



EARTHRIGHTS INTERNATIONAL

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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VISION AND MISSION

EarthRights combines the power of law with the power of people in defense of human rights and the environment. We take legal action against perpetrators of environmental abuses, train activists, and work with communities to demand meaningful and lasting change.

We are a team of community leaders, campaigners, educators, and legal strategists who challenge powerful corporations, governments, and financial institutions that violate peoples' rights and destroy our planet for profit.

We rise in defense of communities and the planet, using the power of law and the power of people in pursuit of justice.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a former staff member and long-time supporter, I look back at EarthRights' work in 2023 with the excitement of an activist hungry for bold action and long-lasting change, and the pride of a new Executive Director who has had the great privilege of leading this organization since March 2024.

This report provides a snapshot of what we have achieved alongside our partners and clients in a year of significant leadership transition. In 2023, our co-founder and first Executive Director, Ka Hsaw Wa, stepped down after 28 years of dedicated leadership.

Through storytelling about our 2023 progress, we also hope to convey that as an organization, EarthRights is deeply committed to upholding the power and agency of human rights and environmental defenders, intent on challenging powerful institutions and corporations that violate these fundamental rights.

We are honored to train so many in the next generation of activists, educators, and litigators, and proud to work alongside frontline and Indigenous communities as they confront these challenges head-on with our full EarthRights support and solidarity.



We have advanced our efforts alongside frontline community leaders and Indigenous groups to defend against corporate suppression attempts and the criminalization of lawful protest actions to protect rights and the environment.

We have navigated complex and often repressive political environments to continue to hold space needed to build and sustain people's power, bring people together in shared learning and collaboration through our school and training programs, and make progress in demanding change in companies and institutions.

We have also expanded our range of strategies and tools to advance climate justice and community resilience, especially among our partner communities in the U.S., and our interventions are bearing fruit.

Thank you for joining us on this journey, and we hope you are motivated and moved by the storytelling moments from the past year we have chosen to highlight in this report.

In Solidarity,

Bobbie Sta. Maria
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bobbie Sta. Maria'.



OUR IMPACT



CLESUI

EARTHRIGHTS SUPPORTED 83 FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES IN 2023

