

WHO WE ARE

Realising and protecting the right to a nationality and pursuing inclusion for all, is necessary for promoting and fulfilling other human rights, reducing poverty and inequality, and countering discrimination and intolerance. Yet today, globalisation, bureaucratisation, securitisation and rising populism and xenophobia, are placing inclusion under severe strain. Citizenship is increasingly used as a weapon of exclusion, progress to resolve situations of statelessness is painstakingly slow and the stateless continue to be “left behind”.

The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI) was founded, in the Netherlands, in late 2014 with the mission to promote inclusive societies by realising and protecting the right to a nationality. Our new strategic plan for the period 2018-2023 focuses on how we can play a meaningful role in a world in which inclusion is increasingly under threat, as set out below.

EQUALITY: Addressing discrimination and promoting inclusive citizenship

Nationality is the gateway through which people access rights and services in our state-centric world. It is also an important part of a person’s legal and social identity. Over 15 million people around the world are stateless, most often due to discrimination on grounds such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability and socio-economic status. Stateless persons count among the most unequal in today’s societies: they continuously encounter discrimination in their daily lives, leading to their exclusion from development programming, basic services and rights. Cast as outsiders and often vilified, stateless persons may even find themselves subject to violence and exploitation, resulting in atrocities, displacement and longer-term destabilisation of countries and regions. Exclusion can fuel conflict and so, equality is not only at the heart of human rights and sustainable development, but is also critical to peace and security. The pursuit of equality is only possible if discrimination as a cause and consequence of statelessness is addressed.

CHILDREN: Realising every child’s right to a nationality

Statelessness is spreading faster than it is being solved because children are denied a nationality, in a multitude of contexts, all over the world. The universally accepted legal norm of the right to a nationality as the right of *every* child is overshadowed by the narrative of nationality regulation as an area of state sovereignty. Discrimination, patriarchy and stigma against particular communities, as well as structural barriers to universal birth registration, block progress in realising the right to a nationality for millions of children around the world. In 25 countries, women are still denied the right to pass nationality to their children – another major cause of statelessness. The lack of nationality has a significant impact on all other child rights, including access to education, healthcare, free movement and family life, as well as on a child’s sense of belonging and self-worth. Preventing childhood statelessness helps to empower children to exercise their rights and participate in society.

FORCED MIGRATION: Tackling statelessness as cause and consequence of displacement

Stateless communities are commonly denied access to education, healthcare, housing, employment, social welfare and documentation, as well as the rights to own property, travel, be safe, free and equal, participate

politically and have their voices heard. Discrimination can escalate to violence and persecution, resulting in displacement. At the same time, refugee communities can find that their nationality connection becomes tenuous, particularly when displaced over generations, obstructing the pursuit of durable solutions. Statelessness is therefore both a cause and consequence of displacement. Large global crises such as the Syria conflict and Rohingya crisis show the reality of this nexus while the new Global Compacts offer both opportunities and threats. Now, more than ever, there is a need for stronger and better informed engagement on the implications of statelessness for forced migration, and vice versa.

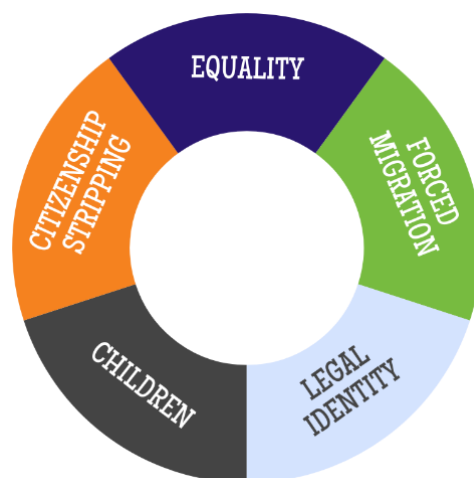
LEGAL IDENTITY: Making the stateless visible to development programming

Statelessness not only exposes people to poverty and marginalisation, it can render them invisible to government systems because they are simply not counted. This invisibility of statelessness poses a cross-cutting challenge for the Sustainable Development Goals and a distinct threat under Goal 16.9. Rolling out technological “solutions” to provide a legal identity for all in a context where questions of belonging are unsettled, controversial or affected by structural discrimination can aggravate statelessness and its impact, undermining the core purpose of the SDGs. A minority group whose nationality status is contested, but who can access rights and services because they are recognized locally as belonging and presenting an identity card is not yet a requirement, will be left *less* able to participate in economic and social life if a programme that promises a “legal identity” results in them being refused an ID or issued papers qualifying them as foreign. Actors involved in implementing or monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals must understand the implications of statelessness for their work if they are to achieve inclusive development.

