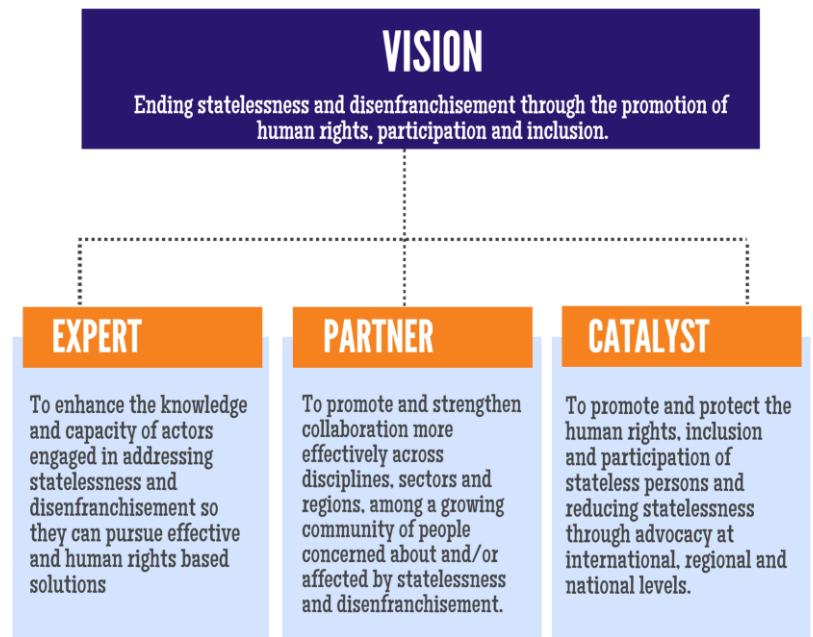


The **Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion** is an independent non-profit organization committed to ending statelessness and disenfranchisement through the promotion of human rights, participation and inclusion. Established in August 2014, it is the first and only global centre dedicated to playing the role of expert, partner and catalyst for action to address statelessness.

The Institute's work combines research, education, and advocacy, and it provides expertise to civil society, academia, the UN and governments. The Institute is based in the Netherlands, where it has Public Benefit Organisation status and an affiliation with Tilburg University.



About statelessness

A stateless person is someone who does not hold any nationality.* The right to a nationality is protected under international human rights law, yet the UN estimates that over 10 million people are stateless worldwide – a number that does not account for stateless refugees or many Palestinians. It is a very significant problem, affecting from over 10,000 to several hundred thousand people, in at least 30 countries, probably many more.

Statelessness is a serious human rights problem: it is often the result of discrimination, against women, ethnic minorities etc.; it is the basis on which further rights violations are carried out; and can act as a barrier to accessing justice and receiving protection. In 27 countries, women cannot pass on their nationality on an equal basis with men, often resulting in their children becoming stateless (for instance where the father is unknown or himself stateless). In such countries, which include Lebanon, Nepal and Barbados, simple legislative change would have a positive impact on countless individuals, families and entire communities by opening a pathway to nationality for children of citizen women. In other statelessness situations such as the Rohingya of Myanmar or Dominicans of Haitian origin in the Dominican Republic, historical racism and ethnic discrimination has been the basis on which entire groups have been arbitrarily deprived of their nationality.

Stateless people face challenges in all areas of life, including: accessing education and healthcare, finding employment, buying or inheriting property, entering into financial transactions and benefitting from social security. The impact on individual lives is evident, often prompting feelings of hopelessness, anxiety and depression. This not only affects family members, and wider society, but also the international community – for instance where it triggers forced displacement.

* Under international law, a person “who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law” – 1954 UN Convention relating to the status of stateless persons.

The Institute's place in a growing global movement to end statelessness

Until very recently, statelessness was not widely recognised as a human rights issue. Over the past decade, this has changed. The UNHCR, UN human rights bodies, NGOs and academia are investing more time and resources to better understand and tackle statelessness. A global movement of lawyers, academics, civil society, government and UN actors, journalists and artists is now emerging. Stateless persons are also finding their voice and the political space to be heard. This trend towards increased engagement is set to grow with the launch of the UNHCR-led *#ibelong* campaign to end statelessness by 2024.¹ It is in this context of an emerging movement that the Institute was established and now operates as the dedicated global focal point for civil society action on statelessness, serving as an expert, partner and catalyst for a human rights based response to the injustice of statelessness.

In its first year, with the support of various donors including The Open Society Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Oak Foundation, UNHCR, the Haëlla Foundation and private donations (crowd funding), the Institute has contributed significantly to the global movement to address statelessness and has also been able to ensure its organisational development. The Institute engaged in extensive consultations with partners (including national and international NGOs, UN agencies, government actors, academics, donors, stateless persons and artists), both to assess the need for the establishment of such an organisation and as part of its strategic planning process. In addition to putting into place the necessary governance, management and administrative structures and fundraising for its first year, the Institute also developed a three year strategic plan which it is now implementing.

Endorsements for the Institute

The Institute has been welcomed by stateless and formerly stateless persons, academics, NGOs, activists, UNHCR, donors and government representatives. Following are some endorsements of the Institute:

The Institute represents a very timely addition to an emerging coalition of actors committed to tackling statelessness across the globe. Particularly welcome is the training, research and expert analysis the Institute can offer to support nascent civil society initiatives.