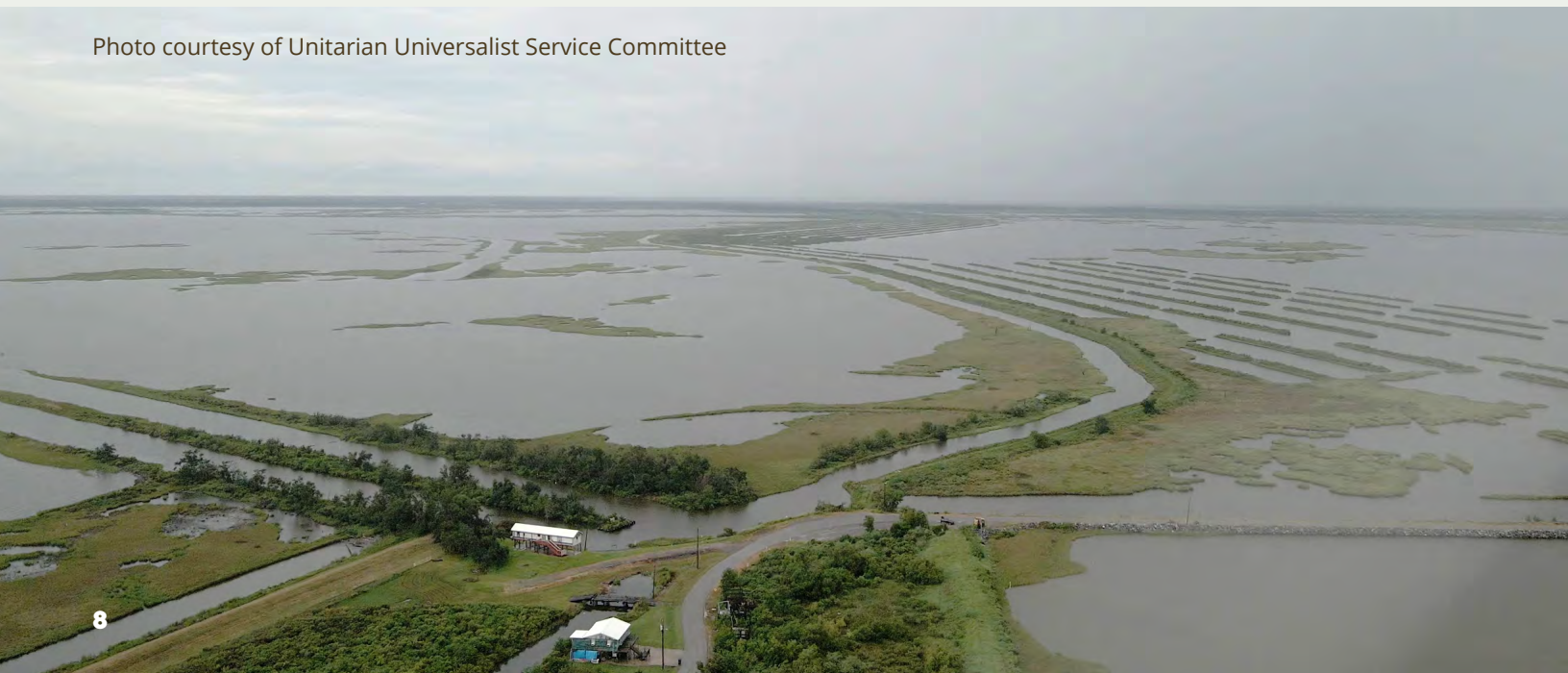
31 Mekong, 26 Amazon, 9 United States, 17 Democratic Republic of the Congo

Campaigns: Preventing and exposing human rights abuses connected to the exploitation of our natural resources.

Nearly all of the Jean Charles Choctaw Nation's ancestral land on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Isle de Jean Charles, is under water. The effects of climate change and the oil and gas industry have made survival on Isle de Jean Charles challenging, forcing the Tribe to make the difficult decision to relocate. A poorly managed resettlement plan by the Louisiana government has disenfranchised Tribal members and undermined community-led reunification and relocation efforts.

EarthRights joins the Jean Charles Choctaw Nation in urging the U.S. government to investigate the state of Louisiana's management of the resettlement program. We are advocating for a remedy that both protects Indigenous land and rights from the effects of climate change and extractive industries, and ensures full community consultation and consent.

Photo courtesy of Unitarian Universalist Service Committee



“Forty-eight million dollars, 512 acres, and they built 32 homes with mediocre construction? This has been a failure. **We put our hopes in the resettlement as a way to reunify our Tribe in a safe new home where we can pass on our culture.** Instead, they disrespected us, violated our sovereign rights, and made it harder to steward our ancestral lands. The Louisiana Office of Community Development and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have to make it right for our Tribal community to be whole, as originally planned.”

- D  m   (Jr.) Naquin, Chief of Jean Charles Choctaw Nation.

EARTHRIGHTS ADVANCED 35 LEGAL CASES IN 2023

2 Mekong, 14 Amazon, 19 United States

Litigation and Legal Advocacy: Seeking justice for frontline communities in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the United States to ensure their voices are heard and their rights are respected.

EarthRights supports the U'wa Nation Indigenous People in Colombia in their quest for justice and reparations after decades of territorial dispossession and violence. Over the past three decades, the Colombian State has promoted and allowed gas, oil, mining, infrastructure, and tourism activities in their territory without their consent, violating their territorial and cultural rights.

The imposition of these extractive projects and the militarization of the territory have increased their vulnerability and put them at risk of physical and cultural extinction.

