



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2025-2029



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# List of Acronyms

<b>ACHPR</b>	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights	<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organizations
<b>AJEN</b>	African Journalism Educators Network	<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>AU</b>	African Union	<b>PESTEL</b>	Political Economic Social Technological Environmental and Legal
<b>CAR</b>	Central Africa Republic	<b>PLWDs</b>	People living with disabilities.
<b>CHARM</b>	Consortium to Promote Human Rights, Civic Freedoms, and Media Development	<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>CRD</b>	Civil Rights Defenders	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations	<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>CT</b>	Coordination Team	<b>SSA</b>	Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>DD</b>	DefendDefenders	<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo	<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers Model
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community	<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States	<b>UDHRD</b>	Universal Declaration on Human Rights Defenders
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence	<b>UNHRC</b>	United Nations Human Rights Council
<b>GESI</b>	Gender equality and social inclusion	<b>PRM</b>	Peer Review Mechanism
<b>HRC</b>	Human Rights Council	<b>WHRDs</b>	Women human rights defenders
<b>HRDs</b>	Human Rights Defenders		
<b>ITP</b>	Media Development in a Democratic Framework		
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning		
<b>MoUs</b>	Memorandum of understanding		

# Foreword

It is with great pride that we present the CHARM Strategic Plan for 2025-2029, a blueprint for advancing human rights, civic space, and media freedoms across Sub-Saharan Africa. This strategy reflects the collective vision and commitment of the CHARM Consortium and its partners to protect and empower human rights defenders, expand civic spaces, and promote independent media in an increasingly complex landscape.

Our journey has been shaped by the unwavering dedication of civil society, human rights defenders, and media professionals. This plan builds on CHARM's achievements, addressing emerging challenges while seizing opportunities to strengthen human rights and democratic governance in the region.

We are grateful for the collaboration and contributions of all stakeholders in crafting this strategic plan. Together, we move forward with renewed purpose to create a more just, free, and democratic Africa.

With gratitude,



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**Hassan Shire**

Executive Director, DefendDefenders

# 1 Executive Summary

**T**his Strategic Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to promoting human rights, civic space, and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. Grounded in a theory of change, the Strategic plan has prioritized three program objectives.

The first strategic focus is on promoting and protecting HRDs and their working environment for human rights defenders in Sub-Saharan Africa to conduct their work effectively. This is envisaged to ensure HRDs are protected from threats, attacks, and intimidation, and are empowered to continue with their human rights work safely.

The second strategic focus is on expanding and protecting the civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve freedom of assembly. This will ensure the civic space is opened, expanded, and protected, enabling CSOs, HRDs, and individuals to operate freely and participate in decision-making.

Finally, the third the strategic focus aims at improving media freedoms, independence of the media, and access in SSA to foster freedom of expression. The expected outcome is media freedoms are promoted and protected, enabling journalists and media outlets to report independently and hold those in power accountable.

The Strategic Plan also recognizes that for the above to be achieved, there should be a vibrant Consortium/Secretariat. To this end, several choices contributing toward improving the effectiveness of the Consortium have been made. The choices include strengthening the governance and oversight of CHARM, improving program management, improving coordination and process management, increasing and diversifying resources envelop for the consortium, improving the quality of planning, reporting, and accountability among the consortium partners, and finally, increasing competitive positioning of CHARM.

The Strategic Plan also explores and profiles the intersections between HRDs, Civic space, and Media freedoms. CHARM will be able to address the complex and interrelated challenges facing HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms, and create a more comprehensive and effective approach to promoting and protecting these fundamental rights. Focusing on these intersectionalities, under these strategic objectives shall enable CHARM to leverage synergies and maximize impact.

The plan's implementation will be guided by a results-based approach, with a focus on capacity building, technical assistance, and advocacy. The plan will be implemented through a compendium of grassroots and top-down approaches, with an emphasis on stakeholder engagement, participation, and ownership. Some of the key approaches identified include capacity-building programs for human rights defenders (HRDs), civil society organizations, and media outlets professional reporting, human rights, advocacy, and protection to enhance their effectiveness and resilience, networking and collaboration, provision of legal support and emergency protection, conducting research and documentation, education and awareness raising, amplifying marginalized voices, to mention but a few.

The Plan also provides for a robust monitoring and evaluation approach to enable effective tracking of progress against specific indicators at output and outcome level. This will form the basis of continuous monitoring and adaptation.

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of this Strategic Plan, and will involve working closely with governments, civil society organizations, media outlets, international partners, and other stakeholders to ensure ownership, buy-in, and effective implementation.

The above efforts are expected to contribute to a just, peaceful, and prosperous continent where citizens exercise and enjoy their rights and freedoms as stipulated in the UDHR and African Union's Agenda 2063.

## 2 Background of CHARM

**T**he Consortium for Human Rights and Media Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM) is a collaborative initiative aimed at promoting and protecting human rights and media freedoms in the region. Comprising seven organizations namely, CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, Magamba Network, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Development, and the Wits Centre for Journalism. CHARM acknowledges the vital role of a free and active media and civil society in safeguarding robust and inclusive democracies and promoting sustainable development.

Through their collective expertise in civil society building, media development, and human rights advocacy, consortium members offer a unique contribution to the region. CHARM's strategic focus areas include civic space advocacy, safety and protection of women/human rights defenders and activists, gender and social inclusion, media development, and tech innovation advancements. The consortium engages with civil society and media organizations that support women/human rights defenders and journalists, particularly those representing marginalized constituencies.

An evaluation in June 2021 found CHARM to be effective, relevant, and efficient in achieving its strategic goals, aligning with global commitments to protect human rights and promote the rights of vulnerable groups. The consortium successfully made efforts to contribute towards creating an enabling environment for human rights, civic space, and media freedoms, supporting a free and vibrant civil society and media. Despite challenges, CHARM achieved a 60% success rate in achieving objectives and strengthened advocacy capacities.

Currently hosted by DefendDefenders in Uganda, CHARM is poised to continue promoting human rights and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To improve and sustain its impact, the consortium has developed a Strategic Plan through a participatory process involving a literature review, key informant interviews, and validation. The plan outlines essential guidelines for coordination, sustainability, and scalability, ensuring CHARM's long-term success and impact.

## 3 Methodology

This Strategic Plan was developed through a rigorous and participatory process, employing a mixed-methods approach. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to contextualize the consortium's background, strengths, challenges, achievements, and plans. The review encompassed a range of relevant documents, including the revised CHARM consortium proposal, CHARM End Evaluation Report (2023), Final Governance and Transition Co-Design Report (2023), CHARM Impact Evaluation report (2021), Afrobarometer (2022), and CIVICUS Monitor reports, among others. This review enabled the identification of key issues, opportunities, strengths, and strategies crucial for CHARM's growth and development.