CITIZENSHIP STRIPPING: Countering arbitrary deprivation of nationality, particularly in security contexts

Deprivation of nationality is not a new phenomenon. Modern history is littered with examples of individuals and communities who were subjected to the stripping of citizenship. However, the present upward trend in the use of nationality deprivation as an administrative measure in response to (purported) threats to national security or terrorism is of urgent concern. Over the past few years, numerous governments have taken steps to expand their deprivation powers, with little consideration given to its legitimacy or effectiveness. This measure may have the effect of exporting the threat, but its net impact on global security is questionable and its use as a tool predominantly against minority communities plays into populist narratives and may even encourage radicalisation. Moreover, in some cases, the instrumentalised use of the withdrawal of nationality has extended to political opponents and human rights defenders, targeted in the name of national security. However, the civil liberties response to counter-terrorism measures has yet to adequately take up citizenship stripping and statelessness as an issue.

our mission	To promote inclusive societies by realising and protecting the right to a nationality.
our values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inclusive & Collaborative ✓ Inquisitive & Innovative ✓ Open & Responsible



HOW WE WORK

As the global expert, leader and nexus for civil society engagement on statelessness, with a unique bird's-eye view of the field, our approach is based on a theory of change of how we can pursue our mission to promote inclusive societies by realising and protecting the right to a nationality. Achieving change means engaging in effective human rights advocacy, influencing decision-makers and development actors, and generating the necessary knowledge, capacity and motivation to act. A diverse array of stakeholders from different sectors (human rights, development, humanitarian, migration etc.) have a part to play in this. This includes affected populations, civil society organisations, UN and other international actors, academics, artists and the media – comprising the growing and fast-evolving “field” of statelessness. Ultimately, states are the duty bearers who must fulfil the right to a nationality. Our role is to lead and build a field capable of holding states to their obligation to ensure that every person's right to a nationality is respected, promoted and fulfilled, through the effective utilisation of human rights, development and other tools at our disposal.

Since our establishment we have provided strategic leadership to and cooperated with NGOs to enlarge the visibility of statelessness and advance its positioning as a human rights issue, in particular within key UN frameworks. We have engaged in ground-breaking research and international consultations to start to build a knowledge base for more and better-informed engagement on statelessness by actors in the humanitarian and development sectors. We have delivered tools and trainings that have made a lasting contribution towards building the capacity of civil society, UN and government actors to undertake activities to address statelessness. We have grown the recognition of statelessness as a distinct and important area of scholarship and action and offered a bridge between academia and civil society actors. We have developed a reputation as a reliable and expert source of information, a convener for the sector, the premiere educators on statelessness, and a knowledgeable, generous and strategic collaborator.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2018-2023

We have identified four goals, which we will pursue as a matter of priority over the next five years. These goals represent to us the most strategic way in which we can work towards our mission to promote inclusive societies by realising and protecting the right to a nationality. The full version of our Strategic Plan details the background to these objectives and our annual programmatic plans and projects will flesh out activities, outputs and targets in relation to each.

Goal 1. Realising every child's right to a nationality

- a. Advocate for the universal implementation of CRC Article 7, safeguards against childhood statelessness and SDG 16.9;
- b. Promote equal nationality rights for mothers and fathers;
- c. Promote the right to nationality for children in the context of (forced) migration;
- d. Highlight and seek solutions to the problem of inherited statelessness, as a human rights and a development issue.

Goal 2. Countering discrimination and the arbitrary denial and deprivation of nationality

- a. Strengthen discourse and understanding of discrimination as a cause and consequence of statelessness, with a particular focus on intersectionality;
- b. Call out and resist the trend towards increased use of citizenship stripping in a national security context;

- c. Highlight new and evolving situations of arbitrary denial and deprivation of nationality;
- d. Maintain a spotlight on unresolved situations of mass deprivation and denial of nationality;
- e. Address discrimination against stateless migrants and refugees, and the denial of nationality as a cause/ consequence of displacement.

Goal 3. Broadening and deepening effective engagement on statelessness

- a. Human rights advocacy: effectively advocate on statelessness before international, regional and national human rights mechanisms;
- b. Shifting the power: serve individual activists and groups affected by statelessness by building their capacity, raising their profile, pursuing their solutions and connecting them to wider movements;
- c. Movement building: Strengthen and build connections among and between stateless persons, civil society, academia, artists and other stakeholders, through convening, communication and collaboration to build strong movements against statelessness;
- d. Capacity building: Develop the capacity of all stakeholders through training, outreach, the development and sharing of resources;
- e. Engaging the UN: more effectively perform the dual role of partner and advocate with UN agencies, and inject statelessness into global UN led discourses on development, migration, etc.;
- f. Expanding the field: engage actors in different sectors and across different disciplines, to mainstream statelessness in their work;
- g. Deepening knowledge: Identify and think through big issues that require deconstruction and analysis from a statelessness perspective – convening expert groups as necessary – to influence global discourses and trends and mitigate negative impacts.

Goal 4. Building a sustainable, effective and inclusive organisation

- a. Achieve financial stability and growth, leading to organisational sustainability and increased capacity;
- b. Strengthen internal planning, accountability, management and governance procedures and create pathways for staff development and progress;
- c. Maintain and strengthen our position and reputation as global convener, educator, expert and information provider;
- d. Implement longer-term programming to pursue our strategic priorities;
- e. Better measure and document the impact of our work;
- f. Grow the visibility of the Institute and the issue and reposition ourselves to lead from the front on issues that align with our mission and priorities;
- g. Develop our online presence, in particular the accessibility of the information and resources we produce and collate.

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about our work, please visit our website at www.institutesi.org or contact our Co-Directors: Laura van Waas (Laura.vanWaas@institutesi.org) and Amal de Chickera (Amal.deChickera@institutesi.org).