In a historic 2023 hearing, the U'wa Nation had the opportunity to present its arguments and requests to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR). This marks the first time the IACtHR agreed to hear a case that involves the rights and self-determination of Indigenous peoples in Colombia.

Photo by Jorge Sánchez





“The threat we currently face for our rivers and waters is the contamination from the crude oil spill. **We are protecting life, taking care, maintaining, and extending human life.** So that white men can understand that we can choose another way of life, seeking means that don't harm nature or Mother Earth.”

- *Daris Maria Cristancho, U'wa Nation Indigenous leader.*

Photo by Marcela Rico

EARTHRIGHTS TRAINED 389 INDIVIDUALS IN 2023

343 in the Mekong, 22 Seminario in the Amazon, 24 Congo River School

Global Education: Training and convening frontline activists, lawyers, campaigners, and civil society leaders to defend human rights and the environment.

We partnered with African Resources Watch (AfreWatch) to establish the Congo River School, where we provide skills and knowledge-building opportunities for the next generation of environmental defenders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In 2023, we began the three-part training program with our first cohort composed of 24 Congolese leaders and activists, focusing on documentation of environmental abuses, and developing advocacy action plans.





“With our action plan and the support we will receive from Afrewatch and EarthRights International, **we will try to advocate for the community's cause** and eventually bring about changes with the decision-makers and the companies that exploit our natural resources.”

- *Alphonse Khonde Lelo, student, Congo River School.*

EARTHRIGHTS ADVOCATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS ACROSS THE GLOBE IN 2023

Environmental Defenders: Working with environmental defenders to protect their rights, resources, and livelihoods.

Supporting and protecting defenders around the world is essential to our work, particularly as attacks against defenders are on the rise, such as in the Mekong region.

As an Indigenous youth from Kaboedin Village in northern Thailand, Duang Kaew has fought to protect her home and community from a mega coal mine that pollutes the air and water, clogs roadways, and destroys local agriculture and livelihoods.

After taking EarthRights courses on campaigning and advocacy, Duang Kaew flourished as a leader and organizer in her community. She educated her peers about possible harms associated with the mine and led her community to collect and analyze data for a community health impact assessment.

In a victory for Duang Kaew and her community, the local court announced in 2023 that operations at the coal plant would halt. EarthRights was proud to support the community in its advocacy.





“As we work towards a more equitable society, **we must support youth-led movements** in holding businesses responsible for respecting human rights.”

- Duang Kaew,
community leader,
Thailand.

EARTHRIGHTS RECEIVED GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM OVER 750 DONORS AND FUNDERS IN 2023

Giving to EarthRights: Joining the fight to achieve climate justice, protect defenders, and demand corporate accountability.

Like many of EarthRights' supporters, Kate Tillery Maruca is committed to social justice and human rights. In 2005, she volunteered to teach at our Burma School and Mekong School in Thailand. She found herself heart-to-heart with students of various ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds who had come together to learn how to fight for their human and environmental rights. This experience helped her realize the impact of our global education program.

Kate continued to follow EarthRights' work in the United States, noting our efforts to promote social justice and personally getting to know the team. In addition to making an annual donation, she has included EarthRights in her estate plan.

"I trust EarthRights to wisely use my donations to make the world a more just and sustainable planet. From their track record in the courts and impactful campaigns, **I am thrilled with the return on my investment.** I invite you to join me!"

- Kate Tillery Maruca (aka Teacher Kate), individual donor.



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EarthRights is grateful to our generous donors for their sustained support, including those who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you.