Additionally, semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with nine (9) members from the Steering Committee, Program Committee, and Coordination Committee. These interviews elicited valuable insights into the Consortium's strengths, areas for growth, opportunities, risks, and priority investment areas. The data generated from these processes informed the development of this Strategic Plan, which was subsequently validated by stakeholders before its final adoption.

A validation meeting was held and valuable input towards improving the form and substance of the Strategic plan was made, and later incorporated to ensure the Strategic Plan is complete and reflects the different viewpoints of the members.

This approach ensured a robust and inclusive methodology, capitalizing on the strengths of both literature review and qualitative data collection and analysis. The resultant strategic plan is thereby grounded in a nuanced understanding of CHARM's internal and external context, positioning the Consortium for optimal impact and sustainability.





# 4 Landscape Assessment

This landscape analysis provides a comprehensive examination of the complex and dynamic context in which human rights defenders (HRDs), civic space, and media freedoms operate in Africa (Harrison, 2022). The assessment offers a nuanced analysis of the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) issues that shape the strategic direction of CHARM regarding HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms across the Sub-Saharan region of Africa.

Politically, the findings of this assessment reveal that while Africa has made significant progress in democratization (Hyman, 2020), many countries continue to grapple with authoritarianism, political repression, and human rights abuses (Vines, 2020). Governments often utilize national security and counter-terrorism laws to restrict civic space and silence HRDs, civil society organizations (CSOs), and independent media outlets (Amnesty International, 2019). Political instability and conflict persist in many regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) affecting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms because of the emergence of totalitarian regimes that do not recognize and provide space for engagement. Not surprisingly, SSA continues to be a home to some of the world's worst civic space conditions, which means that most people are denied the right to organize toward a common goal and take part in democratic dissent.

Despite these challenges, regional and international bodies like the African Union and the United Nations have adopted frameworks and resolutions supporting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms (African Union, 2016; UN General Assembly, 2019). The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights remains a vital continental framework promoting and supporting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2020). Moreover, there is growing political will

to protect HRDs and promote media freedoms in some countries like South Africa (Sec 16 of the Constitution), reflected in their membership in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the African Union. African Union's commitment to human rights and democratic governance, providing a regional framework for promoting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms. Growing demand for democratic governance and human rights in Africa, creating fertile grounds for HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms to flourish (OHCHR, 2020). Economically, Africa and SSA faces significant development challenges, including poverty, inequality, and unemployment, which can fuel social unrest and political instability (World Bank, 2020). There is a general scarcity of resources and capacity among HRDs, civil society organizations, and media outlets, hindering their effectiveness and sustainability (CIVICUS, 2020). Dependence on foreign aid and funding may influence HRD and media freedom initiatives. However, a vibrant and growing civil society, with organizations and activists working on human rights, governance, and sustainable development, offers hope for improved human rights status. There has been growing international support and solidarity for HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms, including from donor governments and funding agencies (OHCHR, 2019).

Socially, speaking up against authority remains a novel concept in many Sub-Saharan African societies, where respect for leaders and tradition often supersedes questioning and dissent (UN Women, 2020). Patriarchal societies and gender inequality persist, affecting women HRDs and media professionals (Amnesty International, 2019). However, strong social and cultural norms supporting community and traditional leadership offer potential for influencing HRD and media

freedom initiatives. Africa's growing youth population and urbanization also drive demand for democratic participation and media freedoms (African Union, 2010). Technologically, Africa's rapid adaptation to web-based technologies presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it will facilitate easy and efficient access to information for the HRDs to engage; while offering new avenues for HRDs and media freedoms (We Are Social, 2020). Governments' increasing use of surveillance and censorship technologies, as well as the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, pose risks to online monitoring and cyberbullying (Freedom House, 2020). The expansion of the digital space and the emergence of AI will also increase the incidences of fake news misinformation and disinformation. These will have a profound effect on journalism and content creation. The emergence of innovations like Artificial Intelligence offers both opportunities and limitations.

The increase in the number of people accessing and utilizing social media also presents a big opportunity for engagement and cross-border and cross-sector collaborations and movement-building especially through social media campaigns including the online exhibitions that are proving effective advocacy platforms and avenues. The expansion of digital media and online platforms are offering new avenues for HRDs and media outlets to reach a wider audience and amplify their voices (CHARM, 2022). This is critical in raising awareness among people on different aspects of good governance.

Environmentally, Climate change and environmental degradation are having a devastating impact on human rights defenders (HRDs) and media freedoms in resource-rich regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, the extraction of oil in the Niger Delta region has led to widespread environmental degradation, displacement of communities, and human rights violations, as documented by HRDs and media outlets. The extraction of natural resources and infrastructure projects in many countries like Congo, Uganda, Angola, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and several others are leading to displacement, pollution, and human rights violations, making it difficult for HRDs to operate in these areas. A

study by the Environmental Justice Atlas (2020) found that resource extraction projects in Africa have resulted in significant environmental damage and human rights abuses, highlighting the need for stronger regulatory frameworks and corporate accountability.

The effects of climate change are also disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities, exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities. This has led to a surge in climate justice activism, with HRDs and media outlets playing a crucial role in amplifying the voices of these communities and holding governments and corporations accountable.

Legally, National and regional laws protecting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms are often poorly enforced, leaving HRDs and journalists vulnerable to attacks, intimidation, and criminalization. As noted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (2019), the lack of effective implementation and enforcement of regional and international human rights standards has led to a culture of impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations against HRDs and journalists.

International human rights frameworks and standards, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, provide a solid foundation for the protection of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms. In Africa, most countries (54) ratified the ACHPR protocol including South Sudan which became a state party in October 2003. The ratification of the charter enjoins state parties to demonstrably observe the state obligations therein including, respecting the resolutions made by the African Union. However, their implementation and enforcement are often inconsistent. Research by the International Journal of Human Rights (2020) has shown that the criminalization of HRD activities and media freedoms is often used as a tool of repression, highlighting the need for legal reform and protection of civic space. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (UDHRDs) is also an information legal framework that was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in 1998, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, also provides a legal basis for the identification of human rights defenders as individuals or groups who act to promote, protect or strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means; recognizes the key role of human rights defenders in the realization of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and legally binding treaties and in the international human rights system, and ultimately represents a paradigm shift: it is addressed not just to States and to human rights defenders, but to everyone. It emphasizes that there is a global human rights movement that involves us all and that we all have a role to fulfil in making human rights a reality for all.

