



open briefing

Impact Report

With supplemental information for grantmakers

2021

We prevent and respond to serious attacks on the people and organisations fighting for peace, human rights, and environmental justice around the world, and work to create the conditions in which they no longer happen.



Around the world, courageous people and communities are fighting to turn the tide of authoritarianism, environmental destruction, and social injustice. But they face attacks, harassment, and censorship from powerful vested interests. Many pay the ultimate price.

Open Briefing is a vital part of the response. Our 'holistic security' support allows human rights defenders and other activists to remain active and effective in local movements. In 2021, our international teams of protection specialists, digital security trainers, and counsellors and psychologists provided over **6,000 hours of direct support** to civil society organisations and activists under threat in 41 countries. We also trained over **1,600 defenders** in 340 holistic security workshops.

Last year was a time of global pandemic and closing civic space, not least of all with the coup in Myanmar and the fall of Afghanistan. The number of calls for our help nearly trebled compared to the previous year. Despite these challenges, those we worked with reported a **15% increase in capacity** and a **14% decrease in risk**.

As a social enterprise, we also provide consultancy, training, and retained support to help nonprofits and foundations understand and meet their risk management and duty of care commitments to staff, grantees, and local partners. In 2021, a third of our income came from such activities – supplementing our grants and donations by more than £200,000, and allowing us to help more people than ever before.

Last year, we supported well-known organisations, including Global Witness and Privacy International; major foundations, such as Luminate and Global Greengrants Fund; and many high-profile winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize (the 'Green Nobel') and the Right Livelihood Award (the 'Alternative Nobel').

But you will likely never hear of most of our partners: human rights defenders in Thailand, women's rights activists in Afghanistan, peacebuilders in Myanmar, pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong, LGBT+ activists in Sri Lanka, environmental defenders in Mexico, community leaders in South Africa, indigenous defenders in Ecuador, journalists in Russia, and humanitarians in Central African Republic. Their work is the very heartbeat of civil society.

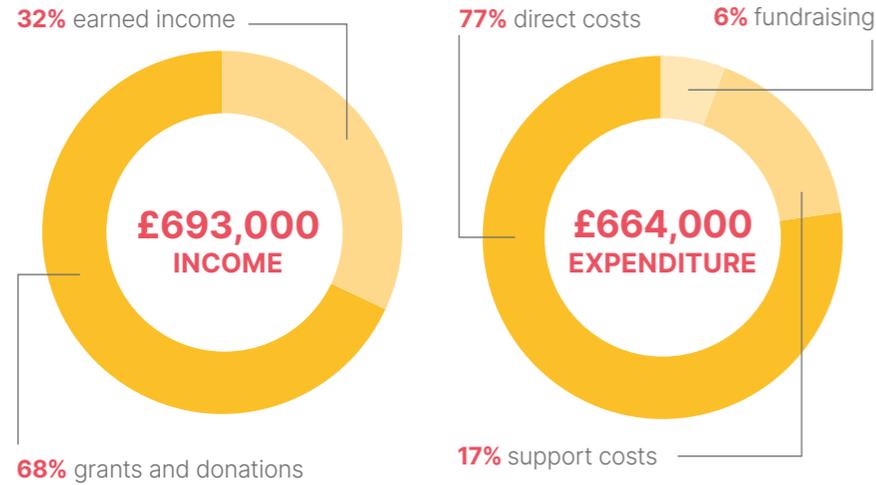
By enhancing their self-protection efforts, Open Briefing empowers those targeted for their advocacy to remain in the struggle for human rights and social and environmental justice in their countries.

For 10 years, we have stood together with those speaking truth to power. And we are just getting started.



We celebrated our 10th anniversary in 2021. You can watch the video and read our story at openbriefing.org/about/10yearsofimpact.

