as well as 3) cooperation and networking.
8. How would you evaluate the Centre's effectiveness in fostering cooperation and networking among diverse stakeholders and networks? Has this changed or improved since the beginning of your collaboration with the Centre?
9. To what extent has your organization collaborated with the Centre on initiatives that focus on gender? What have been the results, challenges, or opportunities observed?

Efficiency
10. Have you found the Centre’s human resource capacity and technical expertise adequate to support joint projects or initiatives with your organization?
11. How transparent and effective are the Centre’s accountability mechanisms in managing joint activities, funding, and shared responsibilities?
12. From your perspective as a partner, how efficient are the Centre’s governance structures and management arrangements in facilitating effective collaboration and timely decision-making?
Autonomy
13. How does the Centre’s autonomy (or perceived lack thereof) affect its ability to respond flexibly and efficiently to joint initiatives or emerging opportunities in your partnership? Have you experienced any limitations in your collaboration with the Centre that might be linked to its legal status, governance, or territorial autonomy (e.g., in contracting, project management, or resource allocation)?
Cross Cutting Themes
14. How valuable has the Centre’s clearing house function been in supporting your organization’s work or the work of your partner networks? Can you provide examples where this knowledge-sharing has informed your policies, programs, or research? How has the Centre contributed to interdisciplinary research or knowledge production in the field of human rights cities? Has your organization benefited from or collaborated on such initiatives?
Recommendations
15. What are the recommendations you would have for the future of the Centre?

Interview Guide – UNESCO & Partners

Interviewee:	
Interviewee's position	
Date & Time:	

Questions
Relevance
<p>1. From your perspective to what extent do the Centre's programmes and activities contribute to UNESCO's C/5 expected outcomes, particularly those under the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Programme? How well is the Centre's thematic focus aligned with the priorities and goals outlined in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)? How well is the Centre's thematic focus aligned with the priorities and goals outlined in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)?</p>
<p>2. To what extent do the Centre's outputs and activities address UNESCO's two global priorities—Global Priority Africa and Global Priority Gender Equality?</p>
Internal Coherence
<p>3. How effectively does the Centre coordinate and plan its programmes with UNESCO Headquarters and Field Offices? What is the communication channels, frequency or quality of the exchanges? What recommendations would you offer for improving the Centre's coordination with UNESCO HQ, Field Offices, and other Category 2 Centres to strengthen internal coherence?</p>
<p>4. What are the impacts of the partnership you have with the Centre? (e.g., increased visibility, knowledge sharing, peer-learning etc.)?</p>
<p>5. How well does the Centre coordinate its activities with other Category 2 Centers and UN entities to ensure coherence and avoid duplication? Have you identified opportunities for increased synergies or joint initiatives between the Centre and other relevant UNESCO entities that could enhance internal coherence?</p>
Effectiveness
<p>6. From your perspective, how effectively has the Centre fulfilled its stated objectives and functions as outlined in its founding agreement with UNESCO, and how well do its activities align with its designated role as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre in the field of human rights and cities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinforcing your institutions' capacities to design, implement, monitor HR-based policies, programmes, - Enhancing the use of research data and monitoring tools to advance HR policy making - Enhancing networking and collaborations with other governments/authorities or organizations?
<p>7. For the HQ: During the implementation of the activities/projects, has there been a need for adjustment (in terms of budget allocation, reformulation of activities, integration of emerging needs and so on)? And if, so to what extent UNESCO has been flexible?</p>

8. How effectively have the Centre’s activities addressed priorities such as gender equality, human rights particularly in relation to your organization’s goals or regional focus?

Efficiency

9. From your perspective, how efficient is the Centre’s unique governance structure in enabling effective decision-making, programme delivery, and partnership management?

10. How would you assess the adequacy and capacity of the Centre’s human resources and management team to implement its programmes and manage collaborations with UNESCO and other partners, and what opportunities do you see for optimizing the Centre’s allocation of both human and financial resources to maximize its impact and achieve its strategic objectives?

Autonomy

11. From your perspective, does the Centre appear to have sufficient autonomy and decision-making capacity to effectively carry out its mandate and collaborate efficiently?

Cross-cutting themes

12. How well does the Centre’s clearing house function complement UNESCO’s efforts in knowledge management and information sharing within the field of human rights and sustainable urban development’

Recommendations

13. What are the recommendations you would have for the future of the Centre?

Interview Guide – Beneficiaries, customers, target group(s)

Interviewee:	
Interviewee's position	
Date & Time:	

Introductory question: What are the activities/projects you have been working on with the Centre? Can you explain your involvement and role?