Presently, all 54 African countries are members of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), a United Nations body mandated to promote and protect human rights around the world. Working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and special procedures, the UNHRC conducts investigations on allegations of breaches of human rights in member states and addresses human rights concerns of varied nature. The resolutions of the UNHRC, though not binding, are persuasive and can trigger the required response from the concerned state parties on the African continent thus contributing towards the promotion and protection of freedom of association and assembly, and freedom of expression.

The criminalization of HRD activities and media freedoms is a growing concern in some countries, with laws being used to silence dissenting voices and restrict civic space. This has led to a rise in arbitrary arrests, detentions, and trials of HRDs and journalists.

In conclusion, this PESTEL landscape analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex and dynamic context in which human rights defenders, civic space, and media freedoms operate in Sub-Saharan Africa. The analysis reveals both challenges and opportunities that can inform the strategic direction of CHARM's initiatives. Despite progress in democratization, many African countries still grapple with authoritarianism,

political repression, and human rights abuses. However, regional, and international frameworks and resolutions support HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms.

By considering these factors, CHARM's strategic plan can effectively address the challenges and leverage opportunities to promote and protect HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **Regional perspective on HRD, Civic Space, and Media freedoms.**

At a regional level, there are varying degrees in the issues experienced under the HRD, Civic Space, and Media freedoms.

### **East Africa:**

According to the DefendDefenders 2023 Annual report to ACPHR, the East and Horn of Africa reported the highest number of incidents involving the detention of journalists across the continent, with cases documented in each country update during the year. In Somalia, journalists face attacks and threats from state and non-state actors, and there are restrictions on reporting on sensitive topics like terrorism and corruption. In Rwanda, media censorship and self-censorship among reporters and citizens further limit space for open dialogue and criticism. In many countries LGBT+ persons are persecuted, one of the harshest examples is in Uganda, where intolerance to LGBT+ leads to threats, assaults and even murder. In Uganda, journalists are occasionally assaulted in the course of their work by government security agencies. Similar incidents have been reported in Eritrea, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Sudan.

Sudan's military government has continued its crackdown on democracy protests and activism, killing scores of protesters and detaining hundreds of people, subjecting them to torture and sexual violence.

In Ethiopia, authorities have targeted, intimidated, and punished journalists and media outlets reporting on the war in Tigray and other areas. HRDs face challenges in countries like Ethiopia, where civic space is restricted, and media freedoms are limited.

### **West Africa:**

Countries like Nigeria and Ghana have seen a rise in HRD activism, but still face challenges in protecting civic space and media freedoms. Civic space violations have increased in both Guinea and Mali, while Ghana has seen its civic space rating downgraded due to curtailed media freedom, physical attacks on journalists, and the arrest of journalists using 'fake news' regulations.

According to [Africanews.com](https://www.africanews.com), the West African region has in the last 4 years witnessed a growing trend of coups that have further affected the HRDs, Civic space, and media freedoms. For instance, in Niger, a military coup occurred on July 26, 2023, led to the overthrowing of the President. In Burkina Faso, two coups occurred in 2022, with the first on January 24, and the second on September 30. In Guinea, a military coup occurred on September 5, 2021, resulting in the overthrow of the President in Mali, two coups occurred, with the first on August 18, 2020, and the second on May 24, 2021, and finally, in Gabon, a military coup occurred in August 2023, where the President was also overthrown.

### **Central Africa:**

Chad has severely repressed democracy protests, killing dozens of people, and dissolved the protest coalition Wakit Tama, which brings together civil society groups and opposition political parties according to Amnesty International (2023).

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (2023), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has imprisoned, attacked, and killed journalists and media workers, and civic space violations have increased in the two eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu, which are under martial law (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The eastern region of DRC has been experiencing increasing violence, with clashes between the military and insurgent groups, particularly M23 and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) escalating in February 2024 (Congressional Research Service, 2022, and International Crisis Group, 2023). The conflicts have raised significant human rights concerns, particularly sexual violence and the need for protection of women and girls. Despite promises to improve media freedoms in the DRC, journalists and media workers continued to be imprisoned, attacked, and killed. Civic space violations have multiplied under the 'stage of siege' that in effect imposes martial law in the two eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu.

**Cameroon:** Civic space remains repressed, with scores of protesters and journalists still being kept in prison (Amnesty International.2023)

**Central African Republic:** The authorities remain intolerant of dissent. An attempt to re-criminalize press offenses, numerous attacks on humanitarian workers, and highly contested government plans to amend the constitution call for continuing vigilance.

### **Southern Africa:**

Countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe have a strong tradition of HRD activism but face challenges in protecting media freedoms and civic space. Southern Africa: Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe have proposed or enacted restrictive laws on CSOs, raising fear of increasing restrictions on freedom of association (Freedom House 2023, Freedom in the World). In South Africa, activists working on land rights and the rights of informal settlement dwellers have been killed, and CSOs have been vilified. Lesotho's civic space has been downgraded to repressed due to police brutality, intimidation, and attacks on journalists. The Private Voluntary Organizations Bill has been enacted to target the CSOs to restrict their operations.

**North Africa:**

In North Africa, the media freedom violations in post-coup countries, particularly in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Niger, have soared as military juntas and their supporters have shown intolerance of criticism and peaceful dissent. (Reporters Without Borders, 2023)

French(France)broadcastersRadioFranceInternationale and France 24 were indefinitely suspended in Burkina Faso while the broadcasters' signals were blocked in Niger following the military coup in July 2023. The two broadcasters had already been suspended in Mali in 2022.

National media regulators, or in some cases local authorities, have suspended media outlets, including in Cameroon, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. (Reporters Without Borders, 2023)

According to Committee to Protect Journalists (2023), In Nigeria, telecommunications engineers, contracted by local authorities in Rivers State, dismantled the transmitter mast and demolished the transmitter complex of Radio Raypower FM and Africa Independent Television in Port Harcourt on 3 September 2023 over a land dispute, effectively shutting down the media outlets. This was also reported on by Amnesty International (2023), and Human Rights Watch (2023). Nigeria Events of 2022.

Civic space conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa remain highly restrictive, with 45 out of 50 countries and territories rated as obstructed, repressed, or closed.

# 5 Strength and Weaknesses Analysis

## Strength

CHARM is comprised of different partners with proven experience and expertise in the different areas of programming in the HRD, civic Space, and media freedom landscape in SSA. CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, the Wits Centre for Journalism, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Development, and Magamba Network. CHARM acknowledges the vital role of a free and active media and civil society in safeguarding robust and inclusive democracies and promoting sustainable national development. These are reputable organizations at the national, regional, continental, and global levels with the capacity to attract funding for CHARM. However, despite all this, to some, CHARM is viewed as “Africa’s best-kept secret.”

The membership of CHARM is spread throughout the entire continent giving it a large footprint that enables the consortium to have diverse experiences of issues felt across the entire continent in HRDs, civic space and media freedoms. This has contributed to the acclaimed reputation of the members and the Consortium on the African continent and beyond.

