



International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION



2017
annual report

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Please find a fully hyperlinked version of this annual report on www.idsn.org

Cover: Young woman in a Dalit sweepers colony in Dhaka. Dalits in Bangladesh are pushing for the enactment of the new anti-discrimination law. In 2017, IDSN has raised concerns over the situation for Dalits in Bangladesh and other caste-affected countries at the UN and EU level, as well as in communications efforts.
Photo by Abir Abdullah

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Word from the Chair

Welcome to the IDSN 2017 Annual Report.

Caste discrimination remains one of the biggest human rights abuses existing today, which involves the abhorrent practice of untouchability and descent-based civil, political, cultural, social and economic inequality. Caste discrimination still goes unchallenged and often unacknowledged, but the tireless work of activists and supporters continues to raise awareness of this issue.

We are a unique organisation, aiming to change values and practices through policy changes worldwide. We are making a difference and we add a significant voice to a growing global human rights movement campaigning for change on caste-based discrimination. Great inroads have been made at the UN and EU levels – with international institutions recognising the need to address caste-based discrimination as a fundamental human and labour rights issue.

We are very proud of what we have achieved this year, as highlighted in this report, but IDSN and its members continue to face ongoing challenges – not least one of political will and the shrinking of space and funding for organisations working to eliminate caste-based discrimination.

We have had an extra-active year at the UN, with the UPRs of India, the UK and Pakistan; submissions to several treaty bodies and meetings with special rapporteurs. IDSN is pleased to welcome Fernand de Varennes, the new Special Rapporteur for Minority Issues who has pledged to continue the excellent work of his predecessors on addressing caste-based discrimination.

We welcome Claire Ivers, our new EU Adviser in Brussels, whose work has already made a significant difference. The EP Annual Report featured a strongly worded recommendation to address caste-based discrimination wherever it occurs.

One of the key highlights this year was the publication of the comprehensive guidance tool addressing caste-based discrimination by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The tool is aimed at supporting UN country teams, agencies and other stakeholders in combatting caste-based discrimination and has been welcomed by UN stakeholders as well as human rights activists across the world. We have made a special feature on this tool on page 7 of this report.

There are so many people and organisations to thank – but above all our member organisations in the caste-affected countries, all of whom provide us with our purpose and our inspiration to continue and carry out fantastic work in their countries despite the many obstacles they face.

The Solidarity Networks in Europe continue to be trailblazers when it comes to ensuring that caste discrimination is addressed and undertake activities such as lobbying their

2017 Highlights

- The UN OHCHR launched a guidance tool addressing caste-based discrimination
- The UPRs of India and Pakistan yielded several recommendations on caste-based discrimination
- Treaty body reviews of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka included recommendations on caste discrimination
- Young Dalit women speak out at the UN Forum on Minority Issues
- Reports and statements from Special Rapporteurs include references to caste-based discrimination
- Dalit activists take part in IDSN's workshop on UN and EU advocacy in Nepal
- MEPs send an open letter on caste discrimination ahead of the EU-India summit
- EU's Annual Report, and the European Parliament's Annual Report, on human rights highlight concern over caste discrimination
- Dalit activists take part in the EU NGO forum
- IDSN publishes a roadmap to the new UN OHCHR Guidance Tool

relevant Ministries to raising the issue to businesses and multi-national corporations or staging awareness raising events. Under-resourced and with many working purely on a voluntary basis, they are a perfect example of what passion and commitment to the cause can achieve.

I therefore take this opportunity to thank all the caste-affected country members, Dalit Solidarity Networks, our International Associates and our donors. Without all of whom the achievements highlighted in this report would not be possible.

Special thanks to my fellow Board members of IDSN, who give so much of their time and energy – and have the passion and commitment to ensure a vibrant and thriving organisation.

My thanks to the whole staff team at IDSN. They are, as ever, hardworking, skilled and excellent at what they do.

We will continue to update you on our progress – both our successes and challenges. We do hope you will be able to continue to support us in the years to come as we fight for a caste free world.

Meena Varma
Chair of the Board

Changes to the 2017 Annual Report

This year we have streamlined the IDSN Annual Report to focus on IDSN's key activities. From 2018, all the developments in caste-affected countries and the activities of the Dalit Solidarity Networks will have their own dedicated pages on www.idsn.org.

IDSN has a continuous dialogue with members, associates and the Dalit Solidarity Networks throughout the year and will be undertaking a thorough update of the country pages on the IDSN website in 2018 so that the latest information is always accessible online to our many website visitors.

The annual report this year therefore covers only IDSN's works in 2017 and the results associated with these. These are reflected in the United Nations, European Union and Communications and Networking chapters. The organisation and finances chapter reflects the latest organisational developments and accounts.

Countries

India

Nepal

Pakistan

Bangladesh

Sri Lanka

Japan

Yemen

UK

Africa

Diaspora

Bangladesh

The estimates of the number of Dalits in Bangladesh vary from 3.5-5.5 million



Caste discrimination affects both the Hindu and the Muslim populations in Bangladesh.

WWW.IDSN.ORG

Caste discrimination

There are an estimated 260 million Dalits worldwide, often born into an 'untouchable' status, in highly stratified caste systems. Caste systems are found in South Asia, in communities migrated from South Asia across the globe and in other caste-stratified countries in Africa and Asia.

Caste-based discrimination involves massive violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Caste systems divide people into unequal and hierarchical social groups. Those at the bottom are

considered inferior, 'impure' and 'polluting' to other caste groups. Those in the lowest of castes, known as Dalits in South Asia, are often considered 'untouchable' and subjected to so-called 'untouchability practices' in both public and private spheres. Dalits may be forced to do the most dirty and hazardous jobs, and subjected to modern slavery. Due to exclusion practiced by both state and non-state actors, Dalits have limited access to resources, services and development, keeping many in severe poverty.

Dalits are often de facto excluded from decision-making and meaningful participation in public and civil life. Lack of special legislation banning caste-based discrimination or lack of implementation of legislation, due to dysfunctional systems of justice, lack of state responsibility and caste-bias, have largely left Dalits without protection.

Despite policy development and new legislation in some countries, fundamental challenges still remain in all caste-affected countries.



United Nations

2017 was a very active year for IDSN's UN advocacy work as there were several key human rights reviews of caste-affected countries that were covered by IDSN. These included the Universal Periodic Reviews of India, the UK, and Pakistan and Treaty Body Reviews of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Reports and statements from Special Rapporteur visits to India and Sri Lanka were also released in 2017 as well as a relevant thematic report by the Special Rapporteur on slavery.

