

UPR Info

Annual report

2021



UPR
INFO



Annual report 2021

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Introduction

2021 saw UPR Info adopting and preparing for new approaches to its work in order to strengthen stakeholders' engagement in the UPR process. Hybrid meetings became the new way of working, with workshops held online and/or in person. The In-Country Programme team was able to resume in-country missions.

UPR Info conducted widescale regional online consultations with civil society actors to ensure that the upcoming 4th UPR cycle will benefit from the good practices and lessons learned from the previous cycle. The consultation process focused on the challenges faced by civil society in many countries as the civic space shrinks, as well as on how the mechanism can support stakeholders' engagement and national mechanisms for reporting implementation and follow-up to ensure improvement of the human rights situation in all UN member States.

As a member of the International Gender Champions, UPR Info signed the gender-based violence pledge and strived to achieve gender parity on the panels it held. In response to its commitments, UPR Info developed a video to raise awareness and provide guidance to UPR stake-

holders on integrating a human rights-based and gender-based approach into their work. It also developed new training modules on mainstreaming these two approaches in the UPR. Furthermore, UPR Info trained young people from the Gender Equality Forum on how to advocate for gender equality using the UPR.

On an organisational level, UPR Info was able to weather the Covid-19 crisis thanks to its agility and the resilience of its teams. Fundraising efforts and the renewed trust of donors and partners in the organisation resulted in the acquisition of new grants.

Finally, the organisation developed a risk management policy to provide guidance to its programmes regarding risk management, to support the achievement of the organisation's mission and objectives, to protect staff and assets and to ensure financial sustainability. That will contribute to maximising opportunities in all UPR Info's work and to minimising adversity.

01 Policy and Advocacy Programme

From a policy perspective, the Policy and Advocacy Programme contributes to collaborative and constructive dialogue on the role of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the improvement of human rights, in line with the objective, transparent and non-politicised nature of the mechanism.

In terms of advocacy, the Programme supports the engagement of civil society organisations (CSOs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) with the UPR by providing them with tools and opportunities to conduct advocacy work.

Through the Pre-sessions project, the Programme provides these stakeholders with an international, high-profile platform to advocate directly to States in advance of the UPR Working Group. Training and awareness-raising campaigns underpin the Pre-sessions and are developed and delivered within the context of the Programme to ensure that other stakeholders have the capacity to conduct effective advocacy throughout the UPR cycle.

Policy dimension

In the run-up to the 4th UPR cycle, UPR Info launched a series of informal consultations with civil society actors in 2021, to discuss how these actors can further contribute to reinforcement of the mechanism. Based on responses to a preliminary survey collected from 123 CSOs, NHRIs, UN agencies, academics and other stakeholders, UPR Info ran a two-day online discussion, open to all civil society representatives. The dialogue focused on (i) civil society participation, the role of national actors and their capacity to contribute to the UPR; and (ii) good practices for implementation, the role of States and how to support civil society engagement in the follow-up process. What emerged from these discussions was the importance of the inclusive dimension of the mechanism, thereby allowing all actors to contribute to the realisation of human rights. Furthermore, States should be encouraged to consult with civil society on an ongoing basis during the process and stakeholders should be equipped with sufficient tools and resources to enable them to engage effectively. Finally, the essential role of national reporting and monitoring mechanisms in ensuring the transparency and effectiveness of the process was highlighted. The full report is available here:

<https://www.upr-info.org/en/news/strengthening-4th-cycle-upr>

UPR Info remained committed to promoting the UPR at the Human Rights Council (HRC), and in 2021 the organisation was active in delivering and co-sponsoring statements in the General Debate under Item 6. In February 2021, during the 46th HRC session, UPR Info encouraged States to take action to end all forms of discrimination, focusing especially on protecting economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) and achieving gender equality. The statement was delivered during the Covid-19 pandemic, which further exposed women and girls to the financial consequences of the crisis and was accompanied by a rise in gender-based violence and more difficult access to ESCR.

UPR Info closely cooperated with the University of Padua and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to structure the student-led initiative of the Padua UPR Model. The Padua UPR Model is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education focusing on young people. In September 2021, during the 48th HRC session, UPR Info announced the launch of the UPR Padua Model as an additional way to boost the active participation of civil society actors in the multi-level machinery of human rights. This educational programme mirrors the UPR process and the interactive dialogue. It not only contributes to raising awareness of the UPR, but also to empowering university students to become stewards of a world in which equality, human rights and non-discrimination are nurtured. UPR Info also contributed to development of the Handbook, which provides guidance to enable the model to be replicated in a range of countries.

Furthermore, as a means of raising awareness of the mechanism and keeping all stakeholders informed of related developments, UPR Info provided live updates on the 38th and 39th sessions of the UPR Working Group, as well as on the adoption of the UPR Working Group reports at the 46th, 47th and 48th HRC sessions.

Finally, UPR Info contributed, by way of a briefing note, to the reflections on the creation of the Universal Health Preparedness Review (UHDR), drawing from lessons learned from the UPR. See here:

https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/lessons_upr_-_uhpr_kas_uprinfo_final_2.pdf

Advocacy dimension



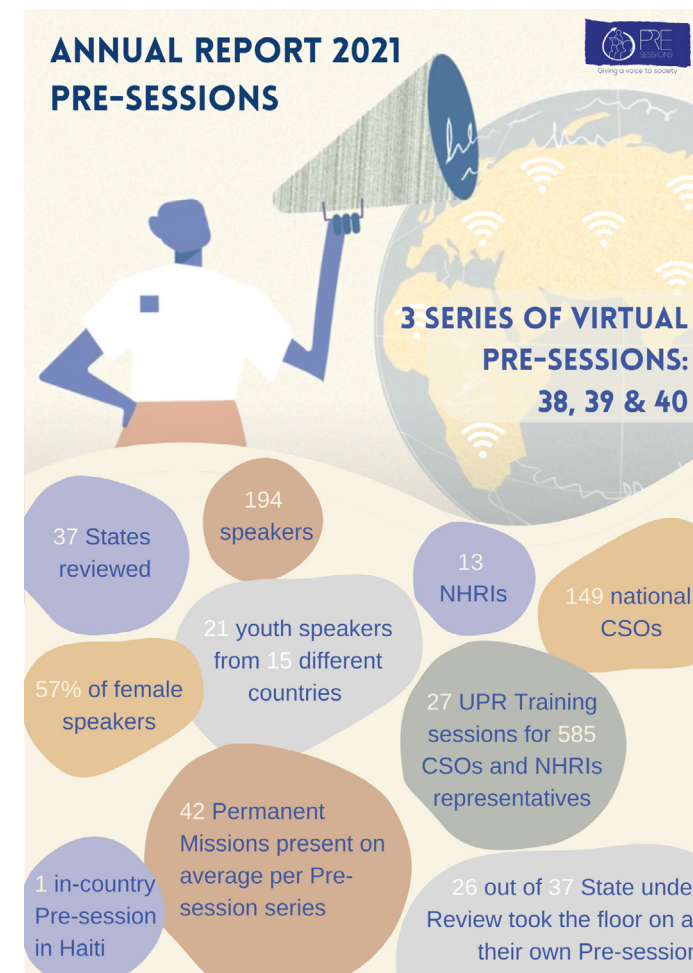
Although the mechanism is often described as a State-driven process, NHRIs and CSOs have a critical role to play in contributing to its success. To support CSO engagement in the UPR, UPR Info developed a series of three videos to assist these stakeholders in identifying entry points for their human rights advocacy throughout the process. The first video introduces the UPR and provides an overview of how civil society can contribute to the process through advocacy. The second video explains how to advocate in the UPR in the digital context, given that the pandemic made face-to-face meetings impossible and reduced opportunities for human rights advocates to meet with States. Finally, the third video provides information on the ways in which civil society can use the UPR to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights. The videos are available here: <https://www.upr-info.org/en/news/strengthen-your-advocacy-skills-through-upr>

Pre-sessions

The Pre-sessions remain a vital platform to amplify the voice of CSOs and NHRIs and to provide first-hand information to the Recommending States ahead of the UPR Working Group. This is even more true during a pandemic, as it helps to maintain dialogue and exchange between civil society actors and representatives of the Recommending States. Thanks to these meetings, States are in the position to make recommendations that reflect the human rights situation on the ground.

