



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

CiFAR was founded in 2015 to support civil society to campaign across borders to prevent public asset theft and for accountable and transparent asset recovery.

Our mission is to amplify the voice of civil society worldwide on stolen assets, to support civil society across the globe to be a strong and effective actor on stolen asset recovery and to close the gap missing in global civil society asset recovery work.

Credits

Cover photo: Martina Della Valle

May 2018

OVERVIEW

Berlin, 1 May 2018

2017 was a remarkable year for CiFAR in many ways. Going into what would be our first, full year of establishment presented us with many challenges, but also a lot of opportunities to grow and to build an organisation that would achieve our ambitious targets. It was also going to be an interesting year for asset recovery, with the promise of the first Global Forum for Asset Recovery, but also a US that seemed less interested in addressing cross-border corruption than before and the ongoing challenges of returns to North Africa and Ukraine.

Going from a promising, yet daunting start of having to raise money for all our projects, by the end of the year we had over €60,000 in project funding and had been able to work with donors to implement exciting new projects, including *Investigate the Mediterranean*, supporting investigative journalists on asset recovery and projects focussed on engaging young professionals and students in asset recovery. We also improved our capacity to act, setting up better internal structures and establishing an advisory board of experts to guide us in moving towards our goals.

We tried and feel we succeed in balancing these new commitments with ensuring that we remained active and engaged both in supporting local actors and in global issues. This meant participating in several NGO groups and attending several international conferences – including the Global Forum for Asset Recovery, as well as supporting civil society 1:1. For a small organisation, it's been challenging, but we stay focussed on trying to maximise our footprint while growing in a sustainable way.

2018 looks to be as difficult as 2017 in terms of the political situation and growing disillusionment around ongoing asset recovery cases. We, however, are in a stronger position than we were last year and can be confident that we now have a growing network also willing to work with us. Asset recovery is all about remedying the crimes of the past. We will keep using that term to discuss what we do, but let's be clear: we should remedy the past, but more important to us is that change happens the future.

Thank you to all those that supported us this year, we look forward to an exciting year ahead!

The CiFAR team

RESULTS AREA I

DEVELOPING THE EXPERTISE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF NON-STATE ACTORS TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE ASSET RECOVERY PROCESS

This results area is designed to address the lack of expertise and/or knowledge in non-state actors, in particular civil society organisations and investigative journalists, in the complexities of the State asset theft and recovery process. Through developing the expertise of non-state actors, this results area is also designed to strengthen the expertise of governments in preventing asset theft and in the recovery of stolen assets, through enabling civil society to provide the blueprints for reform and to provide informed and constructive advice to government officials.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ Launching our programme for investigative journalists from North and South of the Mediterranean
- ❖ Training young people from across Europe on asset recovery
- ❖ Conducting research into public registers of beneficial ownership

FIND OUT MORE

- Read about our work with journalists [here](#)
- Read about our youth work [here](#)
- Find our latest research [here](#)

DETAILED RESULTS

Investigate the Mediterranean

In 2017 we kicked off our new programme of work with investigative journalists. This project, aims to support young investigative journalists from North and South of the Mediterranean to work on cross-border investigations into asset recovery and grand corruption.

Launched in July 2017, we received many more applications than we could accommodate and from this, selected a first cohort of 20 young journalists to take part in the programme. We met for the first time in Berlin in November 2017 where we provided a four-day training to the journalists on asset recovery, financial crime and investigative techniques. The journalists will spend the next months developing their stories in groups – including through meeting in person again – with the aim of developing stories on these topics that span both sides of the Mediterranean.

Research: Public registers of beneficial ownership: the state of play 2017

Countries are moving more and more to public, open data registers of beneficial ownership. These registers are already in place in a number of jurisdictions. We examined these and drew conclusions on how existing registers should be improved and new ones created.