IDSN submitted input in collaboration with members in caste-affected countries, facilitated the participation of Dalit rights activists in key processes at the UN and in advocacy meetings with delegations and ensured Dalit representation wherever possible. IDSN also held a capacity building workshop for Dalit activists in Nepal on UN and EU advocacy.

One of the key highlights in 2017 was the launch of the UN Guidance tool addressing global caste-based discrimination. IDSN participated in consultations ahead of the tool and promoted the tool extensively in 2017.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

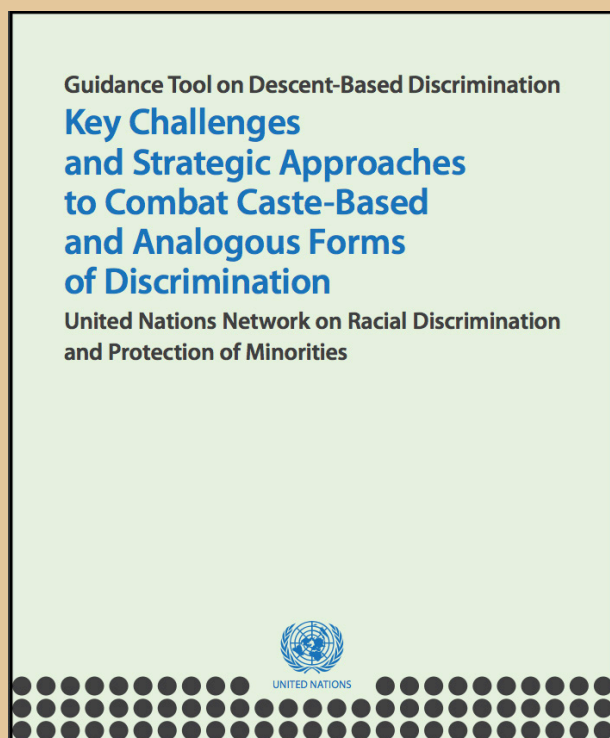
UN guidance tool on caste discrimination

In March 2017, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched the "UNOHCHR Guidance Tool on Descent-Based Discrimination: Key challenges and strategic approaches to combat caste-based discrimination and analogous forms of discrimination." The tool is meant to support UN country teams, agencies and other stakeholders in combatting caste-based discrimination. IDSN has been involved in consultations surrounding the tool and took part in the launch in Kathmandu.

IDSN also published the IDSN Roadmap to the UN Guidance Tool in order to make it more accessible and practical for UN stakeholders at the country level, human rights defenders and Dalit civil society organisations. In addition to the launch of the Guidance Tool, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also mentioned caste in numerous [statements and reports](#).

Special Feature

Landmark UN guidance tool on caste discrimination launched



In a historic event in Kathmandu in March 2017, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched a comprehensive [guidance tool](#) addressing caste-based discrimination.

The tool is meant to support UN country teams, agencies and other stakeholders in combatting caste-based discrimination and has been welcomed by UN stakeholders as well as human rights activists across the world.

The tool is the first of its kind to directly address caste and forms part of an Action Plan to support the implementation of the recommendations contained in the [Guidance note](#) of the UN Secretary-General: On racial discrimination and protection of minorities.

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted by the OHCHR when creating the tool, including IDS, the Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF), Dalit rights organisations, international human rights organisations and OHCHR staff and leaders. It is hoped that the tool will bring much needed attention to and encourage action on one of the most severe forms of discrimination in the world.

“The UN guidance tool on caste-based discrimination will be tremendously useful to those both within the UN system and beyond, working to combat this heinous form of discrimination,” said Meena Varma, Chair of the IDS board and Acting Executive Director of IDS.

“The tool will also create much needed awareness within the UN of the need to address this form of discrimination with direct action at both the country and international level. We applaud the OHCHR for taking this step and look forward to seeing the tool in action over the coming years.”

Several civil society leaders, UN agencies, country teams and networks were represented at the launch, which took place on 27 March 2017. The launch was attended by Rita Izsak, Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues; Katia Chirizzi, Acting Deputy Head of Regional Office for South Asia OHCHR; Renaud Meyer, UNDP Country Director, Nepal; Rikke Nohrlind, former Executive Director of IDS. IDS members and ADRF were also present alongside several other civil society leaders and Human Rights activists from South Asia and other parts of the globe.

This Guidance Tool helps lay the foundation for more concerted and system-wide action by the UN on the issue of discrimination based on descent, including caste-based and analogous forms of discrimination.

Human rights activists see this Guidance tool as another constructive step in the journey of the UN to address this particular type of human rights issue, which it is hoped will evolve to bring out a UN Convention to Eliminate Discrimination based on Work and Descent including Caste.

In connection with the UNOHCHR Guidance Tool, IDS also produced a [roadmap](#) to facilitate a more widespread use of the tool at country level and by civil society.

This Dalit boy is a child labourer in Pakistan. In 2017 IDSN raised concern over child and bonded labour, forced conversions and abductions of Dalit girls and women, violence against Dalits, and caste discrimination in general in Pakistan, through the UN UPR and CCPR mechanisms.

Photo by Jakob Carlsen

Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs)

India and UK UPRs

IDSN facilitated two members' participation in the India and the United Kingdom UPR Pre-sessions, organised by UPR Info in Geneva in April 2017. From India, Ramesh Nathan represented the National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ-NCDHR) and Meena Varma represented the Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN-UK) as well as IDSN.

The delegation also undertook advocacy activities whilst in Geneva, attending briefing meetings with six permanent missions. Ramesh Nathan also made a presentation at the India Pre-session, attended by over twenty country missions.

IDSN distributed [recommendations](#) prepared by DSN-UK and IDSN members from India to a number of other missions and network members and published them on the website and followed up with missions after the briefing meetings and to those who attended the India and the UK UPR Pre-sessions.

IDSN and DSN-UK also produced a [joint alternative report](#) on caste-based discrimination in the UK outlining the need to outlaw caste-based discrimination in the UK and noting the government's failure to implement the legislation as agreed by Parliament.

In May 2017, IDSN facilitated the attendance of representatives from DSN-UK and NDMJ-NCDHR at the UPR sessions and related meetings. For the UK there was no direct mention of caste-based discrimination or Dalits in any of the recommendations but one recommendation on access to justice could be used in future advocacy.

At the UPR review of India thirteen states mentioned caste and/or Dalits, resulting in thirteen [targeted recommendations](#) being included in the final report. Fifteen states made interventions with explicit recognition of the challenges faced by Dalits.