In 2021, the Policy and Advocacy Programme hosted three virtual Pre-sessions in advance of UPR Working Groups 38, 39 and 40, with positive results:

In advance of each Pre-session, CSOs and NHRIs were provided with a series of online training sessions targeted at various aspects of the UPR. The training provided participants with the tools required to effectively engage in the mechanism not only during the Pre-sessions, but also throughout the UPR cycle. This included an introduction to the UPR and the Pre-sessions, UPR advocacy, and implementation and monitoring strategies for the follow-up phase. The online format allowed the Programme to extend its



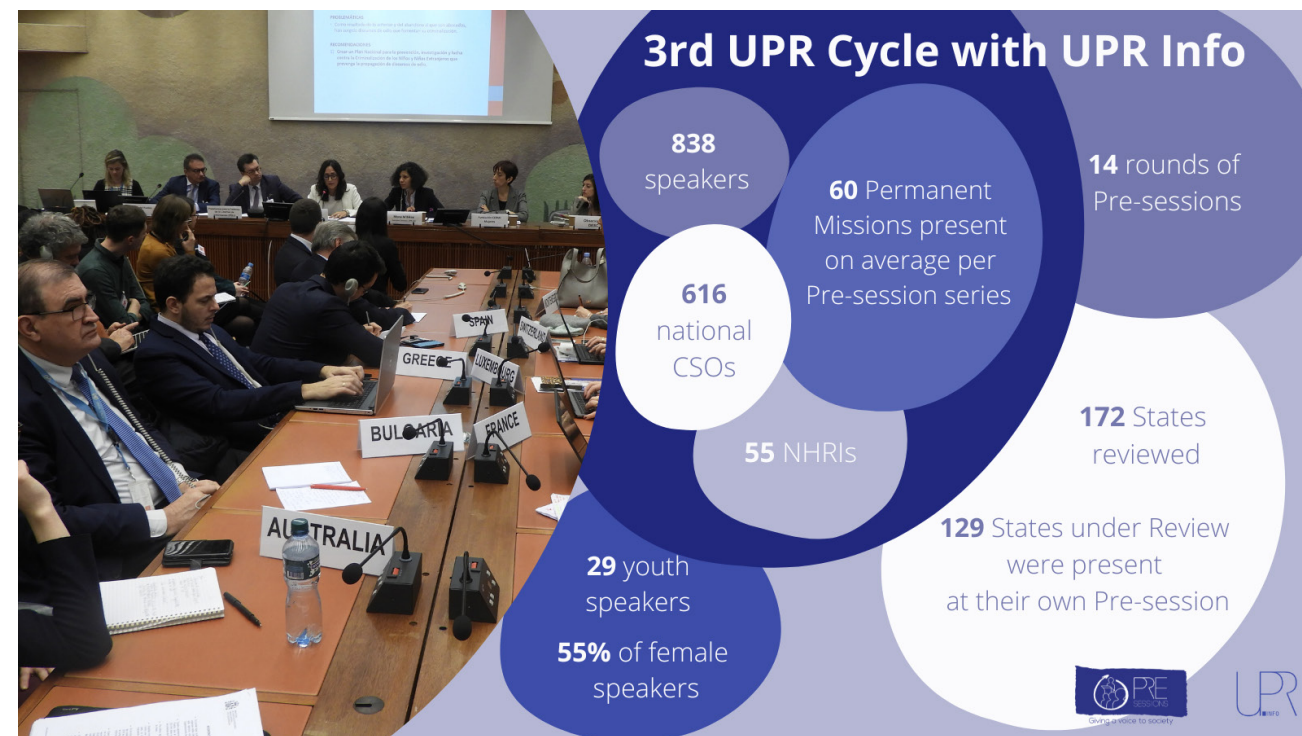
reach to participants who may not have been able to travel to Geneva to receive in-person training. Overall, 585 civil society representatives participated in 27 training sessions in 2021.

UPR Info is strongly committed to ensuring gender equality in its various activities. This engagement is also reflected in our Pre-sessions, where we strive for gender balance and diversity to ensure that groups in vulnerable situations have the opportunity to inform the recommendations made by States in the UPR. During 2021, 57% of the speakers were women and 21 child/young speakers participated in our Pre-sessions.

the national level in Haiti and – through training programmes offered to Haitian and Togolese organisations – raised awareness of the UPR mechanism and entry points for advocacy throughout the cycle. In total, 11 national CSOs and the NHRI representatives participated in two panel discussions. In addition, the Programme hosted four training sessions on the UPR and advocacy strategies, which were attended by 201 members of national Haitian and Togolese CSOs and NHRIs. During the in-country Pre-session in Haiti, 20 of the recommendations made by panellists were reiterated in the UPR Working Group.

events, 616 of which were local organisations and 55 were NHRIs. This number of CSOs confirms that the main objective of our Pre-sessions was attained, namely to provide a space dedicated to CSOs, and in particular local ones, to express their human rights concerns at a high international level.

These results were achieved thanks to the unfailing commitment of our teams and the trust placed in our Pre-sessions by civil society and States. Furthermore, it would not have been possible without the support of our various partners, whom we also thank for their continued trust.



With regard to the impact of our Pre-sessions, we recorded that for Pre-Sessions 38, 39 and 40, CSOs proposed 928 recommendations. In the UPR Working Group, among the States that participated in the Pre-sessions, 2,214 recommendations proposed by them were identical or similar to those proposed in our Pre-sessions.

Continuing to prioritise support for national CSOs in their UPR advocacy, the Policy and Advocacy Programme also hosted one in-country Pre-session in Haiti. This meeting was held in cooperation with the CCPR Centre and a local partner, and brought together CSOs, NHRIs and representatives from the 15 embassies of Recommending States in Haiti. The in-country Pre-session allowed for wider outreach to civil society at

3rd UPR cycle with UPR Info

The 40th Pre-session in December 2021 marked the end of the Pre-session series for the 3rd UPR cycle. During this cycle, UPR Info succeeded in achieving the following key results:

These figures reveal several very interesting points. First of all, UPR Info was able to organise Pre-sessions for 172 out of 193 UN Member States. Furthermore, we note that our Pre-sessions attracted great interest and commitment from States. Indeed, during the 3rd cycle, 129 States under Review attended their own Pre-session and an average of 60 State representatives were present per Pre-session series. In addition, 838 civil society representatives took part in these





02 Stakeholders Programme

In 2021 the Stakeholders Programme strengthened and expanded its work to achieve its two objectives:

- 1: Support key UPR stakeholders to promote effective implementation of human rights recommendations by developing tailored tools and organising capacity-building activities.
- 2: Increase strategic communications and partnerships to engage more people in the promotion and protection of human rights through the UPR.

The programme integrated a gender equality perspective into all its activities: from capacity-building activities to the running of online events for sharing good practices, and from the development of online tools to the creation of social media campaigns.

Civil Society Organisations: empowering human rights defenders and women’s human rights defenders

In 2021, UPR Info continued to provide strategic support to CSOs in the promotion of human rights through the UPR. The Stakeholders Programme conducted specific training sessions online for human rights defenders (HRDs) and CSO members from more than 50 countries. Technical support was provided to HRDs and women’s human rights defenders (WHRD) to guide them in preparation of the Other Stakeholders’ Report and to share good practices for drafting mid-term reports. In addition, a range of advice was offered on conducting strategic advocacy through the UPR.

With its unique procedure for monitoring the realisation of ESCR, the UPR promotes equality and non-discrimination and pushes for the adoption of laws, policies and programmes that target people in a vulnerable situation or those who are left behind. Despite the increased attention and developments in this area, the promo-

Stakeholders Programme in numbers

Through online training sessions we reached out to:





tion and protection of ESCR remains a challenge. UPR Info integrated more and more examples of best practices to show how the UPR can play a significant role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing ESCR. To this end, more CSO members working on ESC rights were invited to join the training sessions as participants and new partnerships were established with NGOs with long-standing experience in the field of ESCR, such as Human Dignity and CACIT Togo.

“Both training sessions were very useful. The first part allowed us to understand our role in the UPR, especially in the phase of implementation of the recommendations and coordination with other UN mechanisms, while the second part focused on sharing good practices of other national and international CSOs, initiatives and activities put in place to support and contribute to the implementation of the UPR recommendations on women's ESC rights in the country.”

WHRD in DRC

In line with this approach, UPR Info participated in various training programmes and events organised by, or co-organised with, other NGOs and networks, such as the one held in November by the Women's Major Group. The Women's Major Group is a global intersectional feminist collective that supports its members in their advocacy within the scope of the UN's sustainable development processes, especially at the regional and global levels. On the occasion of the webinar series titled “SDGs & UN Human Rights mechanisms from a feminist perspective”, UPR

Info made a contribution to the connections between the UPR and the SDGs, concerning how to use UPR and SDGs mutually in advocacy towards gender equality and achievement of SDGs, as well as the possibilities that engagement with UPR can provide to support the achievement of gender equality.

Applying insights from the UPR process in order to improve reporting on SDG16

As part of the 2021 Geneva Peace Week, UPR Info, together with DCAF and WFUNA, held a roundtable discussion aimed at learning lessons from the UPR process and how these could help improve reporting on the SDGs through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). In particular, the event focused on the crucial role of CSOs in these two processes. During the webinar, speakers reiterated the crucial role of CSOs in enhancing the two reporting processes. Civil society is pivotal in making citizens' voices, including those of marginalised and vulnerable groups, heard. Their contributions can involve many different aspects of the review, including the reporting itself, but also raising awareness and advocating on specific issues, as well as monitoring the follow-up process. Accordingly, the contributions of CSOs are important throughout the review process, including before and during the review, but also in the implementation and follow-up periods. One of the key takeaways from this event was the call from the main panellists for the creation of a working group composed of UPR and SDG experts to maintain a fruitful space for dialogue to enable exchanges of good practices and solutions to address the challenges when working with these two processes.

Complementary to the capacity-building activities and the events to facilitate the engagement of CSOs with the UPR, the Stakeholders Programme – in coordination with the Policy and Advocacy Programme – produced a series of videos to make the UPR more accessible. Besides showing different entry points for human rights advocacy throughout the process, one of the videos focused specifically on how CSOs can use the UPR to promote and protect ESCR. The video provided tips and advice to illustrate how some actions taken within the framework of the UPR can contribute to assessing and raising awareness of human rights violations.