CHARM has strong structures that are vibrant and functional. These structures include the Steering committee, the Program Committee, and the Coordination Team that manages the secretariat. The Steering Committee and the Program Committee meet every quarter while the Coordination Team meets monthly. Information is regularly and consistently shared between the members and other stakeholders much as there was no documented communication plan in place. The annual meeting is convened to provide

feedback and solicit ideas from the members. According to the feedback, there is transparency and consensus-based decision-making. The Consortium is hosted by DefendDefenders; a key player in HRD programming in the East and Horn of Africa, bringing together HRD networks from eleven countries in the sub-region. CHARM is positioned to benefit from this vast reputation and robust networks that DefendDefenders has built at the regional, continental, and global levels.

The Coordination Team (CT) is managed by a team of 5 experienced staff members who provide coordination functions to ensure program implementation and coordination is conducted efficiently and effectively. CHARM’s End Evaluation Report showed that overwhelmingly, CHARM members felt positive about the work of the CT and felt it significantly influenced program achievements. Members were most appreciative of the ability of the CT to get the partners to meet, learn from each other, and get familiar with the different organizations and their partners (CHARM’s End Evaluation Report, 2023).

## Weaknesses

Now (as of July 2024), there is limited visibility of CHARM and its operations within and beyond the African continent. This most likely harms the profile and the ability to fundraise and mobilize resources. The consortium has the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) as a single donor guaranteeing the availability of resources in the foreseeable future. However, dependence on one donor limits the resources envelope and the financial sustainability of the Consortium.

In addition to not having a financial sustainability plan, CHARM also does not have a documented program sustainability focusing on outcomes and benefits accruing from its work.

The review of the CHARM evaluation report also indicated that the “strategic” aspect of the partnership was not maximized as much in terms of cross-consortium collaboration and implementation of more strategic joint activities that leverage the expertise and added value of consortium members. There is still limited networking and joint learning to enable continuous learning and adaptation.

Another area of growth is the responsiveness of the Consortium to HRDs, especially the HRD networks and other CSOs in need of support to continue doing their work. The scope of the offering needs to be expanded and re-invented to cater to emerging needs as well as the intersectionality between HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms.

Moving forward, CHARM will continue to address issues around visibility, stakeholder engagement, financial sustainability, and increased benefit stream to HRDs that take into consideration their unique characteristics including the intersectionalities.

In conclusion, the Consortium has diversity of members is one of its greatest assets because it allows it to benefit from diverse experiences as well as the legitimacy champion issues of HRDs, Civic space, and media freedoms on the African continent. The governance and coordination aspects are also working well, with increased benefits to the members.



# 6 Theory of Change of CHARM

This ToC outlines the underlying assumptions that will guide the CHARM Strategic Plan:

**Goal:** To contribute towards improved protection of HRDs, Civic space, and media freedoms as envisaged in the UDHR and African Union Agenda.

## **“If:**

- Human rights defenders (HRDs) are empowered and protected to operate.
- Media freedoms are promoted and respected by all players.
- Civic space is expanded and protected to guarantee the freedom of expression and assembly.

## **Then:**

- HRDs will be able to promote and protect human rights without fear of reprisal.
- Media professionals will be able to report freely and hold those in power accountable.
- Citizens will be more aware and participate in democratic processes and hold their governments accountable to achieve sustainable development outcomes in SSA.

## **Which will lead to:**

- Improved human rights situation and protection mechanisms in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Increased accountability and transparency in government and institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa that will influence development outcomes.
- Strengthened democratic governance and the rule of law in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **Assumptions:**

- HRDs, media professionals, and citizens are critical actors in promoting human rights and democratic governance.
- Empowering and protecting HRDs, media freedoms, and civic space in SSA will lead to a more enabling environment for human rights and democratic governance (prevent rumors, lies and conspiracy theories etc.)
- National and international stakeholders will support and collaborate with HRDs, media professionals, and citizens to achieve these goals.
- Media professionals are aware on how to report correctly (fact check, debunking misinformation and disinformation etc.)

The Theory of Change assumes that empowering HRDs, media professionals, and citizens will lead to a more just and democratic society in Africa, where human rights are respected and protected and thus contribute to improved development outcomes at national, regional, Continental levels.



## Strategic Choices /Direction

The strategic objectives for a strategic plan on Human Rights Defenders, Civic Space, and Media Freedoms are to be found at the intersections between the three areas. By identifying the common goals and areas of overlap, to develop objectives that address the interconnected challenges and opportunities facing HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms. By understanding this intersectionality, we can better support and protect Human Rights Defenders, expand Civic Space, and promote Media Freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa, ultimately advancing human rights and social justice in Africa.

### Strategic Objectives and Outcomes.

**Strategic Objective 1.0: Promote and protect the HRDs in Sub-Saharan Africa and their working environment for human rights defenders to conduct their work effectively.**

- Outcome 1.1 HRDs in Sub-Saharan Africa are protected from threats, attacks, and intimidation, and are empowered to continue with their human rights work safely.

**Strategic Objective 2.0: Expand and protect the civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve freedom of assembly.**

- Outcome 2.1 Civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa is opened, expanded, and protected, enabling CSOs, HRDs, and individuals to operate freely and participate in decision-making.

**Strategic Objective 3.0: Improve media freedoms, independence of the media, and access to foster freedom of expression in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

- Outcome 3.1 Media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa are promoted and protected, enabling journalists and media outlets to report independently, are sustainable, and hold those in power accountable, and support people to make informed decisions.

**Strategic Objective 4.0: Improve the effectiveness of the Consortium.**

- Outcome: 4.1 Strengthened governance and oversight of CHARM.
- Outcome: 4.2 Improved programme management.
- Outcome: 4.3 Improved coordination and process management.
- Outcome: 4.4 Increased and diversified resources envelop for the consortium.
- Outcome: 4.5 Improved quality of planning, reporting and accountability among the consortium partners.
- Outcome: 4.6 Increased competitive positioning of CHARM.



## Intersectionalities

The intersections represent areas where efforts to protect and promote one area (e.g., HRDs) can also benefit the others (e.g., civic space and media freedoms). By focusing on these intersections, it is possible to leverage synergies and maximize impact. Recognizing and leveraging the intersectionalities between and among the HRDs, Civic space, and media freedoms is critical to defending HRDs' rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression, and ensuring media freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa to report on HRDs' work and civic space issues. The intersectionalities between HRD, Media freedoms, and Civic Space, and the resultant areas of focus are detailed below.