Several states addressed the need to introduce new policies and implement existing ones to prevent violence and attacks against Dalits, as well as ensuring justice for victims of such crimes. Others addressed the need to ensure free and compulsory universal education and prioritise anti-discrimination measures in its provision, protect the rights of Dalit women and uphold the countries anti-discrimination policies in practice.

Responding to the review in September 2017, the Indian Government accepted nine of the recommendations

concerning caste-based discrimination. However, the Government did not accept any of the recommendations related to protecting civil society space and amending the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act.

Despite the concerns raised by civil society and member states, the Indian delegation failed to give convincing assurances that concrete steps to improve the situation would be taken.

"The position of the Indian Government in the 2017 UN UPR review has been defensive stating introduction of new amendments to the SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. Introducing new amendments alone will not address structural caste based discrimination and atrocities inflicted against Dalits and Adivasis.

The State must recognize that there is a consistent failure to protect Dalit and Adivasis from violence by not ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of such laws."

Ramesh Nathan from the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) speaking on the Government's response to the UPR of India.

The States who brought recommendations to the floor were spread across Asia, Europe, South America and North America, thus showing the global nature of the concern over this issue.

Several other issues relating to the rights of Dalits were also raised, including the need to secure protection for human rights defenders and concern over the detrimental effects of India's Foreign Contributions Act (FCRA), blocking funding for thousands of civil society organisations working to further human rights.

Pakistan UPR

IDSN and the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) made a [joint submission](#) in advance of Pakistan's UPR and distributed a [factsheet](#) with key [recommendations](#) prior to the UPR pre-session in October.



IDSN facilitated the participation of Dalit rights activists Pirbhu Lal and Zulfiqar Shah from PDSN to attend Pakistan's UPR Pre-session, bilateral lobbying meetings and other relevant events in Geneva. The IDSN UN Advocacy Programme Officer was also in Geneva to coordinate meetings and activities.

The delegation attended the UPR info training on UPR advocacy, had meetings with fourteen State missions and met with relevant special procedures' mandates.

During the UPR of Pakistan, in November, three states - Sierra Leone, Argentina and Holy See, directly mentioned "caste" in their [recommendations](#). Fifteen states made recommendations on religious minorities and three on bonded labour.

IDSN coordinated and issued a [joint statement](#) together with PDSN, International Movement Against All Forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR), Minority Rights Group International, Anti-Slavery International and FORUM-ASIA.

The statement urged the Government to accept the caste-related recommendations and to honour their commitments and make sure that the recommendations at the November 2017 UPR are not only accepted but also urgently implemented and systematically followed up. The statement was distributed widely and PDSN organised streaming of the UPR review in Pakistan.

Special Procedures

Report on access to justice by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

"In South Asia, debt bondage and forced labour is reported to be widespread in countries such as Bangladesh India, Nepal and Pakistan. Those who are trapped in debt bondage in South Asia are predominantly Dalits, of "low" caste status, indigenous people or other minority groups. In some countries, a hierarchy of work has been created as a result of community divisions under which labourers are put at the lower level, particularly those of "low" caste status or those belonging to ethnic and religious minorities. An individual's access to justice, jobs and other rights and privileges are often conditioned by this social hierarchy. This results in discrimination, domination, inequality and disparity, primarily through a lack of cultural and social power and access to resources for people who belong to minority groups. Furthermore, those who opt to defy traditional exploitative, discriminatory and humiliating roles, often face social boycotts that further restrict any opportunity to overcome discrimination-related poverty and dependency on employers or landlords." "HRC37, September 2017, Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery - Urmila Bhoola

IDSN facilitated submissions from IDSN members in Nepal and in India, to the call for submissions on access to justice by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Urmila Bhoola. IDSN member DSN-UK together with the organization READ also made a [submission](#). The [thematic report](#) included a number of direct references to the IDSN member submissions.

IDSN subsequently sponsored and facilitated participation of Ramesh Nathan from NDMJ-NCDHR in India and Bhakta Bishwakarma from Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation/ Dalit NGO Federation (NNDSWO/DNF) in Nepal at the HRC 36 session, on 11-13 September 2017. The delegation also met with the Special Rapporteur after the interactive dialogue.

Special Rapporteur on Housing reports on India

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha, released a [report](#) on housing in India in January 2017 – as a follow up on her visit to India in 2016. The report draws attention to the alarming state of Dalit houses and the need for Government action to improve housing and end discrimination.

The report cites Government statistics revealing that Dalits on average live in lower quality housing, made with inadequate materials compared to the general population and finds the lack of access for Dalits to latrines, at 66%, particularly alarming.

The report states that the manual removing of human excrements from dry latrines, known as manual scavenging, persists and is not being dealt with effectively. It also states that those engaged in manual scavenging, primarily Dalits, “suffer from deplorable housing and living conditions”.

The Rapporteur furthermore points to evidence of caste discrimination in the rental market and refers to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination’s 2007 recommendation that India intensify its efforts to effectively punish acts of “untouchability”, and take effective measures against residential segregation.

“I am extremely concerned for the millions of people who experience exclusion, discrimination, evictions, insecure tenure, homelessness and who lack hope of accessing affordable and adequate housing in their lifetimes.” Special Rapporteur on Housing, Leilani Farha, said in a press statement on her visit to India.

The report points out that discrimination and inequality in terms of access to and the availability of adequate housing and land were repeatedly raised with the Special Rapporteur on her visit as issues of concern. According to the report this discrimination includes not only actions or omissions by all government authorities, but also the lack of effective mechanisms to ensure protection from an array of private entities, such as private landlords, developers, megaproject construction companies and extractive industries.

The report also offers concrete recommendations to fight discrimination and ensure implementation of existing legislation.

Special Rapporteur on Water and Sanitation’s statement on India

The United Nations Special Rapporteur, Léo Heller, visited India from 27 October - 10 November to examine the extent to which people’s rights to safe drinking water and sanitation are being realized. IDSN and IDSN member Jan Sahas made a joint submission to the Rapporteur, prior to his visit. The submission draws attention to the inhumane practice of manual scavenging that persist in India, despite this practice being banned.

In Léo Heller’s [official statement](#) following his mission in India, he noted that the failure to end the practice of manual scavenging in India coupled with the construction of more non-flush toilets, is contributing to an increase in the discriminatory practice of manual scavenging, where the lowest castes are made to undertake the duty of cleaning excrements from non-flush toilets by hand.

During his visit Mr. Heller took part in a community consultation in India organised by IDSN member Jan Sahas and Safai Karamchari Andolan (SKA). At the consultation he heard cases of many ‘workers’ that had died while carrying out their ‘duties’ where no legal action had been taken and no relief or compensation had been made. He also heard that workers engaged in cleaning sewer lines, septic tanks, and manholes are not provided with safety gear at all, despite the legal obligations and that sanitation workers are largely unprotected.