Promoting economic social and cultural rights through the UPR

Thanks to the funds of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, UPR Info was able to support HRDs and WHRDs in Ghana, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal in using the UPR recommendations to promote ESCR. Beyond strengthening the capacity of CSOs, and in particular WHRDs, in protecting women's rights in the target countries, the specific objective of the project was to provide financial support to women's organisations for the implementing UPR recommendations addressing ESCR.

Thanks to this project, UPR Info was able to support two projects. In Liberia, the Liberia Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) delivered a broad range of activities to advocate for and promote the rights of women and girls, minority groups, people living with disabilities and the LGBTIQ communities and to protect them against all forms of discrimination, violence and marginalisation within communities. This ranged from the creation of materials and products for raising awareness on multiple platforms, such as the radio and social media, to empowering community-based organisations by raising their awareness of the State's obligations concerning their rights, including the commitments to the adopted recommendations from the last cycle of the UPR in 2020.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Development Centre for the Self-Promotion of Disadvantaged Pygmies and Indigenous Populations (FDAPID) held a series of workshops on the promotion and protection of women's rights, reaching 58 activists from the country's 26 different

provinces. In addition, strong advocacy work was conducted to ensure the implementation of UPR recommendations before the President of the Republic, the Senate, the National Assembly, the Prime Minister's Office, the Minister of Human Rights and the National Human Rights Commission (NCHR).

National Human Rights Institutions: strengthening their role

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are encouraged to actively participate in all phases of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. The UPR process covers essential parts of the core mandate and work of NHRIs, including reporting on national situations, encouraging broad national consultations, raising awareness around the Universal Human Rights System, empowering stakeholders and advising the State on implementation of recommendations emanating from UN processes, including the UPR.

“As a Commission, we remain committed to the protection of all persons, hence we will use all legitimate means at the disposal of the Commission to ensure that the State improves on its human rights record and takes steps to implement Recommendations from the UPR”

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Ghana

In 2021, UPR Info's work with NHRIs focused on providing the tools and methodology to follow up on UPR recommendations and human rights recommendations in general. The capacity-building activities developed in partnership with the NHRIs of Liberia and Mauritania provided the participants with knowledge of the role of indicators in monitoring human rights progress and the implementation of human rights commitments, and how to identify and contextualise these indicators. To the greatest extent possible, the online sessions were conducted in a participatory manner in order to facilitate the exchange of best practices and experiences among the members of CSOs and NHRIs, as well as to foster interactive dialogue during the sessions.

As part of its commitment to supporting the engagement of NHRIs in the UPR, UPR Info has undertaken a variety of other initiatives, including collaboration with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission. Working together with the latter, UPR Info was pleased to organise a series of training sessions involving members of civil society working on human rights in connection with specific groups, such as women, people with disabilities, and children and people from black and minority ethnic groups. A significant proportion of those concerned were working on economic, social and cultural rights issues, such as housing, health and mental health, poverty and social care.

As in previous years, UPR Info participated in the training programme for members of NHRIs run by GANHRI, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and UNITAR. Ahead of the online session, this year's participants – from Ireland, Hungary, Samoa, Liberia, Kenya, Greece, Lithuania, Moldova and Nepal – received short informative videos produced by UPR Info with specific advice on NHRIs' engagement in the UPR. During the tailored online workshop, UPR Info facilitated sessions on UPR reporting and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations through exercises and the sharing of best practices.

"The materials were very useful in giving tips, particularly on the conduct of consultations and areas we could focus on with regard to the stakeholders being consulted. It provided me with a clearer picture of what we're doing in our NHRI."

Member of NHRI in Greece

UNCTs: working more closely together

As a result of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights to UN Country Teams and UN Agencies to make fuller use of the UPR as a basis for meeting the challenges, opportunities and needs of the 21st century and for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UPR Info has stepped up its cooperation with these actors.

To mark the 2021 International Day of Universal Access to Information (IDUAI), UPR Info took part in the "The Right to Know – Building Back Better with Access to Information" event organised by UNESCO. In particular, UPR Info's intervention focused on how to strengthen the right to access to information in the UPR by making specific recommendations (with the SMART methodology) and how to mainstream this issue in the UPR. In September 2021, UPR Info also participated in the first thematic UNESCO Human Rights Dialogue Series, which focused on freedom of expression, access to information, the safety of journalists and media freedom. The dialogue helped to reflect on how the UPR mechanism can further contribute at the national level to the protection of these rights, which in turn enable other rights. In 2021, UPR Info also continued to follow and support the work conducted by the Global Protection Cluster Human Rights Engagement Task Team (HRE-TT) within UNHRC. In collaboration with HRE-TT, UPR Info organised three information sessions for civil society representatives and members of the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in French, Spanish and English. The one-and-a-half hour webinars introduced participants to the UPR mechanism and its modalities. Specifically, the sessions offered an overview of the different entry points in this process for various stakeholders and briefly highlighted the linkages and complementarity with other human rights mechanisms and the SDGs.

Journalists: reporting on human rights

UPR Info and the Multilateral Dialogue section in Geneva of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) strengthened their collaboration, which got underway in 2020, to support journalists and media professionals on how to use the HRC, and specifically the UPR to report on human rights. More than 100 journalists from Malawi, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zimbabwe and Zambia were trained in advance of their respective country's UPR to provide them with the necessary knowledge to follow the UPR process. By publishing or broadcasting human rights programmes, disseminating information on human rights, reporting on government policy and promoting tolerance, the media can place human rights at the front and centre of public discourse.



Young people: setting the agenda through the UPR

"There is a huge need to engage the media and journalists in the discussions about human rights."

Mr. Guilherme Canela Godoi, Chief of Section of Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, UNESCO

Following the numerous requests from the training session participants to have a space for discussion with peers and exchange experiences on how to use the UPR to monitor human rights, UPR Info, in conjunction with KAS, organised an online side event during the 48th HRC session. The panel discussion, which featured eminent representatives of UNESCO, representatives of the US Permanent Mission and journalists, provided useful tips and reflections on how media professionals can identify human rights violations, hold governments accountable to their commitments and lend visibility to the human rights progress.

"We have to link our stories to the global cause, conventions or the SDGs. Then our journalism and coverage of human rights would be at another level."

Albert Sharra, journalist, Malawi

From mobilising for the right to a healthy planet to campaigns fighting racism, young people have been inspiring the world by standing up for human rights. Yet young people still face barriers and challenges when it comes to participating in the decisions that affect their lives and the realisation of many of their human rights precisely because of their age. The UPR has great potential as an entry point for meaningful participation of young people in advocating for their rights. To this end, UPR Info has been creating closer partnerships with young people and youth-led organisations, such as CODAP, the European Youth Forum and WFUNA, in order to promote human rights with and for young people.

"All training modules gave us concise guidelines on how we can draft a good UPR submission. This is very helpful training for those of us who do work with young people."

NGO in Papua New Guinea

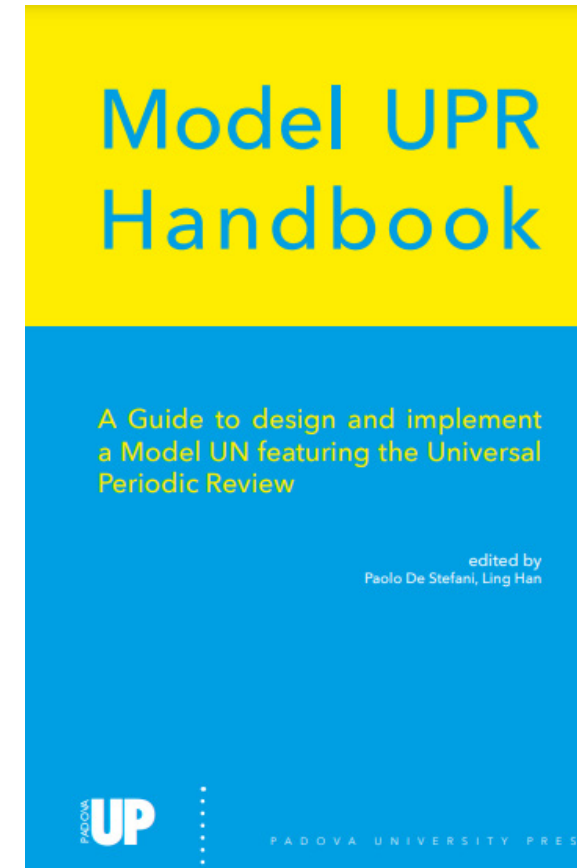
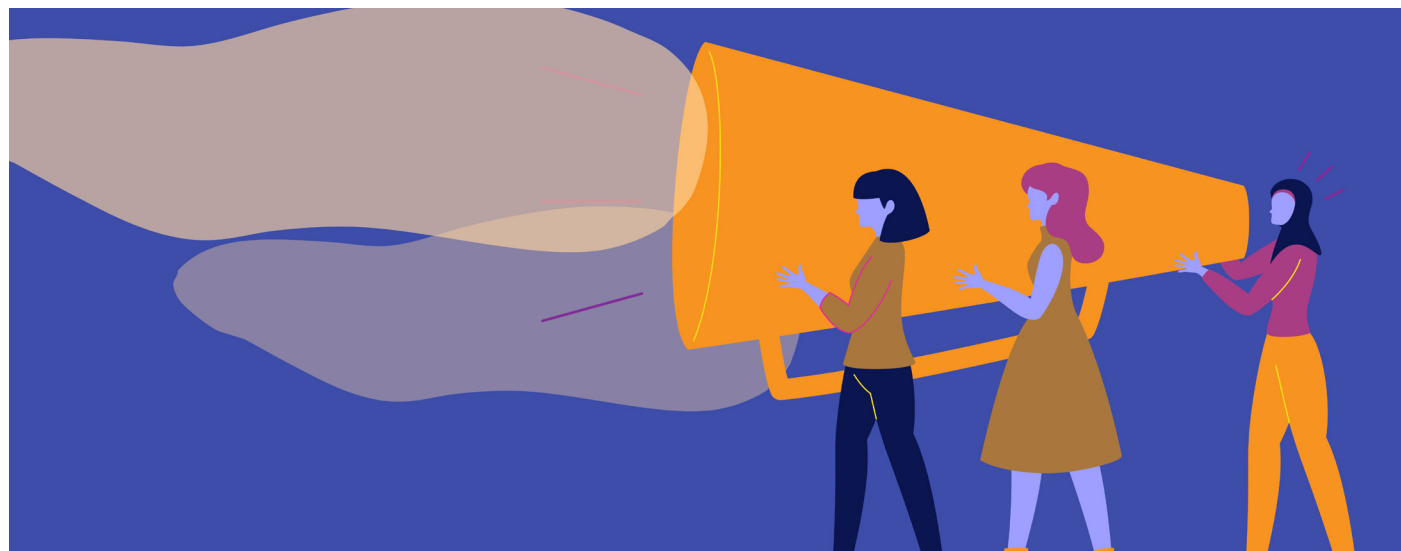
In 2021, UPR Info delivered training sessions to young people from Algeria, United States, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Morocco, Togo and Moldova. In all the training sessions held to describe the mechanisms and share the means of participation within the process, UPR Info has integrated a gender-based approach and made links with the SDGs. That reflects our conviction that young people's involvement in human rights issues and gender equality is indispensable for the effective implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.