Inputs: The resources that we devoted to our work



6.2 FTE staff and consultants

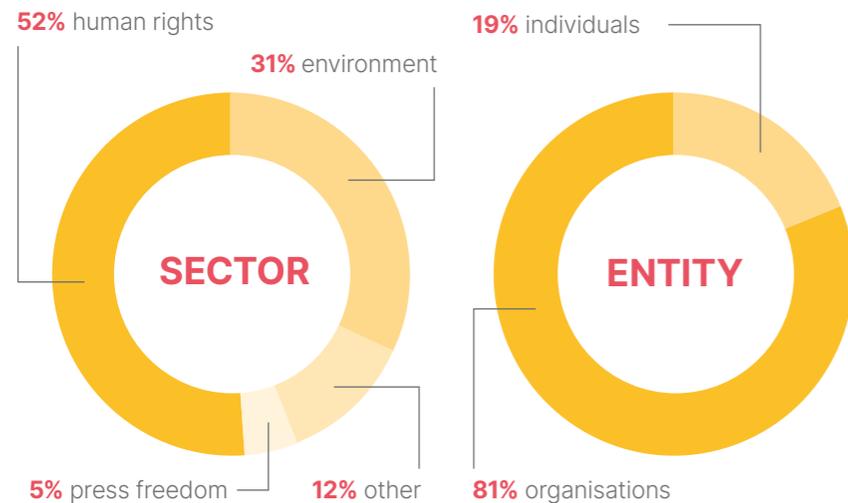


FUNDED BY

Oak Foundation and National Endowment for Democracy

Outputs: The support that we provided

334 calls for assistance



6,150 hours of holistic security support



1,650 defenders trained in 340 workshops



6,300 users of our free resources

41 countries worked in or on 

Outcomes: The effects of our support on recipients

The effects of our support on recipients



15% increase in capacity



85% approval rating

Impact: The long-term or indirect effects of our work

The long-term or indirect effects of our work



14% decrease in risk



Open Briefing supported me to understand the threats I face in my complex security situation. They collaboratively developed strategies to improve my physical and digital security and personal wellbeing. This enables me to make practical decisions around my security and resilience, while continuing to advocate for the human rights of women in a difficult and high-risk environment.”

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, AFGHANISTAN

The support from Open Briefing was invaluable, not only in helping us understand and manage the risks we are facing, but also in building our capacity to cascade this knowledge to partners. There has been a noticeable attitude change among our team, whose awareness of risk and how to constructively engage with it has become more holistic and proactive.”

PEACEBUILDING NGO, MYANMAR

Freelance journalists in Haiti were being arrested by state security forces and attacked by organised criminal gangs.

After extensive consultation, our team delivered five days of security training to 36 local journalists. During the interactive sessions, the participants co-designed procedures for how to work safely and how to support each other in an emergency. The participants committed afterwards to form small groups of inexperienced journalists and pass on what they learned.

A high-profile environmental defender in Nicaragua was facing detention, intimidation, and physical assault by armed land colonisers and state security forces.

Our team completed a risk assessment with her, created a personal security action plan, and provided tailored digital security advice. Our support helped her understand which risks to focus on and gave her a concrete plan to implement. This allowed her to return safely to her community and continue her vital work.



A human rights defender was targeted by the Taliban for his work documenting cases of sexual violence during the conflict in Afghanistan.

Following the fall of Kabul, our team provided crisis management, security advice, and wellbeing support, and coordinated multiple attempts to get him and his family into the airport and onto an evacuation flight. We eventually secured seats for them on a private flight, and he safely continues his advocacy work from outside the country.

Our donor community

We are funded by Oak Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Sigrid Rausing Trust. We have also previously received funding from Ford Foundation, the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation, the Marmot Charitable Trust, and the Network for Social Change.

These foundations support the fight against authoritarianism, environmental destruction, and social injustice. They understand that local organisations and activists have the radical solutions that the world needs at this time. And they seek through Open Briefing to defend, strengthen, and empower those groups in the face of attacks and repression.

As civic space closes around the world, Open Briefing is experiencing a surge in the scope and scale of the demand for our holistic security support. We find ourselves standing against powerful, state-level adversaries and organised criminal gangs. But we are poised to make a major step change to meet this challenge responsibly and sustainably. We just need the resources.