The emphasis on building toilets should not “contribute to violating fundamental rights of others, such as those engaged in manual scavenging, or ethnic minorities and people living in remote rural areas,” Mr. Heller said in this statement.

The rapporteur will release a full report on his mission to India at the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018.

SR on minority issues report on Sri Lanka

The now former UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, [visited Sri Lanka](#) in October 2016 and was briefed by IDS-N ahead of the visit.

In March 2017 she presented her [report](#) to the Human Rights Council.

“The Special Rapporteur observed that the caste system, the existence of which is not disputed, is evidently an uncomfortable topic for the majority of Sri Lankans.

She was told that three parallel caste systems that define interpersonal relationships exist within the Sinhala, Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil communities.

Additionally, some members of the lower caste groups have clearly inherited status that limits them, by birth, to certain occupations that are considered the most dirty, menial and hazardous, such as manual scavenging and street sweeping, and that are passed down through generations, continuing patterns of social exclusion and marginalization.

Most of these persons suffer discrimination in all spheres of life, have limited or no access to political representation and often have their children excluded from the education system, perpetuating the cycle of extreme poverty.”

Former UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, report on Sri Lanka released in 2017

Treaty Bodies

Committee on civil and political rights (CCPR) review Bangladesh

A small team of IDS-N members, supported by IDS-N, participated in the 119th session of the Human Rights Committee on 6-7 March for the examination of Bangladesh and its adherence to its international obligations to protect civil and political rights.

Prior to the review, Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM), Network of Non-mainstreamed and Marginalized Communities (NNMC) and IDS-N submitted a [joint alternative report](#) to the Human Rights Committee detailing how the Dalit population in Bangladesh continues to be exposed to systemic discrimination based on caste. The report also highlights the most prevalent forms of discrimination against Dalits, including restrictions in their access to adequate housing, land, water and sanitation, and discrimination by employers.

Dalit rights and caste were subsequently mentioned in the list of issues by The National Human Rights Institution of Bangladesh and a joint civil society report from Bangladesh, as well as very briefly in the response from the State party to the list of issues.

On 6 March a small team of IDS-N members - Sarah Marandy from NNMC and Zakir Hossain from BDERM, participated in an informal consultation. Zakir Hossain was able to present an oral statement to the Committee members on discrimination of Dalits, including restrictions in their access to adequate housing, land and employment. He urged the Committee to question the government under review on which specific measures it intends to take in addressing caste-based discrimination and requested a timeline for the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Act proposed in 2014.

Before the review, both representatives participated in a meeting with the representatives of the United Nations bodies, specialised agencies, national human rights institutions and non-government organisations, where they raised issues of land and related violence against indigenous communities, freedom of speech and association, and the need for better protection of human rights defenders.

During the constructive dialogue with the state delegation the Committee posed two questions on combating caste-based discrimination and requested a concrete timeline for passing the Anti-Discrimination Law to protect the rights of Dalits. The head of the state delegation expressed a commitment to pass the Anti-Discrimination Act in the next six months. However, specific caste related questions were not addressed by the delegation during the dialogue.

In a [state reply](#) to the [list of issues](#), prior to the review, the government stated that its Constitution prohibits

Sweepers colony in Bangladesh. The situation of Dalits in Bangladesh, including the extremely poor and segregated housing many Dalit are forced to endure, was raised at the United Nations by IDS

Photo by Jakob Carlsen

discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and in order to put an end to practice of discrimination, the Law Commission of Bangladesh has finalised the Anti-discrimination Bill, 2015, which is under active consideration of the government". The [Concluding Observations](#) include a recommendation on caste.

"Take measures to end the de facto caste systems and ensure that individuals from so-called lower castes are not relegated to caste-based employment and have equal access to all rights guaranteed under the Covenant, without discrimination," and "The State party should ensure that the anti-discrimination bill, 2015, protects against direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private sphere based on a comprehensive list of grounds for discrimination, including colour, descent, caste." Concluding Observations of the Committee on civil and political rights (CCPR) review Bangladesh

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) review Pakistan

Prior to the CESCR review of Pakistan, the Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) and IDS

Members of the review committee, including the Chairman, directly addressed Dalit rights issues – but the Government of Pakistan were weak in their response, failing to acknowledge and outline action to tackle the rights violations faced by Dalits in Pakistan.

"With such clear documentation before them, it is disappointing and disheartening that our Government is not giving any clear commitments to end the injustices suffered by Dalits in Pakistan."

Pirbhu Lal Satyani stated after the CESCR review of Pakistan

Despite the Government's failure to acknowledge the issue, the Committee included a separate section under point 15 and 16 in its [Concluding Observations](#) dedicated to "Scheduled Castes/ Dalits" stressing its concern over continued caste-based discrimination, segregation and stigma. The committee made a clear recommendation stating that:

"The Committee recommends that the State party carry out a study on the situation of the Scheduled Castes/Dalits with the participation of this community and relevant experts and include information on the situation of Dalits in the country, including relevant statistical data, in its next periodic report. It also recommends that the State party take effective measures to eradicate stigma and prejudice against the Scheduled Castes/Dalits, including awareness-raising campaigns, and to combat discrimination against Dalits, particularly in the employment and education sectors." CESR review of Pakistan recommendations

CEDAW and CESCR reviews of Sri Lanka

While IDS

UN Forum on Minority Issues

Young Dalit activists played an active role at the 2017 Forum on Minority Issues, which took place in Geneva from 30 November to 1 December. Dalit women from Nepal and India, forming part of an IDS

They explained to participants how deeply ingrained caste-based discrimination continues to pose severe obstacles to equal participation in most aspects of life and how social media offers both new opportunities for change and new challenges.

Anju representing the All India Dalit Women Rights Movement (AIDMAM-NCDHR) had been nominated by IDS



She described how Dalit women activists were using social media to mobilise and demand justice, through campaigns such as [#dalitwomenfight](#) and the Dalit History Month.

Anju also explained how digital tools were giving increased exposure to Dalits, as traditional media narratives continue to be controlled by dominant caste groups in society and are not representing Dalit voices adequately. She also touched upon the many challenges in relation to harassment, the personal security of the women engaging with social media, as well as the lack of access to being online and the necessary tools for many Dalits.

“In spite of all these challenges, we must use social media so that the whole world can know and see what is happening with Dalit communities, that’s why we decide not to leave but take measures to overcome these challenges. We have to use these social media to reach out to the world.”