As part of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November 2021 to 10 December 2021), UPR Info took part in the training programme titled "Youth Participation in the Universal Periodic Review" run by the National Council for Human Rights, in partnership with UNFPA. In view of Morocco's UPR (November 2022) and in line with the organisational strategy to encourage youth participation in the process, UPR Info trained 16 young people from different regions of Morocco to strengthen their knowledge of the UPR and encourage them to draw up recommendations related to women's rights.

The Padova Model UPR is an academic simulation of the UPR process. This model offers participants in-depth understanding of the mechanisms and dynamics of the mechanism and represents a unique opportunity to learn about human rights, democracy and diplomacy.

In 2021, UPR Info continued collaboration with the University of Geneva and the University of Padua to facilitate information sessions on the UPR with students enrolled in the International Relations and Human Rights Programmes. In addition, UPR Info supported students in the 4th edition of the Padua Model UPR. By playing the roles of State delegates, NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions, students from over 15 countries gained experience of the UPR procedure and assessed States' human rights records. The simulation included integration of UPR Info's Pre-Sessions model to ensure that civil society was represented.

In an effort to promote the participation of even more young people and students in the UPR, UPR Info signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Padua University and the UPR branch of the OHCHR to further promote the Padua UPR Model and reinforce university students' knowledge, skills and competencies to enable them to advocate for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.



As a result, UPR Info contributed, alongside OHCHR, to the amazing collective work carried out by master's students at the University of Padua and former delegates to the past editions of the Padova Model UPR and to the publication of the Model UPR Handbook. The guide sets out the rules and regulations of the simulation and is a useful tool that provides articulated knowledge of the UPR and has the potential to increase the active participation of civil society in the multi-level machinery of human rights promotion and protection.

Working with the Generation Equality Forum

To support young people in their work on the promotion and protection of human rights using the UPR mechanism, UPR Info delivered a training programme in cooperation with UN Women, with an inspiring group of young people from the Generation Equality Forum.

The Generation Equality Forum was held in Mexico City in March and in Paris from 30 June to 2 July 2021. The Forum launched a five-year action journey to achieve irreversible progress towards gender equality, founded on a series of specific, ambitious and transformative actions. Among the various actions, the Forum's participants highlighted the need to learn more about the tools available to conduct their work. Within the scope of providing a better understanding of the different human rights mechanism – with the main focus on the UPR and providing guidance on how to conduct effective advocacy strategy to promote and protect youth rights and gender equality – UPR Info developed a training programme titled "The UPR: Bringing Changes Through Advocacy and Accountability". The programme, which was delivered entirely online, in English and Spanish, reached out to more than 100 young activists in 30 countries around the world.

"After our sessions, the UPR process started to occupy my mind as an unexplored field with much potential. I did some more research on my peers' knowledge of the process itself and was quite saddened to see that almost none of them had any idea about what it was or how it operated. I genuinely want to bring about more youth attention and thus involvement in the UPR."

Young activist in Turkey

03 In-country Programme

The 2021 In-country Programme (ICP) adapted its work to the pandemic while remaining as close to the programme's foreseen activities as possible. The work aims to equip national human rights institutions, civil society organisations, governments, parliamentarians, youth groups, women, vulnerable groups and local embassies with knowledge and tools to engage in the process effectively.

This is done through the five entry points that characterise the ICP programme:

- **Step 1:**
Other stakeholders' submissions workshop
- **Step 2:**
In-country Pre-sessions
- **Step 3:**
Strategy workshop
- **Step 4:**
Multi-stakeholder engagement workshop
- **Step 5:**
Mid-term report workshop

ICP systematically integrated the sustainable development goals, a human rights-based approach, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into all its activities. The programme has articulated the activities with which it intends to achieve its two main objectives:

1: Increase quality information on the progress and challenges of UPR implementation in the target countries.

2: Trigger dialogue among groups of stakeholders on the human rights situation of the country through the UPR mechanism.



During the first half of the year, activities remained online and in a hybrid form due to the sanitary and travel restrictions.

The team resumed its operational work in the second half of the year with DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan and Togo.

The socio-political context in the target countries came with its challenges. The coup d'état in Guinea made it challenging to conduct activities in the country. Kyrgyzstan had presidential elections, changed its constitution and transitioned from a parliamentary system to a presidential one. UPR Info observed civil society's shrinking space in several countries. In Cambodia, civil space has become so restrictive that no UPR activities have been organised for the safety of participants.

"For the first time, a conference of such calibre took place in the DRC, bringing together all stakeholders to discuss the implementation of international human rights recommendations transparently and urgently."

Lutala Kyad 'I Luc, President of ONG ESPOIR POUR TOUS

In-country activities:

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Step 4.2 and 5: National multi-stakeholder engagement follow-up discussion and mid-term reporting workshop

- Three stakeholder-specific workshops (two days each with representatives from CSOs, the NHRI, the Interministerial committee and parliamentarians) on UPR follow-up, development of indicators, elaboration of UPR implementation plans and mid-term reporting were held.
- A two-day multi-stakeholder conference and workshop attended by 39 CSO/NHRI participants, 33% of whom were women. On the government side, 38 representatives from various relevant ministries were present. Representatives from regions and parliament accounted for 10% of the attendees.
- Five thematic implementation plans were adopted, forming a general matrix of 20 recommendations analysed with corresponding indicators to monitor implementation.
- The government of the DRC committed to submitting a mid-term report.
- One mid-term report was launched by the CSO-UPR coalition.
- A CSO-UPR nation-wide coalition was formed.



CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Step 4.2 & 5: National multi-stakeholder engagement follow-up discussion and mid-term report

- UPR Info held five workshops from August to October, namely: a session on the UPR and the role of parliamentarians delivered to the Senate, a workshop for CSOs and the NHRI to prepare for the multi-stakeholder discussion, a two-day seminar on mid-term reporting for CSOs and the NHRI, a workshop for governmental stakeholders on mid-term reporting and good practices in the implementation phase, and a multi-stakeholder discussion on UPR implementation.
- A total of 140 representatives from CSOs, the NHRI, Parliaments (National Assembly and Senate), and the government (administration and eight relevant ministries) took part in the activities.
- CSOs and the NHRI started to draft five thematic mid-term reports during the workshop. Information from CSOs will be compiled in one consolidated mid-term report, and the NHRI plans to submit its mid-term report.
- CSOs and the NHRI presented their five thematic action strategies to the government and parliamentarians in the multi-stakeholder mid-term discussion. They showcased

UPR mid-term multistakeholder discussion, with CSOs, the NHRI, parliamentarians and the government in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

how they contributed to implementing seven UPR recommendations. Presentations were followed by talks on fully implementing specific thematic UPR recommendations.

- A few weeks after the workshops, the Inter-ministerial Committee on international human rights reporting and follow-up finalised a national action plan on human rights, including UPR recommendations, in consultation with the NHRI.

"Thank you once again for this workshop that has equipped us for the advocacy factsheets and the UPR. Personally, I will make good use of it in our projects."

Simplice Samtougou, Communications Officer, UST (Social Universities of Togo)



Information session on the UPR and the role of parliamentarians in the UPR, at the National Assembly of Togo in Lomé

TOGO

Step 1: UPR submission workshop

- Two workshops for CSOs and NHRIs were held in April and May 2021, and a CSO reports validation meeting in July.
- A total of 134 representatives from CSOs, media, trade unions (90) and the National Human Rights Institution (44) from all five regions of the country took part in the activities on UPR submissions and the validation meeting, co-organised by UPR Info, the *Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo* (CACIT) and the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH).
- Six thematic groups were formed to draft the reports.
- As a result, ten reports were successfully submitted (nine by CSOs and one by the NHRI).
- The OHCHR matrix containing all UPR recommendations and the corresponding implementation assessment by CSOs was also submitted alongside the CSO reports.