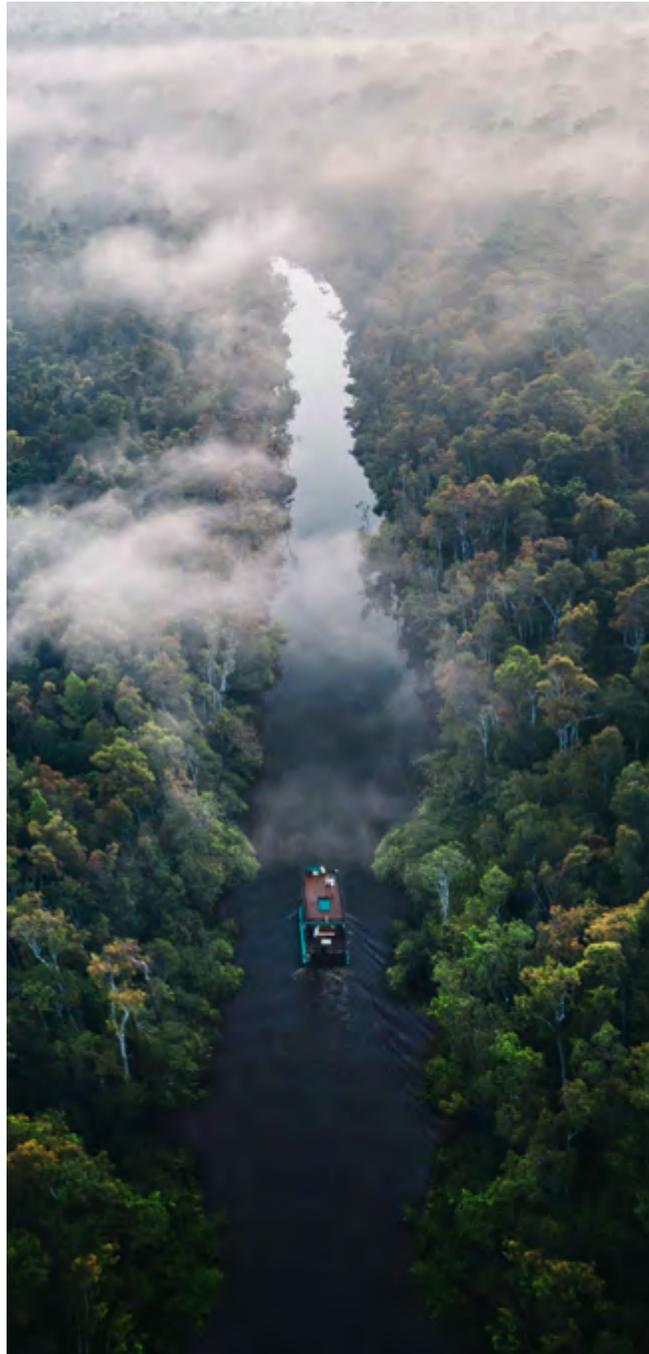


£500,000

This is the amount we seek to raise a year from new foundation funding.

It will allow us to double the amount of funded support available to human rights defenders and other activists under threat and to employ three full-time protection coordinators to manage the highest-risk cases.