Dalit human rights defender from India, Anju, said in her statement at the UN Minority Forum

Ankita, speaking on behalf of the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) in Nepal, gave [statements](#) on inclusive education and participation of minority youth in public life. Ankita’s statements pointed towards structural caste-based discrimination and socially ingrained stigmatisation as the key obstacles to Dalits receiving education on par with non-

Dalits and to their enjoyment of equal participation in public life. She furthermore pointed out that Dalit women were even more at risk of exclusion, discrimination and abuse as they face multiple discrimination on account of their gender and their caste.

“Dalits need to be protected by the full implementation of anti-untouchability legislation. This will not change mind-sets overnight but over time behaviour will change”

Dalit human rights defender from Nepal, Ankita, said in her statement at the UN Minority Forum

Ankita also attended Minority Rights Group training and capacity building sessions following her nomination by IDS. IDS also secured training for a Dalit delegate from Bangladesh but unfortunately his visa was rejected.

In addition to this UN Minority Fellow, Chet Narayan, Chairman of the Dalit Youth Alliance in Nepal gave a presentation on the general state of caste-based discrimination in Nepal.

The newly appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Dr Fernand de Varennes, mentioned his concern over Dalit rights violations in his opening and closing statements.

ECOSOC

IDSN's application for UN consultative status

IDSN's [application for ECOSOC status](#) has been pending in the UN NGO Committee for ten years due to perpetual questioning by one State in the Committee. In 2017, IDSN received two additional questions: one question in May and one in June, and provided timely answers.

On 19 June 2017, IDSN board member, Henri Tiphagne, spoke about the IDSN ECOSOC situation at a UN [side event](#) in New York entitled "The Committee on NGOs: improving working methods, encouraging civil society engagement".

Several states and civil society representatives spoke about how the NGO committee, which grants UN ECOSOC accreditation, is effectively blocking legitimate civil society participation at the United Nations.

In a powerful [statement](#), Henri Tiphagne explained how IDSN has been forced to operate through partners with ECOSOC accreditation who have kindly allowed IDSN to be present at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva as their guests.

He also explained how being at the mercy of the help of others to speak at the UN is humiliating and he found it disturbing that the humiliation faced by Dalits in India, can follow them into the corridors of the UN, where one state is effectively given the power to block them.

"This continuous referral is a reprisal, leading to the exclusion of millions of people who want to be included in the UN processes and contribute to strengthening the sensitivity of the UN to the violations of human rights faced by 260 million people." Henri Tiphagne said at the side-event.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, has highlighted IDSN's application as a particularly troubling case. At the UN General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur criticised India for arbitrarily blocking IDSN from obtaining UN consultative status calling it "clearly unacceptable, wrong and unfair".

Human Rights Council

IDSN issues recommendations for the Human Rights Council's [34th](#), [35th](#) and [36th](#) sessions that were widely distributed ahead of each session.

IDSN facilitated participation of two of its members at the HRC 36 session, on 11-13 September 2017- for the aforementioned presentation of the Special Rapporteur on Slavery's [thematic report](#).

Their programme in Geneva included meetings with the Special Rapporteur on slavery, the Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation, the CERD secretariat, and the new assistant to the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, State missions, and a number of INGOs.

At the HRC 35 Session IDSN facilitated the participation of two Dalit women from the All India Dalit Women Rights Movement (AIDMAM-NCDHR) who took part in advocacy efforts during the council session and in preparatory and exploratory meetings for planning a Dalit women's event in future at the UN.

At the HRC 34 Session IDSN board member, Henri Tiphagne, from Human Rights Defenders Association in India spoke about the impact of the restrictions on foreign contributions to civil society in India at the side event, organised by CIVICUS, on "Backsliding on Civic Space in Democracies".

The event was organised in consultation with IDSN and co-sponsored by Amnesty International, CIVICUS, Forum Asia, International Service on Human Rights (ISHR), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Human Rights Defenders Alert (HRDN) and L'Observatoire pour la protection des défenseurs des droits de l'Homme (OBS).

UN and EU

Dalit activists take part in IDSN 's UN and EU advocacy workshop



IDSN organized and facilitated a capacity building workshop on October 10, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The day focused on 'Making international institutions and mechanisms work for you' was to help inform and strengthen Nepalese Dalit activists' engagement with the UN and EU and as well as their advocacy capacities toward such institutions.

The workshop included an overview of the EU and its institutions by IDSN EU Adviser, Claire Ivers, specifically the different roles of the European Council, Council of the EU, European External Action Service (EEAS), European Commission, and European Parliament. EU Human rights policy was also explored along with what avenues are available for advocacy and lobbying most suited to pursuing Dalit rights.

This was followed by an explanation of how to use the UN institutions to advance Dalit Human rights in Nepal, facilitated by Meena Varma, IDSN Chair and Acting Director. This explored the role of the UN Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies, as well as avenues for NGO advocacy through the UN and a group exercise allowing participants to draft their own recommendations in relation to the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Increasing the skills and knowledge of Dalit activists and organisations and as a result Dalit communities, the workshop not only provided participants an opportunity to learn more about how they can access the EU and UN institutions for advocacy, but also provided an opportunity for networking and linkages between local and national organisations and IDSN – and getting Dalit voices heard at the international level.

The workshop involved 26 participants from 13 different organisations, almost half of which were women.

The information, networking and capacity the workshop provided will not only help the long term goal of elimination of caste-based discrimination, but is specifically relevant in the Nepalese context ahead of 2018 CERD review.

"The presentation about EU mechanisms is new to us and also the information about the UN Minority Forum and its relevance for the Dalit Community is interesting," stated Sushil BK, Vice-President of the Dalit NGO Federation.

"After this workshop we can work and coordinate with the EU delegation and engage with the UN Minority Forum. Overall the workshop is a success to give some new knowledge and skills and re-energize us."

Generally, the participants were overwhelmingly positive about the workshop, the only complaint being that more time was needed.

This Dalit woman paid a high price for refusing to vacate her land when a dominant caste wanted to take it from her. One night she was captured, stripped naked, beaten, slashed with a knife under both eyes and left for dead. She was found and later reported the assault to the police. Ten years later the case was still pending. In 2017 the EU Annual Report on Human Rights raised concern over caste discrimination, access to justice for Dalits, and violence against Dalit women. A joint letter was released by MEPs to urge the issue of caste to be addressed at the 2017 EU-India summit. Photo by Jakob Carlsen

European Union

In 2017, IDS^N continued to conduct outreach with EU institutions including representatives from the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament (EP). As in previous years, caste discrimination was featured in important EU initiatives and resolutions throughout the year.

In a [declaration](#) by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, caste was identified as one of the many forms of discrimination that men, women and children worldwide continue to suffer from.