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**Thank you to all of the
donors who give gifts
ranging from \$5-\$499.**

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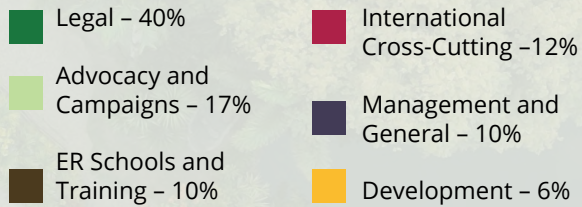
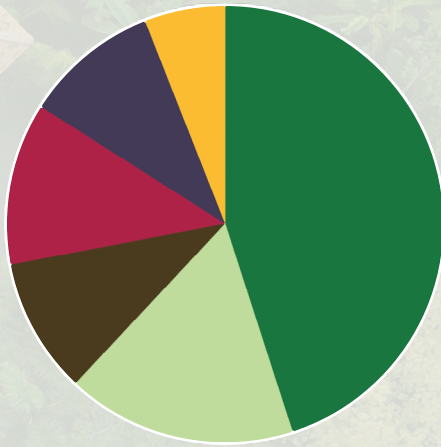
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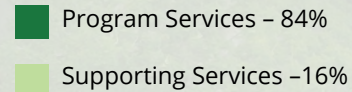
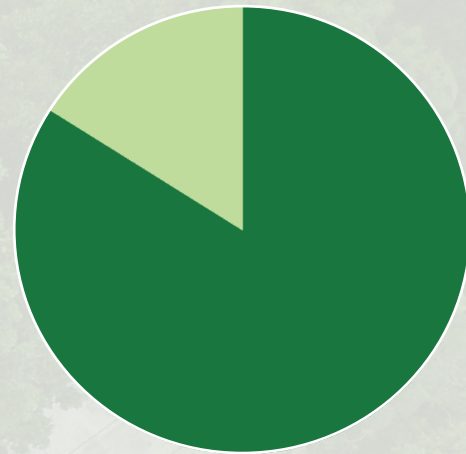
FINANCIALS FY2023

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Grants and Contributions	\$ 1,743,593	\$ 4,063,897	\$ 5,807,490
Contracts	\$ 82,387	\$ -	\$ 82,387
Net Investment Income	\$ 599,245	\$ 23,601	\$ 622,846
Other Revenue	\$ 238	\$ -	\$ 238
Net Assets Released from Donor Restrictions	\$ 5,505,207	\$ (5,505,207)	\$ -
Total Revenue and Support	\$ 7,930,670	\$ (1,417,709)	\$ 6,512,961
EXPENSES			
Program Services:			
Legal	\$ 3,370,522	\$ -	\$ 3,370,522
Advocacy and Campaigns	\$ 1,261,033	\$ -	\$ 1,261,033
ER Schools and Training	\$ 749,630	\$ -	\$ 749,630
International Cross-Cutting	\$ 898,623	\$ -	\$ 898,623
Total Program Services	\$ 6,279,808	\$ -	\$ 6,279,808
Supporting Services:			
Management and General	\$ 719,588	\$ -	\$ 719,588
Development	\$ 465,779	\$ -	\$ 465,779
Total Supporting Services	\$ 1,185,367	\$ -	\$ 1,185,367
Total Expenses	\$ 7,465,175	\$ -	\$ 7,465,175
Change in Net Assets	\$ 465,495	\$ (1,417,709)	\$ (952,214)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ 6,569,209	\$ 7,573,400	\$ 14,142,609
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$ 7,034,704	\$ 6,155,691	\$ 13,190,395

EXPENSES: by Program



EXPENSES: by Service Category



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*Joined in 2024

KA HSAW WA'S LEGACY

Just as EarthRights has fought alongside communities in the jungles of Myanmar and the Mekong, the halls of the U.S. Supreme Court, and everywhere in between, so has Ka Hsaw Wa.

Ka Hsaw Wa, EarthRights co-founder and founding Executive Director, stepped down from his leadership role at the end of 2023. He leaves a legacy that has touched thousands of lives, hundreds of Indigenous and frontline communities, and has helped shift the tide of power in favor of people and communities across the globe.

He has served as a shining leader to the EarthRights community for decades, and will continue to inspire our commitment to uplifting the voice and action of defenders, litigators, students, and educators worldwide.

Thank you, Ka Hsaw Wa!



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