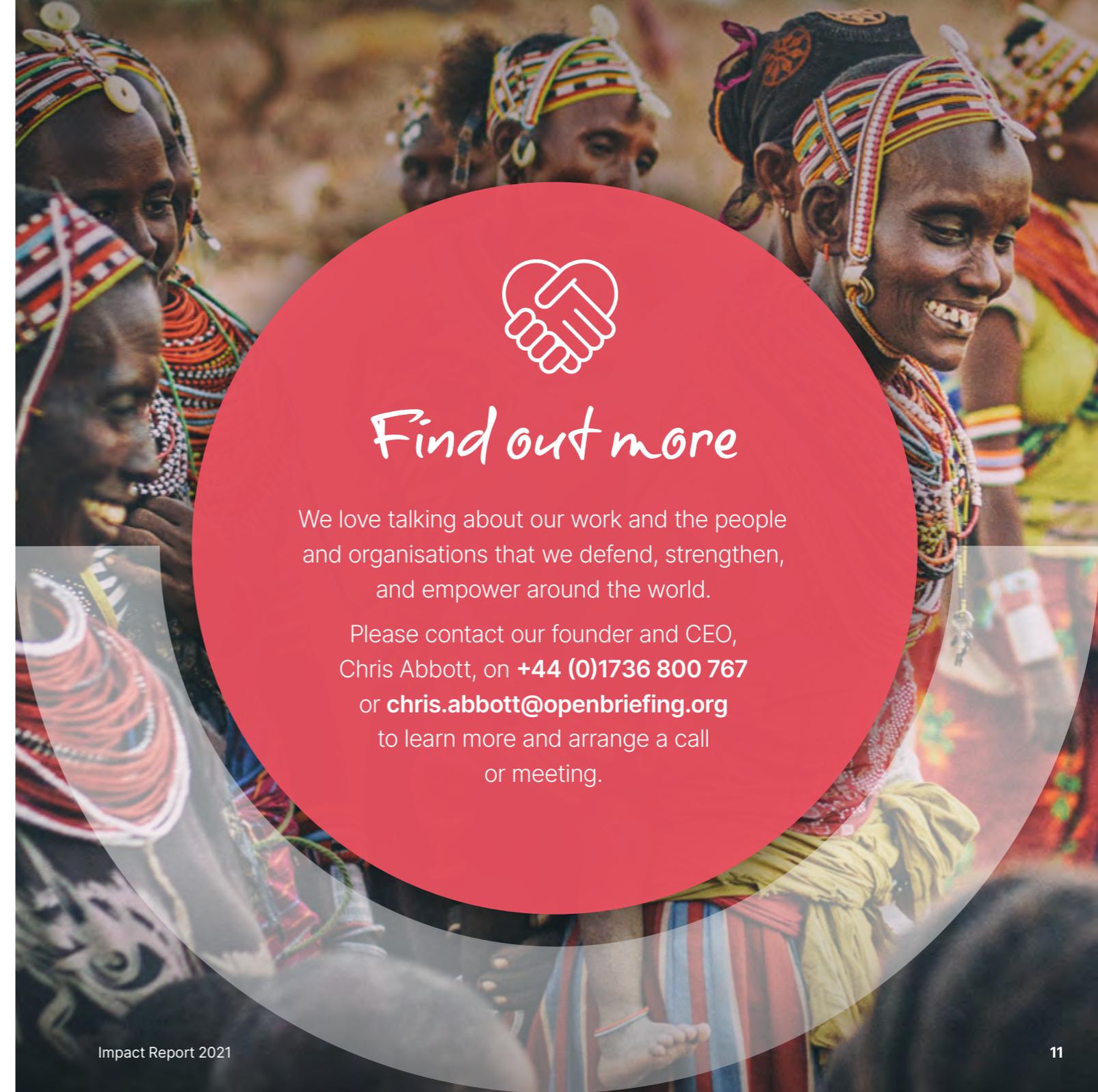
It will also allow us to invest in the people and systems we need to responsibly and sustainably meet the surge in demand for our support.



Charitable nature of our work

Our work meets the public benefit requirement set out by the Charity Commission and aligns with the 'advancement of human rights' charitable purpose set out in the Charities Act 2011. We are registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee. Our articles of association include a non-profit clause and an asset lock, and there are no shareholders.

Charitable foundations are able to support our work under guidance issued in the United Kingdom by the Charity Commission in October 2017. In the United States, we have been assessed to be the equivalent of a tax-exempt organisation.



Find out more

We love talking about our work and the people and organisations that we defend, strengthen, and empower around the world.

Please contact our founder and CEO, Chris Abbott, on **+44 (0)1736 800 767** or **chris.abbott@openbriefing.org** to learn more and arrange a call or meeting.



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