Step 2: In-country Pre-session

- In October and November, five activities were co-organised by UPR Info, the CACIT and the CNDH: a webinar on advocacy factsheets, a webinar for Recommending States (local embassies), a two-day workshop on CSO/NHRI advocacy, a national Pre-session and a one-day training event for parliamentarians.
- A total of 208 representatives from local CSOs, the NHRI, the National Assembly, UN agencies and the resident diplomatic community took part in the activities.
- During the two-day advocacy workshop, 13 advocacy factsheets and ten declarations were finalised by CSOs and the NHRI to prepare for the in-country Pre-session.
- Seventeen CSO representatives and ten representatives from the diplomatic and UN system community attended the in-country pre-Session. Eleven CSO and NHRI speakers took the floor to present the level of implementation of the 2nd cycle UPR recommendations and suggested 52 recommendations to formulate to Togo during its 3rd review.
- Twenty-four members of the National Assembly attended an information session on the UPR and the role of parliamentarians in the mechanism. CACIT and the NHRI each presented their respective roles and engagement in Togo's UPR.



→ GUINEA

Step 3: Development and implementation of Action Strategies

Due to the socio-political situation in Guinea, which hampered open dialogue with authorities, the CSO-UPR coalition continued to develop and implement some advocacy actions included in their action strategies.

BANGLADESH

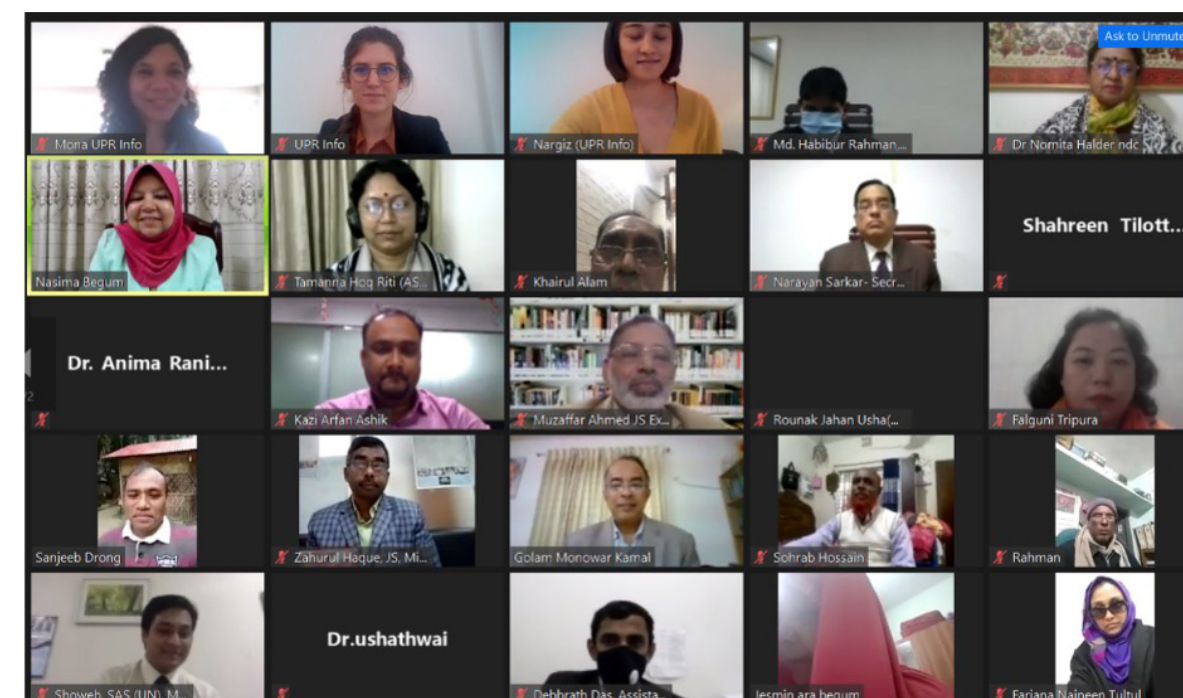
Step 5: Mid-term reporting workshop

- One "Training of Trainers" event was organised for our National Focal Point, UNDP officials and NHRC members to prepare for the workshop conducted in January.

- Three stakeholder-specific orientation sessions took place for the Government, the NHRI and CSOs on their role within the UPR, particularly during the implementation phase.
- One two-day online workshop on drafting mid-term reports and good practices for sustainable implementation was attended by members of Government, NHRI and CSOs; there were 69 participants, 51% of whom were women.
- Twelve districts of Bangladesh were represented in a multi-stakeholder discussion on UPR implementation and UPR mid-term reporting.
- Three UPR mid-term reports were drafted by participants during the workshop. One CSO-UPR coalition mid-term report was submitted to the OHCHR. The report has since been updated and disseminated.

"Once the recommendations were received, the NHRC and CSOs met the Nepalese government after the Review to discuss priority issues raised in the recommendations and advocate for acceptance."

Bijay Raj Gautam, Executive Director, Informal Sector Service Centre INSEC, Secretariat of the UPR CSO Coalition – Nepal.





NEPAL

Step 3: Development of Action Strategies

- Two webinars on advocacy before the adoption and the clustering of UPR recommendations were held with Nepalese-English interpreting. These were attended by a total of 46 participants from CSOs and NHRIs.
- A three-day UPR strategy workshop for CSOs and NHRIs was attended by 52 participants from all regions of the country and representatives from UNDP.
- Participants worked within five thematic groups, integrating outcomes from Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and the SDGs into their action strategies.
- Five thematic action strategies were initiated alongside their indicators to monitor CSO activities contributing to implementation.

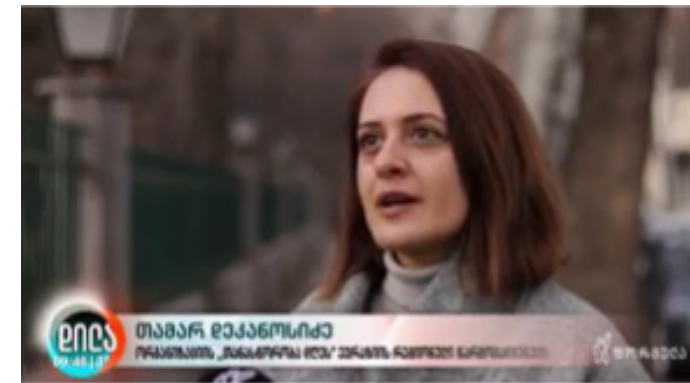
Workshop on the development of human rights indicators, with CSOs and NHRIs, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan



KYRGYZSTAN

Step 4.1: Monitoring the implementation of UPR recommendations

- A three-day workshop on UPR implementation and monitoring was held together with the Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan human rights association, during which participants were introduced to the development of human rights-based indicators.
- Thirty representatives from CSOs, the Ombudsman Institute and the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (NPM) from several regions of the country participated in the workshop.
- CSOs and NHRIs updated their five thematic action strategies to adapt activities and identify new ones to support the implementation of selected UPR recommendations, given the numerous political, legislative and institutional changes that have occurred in the country since the last UPR strategy workshop in 2020.
- A total of 110 human rights-based indicators to monitor the implementation of 12 UPR recommendations were developed by CSOs and NHRIs.



CSO representatives being interviewed on the UPR process in Georgia after the country's third review

GEORGIA

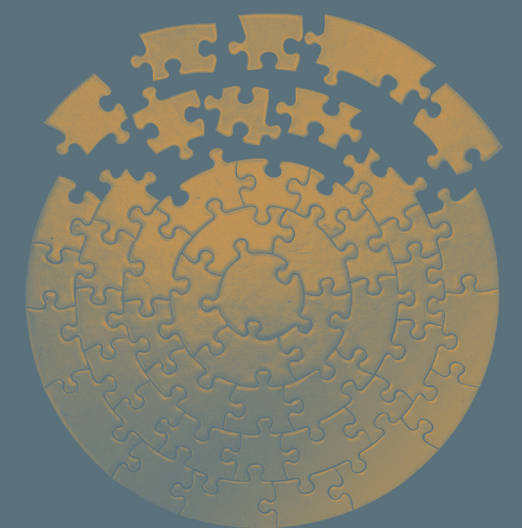
Step 3: Development of UPR action strategies

- Two webinars were held by UPR Info and the Open Society Georgia Foundation in February and December.
- A total of 47 representatives from Georgian CSOs and the Public Defender Office (PDO, the NHRI) took part in the events.
- Participants familiarised themselves with the content of the 285 recommendations formulated to Georgia and identified those falling under their thematic areas of expertise to inform their work.
- A series of nine thematic infographics (both in English and Georgian) on UPR recommendations were published on social media to raise the wider public's awareness of recommendations received before the final adoption of recommendations.
- After the adoption, CSOs and the PDO representatives split into six thematic groups to start working on their thematic action strategies. During the workshop, participants identified 32 activities to support the implementation of seven UPR recommendations.