In February an IDS^N delegation took part in meetings with the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) and with the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), where opportunities for increased cooperation were explored.

An IDS^N delegation also visited Brussels in June and held meetings with the European External Action Service (EEAS), the International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and key Members of the European Parliaments and assistants to inform them of developments in caste-affected countries and look to future avenues for engagement.

MEP open letter ahead of EU-India Summit

On 6th October, India hosted the EU-India Summit in New Delhi. Ahead of this high-level meeting, a cross-party group of prominent Members of the European Parliament (MEP) sent an [open letter](#) to the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, urging them to address both publicly and privately the EU's concerns with regards to caste discrimination.

Amongst other recommendations, parliamentarians called on EU leaders to urge the Indian government to take immediate steps to eliminate abuses against Dalits and provide concrete plans to implement laws and government policies to secure their protection.

“We remain deeply concerned with the serious human rights violations and persistent development challenges linked to caste discrimination. At least 260 million people around the globe face appalling and dehumanising discrimination based on caste and similar systems of inherited status.”

Excerpt from cross-party MEP letter to EU leaders ahead of EU-India Summit

Capacity building workshop on EU advocacy

IDS^N organized and facilitated a capacity building workshop ‘Making international institutions and mechanisms work for you’ on 10 October (see also pg. 15). The workshop included an overview of the EU and its institutions by IDS^N's EU Adviser. EU Human rights policy was also explored along with the avenues available for advocacy on caste discrimination at the EU level. In the margins of the workshop, an IDS^N delegation accompanied by Dalit representatives met with Veronica Cody, the new EU Ambassador to Nepal.

EU annual report highlights concern over caste discrimination

Also in October, EU Foreign ministers adopted the EU [Annual Report](#) on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2016. The report provides an annual overview of the EU's human rights efforts towards third countries. Two chapters, on Nepal and India, specifically highlight concern with regards to Dalits.

“In 2016, the cancellation of many CSOs' licenses under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act became prominent in the discussion of civil society space. Moreover, acts of discrimination against Dalits and violence against women continue to persist in the country despite government efforts.”

EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, India Chapter

“There are regular reports of domestic violence, dowry killings, rape, child marriages, traditional harmful practices and other gender-based violence. Long-standing prejudices hamper effective access to justice. Some groups, e.g. female Dalits, women with disabilities, and human rights defenders are particularly vulnerable.”

EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, Nepal Chapter



Dalit activists at EU NGO Forum

On 5-6 December, Dalit human rights defenders formed part of an IDSN delegation to the 19th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum that took place in Brussels. The theme of the forum was "Human rights under threat: Exploring new approaches in a challenging global context."

The Forum was organised by the European Union's External Action Service and the European Commission together with the NGO umbrella Human Rights Democracy Network (HRDN), of which IDSN is a member. At the Forum, Dalit defenders participated in discussions on how to ensure more action to fight caste discrimination, particularly at the EU level.

Among recommendations put forward were the need for the EU to ensure that caste discrimination is addressed in all bilateral dealings with caste-affected countries and for EU member states to raise the issue of caste-related human rights violations at the United Nations. Ankita, representing the Feminist Dalit Organisation – Nepal, also discussed the multiple discrimination faced by Dalit women in caste-affected countries and continued discrimination in Nepal.

IDSN nominated Sushil BK of the Dalit NGO Federation and he was chosen by the EEAS as a key participant. He raised the issue of Dalits facing ongoing exclusion from civil, political, cultural and economic rights, despite some positive changes to the constitution.

European Parliament's annual rights report

In December, The European Parliament's 'Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter', was also adopted. The [report](#) contained a number of references to caste discrimination.

MEPs repeated their calling for the development of an EU policy on caste discrimination and urged the EU and its member states to intensify efforts and support related initiatives at UN and delegation level by 'implementing and monitoring the 2030 SDGs, monitoring the new UN Guidance Tool on descent-based discrimination and supporting states' implementation of recommendations by UN human rights mechanisms on the topic of caste discrimination'.

"Condemns the continuing human rights violations committed against people suffering as a result of caste hierarchies and caste-based discrimination, including the denial of equality and access to the legal system and employment, continued segregation and caste-induced barriers to the achievement of basic human rights and development and similar systems of inherited status." European Parliament's 'Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter'



Communication and networking

IDSN continued to see solid engagement across IDSN's communication channels including the website, newsletter and social media. In addition to the IDSN Annual Report published in March, IDSN also published an IDSN Roadmap to the UN Guidance Tool in October.

IDSN also produced news articles, statements, website and social media content as well as the IDSN newsletter. Statements, reports, events and activities were promoted throughout the year with particular priority given to news related to Dalit women's rights.

IDSN newsletter, website and social media

The IDSN website serves a broad global user base of activists, academics, policy and decision-makers. It continues to be the leading global resource on caste-based discrimination. In 2017, the IDSN website had over 37,000 unique visitors and 87,000 pageviews.

There were almost 50,000 unique visits to the IDSN website in 2017 and the top ten countries visiting the site were India, United States, Nepal, United Kingdom, Denmark, Canada, Australia, Germany, Netherlands, and Pakistan. The user base is particularly strong in India, which accounts for more than 20,000 sessions.

Over [40 news articles](#) were published on the IDSN website in 2017 and 78 documentation entries were made on the IDSN online documentation [database](#) and categorized for cross-reference searches. The news articles covered IDSN's UN and EU activities as well as relevant reports, events and initiatives by IDSN members and associates and were distributed through the IDSN monthly newsletter – alongside case stories, upcoming events and relevant press coverage. The content of the newsletter was sourced from IDSN members and associates as well as a wider range of Dalit rights organisations.

The IDSN newsletter has over 1300 subscribers, including key UN and EU officials and human rights activists from across the globe. IDSN members and associates also use the newsletter to stay updated on developments and draw inspiration from the struggle to end caste discrimination nationally, regionally and globally.

IDSN's social media channels all saw a rise in users in 2017 with Twitter followers rising by almost 30% to 1680 followers and IDSN's Facebook fans rising by 4% to 8760 fans in relation to 2016. The IDSN YouTube Channel continued to prove popular with views of the IDSN Dalit women video rising by over 40% this year to more than 134,000 views and views of the IDSN intro video rising by 25% to 56,304. The older video – I'm Dalit How Are You? also continued to grow in views reaching 209,800 views by the end of 2017.