- 1. HRD Media Freedoms:** Protecting HRDs' freedom of expression and access to information in SSA to further their work.
- 2. HRD Civic Space:** Empowering HRDs through civic space actions in SSA, such as movement building, peaceful demonstrations, and advocacy.
- 3. Civic Space Media Freedoms:** Promoting free and independent media in SSA as a cornerstone of civic space
- 4. HRD Civic Space Media Freedoms:** Defending HRDs' rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression, and ensuring media freedom in SSA to report on HRDs' work and civic space issues.

CHARM will be intentional to profile and focus on the above intersections to be able to address the complex and interrelated challenges facing HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms, and create a more comprehensive and effective approach to promoting and protecting these fundamental rights in SSA. CHARM will be driven by the conviction that efforts to protect and promote one area are expected to also benefit the others, hence maximizing impact. Eventually, focusing on these intersections, programs implemented by CHARM shall:

- Strengthen protection for HRDs by leveraging media freedoms and civic space.
- Enhance media freedoms by supporting HRDs' ability to report on human rights abuses.
- Expand and protect civic space by amplifying HRDs' voices and promoting public awareness and education.

# 9 Strategy Implementation Approaches

To deliver this Strategic Plan, a compendium of approaches and strategies below will be utilized.

**1. Capacity enhancement:** CHARM will provide training and capacity-building programs for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), civil society organizations, and media outlets on human rights, advocacy, and protection to enhance their effectiveness and resilience.

Capacity building will also focus on the skills of the HRDs and media players on how to do their work including physical and digital security skills. The focus of capacity building will also be placed on the relevant CSOs and thematic networks at national and sub-regional levels, focusing on their “Capacity to do,” “Capacity to be” and “Capacity to Relate”<sup>1</sup>.

**2. Network facilitation:** Deliberate effort shall be invested to foster strategic partnerships and collaborations among HRDs, civil society organizations, media outlets, and international organizations to leverage resources, expertise, and influence. The mapping of strategic actors in section 8.0 will be instructive.

**3. Advocacy and policy influencing:** Design and implement public awareness campaigns, petitions, and advocacy efforts to influence policy and legal reforms, promote media freedoms and civic space and hold duty bearers accountable for human rights violations and abuses.

**4. Legal support and protection:** Legal assistance, emergency protection, and representation shall be provided to HRDs, civil society organizations, and media outlet players to ensure their safety and security is guaranteed as a priority.

Safe spaces will be made accessible for temporary relocation for those HRDs under imminent risk to protect their lives. The well-being of HRDs will be a priority.

**5. Research and documentation:** CHARM will conduct rigorous research and documentation of human rights violations, abuses, and successes to inform evidence-based advocacy and policy reforms. The research will also encompass the area of civic space and media freedoms to surface contradictions, new paradigm shifts, shifting and changing the nature of spaces, addressing misinformation and disinformation, counter-narratives, etc. Media professional development shall also be enhanced to ensure that is able to promote fact checking, stopping rumors, conspiracy theories, especially in the Artificial Intelligence era.

**6. Education and awareness raising:** Efforts shall be invested to develop and implement education and awareness-raising programs to enhance public knowledge and understanding of human rights, promote recognition and respect for HRDs and civic space, the role of the media in promoting good governance and democracy, and demand human rights protection and promotion from duty bearers.

**7. Amplifying marginalized voices:** CHARM will implement strategies to enhance representation and voice for marginalized HRDs, promoting public awareness, understanding of their concerns, and enhancing accountability and responsiveness of governments to their needs.

These implementation strategies aim to promote human rights, empower HRDs and civil society organizations, and hold duty bearers accountable for their obligations.

<sup>1</sup> Brenda Lipson and Martina Hunt. Capacity Building Framework, A Value-Based Programming Guide, INTRAC (Oxford: INTRAC Press)15

# 10 Mainstreaming Themes:

Promoting human rights defenders, civic space, and media freedoms in SS-Africa requires a multifaceted approach that recognizes the over-arching and underlying issues that further promote and sustain the challenges and threats, including gender-specific human rights violations, diversity-specific abuses, and intersectional violations. CHARM will put particular focus on addressing the following issues:

**Gender and human rights:** Gender balance is essential in HRD and civil society leadership, and gender-sensitive media reporting is crucial. Gender-responsive and transformative program interventions should focus on addressing gender-specific human rights violations and abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, reproductive rights violations, and discrimination based on gender identity and expression. The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework shall be developed to guide CHARM to achieve effective programming and targeting of the different categories under this framework.

**Diversity and inclusion:** Marginalized communities, including minority groups and persons with disabilities and other minority groups, shall be included in HRD and civil society work. Diversity-specific human rights violations and abuses, such as discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability, shall be profiled and addressed. CHARM will continue to promote inclusive media reporting and intersectional analysis, and advocacy are essential for promoting diversity and inclusion. The media should be empowered to reflect the whole society, men, women, young, old as well as different communities.

**Intersectionality and Human Rights:** Intersectional analysis and advocacy are critical for addressing intersecting human rights violations and abuses, including those based on race, gender, sexuality, and disability. HRDs and civil society organizations shall prioritize intersectionality in their work, recognizing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression faced by marginalized traditionally excluded communities/groups of HRDs, Civic space actors and media outlets.

**Youth engagement and human rights:** Youth HRDs and civil society leaders shall be empowered to address youth-specific human rights violations and abuses, including those related to education, employment, and healthcare. Youth-led advocacy and initiatives will also be supported and amplified, recognizing the critical role of young people in promoting human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Technology and digital rights:** The online sphere presents both opportunities and challenges for HRDs and civil society organizations. Digital security and privacy shall be prioritized, and technology should be utilized to promote HRD and civil society work. Addressing online human rights violations and abuses, including cyberbullying, online harassment, and surveillance, is essential. Key players and stakeholders to work with shall be identified to create an enabling environment for HRDs and civil society organizations to thrive, and for human rights to be promoted and protected for all.