Questions
Relevance
1. How aligned do you feel the Centre's initiatives are with your organization's mission or strategic priorities?
2. What were the needs of your organization in implementing HR approach? Has the project/activities proposed by the Centre were aligned with those needs? What were the mechanisms/consultations in place to ensure that the activities proposed by the Centre corresponded to your needs (e.g., needs assessment, interviews)?
3. Does the project/activities with the Centre is formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted stakeholder groups, especially marginalized group?
External Coherence
4. How has your institution contributed to, or benefited from, the Centre's collaborative network?
5. From your perspective, how effective has the Centre been in facilitating or coordinating cooperation amongst different actors (i.e. int'l, regional, or local governments, networks, organizations, etc.), notably at the service of your organization? Are there areas where your institution sees room for improved coordination with the Centre to better support your organization's goals?
6. In what ways has the Centre's network helped to advance the objectives of your institution (e.g., Centre's collaboration with academia, local authorities, UNESCO entities, and civil society organizations)?
Effectiveness & sings of impact
7. To what extent, do you consider the objectives of the project/activity you have collaborated on with the Centre is achieved? What are the factors contributing to or hinder the achievement of the expected results? Notably regarding the Centre's key activity areas on 1) capacity building, 2) interdisciplinary research as well as 3) cooperation and networking.
8. How effectively have the Centre's activities addressed priorities such as gender equality, human rights particularly in relation to your organization's goals or regional focus?

9. During the implementation of the activities/projects, has there been a need for adjustment (in terms of budget allocation, reformulation of activities, integration of emerging needs and so on)? And if, so to what extent the Centre has been flexible in adopting to such emerging needs?
10. In what ways, has the Centre contributed to strengthening your institution's capacity to mainstream human rights, gender equality, and social inclusion in local or regional governance? Notably on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reinforcing your institutions' capacities to design, implement, monitor HR-based policies, programmes,- Enhancing the use of research data and monitoring tools to advance HR policy making- Enhancing networking and collaborations with other governments/authorities or organizations?
Efficiency
11. To what extent the governance and communication mechanisms of the Centre is clear to you?
12. To what extent the resources, and the expertise mobilized for the activity were sufficient/adequate to meet the needs?
13. Were the activities finalized in a timely manner? If not, what are the factors for delays?
Autonomy
14. From your perspective, does the Centre appear to have sufficient autonomy and decision-making capacity to effectively carry out its mandate and collaborate efficiently?
Cross Cutting Themes
15. Has your institution engaged with or benefited from the Centre's initiatives to collect, analyze, or share good practices in human rights implementation at the city level? If so, how effective were these efforts?
Recommendations
16. What are the recommendations you would have for the future of the Centre?

Focus Group Protocol – trainers, lecturers, implementors

Participants (name and position)	
Date & Time:	

The following questions provide a comprehensive framework to guide the focus group discussion. The evaluator will selectively address the most relevant questions based on the flow of the conversation and the insights shared by participants.

Introductory question: We kindly ask you to introduce yourself and tell us in which area you collaborated with the Centre

Questions
Relevance
1. From your point of view to what extent is the Centre’s programme/activities in which you were involved formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted stakeholder groups, especially marginalised group? To what extent and in which way were their needs and interests taken into consideration? (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)
2. Within your programme and its activities, to what degree did UNESCO strategies (e.g., taking into account of the gender approaches, Africa as a priority, ...) or other relevant strategies (i.e. SDGs) play a role?
External Coherence
3. To what extent can/could you observe an exchange and dissemination of good human rights practices at city-level among various networks? To what degree could you benefit from it?
Effectiveness & signs of impact
4. What has been your experience with the Centre and the activities in which you were involved? What went well, what were challenges?
5. According to you, how did the Centre deal with unforeseen evolutions? To what degree were you satisfied with the responses and the level of flexibility?
6. If you had to mention two strengths and two weaknesses of the Centre, which ones would these be?
7. What are the signs of changes/impact you have observed regarding the beneficiaries for the activities you were involved in? In terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The capacity building of local authorities in implementing HRBA? b. The use of research/evidence in policymaking c. Policy alignment/collaboration among key stakeholders?
Efficiency
8. Within the activities you were involved in, how was your experience with the Centre’s governance, including organizational arrangements, communication, management, human or financial resources and accountability mechanisms? For instance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To what extent the budget and the expertise mobilised were sufficient/adequate to achieve the project objectives? b. To what extent the communication channels and their frequency allowed for an efficient implementation?