Study on good practices from federal States in the UPR process

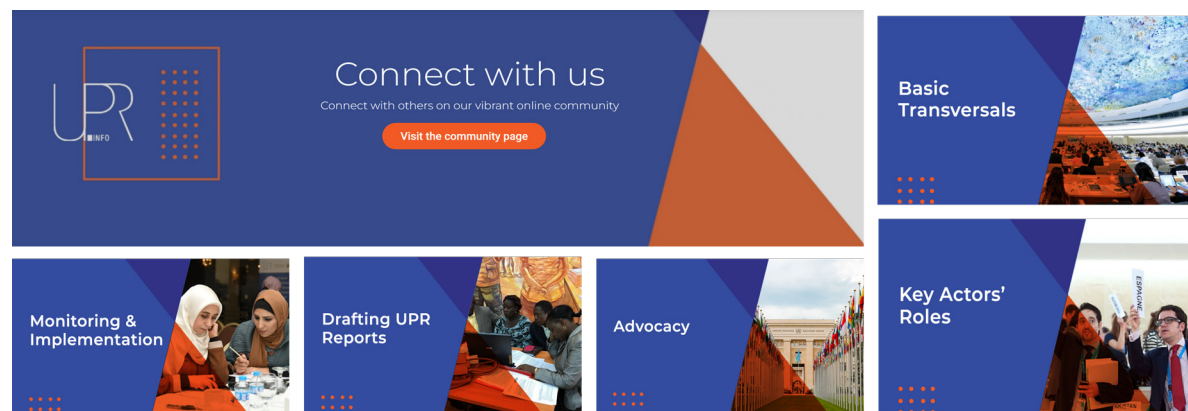
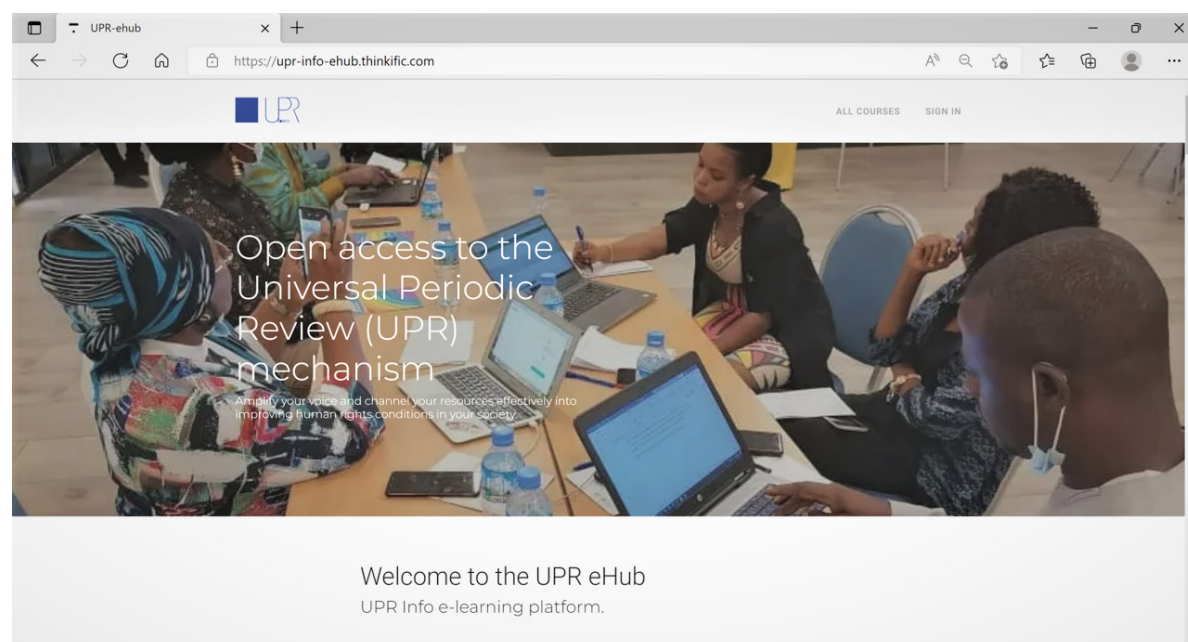
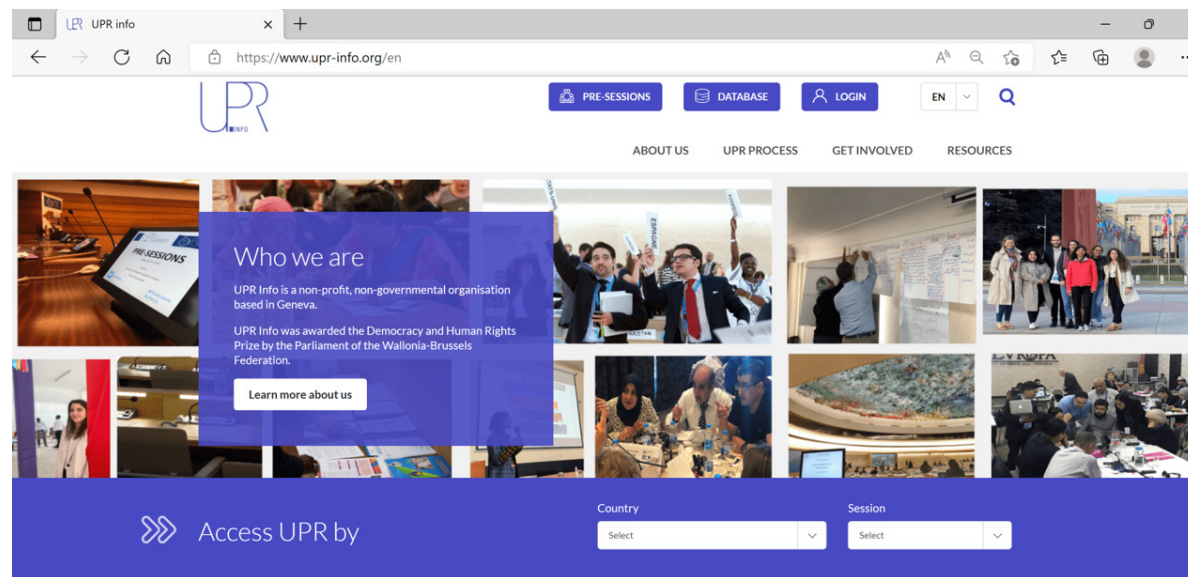
The ICP team has conducted research examining how federal systems coordinate with their sub-national entities throughout the UPR cycle and how federated entities implement the recommendations specifically and identify good practices. For this purpose, nine States across different world regions were examined, namely Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland and the USA. The study's primary purpose was to analyse official human rights coordination, monitoring and implementation structures at the governmental levels. To further this context-specific implementation process within federal States, other stakeholders' roles and engagement are showcased by providing some examples of good practices. While this study considers the modus operandi of federal systems, it is also relevant for unitary states with some levels of decentralisation. UPR Info officially launched the study at a side event for the 48th session of the Human Rights Council on 8 October 2021.

Good practices
from Federal States
in the UPR process



UPR
INFO

04 Digital Transformation Project



In 2021, UPR Info continued to work on its three digital transformation projects, which comprise a new website, an updated and upgraded database using machine-learning technology, and the development of an e-learning platform. One essential element of this digital shift is adaptability: the tools developed aim not only to address current situations, such as the pandemic, but also to constantly innovate and respond to the needs of the various stakeholders and the increasing demands of the beneficiaries of UPR Info work.

The overall objective of the projects is to enhance UPR Info's capabilities through a comprehensive digital transformation of its programmes to ensure sustainable and meaningful engagement of stakeholders with the UPR.

The new website provides more information on UPR Info itself, its various programmes and on how key stakeholders can engage with the mechanism.

Throughout 2021, the UPR Info team harmonised the content and training methodologies that have been developed by UPR Info for over ten years to give rise to a structured UPR e-learning hub.

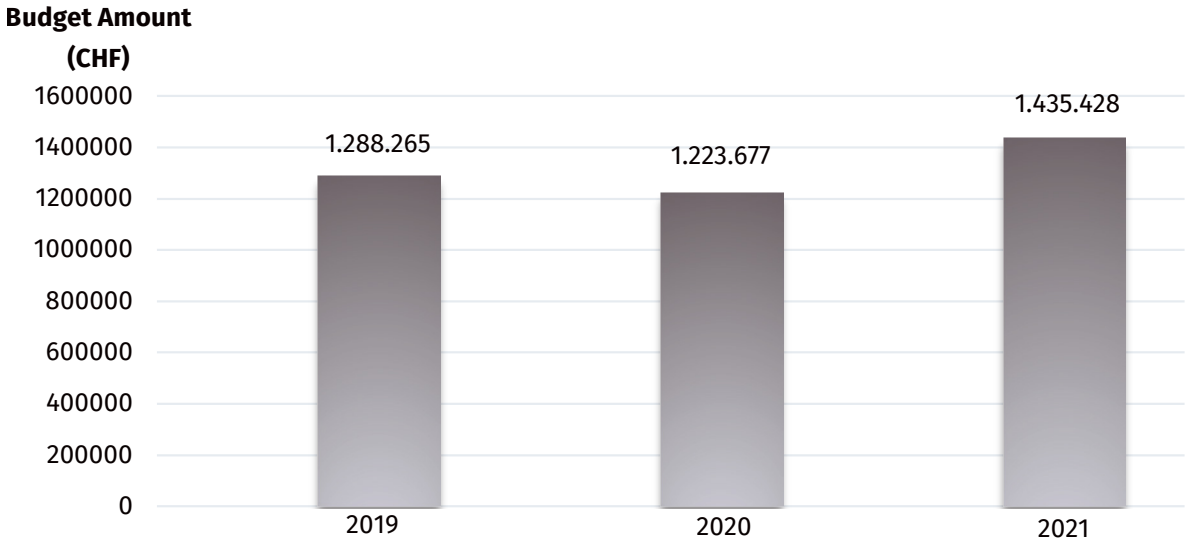
UPR Info has developed five training modules aimed not only at facilitating easier access to technical tools, but also at building a community of best practices around the platform. We are confident that the platform will enable the organisation to reach a larger audience and streamline the work of the members of the UPR community.