# 11 Key Players in the HRD, Civic space, and Media freedoms landscape

In the complex landscape of human rights defenders (HRDs), civic space, and media freedoms in Africa, several key players are crucial toward promoting and protecting these fundamental rights. These stakeholders are intertwined in complex ways, and their actions significantly impact on the state of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. CHARM will broker collaborative working relationships with the different stakeholders indicated in the table below by tapping into their roles and responsibilities, influence and interest positions to build a more effective and coordinated approach to promote HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Stakeholder	Description	Level of Influence	Level of Interest
<p><b>African Union</b></p> <p>The African Union has taken significant steps to promote HRDs and civic space, recognizing their vital role in advancing human rights and democracy. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Pan-African Parliament, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, AU Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and others will be particularly targeted. However, more needs to be done to protect media freedoms, which remain under threat in many member states.</p>	<b>A Promising Partner</b>	High	High
<p><b>Regional Economic Blocs</b></p> <p>Regional blocs like EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC play a crucial role in promoting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms in their member states. By leveraging their influence and resources, they can support the work of HRDs and civil society organizations and encourage governments to respect human rights and media freedoms.</p>	<b>Champions of Human Rights</b>	High	High
<p><b>Civil Society Organizations:</b></p> <p>Civil society organizations like CHARM members, AfricanDefenders, and Amnesty International, Defenders International, the African Civil Society Forum, Transparency International in some countries, and the West African Human Rights Defenders Network are the backbone of human rights promotion and protection in Africa. They provide critical support to HRDs and media freedoms in SSA, amplify their voices, and hold governments accountable for their actions.</p>	<b>The Backbone of Human Rights.</b>	Low	High
<p><b>International Community:</b></p> <p>The international community, including organizations like the UN and international NGOs, has a crucial role in supporting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms in Africa. They provide funding, technical assistance, and diplomatic support to HRDs and civil society organizations, and advocate for policy changes that promote human rights in SSA.</p>	<b>A Vital Partner.</b>	High	High

<p><b>Independent Media Outlets and Journalists:</b> Africa's independent media outlets and journalists are the guardians of truth, holding those in power accountable for their actions as well and creating awareness among the people. Despite facing intimidation, harassment, and even violence, they continue to report on human rights abuses, corruption, and governance issues. Their bravery and commitment to truth-telling are essential to Africa's democracy and development.</p>	<p><b>The Guardians of Truth</b></p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>
<p><b>Governments and Public Institutions:</b> Governments and public institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa must protect and promote human rights, including the rights of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms. While some governments have made progress in this regard, others continue to restrict civic space, silence HRDs, and muzzle the media. CHARM needs to build sustained and non-confrontational engagements with governments to fulfill their obligations and create an enabling environment for HRDs and media outlets to operate freely.</p>	<p><b>The Duty-Bearers</b></p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p><b>Donor Governments and Funding Agencies:</b> Donor governments and funding agencies play a crucial role in supporting HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their funding and technical assistance have enabled civil society organizations, HRDs, and media outlets to carry out their work effectively. However, they will be engaged to also hold African governments in Sub-Sahara to be accountable for their human rights obligations and ensure that their support is not used to perpetuate human rights abuses.</p>	<p><b>The Enablers</b></p>	<p>High</p>	<p>High</p>
<p><b>Digital Media and Online Platforms:</b> Digital online platforms have become central to the generation, circulation and reception of information. They have also created opportunities for HRDS to mobilize and organize. However, digital expression and activism face increased threats from Governments, 'Big Tech', and fringe groups. It is essential for CHARM to invest efforts to ensure that digital media and online platforms remain a safe and open space for free expression and dissenting voices. However, the increasing attempts by governments to regulate online expression and crack down on online activism pose a significant threat to media freedoms and civic space. It is essential for CHARM to invest efforts to ensure that digital media and online platforms remain a safe and open space for free expression and dissenting voices.</p>	<p><b>The New Frontier of Free Expression</b></p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>

# 12 Monitoring & Evaluation of the Strategic Plan

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is crucial for documenting progress, lessons learned, and emerging issues, thereby driving the effective and efficient implementation of the strategy and it will be developed for that purpose. The M&E function will also facilitate program implementation, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, and impact. Through M&E, CHARM will assess the strategic relevance and impact with a focus on the traditionally marginalized and socially excluded HRDs, including youth, women, girls, environmental HRDs, and individuals with disabilities.

A strategy baseline survey will be conducted to establish baseline values for priority outcome indicators, which will be compared to mid-term and end-term strategy evaluation findings.

The M&E process will be participatory, involving stakeholders, including donors, members, and government authorities. Findings and reports will be disseminated through a communication plan, with individual projects developing clear communication plans. To enhance practicality and cost-effectiveness, priority outcome indicators will be integrated into the M&E framework. The M&E calendar will also be developed to guide adequate planning and implementation of M&E activities.

Learning and reflection events will be organized periodically to take stock of progress and challenges. Inputs and arrangements for M&E will include integrating priority indicators into the CHARM M&E system, a log frame matrix, annual and quarterly work plans, monitoring checklists, and technical support from an M&E champion.

Formative evaluation will focus on inputs, activities, timeliness, outcomes, involvement of factors, beneficiaries, intersectoral activities/intersectionalities, and changes or additions to the strategic plan. Monitoring will also track changes in activities, what adjustments have been made, and other omissions. Summative evaluation will assess effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, impact, and unintended effects, using means of verification. A keen focus will be placed on ascertaining the intended and unintended effects, including positive and negative changes.

Monitoring and evaluation will be critical in documenting success, lessons, and emerging issues as a driver for effective and efficient delivery of the strategy. The M&E function will also be a vehicle for driving program implementation to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, and impact. The M&E function will generate data to guide informed and evidence-based decision-making regarding the strategy, structure, systems, staff, skills, style of management, and the core values.



Outcome Harvesting (OH) will be utilized by CHARM to better capture qualitative results and to better tell the stories of change of the program because of its ability to capture higher-level change as well as the complexity of how change happens.

The means of verification will include baseline, mid-term, and end-term surveys and impact studies, standard M&E instruments and guidelines, support supervision and monitoring visits, and periodic review meetings conducted by the different Committees. Internal reports and other reports from other stakeholders such as PRM, CIVICUS monitor reports, Amnesty International, and others will be utilized.

The results generated from the M&E reports will be shared with both internal and external stakeholders including the Steering Committee, the Program Committee, and the Coordination Committee for decision making at those different levels.

The Communication strategy will be utilized to ensure there is targeted and effective communication with the different stakeholders/audiences.

# 13 Sustainability.

The sustainability of CHARM's initiatives is conceptualized across three temporal horizons: short-term, medium-term, and long-term. This multifaceted approach encompasses both programmatic action and organizational development, including the Secretariat. In the short term, the following initiatives will be pursued by CHARM

- 1.** Grow and diversify the membership of CHARM to ensure an increase in the impact and legitimacy of CHARM as a formidable force on the continent to engage on issues of HRDs, Civic Space, and Media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. The membership growth will also facilitate growth in revenue and support. A mechanism or plan on membership extension, engagement, and retention will be implemented.
- 2.** Initiate and grow a reserve fund as "hay for winter". CHARM will deliberately save 10-20% of annual income to ensure financial stability. Candid discussions with donors shall be explored to ensure a certain percentage of the project funds are gazette as reserve funds (Diminimis)
- 3.** CHARM uses the communication plan to grow relationships and elicit support from the members, funders, partners, and stakeholders. Membership engagement and satisfaction shall be a focus of the secretariat.