Autonomy
9. To what extent did you have the feeling that the Centre can implement its activities in autonomous ways? What kind of independencies did you observe, if any?
Conclusion
10. Would you plan another cooperation with the Centre in the future, in what way would you like the Centre to improve? What would be a desirable change in your eyes?
Recommendations
11. What are the recommendations you would have for the future of the Centre?

Annex 7: BioData of the Team

Fabrice Hénard

Nationality: French

Residence : Paris, France

Education:

Institution : Dates	Degree(s) or Diploma(s) obtained:
Sciences Po-Paris [1991-1993]	Master in urban planning, Local development, town planning, real estate management
Sciences Po-Paris [1987-1991]	Master of Art; Major Public law, macroeconomics, public financing, history

For over 22 years Fabrice Hénard has been working in the field of evaluation of public policies and policy design. In early 2013, he founded the consultancy firm, Learning Avenue (www.learningavenue.fr) that specialises in designing and evaluating organisations, strategies, policies and programmes in human capital development. Fabrice is an experienced evaluator, mastering evidence-based analysis and has a deep practice of case studies, quantitative and qualitative analysis. Since the early 2000s, Fabrice has extensively worked on vulnerable populations and human rights, for CSOs and societal movements such as informal trade unions or community-based groups. He has conducted some 7 evaluations for UNESCO HQ, Category 1 and Category 2 institutes and more 15 evaluations on teacher training education. He is in addition CEO of the International Quality Assurance in Higher Education aimed at fostering the expansion of quality worldwide (300 members). From 2007 to 2012, Fabrice was an expert-analyst at the Directorate for Education, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Before joining the OECD, Fabrice was an international quality evaluator at the French Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (2003-2007). From 1999 to 2003, he was a senior consultant at EUREVAL-Centre for European Evaluation & Expertise. A French native, Fabrice is a graduate from Sciences Po-University Paris and works in French and English.

Elçin Bahçeci

Nationality: Turkish

Residence: Paris, France

Education :

Institution (Date from - to)	Degree(s) or Diploma(s) obtained:
Sciences Po Paris Paris, France [2017-2019]	Master in « International Development » <i>Specialty</i> : Project/ programme management & human rights
Shanghai Jiao Tong University Shanghai, China [2016-2017]	Language training (Mandarin)
Sciences Po Paris – Le Havre Campus Le Havre, France [2014-2017]	Degree in political science

Elçin Bahçeci is a consultant at Learning Avenue and has been working with Fabrice Hénard for 5 years. Elçin obtained her master's degree from Sciences Po Paris (Paris School of International

Affairs- PSIA), specialising in 'international development'. During her studies, she focused on education policy. She regularly contributes to reports and evaluations on education policies, notably for the European Commission and the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC). She has taken part in more than 20 evaluations (education, training, youth) in Europe, Africa, and Asia, including 3 other UNESCO Category 2 Centres.

Sara Soltani

Nationality: Austrian, Iranian

Residence: Vienna, Austria

Education:

Institution (Date from - to)	Degree(s) or Diploma(s) obtained:
European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice Danish Institute for Human Rights, Copenhagen [2016-2017]	European Master (E.MA) in Human Rights and Democratisation
University of Vienna [2014-2017]	Master of Arts in Political Science
University of Vienna [2010-2014]	Bachelor of Arts in Social and Cultural Anthropology

Over the last 7 years, Sara has been working as a human rights advisor at the Austrian level as well as in the international field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid. As a human rights and gender advisor at the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), she was not only an active part of the project proposal evaluation team, but also involved in drafting terms of references for various baselines, analyses and in developing thematic and strategic policy papers. Furthermore, she provided technical support in German, English and French to national and international project partners (NGOs, UN, EU institutions) during the project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation(result-based management).As a gender and disability advisor at Diakonie, she supported NGOs in Austria and partner countries in conducting diversity and gender analyses and led trainings on these topics, always following the HRB-approach. Examples include capacity building for self-advocacy organizations in Lesotho and Uganda as well as in Palestine to combat discrimination against Palestinian women with disabilities. These projects followed a Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) approach. During her career, she has been part of many human rights-related expert groups, boards and committees. Sara has been trained in qualitative and quantitative research methods spanning from social sciences and philosophy to international human rights legal frameworks. Focus groups, semi-structured interviews, narrative interviews, participatory observations as well as quantitative surveys have been part of her tasks. She is fluent in German, Farsi, English, and French.