Youth for a transparent and open Europe

Through a youth exchange bringing together young people from Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland in December 2017, we aimed to inspire young people from across the EU to be engaged in and active advocates for an open and transparent Europe and to use this experience to provide information to and encourage other young people to also get involved and make their voices heard. Supported by coaches and mentors, these young people spent 6 days in Berlin learning from and with each other, exchanging their experiences and understanding how they can become young European advocates for transparency and open governance.

German Development and illicit financial flows: closing the gap

Tied in with this, we supported young development workers and students in Germany to become advocates for change in illicit financial flows and cross-border corruption. In addition to joining the exchange, these young people are being supported in understanding the global financial system as it relates to illicit financial flows and the role Germany plays and can play in this.



RESULTS AREA II

ENABLING STRONGER CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION OF NON-STATE ACTORS TO FIGHT AGAINST STATE ASSET THEFT AND FOR ASSET RECOVERY

This results area is designed to address the difficulties civil society, investigative journalists and other non-state actors face in working on asset recovery outside their national context. While State asset theft is a global issue, networks and advocacy to end this practice tends not to be. Through expanding networks against asset theft, this results area is designed to lay the groundwork for increasing cross-border collaboration.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ Engaging in civil society asset recovery coalitions
- ❖ Speaking and participating in international asset recovery fora

FIND OUT MORE

- Read about our work on the Global Forum for Asset Recovery [here](#)

DETAILED RESULTS

Conferences

As part of our work to ensure more civil society participation on global asset recovery issues, we participated in several conferences discussing asset recovery internationally in 2017.

In March, we were at the OECD's Integrity Forum where government and civil society discussed the issue of private sector fines for corruption committed abroad and the return of this money to the country where the corruption occurred.

In May, we travelled to Kiev to attend a meeting of civil society and government officials on the Ukraine asset recovery process. During this conference, we spoke on a panel where we discussed the Ben Ali and Mubarak cases and lessons that could be learnt for Ukraine.

November saw us at the Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC in Vienna, where we presented on the work we were doing with investigative journalists and the role of civil society more generally in the asset recovery process, as well as participating in several sessions on asset recovery priorities.

In December, we attended as one of ten international civil society organisations to the first Global Forum for Asset Recovery. This meeting brought together governments to discuss the asset recovery processes in Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Ukraine.

Working groups

Over 2017 CiFAR actively participated in several cross-border civil society groups on asset recovery.

On a general level, we supported and participated in the UNCAC Coalition's Working Group on Accountable Asset Recovery, which brings together approx. 30 civil society organisations from across the world on a regular basis to discuss issues of importance on a global level and in particular in relation to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. The focus of much of the discussion in 2017 related to civil society participation and in particular the role of civil society with regards to international meetings, including the Global Forum on Asset Recovery.

We also participated as a member of a civil society working group on Uzbekistan. This group aims to coordinate a civil society response to the ongoing returns process to Uzbekistan and to ensure that the voices of independent Uzbekistan civil society are heard in this process.



RESULTS AREA III

BUILDING STRONG, MULTI-COUNTRY CAMPAIGNS TO CHALLENGE THE IMPUNITY OF INDIVIDUALS FOR STATE ASSET THEFT AND TO CHALLENGE THE STRUCTURES THAT ALLOW FOR ASSETS TO BE STOLEN AND MOVED ABROAD

This results area is designed to bring together and amplify the voices of non-state actors to challenge the foundations of asset theft and to hold accountable those who are involved. We will seek to push governments to take action against the asset theft chain, to make it more difficult for private institutions to facilitate and accept stolen assets and to empower those who support our cause.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ Dialogue on the future of Yemen's frozen assets
- ❖ Advocacy for the Global Forum for Asset Recovery
- ❖ Broadening our audience and engaging new people on asset recovery

DETAILED RESULTS

Advocating for change

Our direct advocacy work in 2017 focussed on our work on Yemen and in promoting transparency and accountability in the Global Forum for Asset Recovery Process.