Over 400 Dalit women from across India took part in the Dalit Women Speak Out Conference organized by AIDMAM-NCDHR. IDS N promoted the conference on all communications channels and were invited to have a stand at the conference. Promoting the voices of Dalit women is a key focus area for IDS N. Photo by AIDMAM-NCDHR

The Social media channels are an important source of internal as well as external communication in the network and as Dalit rights activists and organisations are increasingly communicating on social media these channels have become an indispensable source of information for IDS N as well as avenues to promote Dalit rights. Many of IDS N's followers who retweet or share IDS N posts have wide reaching audiences and good potential for impact.

IDS N statements were also promoted through IDS N communications channels in addition to being distributed to relevant press contacts. Throughout the year IDS N continued to liaise with media and also responded to requests from journalists but as a principle, and wherever possible, forwarded such requests on to the relevant Dalit member organisations or activists.

Promoting the voices of Dalit women

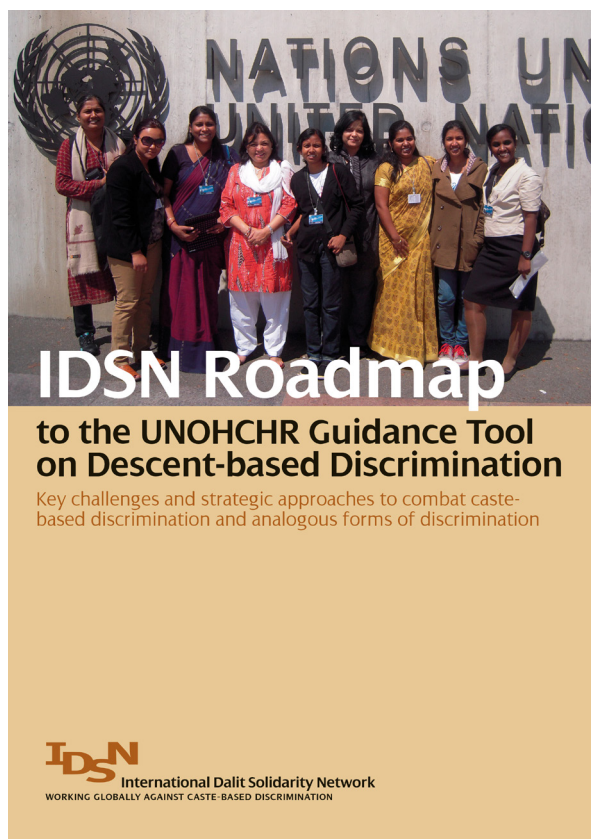
A focus area for IDS N's communications work in 2017 has been promoting the voices of Dalit women at the international level. We have throughout the year prioritised promoting and distributing material and documentation on Dalit women's rights. We have highlighted case stories on Dalit women activism in India and Nepal and have covered key events, conferences and reports on and by Dalit women in caste-affected countries.

One good example of this was the December [Dalit Women Speak Out conference](#) held in Pune, India, organised by the national platform for Dalit women, All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM-NCDHR) and co-organised by the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre, Pune.

The conference presented a free space for over 400 Dalit women from across India to speak their mind and discuss how best to progress with a collective resistance to caste and gender oppression. IDS N was invited to have a stand at the conference for which IDS N produced flyers and a poster to be distributed at the conference, which invited Dalit women activists to connect to IDS N. IDS N promoted the conference on all communication channels.

IDS N Roadmap to the UN Guidance Tool on caste

A key activity in IDS N's communications work in 2017 was the production of the IDS N Roadmap to the "UNOHCHR Guidance Tool on Descent-Based Discrimination: Key challenges and strategic approaches to combat caste-based discrimination and analogous forms of discrimination."



The UN Guidance Tool is a very comprehensive document spanning over 100 pages and in order to promote its use by both the UN country offices and agencies, as well as a broader range of development actors and rights defenders, IDS N has produced a condensed version focusing on the actionable elements of the tool.

The IDS N roadmap offers check boxes on actions within the four main areas covered in the tool: Learn, Involve, Support and Act. It summarises key concepts drawing on text excerpts from the UNOHCHR Guidance Tool and offers direct links to good practice cases and useful documentation and examples.

The Roadmap can be used by the UN but will also support civil society in caste-affected countries to navigate the guidelines and help ensure accountability. The Roadmap also serves as a useful introduction for UN and EU officials globally to understand the issue of caste-based discrimination and the action that needs to be undertaken to counter this.

Organisation and finances

Governance

In 2017 IDSN undertook an organisational development process steered by two consultants. The consultants have interviewed numerous IDSN stakeholders and will submit a report to the IDSN Board to inform the new IDSN strategy to cover the period 2019-2023.

In connection with the organisational development process the IDSN Board has had a particularly active year with 2 full Board Meetings, dedicated to this process, held in Kathmandu in February and October 2017.

The IDSN Board had both face to face and Skype board meetings throughout the year and Board members played an active role in many of IDSN's activities in 2017.

IDSN Board Members as of 31 December 2017:

- Meena Varma
Dalit Solidarity Network, UK – Chair
- Durga Sob
Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal
- Renu Sijapati
Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal
- Bhakta Bishwarkarma
Dalit NGO Federation, Nepal
- Sono Khangharani
Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network
- Sandra Petersen
Dalit Solidarity Network, Norway
- Einar Tjelle
Dalit Solidarity Network, Norway
- Henri Tiphagne
People's Watch, India
- Paul Divakar
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, India
- Manuela Ott
Dalit Solidarity, Germany (DSiD)

Finances and funding

In 2017, IDSN, with gratitude, received funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Hermod Lannungs Fond (Denmark), HEKS (Switzerland), Bread for the World (Germany), Misereor (Germany) and DanChurchAid - Nepal.

IDSN also continued fundraising efforts in order to ensure the longer term sustainability of the organisation.

Secretariat

The Chair of the Board, Meena Varma, continued to serve as Acting Executive in 2017.

During 2017, the IDSN UN Advocacy Officer role was undertaken by Nina Back Andersen until March and Danguole Kleinaityte for the rest of the year.

Karen Bundgaard Andersen was Head of Finance and Administration assisted by Peter Soby Pedersen as part-time bookkeeper.

Anna Laming undertook the role of Programme Assistant.

IDSN's Communications Adviser was Maria Brink Schleimann and in September consultant Claire Ivers joined IDSN as a part-time EU Adviser

The IDSN secretariat moved offices in 2017 to a smaller and less expensive office on Farvergade 27D, 1st floor, 1463 Copenhagen K.

