The Economic Policy Working Group facilitates critical analysis and collective action to challenge economic policies, practices and structures that undermine respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights.

Current Objectives

- Amplify and deepen a human rights analysis of evolving economic issues by promoting the perspectives and advocacy of member organizations—social movements and NGOs—confronting systemic human rights violations tied to economic policy in different regions and facilitating cross-regional, strategic exchanges between these members;
- Renew a common, strategically focused agenda for ESCR-Net members’ collective advocacy to advance economic policies and alternative models that facilitate human rights realization; and
- Facilitate the ongoing engagement of ESCR-Net Members and partners in existing collective initiatives, including the Righting Finance and Coalition for Human Rights in Development initiatives, which we established with the support of ESCR-Net.

Impacts 2013-2016

- ESCR-Net, with the leadership of IAP and CIEL, cofounded the Bank on Human Rights Campaign, engaging members and allies—social movements and NGOs—in advocacy to strengthen World Bank Safeguards and enforce human rights obligations in relation to development finance at multiple levels. In 2015, ESCR-Net helped to facilitate an international campaign strategy meeting, which resulted in several members taking leadership in a new steering committee, transitioning the Campaign to the Coalition of Human Rights in Development, and bringing new technical support for national-level advocacy.
- Emerging out of the Economic Policy Working Group’s earlier human rights advocacy related to trade, export credit agencies and austerity, the working group was involved in creating the online platform Righting Finance—with the coordination of the Center of Concern and leadership of several members—which continues to be central to deepening critical analysis and supporting advocacy in multiple international spaces.
- A growing number of social movement and grassroots members have engaged in dialogues and strategic discussions related to economic policy, laying the foundation for new member-led collective work in the coming period.

Prioritized Activities for 2016

In recent years, the Board and many members have emphasized the need for reinvigorated and dedicated attention to economic policy issues via a renewed Economic Policy Working Group (EPWG). Members are eager to deepen and promote critical human rights analysis of evolving global conditions and emerging economic issues and to facilitate collective advocacy targeting economic policies and practices that undermine human rights while advancing alternative models.

1. **Amplify an ESCR analysis of key economic policy issues:** building on themes that emerged in the recent economic policy mapping and ongoing developments impacting ESCR-Net Members,
facilitate online webinars/discussions between regionally diverse members to foreground their analysis and advocacy, including online background notes and podcasts/videos

2. **Renew Economic Policy Working Group:** developing an advisory group/steering committee of members, based on principles of regional and gender balance and the centrality of social movements; identify and analyze openings for collective work, building on the economic policy mapping, and explore pilot projects, potentially with other working groups, like corporate accountability or women and ESCR; hold a strategic planning meeting of a reengaged EPWG as part of the Global Strategy Meeting

3. **Support the ongoing engagement of ESCR-Net Members in existing economic policy-related initiatives:** including Righting Finance and the Coalition of Human Rights in Development, as well as projects initiated by various members

**Emerging Issues and Potential Synergies:** A fuller analysis of the economic policy mapping will be completed in June 2016. Initial analysis highlighted several issues of concern and interest to overlapping groups of members. In broad terms, the mapping identified a collective desire to articulate alternative models grounded in human rights in response to dominant modes of development, which have relied on privatization of public services, growth in public-private partnerships (including in relation to the new UN Sustainable Development Goals), and investment and trade agreements that prioritize commercial interests over public good. Members also highlighted the human rights issues associated with informal and care economies, market-oriented fiscal policy, investor-state dispute settlement, and related themes such as infrastructure, energy and extractives.

**Membership**

More than 40 ESCR-Net members from all regions of the world engage directly in economic policy and human rights related activities. Thirty organizations, including almost a third social movements, participated in an economic policy mapping of members in 2015. In 2016, through a series of online dialogues on key themes and intensive discussions at the Global Strategy Meeting in November, a regionally-diverse core of organizations will ideally provide new leadership to this area of work, with a growing number of members engaging in collective advocacy and relate projects.