Advocating for meaningful dialogue on the future of assets frozen under UNSC Resolution 2140, our work on Yemen saw us engage closely with the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen and in working to understand the extent to which the Security Council resolution was leading to asset freezes, through freedom of information requests to several European countries, and feeding this back into the UN process. We also began a dialogue with Yemeni civil society and other organisations on a civil society response to the future of Yemen's frozen assets.

In advance of the Global Forum for Asset Recovery our work, through the UNCAC Coalition, aimed at bringing accountability and transparency to the process and solid recommendations coming out of the meeting. In particular, we focussed advocating for accountable attendance processes and transparency in proceedings.

Public activism

Our work in this area in 2017 included both our own outreach and work to support others. As CiFAR we engaged over 5,500 unique visitors on asset recovery through our website, many of whom were channelled through our social media work.

Over the course of the year this included fifteen blog posts, covering topics from the Obiang case, to reconciliation in Tunisia and the Karimova case. It also included innovative videos explaining different aspects of asset recovery and on our activities to support young people to become more engaged in fighting illicit financial flows. We additionally held public events, including on investigative journalism with other associations, and engaged with the traditional media.

We also supported others in their outreach, training young people to be able to engage on this topic with the public. Planning for this area began at the end of 2017, with results due in 2018.

FIND OUT MORE

- Read our latest blogs [here](#)
- See our global work [here](#)

FINANCES AND SUPPORT

WE HOLD GOVERNMENTS TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN OUR WORK. THOSE STANDARDS APPLY TO US TOO.

INCOME AND SPENDING 2017

Total income: €54.897,40

Of which:

Institutional donors: €54.270,25

Individual donations: €627,15

Total expenditure: €52055.97

Cash in hand 01.01.2017 €1.195,38

Cash in hand 31.12.2017 € 4.036,81

Expenditure	Total (€)	As a percentage
Accommodation	8,168.75	15.69%
Communication	1,585.45	3.05%
Overheads	563.75	1.08%
Rent	120.00	0.23%
Room hire	1,149.73	2.21%
Staff	10,885.00	20.91%
Subsistence	6,331.79	12.16%
Trainer	5,226.78	10.04%
Travel	17,558.72	33.73%
Visa costs	466.00	0.90%

DONORS 2017

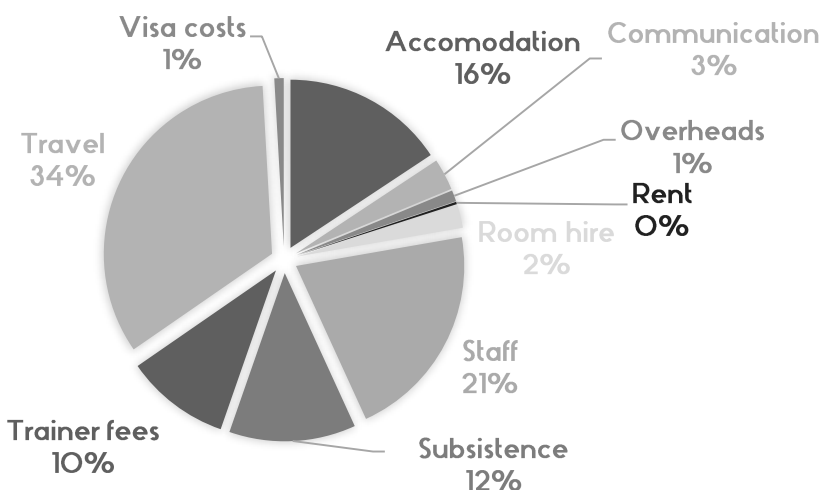
In addition to individual donations, we are grateful for the support of the following donors in 2017:



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EXPENDITURE BY TYPE



FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to ask us any questions about our accounts, please contact us at info@cifar.eu

You can support CiFAR at www.cifar.eu/donate