05 Finances

In 2021, UPR Info’s finances and financial management were independently audited by BEAU HLB Audit. Financially, 2021 was a positive year for UPR Info (+17% compared to 2019). This is visible in the sustainability of funding, as well as the support of new donors and the growing engagement with new partner organisations. New projects have increased the overall budget, grown our programmes and contributed to strengthening the structure of our organisation.

Most of the organisational funding, however, remains tied to specific projects and is short-term (usually for a duration of one to three years). UPR Info is continuing its efforts to raise unrestricted funds, in order to ensure the long-term stability of activities carried out in the target countries and to make it possible to focus on new opportunities in general.

UPR Info’s Income from 2019 to 2021



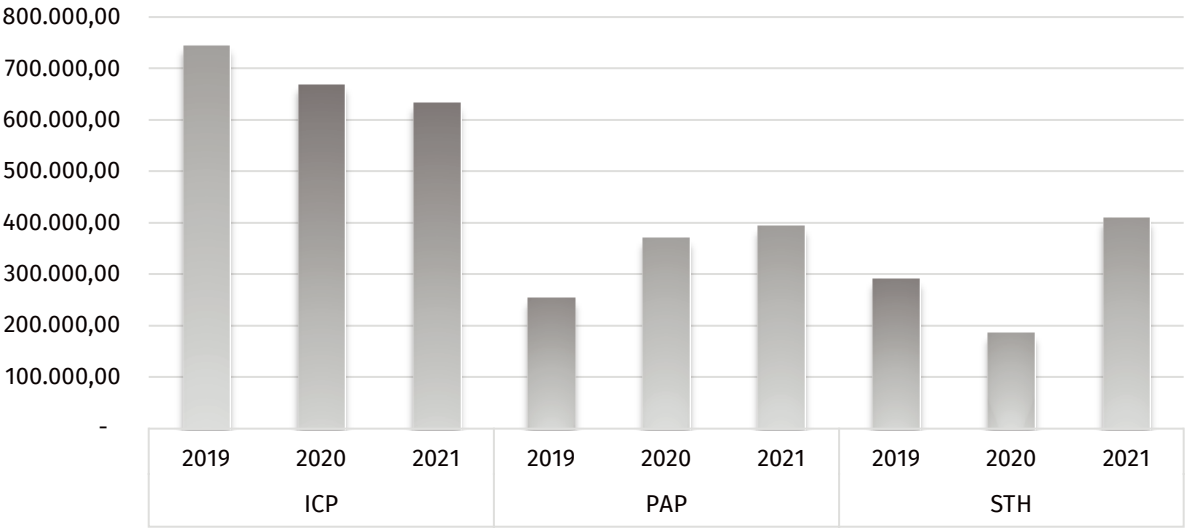
UPR Info has continued to grow as an organisation with an increasing budget over the years, except for 2020, when it saw its annual funding decrease due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The intensive fundraising and the recognition by donors of UPR Info’s work have paid off. New donors have contributed to supporting the implementation of programmes.

UPR Info thanks the flexibility of its donors, who authorised the reallocation of travel funds to support the development of a new website and an e-learning platform to continue providing in-

formation on the UPR and build the capacity of stakeholders engaging in the mechanism.

In 2021, UPR Info also increased its revenues thanks to funds received from the delivery of tailored training courses not covered under project grants and the drafting of analytical briefings.

Affected and used funds per Programme 2019-2020-2021



In-country Programme (ICP):

Since 2019, the In-country Programme has seen a decrease in the financial contribution provided by its three regular donors.

From 2019 to 2021, we recorded a decrease in funds of CHF 111,000.

In order to face the increasing demands for technical support by the programme beneficiaries,

UPR Info started exploring new funding opportunities.

Despite financial constraints, UPR Info was able to deliver training to its target countries by reducing certain costs and delivering remote workshops.

Policy and Advocacy Programme (PAP)

The Policy and Advocacy Programme continues to consolidate its programmatic approach and intensified its work at the policy level. Over the years, the Programme has benefited from the contributions of new donors to support the advocacy work of human rights defenders.

We recorded an increase of funds from 2019 to 2021 of CHF + 140,300.

Stakeholders Programme (STH)

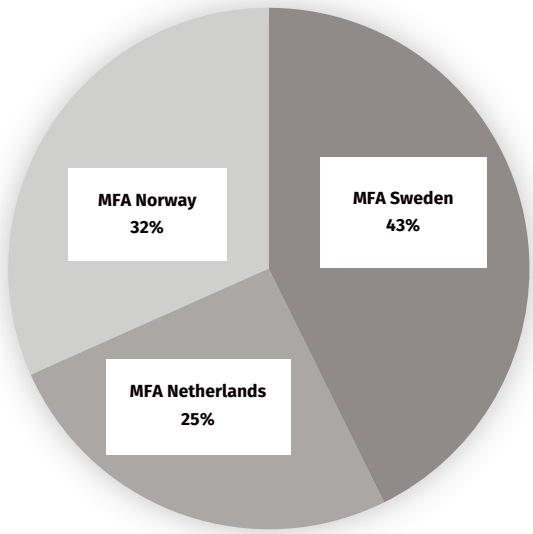
Three years after its establishment (in 2018), the Stakeholders Programme has become consolidated. Activities implemented during 2021 resulted in a budget increase compared to 2019 and 2020. In the period from 2019 to 2021, we recorded an increase of funds of CHF + 118,000.

In addition, the Programme has diversified its donors and strengthened its engagement with its beneficiaries in specific countries.

In-country Programme

In-country Programme		
Affected funds (income) for 2021	632,542.50	
+ carried over funds from 2020	61,630.04	
Used (spent) funds in 2021	565,826.91	
Carried over to 2022 (not used in 2021)		128,345.63

In 2021, UPR Info continued the planned activities, adding online support components to reinforce its action in the field. Restrictions due to health measures required flexibility in the implementation of activities. UPR managed to anticipate these or adapt in due course. Once sanitary and travel rules were relaxed, UPR Info resumed its dynamic in-person activities in various countries. Nevertheless, some activities could not be conducted properly in 2021 and thus have been scheduled to take place the following year. CHF 128,346 has been carried over to 2022.



Sources of funding for the In-country Programme in 2021

Policy and Advocacy Programme

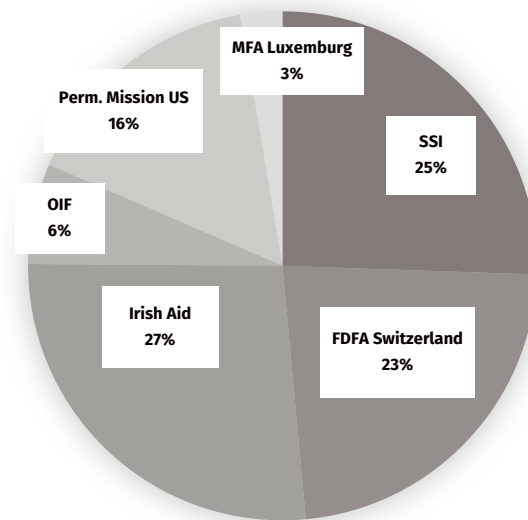
Policy & Advocacy Programme

Affected funds (income) for 2021	394,048.76
+ carried over funds from 2020	81,725.89
Used (spent) funds in 2021	369,727.27
Carried over to 2022 (not used in 2021)	106,047.38

In 2021, UPR Info successfully organised three Pre-sessions online, connecting with human rights defenders of the States under Review. In addition, an in-country Pre-session was held in Haiti.

CHF 106,047 has been carried over to 2022. It involves funding that covers the period from September 2022 to August 2023.

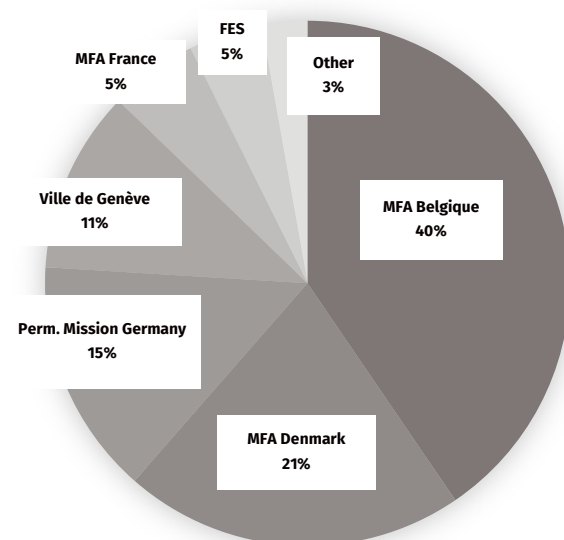
Sources of funding for the Policy and Advocacy Programme in 2021



Stakeholders Programme

Stakeholders Programme

Affected funds (incomes) for 2021	408,837.02
+ carried-over funds from 2020	101,302.11
Used (spent) funds in 2021	277,769.42
Carried over to 2022 (not used in 2021)	232,369.71



The planned expenditures have been met in 2021. As at the end of the year (December), a new donor funded the programme; this explains why CHF 232,370 has been carried over to 2022.