- 4.** CHARM will intensify resource mobilization efforts to realize increased and diversified resources envelop. Attention will be focused on securing funding from grants, donations, membership fees, and training and consulting services where possible as part of the social enterprise initiatives. A separate resource mobilization strategy will be developed to guide the diversification of the resource envelop.
- 5.** Strengthening compliance in financial management including budgeting, accounting, and reporting processes will be explored to continue building on the confidence among partners and donors.
- 6.** Strengthen the leadership and oversight function of the Consortium.

In the medium term, CHARM will pursue the following initiatives to achieve sustainability.

- 1.** Strengthen the capacity of staff to develop and implement projects and programs efficiently and effectively.
- 2.** A Sustainability plan will be developed to achieve income diversification and expense reduction.
- 3.** Explore and broker collaborations with other stakeholders to increase impact while reducing costs by leveraging on resources from other stakeholders.

In the long term, CHARM will undertake the following initiatives to achieve sustainability.

- 1.** Ensure financial stability through an increased and diversified resources envelope through a reserve fund, an endowment fund, and diversifying income streams.
- 2.** Focus more on yielding and demonstrating the impact of the programs and projects to benefit more HRDs, civil society organizations, and media outlets.
- 3.** Grow and nurture a legacy of CHARM by ensuring a strong brand and reputation based on the successes and impact of the Consortium.

- 4.** Develop and maintain a strong culture of learning and adaptation based on M&E. This will enable CHARM to become a learning organization to realize internal, external, and dynamic consistency with the emerging trends and contextual changes and shifts within the HRD, Civic space, and media freedoms dynamically and externally consistent and relevant.

This sustainability plan outlines a strategy for CHARM to ensure its long-term sustainability, financial stability, and impact.

# 14 CHARM Strategy Results Matrix

Outcome	Indicators	Means of Verification	Strategic Initiatives	Assumptions
<b>Thematic Focus: Human Rights Defenders.</b> <b>Strategic Objective 1.0: HRDs in Sub-Saharan Africa are protected from threats, attacks, and intimidation, and are empowered to continue with their human rights work safely.</b>				
Outcome 1.1 HRDs are protected from threats, attacks, and intimidation, and are empowered to continue with their human rights work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of attacks and threats against human rights defenders</li> <li>Percentage of human rights defenders under imminent risk receiving protection and support services.</li> <li>Percentage of HRDs who have resumed their work.</li> <li>Percentage of HRDs who feel secure</li> </ul>	CIVICUS Monitor Reports  CHARM Monitoring and Evaluation reports.  UPR Reports	Develop a training program on digital and physical security for HRDs.  Provide medium and emergency protection support to HRDs facing imminent risks.  Partner with media outlets to provide platforms for HRDs to share their stories and advocacy messages.  Establish a network of HRDs and media professionals to collaborate on advocacy initiatives.	There is a clear framework in place to guide the delivery of medium and emergency protection support.
<b>Thematic Focus: Civic Space.</b> <b>Strategic Objective 2.0: Expand and protect the civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve freedom of assembly.</b>				
Outcome 2.1 Civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa is opened, expanded, and protected, enabling CSOs, HRDs, and individuals to operate freely and participate in decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of an enabling environment that encourages civil society organizations to register and operate freely.</li> <li>Number of peaceful assemblies and protests allowed and protected.</li> <li>Level of citizens participating in public decision-making processes.</li> </ul>	CIVICUS Monitor Reports  CHARM Monitoring and Evaluation reports.  UPR Reports	Develop a legal defense fund for HRDs facing legal action.  Advocate for policy reforms to protect online freedom of expression and access to information.  Establish a rapid response mechanism to support HRDs facing harassment or legal action.	National and international stakeholders will support and collaborate with HRDs, media professionals, and citizens to achieve these goals.

**Thematic Focus: Media Freedoms.**

**Strategic Objective 3.0 Improve media freedoms, independence of the media, and access to foster freedom of expression in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

<p><b>Outcome 3.1</b> Media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa are promoted and protected, enabling journalists and media outlets to report independently, are sustainable, and hold those in power accountable, and support people to make informed decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of independent media outlets operating freely.</li> <li>• Percentage of journalists arrested, detained, or prosecuted.</li> <li>• Number of media outlets freely reporting on human rights and corruption issues.</li> </ul>	<p>CIVICUS Monitor Reports</p> <p>CHARM Monitoring and Evaluation reports.</p> <p>UPR Reports</p>	<p>Develop a mechanism to provide protection mechanisms and support services for journalists.</p> <p>Advocate for policy reforms to promote media independence and access to information.</p> <p>Establish a working group of independent media professionals to share resources and best practices.</p> <p>Build capacity of media to counter propaganda and misinformation to foster greater public support for human rights and free and accessible civic space.</p>	<p>HRDs, media professionals, and citizens are critical actors in promoting human rights and democratic governance.</p>
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**Thematic Focus: Consortium efficiency.**

**Strategic Objective 4.0 Improve the effectiveness of the Consortium.**

<p><b>4.1</b> Strengthened governance and oversight of the CHARM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee actively involved in direction setting.</li> </ul>	<p>Minutes of the Steering Committee</p>	<p>Develop a Work plan for the Steering Committee.</p> <p>Conduct quarterly Steering committee meetings.</p>	<p>Steering Committee members have the will to support the Consortium.</p>
<p><b>4.2</b> Improved programme management and delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of donors satisfied with the program implementation.</li> <li>• Level of compliance with donor financial and program reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Proportion of beneficiaries expressing satisfaction.</li> </ul>	<p>Donor feedback</p> <p>Audit reports.</p> <p>Stakeholder satisfaction survey reports</p>	<p>Constitute adhoc “think-tanks” to generate alternative ideas to influence program planning and management.</p> <p>Convene quarterly learning and reflection meeting.</p> <p>Conduct stakeholder satisfaction surveys</p>	<p>There are clear guidelines</p>

<p>4.3 Improved coordination and process management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of networking and engagement in the Consortium activities.</li> <li>• % of consortium members expressing satisfaction with the coordination function.</li> </ul>	<p>M&amp;E Reports</p> <p>Membership satisfaction survey reports</p>	<p>Develop a member satisfaction measurement mechanism.</p> <p>Develop and implement a shared calendar for the Coordination Committee.</p>	<p>Member engagement guidelines are in place.</p>
<p>4.4 Increased and diversified resources envelop for the consortium.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of the resources mobilized from different sources.</li> <li>• Number of new funding agreements.</li> </ul>	<p>Financial Reports</p> <p>Audit Reports</p>	<p>Develop a fundraising and resources mobilization strategy.</p>	<p>The coordination team has the skills to fundraise and mobilize resources.</p> <p>There is a Fundraising strategy in place.</p>
<p>4.5 Improved planning, reporting, and accountability among the consortium partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of financial and program reports submitted on time.</li> <li>• Proportion of consortium partners who deliver on time as per the plan.</li> </ul>	<p>M&amp;E Reports</p> <p>Audit Report</p>	<p>Develop a Reporting Calendar.</p> <p>Convene quarterly learning and reflection events.</p>	<p>The reporting guidelines are in place and the members are aware and able to utilize them.</p>
<p>4.6 Increased visibility and competitive positioning of CHARM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of donors and partners who support CHARM.</li> </ul>	<p>Audit reports.</p> <p>Social Media reports.</p>	<p>Develop and implement a communication plan for the consortium.</p> <p>Document and share knowledge products on best practices and emerging success stories.</p>	<p>A communications Strategy is in place and being implemented consistently.</p>

# 15 Strategy Communication Plan

Goal: To build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage support and collaboration among key stakeholders in the HRD, civic space, and media freedoms landscape in Africa.