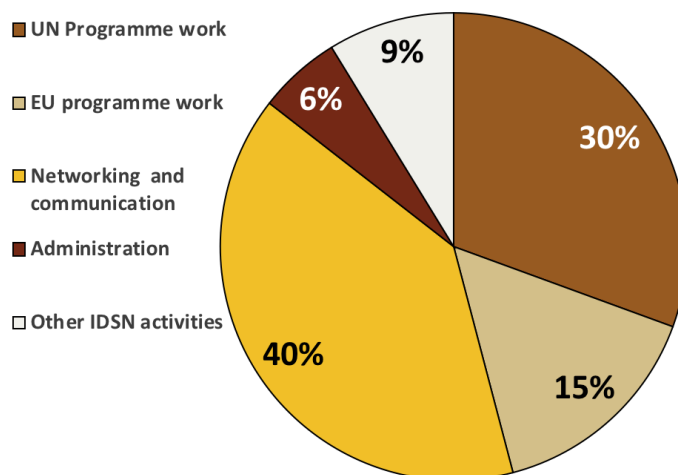
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017

EXPENDITURE 2017

Profit and loss

	2017 DKK	2017 EURO	2016 DKK
Opening balance ¹	369,356.48	49,578.05	428,315.23
Income			
DanChurchAid ²	200,000.00	26,845.64	200,000.00
Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs	803,995.25	107,918.83	777,940.50
Membership fees recd. for DSN-DK	0.00	0.00	10,400.00
Danida	0.00	0.00	1,000,000.00
HEKS	198,080.70	26,588.01	194,848.80
HEKS for 2016	0.00	0.00	172,308.23
DSiD ³	144,802.75	19,436.61	92,851.25
Brot für die Welt ⁴	798,317.60	107,156.72	0.00
Misereor ⁴	309,410.59	41,531.62	0.00
Hermod Lanung ⁵	50,000.00	6,711.41	0.00
Lutheran World Federation	0.00	0.00	37,123.50
Other income	13,125.00	1,761.74	10,000.00
Total	2,517,731.89	337,950.59	2,495,472.28
Agio	223.06	29.94	917.14
Expenditure	2,300,855.93	308,839.72	2,554,431.03
Result	216,875.96	37,023.32	-58,958.75
Balance	586,232.44	78,688.92	369,356.48

Expenditure



Please find the detailed financial statements for IDS on www.ids.org/financial-statements-2017

Balance statement

	2017 DKK	2017 EURO	2016 DKK
Assets			
Cash at bank at 31.12.2017	776,747.93	104,261.47	608,617.16
Other assets			
Petty cash	1,982.52	266.11	1,250.10
Outstanding accounts	8,573.04	1,150.74	1,670.29
Total other assets	10,555.56	1,416.85	2,920.39
Liabilities			
Balance Master Card account	-13,334.11	-1,789.81	-13,442.79
Compulsory holiday payment fund ⁶	-44,819.96	-6,016.10	-34,957.88
DSiD received for 2017			-92,851.25
Outstanding accounts ⁷	-142,916.98	-19,183.49	-100,929.15
Total Liabilities	-201,071.05	-26,989.40	-242,181.07
Balance carried forward	586,232.44	78,688.92	369,356.48

The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner.

For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are presented, using a fixed exchange rate based on a monthly average from www.inforeuro.eu: 7.45

Hence, some discrepancies may appear compared to actual amounts received in Euro.

Notes:

- Opening balance is in accordance with accounts for 2016
- Danchurch Aid supported IDS in 2017 with 200.000 DKK. Part of the support were focused on activities in Nepal, and primarily used to fund meeting in Kathmandu where several activities took place (see annual report) giving voice to Nepalese Dalits
- Part of donation in 2016 was transferred to 2017 as co-financing of UN, EU and Communications programmes as well as contribution to the OD review process.
- Brot für die Welt and Misereor funds run from the 1 May 2017 to 31 October 2018
- Hermod Lannungs Foundation supported some elements of the programme funded Danchurch Aid(see note 2), to ensure the participation of Nepalese Dalits at UN sessions
- Compulsory and calculated as per the situation on the 31 December 2017
- Consist of audit, annual report, tax for 2017 to be paid in 2018



Left: A Dalit elder and a Dalit child enjoy a moment together in Nepal. In close collaboration with our members and associates, IDSN undertook activities in 2017 that help bring hope for a brighter future for the coming generations of Dalits in Nepal and other caste-affected countries. Photo by Jakob Carlsen



International Dalit Solidarity Network

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info@idsn.org
www.idsn.org

IDS N members

India

- The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
- The National Federation of Dalit Women
- People's Watch
- Jan Sahas
- Navsarjan Trust

Nepal

- Dalit NGO Federation (DNF)
- The Feminist Dalit Organisation
- Nepal Dalit National Social Welfare Organisation (NNDSSWO)
- Jagaran Media Center (JMC)

Bangladesh

- Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)
- Network of Non-Mainstreamed Marginalized Communities (NNMC)

Pakistan

- Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN)

Dalit Solidarity Networks in Europe

- Dalit Solidarity Network – UK
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Norway
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Finland
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark
- Solidarité Dalits Belgique (Belgium)
- Dalit Solidarität Deutschland (Germany)

International Associates

- Human Rights Watch
- International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination (IMADR)
- Asian Human Rights Commission
- Asian Centre for Human Rights
- Minority Rights Group International
- Anti-Slavery International
- The Rafto Foundation
- Lutheran World Federation
- Robert Kennedy Memorial Foundation, USA
- ICMICA/Pax Romana
- World Council of Churches
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Franciscans International

Research Affiliates

- Research associates New York University School of Law's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice
- International Centre for Ethnic Studies – Sri Lanka

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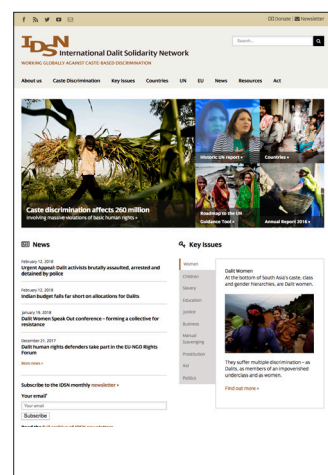


twitter.com/idsnupdates



youtube.com/idsnvideo

www.idsn.org



The IDS N website www.idsn.org

IDS N was founded in March 2000 to advocate for Dalit human rights and to raise awareness of Dalit issues nationally and internationally. IDS N is a network of international human rights groups, development agencies, national Dalit solidarity networks from Europe, and organisations in caste-affected countries. IDS N engages with the United Nations, the European Union and other multilateral institutions, working for action-oriented approaches to address 'untouchability' and other human rights abuses against Dalits and similar communities that suffer discrimination based on work and descent. IDS N bases its work on contributions from members, associates and affiliates. The network produces crucial input in the form of documentation, strategic interventions and lobby action and also supports national level lobbying.