Sources of funding for the Stakeholders Programme in 2021

2021 Donors

UPR Info's activities were supported by 18 donors in 2021.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to each of them for making our work possible and thereby ensuring that the UPR is an effective tool to advance human rights.

Foundations or international NGOs:

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)
Greater Washington Community Foundation
Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
UN Women

Institutional donors:

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland
Government Offices of Sweden
Irish Aid
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France
Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
Wallonia-Brussels International
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium¹

Local donors:

Canton of Geneva, Service de la Solidarité Internationale
Ville de Genève (City of Geneva)

Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva:

Permanent Mission of Denmark¹
Permanent Mission of the United States
Permanent Mission of Germany
Permanent Mission of Luxembourg

(1) Activities will be delivered in 2022

Audit of UPR Info accounts

Balance Sheet – as at 31 December 2021

Bilan / Balance Sheet
au 31 décembre 2021 / as at 31st of December 2021
 (avec chiffres comparatifs 2020 / with 2020 comparative)

ACTIF/ASSETS	2021	2020
Liquidités / <i>Cash (Annexe 6)</i>	757,157.81	493,727.14
Subventions et produits à recevoir / <i>Grants to be received (Annexe : Mouvement des fonds affectés / Movement of affected funds)</i>	0.00	30,594.76
Actifs de régularisation / <i>Transitory assets (Annexe 7)</i>	19,665.05	2,437.10
Actifs circulants / <i>Current assets</i>	776,822.86	526,759.00
Garanties / <i>Guarantees (Annexe 8)</i>	4,906.37	4,906.37
Actifs immobilisés / <i>Permanent assets</i>	4,906.37	4,906.37
Total de l'actif / <i>Total Assets</i>	781,729.23	531,665.37
PASSIF/LIABILITIES		
Charges sociales dues / <i>Social benefits to be paid (Annexe 9)</i>	0.00	2,527.25
Passifs de régularisation / <i>Payable and accruals (Annexe 10)</i>	165,877.30	100,385.07
Capitaux étrangers a court terme / <i>Short term liabilities</i>	165,877.30	102,912.32
Fonds reçus d'avance non utilisés / <i>Deferred Income (Annexe : Mouvement des fonds affectés / Movement of affected funds)</i>	466,762.72	275,252.80
Fonds pour projets futurs / <i>Funds for future projects (Annexe 11)</i>	131,294.64	131,294.64
Capitaux étrangers a long terme / <i>Long term liabilities</i>	598,057.36	406,547.44
Capital / <i>Capital</i>	17,794.57	22,205.61
Capitaux propres / <i>Equities</i>	17,794.57	22,205.61
Total du passif / <i>Total liabilities</i>	781,729.23	531,665.37

2021 Profit and loss statement – From 1 January to 31 December 2021

Détail du compte de capital / Capital detailed
au 31 décembre 2021 / as at 31st of December 2021
 (avec chiffres comparatifs 2020 / with 2020 comparative)

	2021	2020
Solde reporté / <i>Report 1.1.2021</i>	22,205.61	19,231.67
Charges sur exercices antérieurs / <i>Prior year expenses</i>	-4,411.04	0.00
Sous-total / <i>Sub total</i>	17,794.57	19,231.67
Resultat annuel / <i>Year result</i>	0.00	2,973.94
Capital / <i>Capital 31.12.2021</i>	17,794.57	22,205.61

Capital detailed – as at 31 December 2021

Compte de résultat 2021 / 2021 Result account
du 1er janvier au 31 décembre / From 1st of January to 31st of December
 (avec chiffres comparatifs 2020 / with 2020 comparative)

	2021	2020
Subventions de projets / <i>Grant for projects (Annexe : Mouvement des fonds affectés / Movement of affected funds)</i>	1,435,428.28	1,215,591.80
Recettes propres / <i>Own revenue</i>	8,665.79	1,217.59
Produits / <i>Incomes</i>	1,444,094.07	1,216,809.39
Ateliers et séminaires / <i>Workshops and seminars</i>	-95,956.16	-56,037.36
Accords de partenariats / <i>Partnership agreements</i>	-131,039.41	-48,033.34
Publications et Vidéos / <i>Publications and Videos</i>	-12,948.75	-17,764.03
Plateforme et Site Web et service en ligne/ <i>Platform and Website and online tools</i>	-149,934.34	-116,355.01
Salaires et charges sociales / <i>Salaries and social charges</i>	-768,827.91	-694,694.65
Frais administratifs et frais courants / <i>Administrative costs and Running costs</i>	-60,681.11	-45,713.92
Gouvernance et Organisation / <i>Governance and Organization</i>	-6,330.95	-5,525.40
Charge financières / <i>Financial charges</i>	-717.50	-886.41
Charges / <i>Expenditures</i>	-1,226,436.13	-985,010.12
Résultat net avant variation des fonds/Net result before variation of funds	217,657.94	231,799.27
Mouvements des fonds affectés/Movement of affected funds	-217,657.94	-228,825.33
Attribution aux fonds affectés/Allocation to affected funds	-1,435,428.28	-1,215,591.80
Utilisation des fonds affectés/Used of affected funds	1,217,770.34	986,766.47
	0.00	2,973.94

Genève, le 30 mars 2022 / Geneva, the 30th of March 2022

06 Internal Organisational Structure

UPR Info Executive Board 2021

The Executive Board oversees the policies and operations of UPR Info to ensure that the organisation meets its goals. Its members are as follows:

- Mr. Miloon Kothari** (India), President
- Mr. Chris Duckett** (USA), Treasurer
- Prof. Edward R. McMahon** (USA), Board Member
- Ms. Catherine Mbengue** (Cameroun, Switzerland), Board Member
- Ms. Hoa Nghiem** (Vietnam), Board Member

UPR Info team 2021



Ms. Mona M'Bikay
Executive Director



Ms. Nargiz Arupova
Programme Manager
In-Country Programme



Ms. Nicoletta Zappile
Programme Manager
Stakeholders Programme



Ms. Tenar Lorente
Programme Officer
In-Country Programme



Ms. Laura Sinner
Programme Officer
In-Country Programme



Mr. João Rebelo
Programme Officer
Policy and Advocacy
Programme



Ms. Ashleigh Shields
Programme Manager
Policy and Advocacy
Programme



Ms. Saïda Laurent
Administrative and Finance
Manager



Ms. Claudia Caicedo
DIKM Programme Manager

Internship Programme 2021

The work of UPR Info would not have been possible without the support of our interns:

Ms. Basma El Kaldi
Ms. Maud Chambet
Ms. Rita Franceschet
Ms. Nisso Käser
Ms. Annabelle Montagne
Mr. Federico Borre

UPR Info is the founder of the We Pay Our Interns Initiative, which is composed of 47 partner organisations.



Codes of Conduct and Policies

UPR Info work is guided by the following codes of conduct and policies

- Organisational policies and procedures (2012/2016/2018/2020)
- Finance Guide (2020)
- Anti-Fraud Policy (2014)
- Anti-Corruption Code (2014)
- Anti-Terrorism Policy (2016)
- Sexual Harassment Policy (2018)
- Code of Conduct for Board Members (2019)
- Child Protection Protocol (2019)
- Business Continuity Plan (2020 – developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic)
- Risk Management Policy (2021)

07 Outlook

Owing to the UPR's schedule in 2022, there will not be a Pre-session in April. We will use this time to continue our policy and advocacy work by producing a series of communications about the UPR. We will also use the end of the 3rd cycle to meet with diplomatic representatives in Geneva to find out what they expect from our Pre-sessions and how they can be improved to better meet their expectations. The Pre-sessions will resume in August 2022, before the start of the 4th cycle. We will therefore hold Pre-session 41 in August and Pre-session 42 in November/December, hoping to reconvene them in person.

The Policy and Advocacy Programme will also cooperate with the GCR2P on a series of five regional workshops in 2022/23. The four-day workshops will introduce stakeholders to how they can utilise the UPR to support atrocity prevention and development.

In 2022, the ICP programme will focus on implementation and supporting stakeholders from the regions of its target countries. More substantial attention will also be provided to the transfer of knowledge through systematic training of trainers with an exchange of best practices of ICP countries. Evaluation of the second phase for the programme will also be prepared.

UPR Info will continue to work on adopting innovative ways of working through the review of its training curriculum and will strive to improve access to information on the UPR by launching a new website.

On an organisational level, UPR Info will start to reflect on how the organisation will grow to adapt to increasing demands of stakeholders to engage in the UPR process and to support reinforcement of the mechanism's effectiveness within the framework of the 4th UPR cycle. To this end, UPR Info will seek to secure more partnerships with international organisations and UN Country Teams to contribute more significantly to supporting the implementation of UPR recommendations. During the pause between the 3rd and 4th cycle, UPR Info will conduct research work to identify good practices that contributed to improving the human rights situation on the ground and that can inspire a range of national actors in the upcoming cycle.



**Promoting
human rights
through the
Universal
Periodic
Review.**



Annual report **2021**

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