Audience	Communication Objective	Message	Delivery mode	Responsible	Frequency
Audience: African Union officials and staff	Build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage support	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Meetings, consultations, email updates, and press releases	SC Members and Coordinator	Quarterly meetings, regular email updates, and press releases as needed
Regional Blocs (EAC, ECOWAS, SADC) officials and staff	Build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage support	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Meetings, consultations, email updates, and press releases	Steering Committee and Coordinator	Quarterly meetings, regular email updates, and press releases as needed
Civil Society Organizations (CHARM members, DD & African Defenders, Amnesty International, etc.)	Build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage collaboration	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Meetings, consultations, email updates, and social media	Program Managers and Communications Manager	Regular meetings, monthly email updates, and social media engagement
International Community (UN, INGOs, etc.)	Leverage support and resources for CHARM's work, and encourage support	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Meetings, consultations, email updates, and press releases	Coordinator and Communications manager	Quarterly meetings, regular email updates, and press releases as needed

Independent Media Outlets and Journalists	Build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage coverage	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Monthly meetings with independent media outlets and journalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual joint conference on media freedoms and digital security</li> </ul>	Coordinator and Communications manager	Regular meetings, monthly email updates, and press releases as needed
Governments and Public Institutions	Encourage governments to fulfill their obligations to protect HRDs Build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage support	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms		Meetings, consultations, email updates, and press releases	Quarterly meetings, regular email updates, and press releases as needed
Donor Governments and Funding Agencies	Build relationships, promote CHARM's work, and encourage funding support	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Meetings, consultations, email updates, and press releases	Steering Committee and Coordinator	Quarterly meetings, regular email updates, and press releases as needed
Digital Media and Online Platforms freedoms	Build awareness, promote CHARM's work, and encourage engagement	CHARM's vision and mission, impact and achievements, importance of HRDs, civic space, and media freedoms	Monthly collaborative digital security and online safety programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly social media campaigns</li> <li>Quarterly joint events</li> </ul>	Social media posts, email updates, and online advertising	Quarterly meetings, regular email updates, and press releases as needed



# 16 Strategy Expenditure (StratEx)

**Strategic Objective 1.0: HRDs in Sub-Saharan Africa are protected from threats, attacks, and intimidation, and are empowered to continue with their human rights work safely.**

Outcomes	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
<b>1.1</b> HRDs in Sub-Saharan Africa are protected from threats, attacks, and intimidation, and are empowered to continue with their human rights work safely.	\$ 314,647	\$ 346,112	\$ 380,723	\$ 418,795	\$ 439,738	\$ 1,900,015
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 314,647</b>	<b>\$ 346,112</b>	<b>\$ 380,723</b>	<b>\$ 418,795</b>	<b>\$ 439,738</b>	<b>\$ 1,900,015</b>

**Strategic Objective 2.0 : Expand and protect the civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve freedom of assembly.**

Outcomes	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	total
<b>2.1</b> Civic space in Sub-Saharan Africa is opened, expanded, and protected, enabling CSOs, HRDs, and individuals to operate freely and participate in decision making.	\$ 170,828	\$ 187,911	\$ 206,702	\$ 227,372	\$ 238,741	\$ 1,031,554
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 170,828</b>	<b>\$ 187,911</b>	<b>\$ 206,702</b>	<b>\$ 227,372</b>	<b>\$ 238,741</b>	<b>\$ 1,031,554</b>

**Strategic Objective 3.0 Improve media freedoms, independence of the media, and access to information in Sub-Saharan Africa to foster freedom of expression.**

Outcomes	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
<b>3.1</b> Media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa are promoted and protected, enabling journalists and media outlets to report independently and hold those in power accountable.	\$ 53,656	\$ 59,022	\$ 64,924	\$ 71,416	\$ 74,987	\$ 324,005
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 53,656</b>	<b>\$ 59,022</b>	<b>\$ 64,924</b>	<b>\$ 71,416</b>	<b>\$ 74,987</b>	<b>\$ 324,005</b>

**4.0 Improve the effectiveness of the Consortium.**

Outcomes	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
<b>4.1</b> Strengthened governance and oversight of the CHARM.	\$ 95,000	\$ 104,500	\$ 114,950	\$ 126,445	\$ 132,767	\$ 573,662
<b>4.2</b> Improved programme management and delivery.	\$ 362,185	\$ 398,404	\$ 438,244	\$ 482,068	\$ 506,171	\$ 2,187,072

<b>4.3</b> Improved coordination and process management of the Consortium.	\$ 274,626	\$ 302,089	\$ 332,298	\$ 365,527	\$ 383,803	<b>\$ 1,658,343</b>
<b>4.4</b> Increased and diversified resources envelop for the consortium.	\$ 140,000	\$ 154,000	\$ 169,400	\$ 186,340	\$ 195,657	<b>\$ 845,397</b>
<b>4.5</b> Improved planning, reporting, and accountability among the consortium partners.	\$ 75,000	\$ 82,500	\$ 90,750	\$ 99,825	\$ 104,816	<b>\$ 452,891</b>
<b>4.6</b> Increased visibility and competitive positioning of CHARM.	\$ 56,000	\$ 61,600	\$ 67,760	\$ 74,536	\$ 78,263	<b>\$ 338,159</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,002,811</b>	<b>\$ 1,103,092</b>	<b>\$ 1,213,401</b>	<b>\$ 1,334,741</b>	<b>\$ 1,401,477</b>	<b>\$ 6,055,524</b>
<b>Total (USD)</b>	<b>\$ 1,541,942</b>	<b>\$ 1,696,136</b>	<b>\$ 1,865,750</b>	<b>\$ 2,052,325</b>	<b>\$ 2,154,943</b>	<b>\$ 9,311,098</b>





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