Chris Nash

Director, European Network on Statelessness

It's great that the Institute has been established. In countries like ours, when we do advocacy, we need more arguments, international perspectives and support... this Institute can also be a good platform for us to share our work.

Sabin Shrestha

Secretary, Forum for Women, Law and Development, Nepal

The Institute is unique and original and is filling a gap. The setting up of the Institute will sharpen the teeth of this field, and I wish it the best of luck.

Tamás Molnár

Head of Migration, Asylum and Border Management,
Ministry of Interior (Hungary) and
Assistant professor in the Corvinus University of Budapest

I welcome the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion. It's a fantastic thought to include the stateless as members of society. I love the concept and so I wish I can be included and I wish more stateless people can be included.

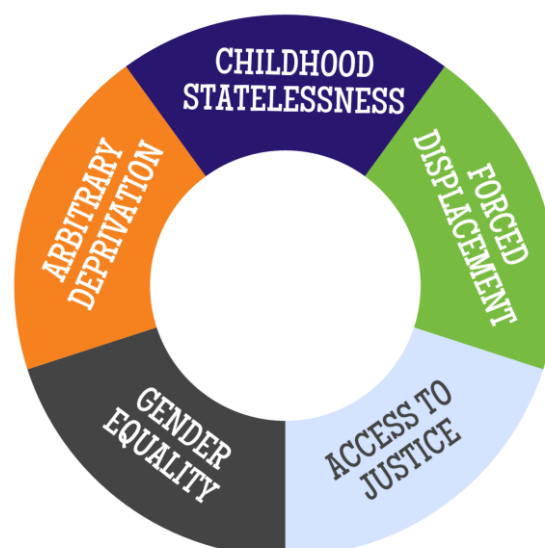
Lara Chen

Formerly stateless,
Founder of the Stateless Network Japan

¹ For more information about the campaign, see: <http://ibelong.unhcr.org/en/join/index.do>

The Institute's thematic priorities

The Institute currently organises its work around five thematic priority areas – but also engages in activities that fall beyond these themes and cuts across them. For instance, the Institute is also currently working on statelessness and the Sustainable Development Goals, a cross-cutting area relevant to many of the Institute's thematic priorities.



Childhood statelessness: Every child has the right to acquire a nationality and states have an obligation to prevent childhood statelessness. The Institute is working to help realise this right.

In its first year, the Institute served as an expert partner in the implementation of the European Network on Statelessness (ENS) campaign to end childhood statelessness in Europe, supervising the research and publication of eight country working papers on childhood statelessness, and producing a regional synthesis report for ENS. The Institute also developed and launched a database on all

concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child relating to the child's right to acquire a nationality, and produced a fact sheet and policy paper on the right of every child to acquire a nationality under the CRC.

Gender equality: Men and women have equal rights to acquire, retain and transfer nationality. When these rights are not respected, statelessness can ensue. The Institute is committed to combatting statelessness that results from gender discriminatory nationality laws.

In its first year, the Institute has conducted research for the Equal Rights Trust on gender discrimination and nationality in Nepal, Madagascar, Kenya and Indonesia. The research report has been published by the Trust. The Institute also serves on the Steering Committee of the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, and has engaged in international advocacy in this area.

Forced displacement: Forced displacement can be a cause and consequence of statelessness, but there is insufficient knowledge of the extent and impact of this phenomenon. The Institute aims to increase understanding and develop tools to protect the stateless from forced migration and those who are forcibly displaced from statelessness.

In its first year, the Institute has looked at the nexus between statelessness and forced displacement among IDPs in Iraq and Syria. This work has also resulted in the development of tools to protect against statelessness in such circumstances.

Arbitrary deprivation: The deprivation of nationality on arbitrary grounds is prohibited under international law. However, the laws of many countries continue to deprive both individuals and groups of their nationality on arbitrary grounds, often resulting in statelessness. The Institute will monitor and question such laws, policies and practices around the world.

The Institute intends to develop a short policy paper setting out the circumstances under which deprivation of nationality would be arbitrary and contrary to international law. This paper will build on the findings of the 2013 UNHCR Expert Meeting on "Avoiding statelessness resulting from loss and deprivation of nationality", at which two of the Institute's founders participated.

Access to justice: Stateless people are more likely to be excluded from enjoying human rights, and are less likely to be able to enforce their rights through legal processes. The Institute advocates the breaking down of the barriers to accessing justice that stateless persons face.

In its first year, the Institute served as an expert partner in the implementation of the ENS project to protect stateless persons from arbitrary detention, supervising the research and publication of three country reports on the detention of stateless persons and producing a regional toolkit for practitioners on protecting stateless persons from arbitrary detention.

The Institute's areas of engagement



As shown in the diagram, the Institute works towards its goals through a variety of different forms of engagement. These are some examples from the Institute's work in 2015:

International human rights advocacy

In its first year, the Institute made Universal Periodic Review submissions on Nepal, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Sudan and Thailand and also engaged in sustained advocacy in relation to every child's right to acquire a nationality.

Training and capacity building

In August 2015, the Institute's Summer Course on Statelessness and Inclusion was successfully delivered. It was attended by 28 participants (NGO, academics, lawyers, UNHCR, government and artists) from over 20 countries. The Institute also developed the curriculum and co-delivered the second ENS train the trainer workshop in Strasbourg.

Research and academic engagement

The Institute launched the first edition of its 'flagship' biennial publication, "The World's Stateless", offering an overview of statelessness globally and an analysis of the challenges related to documenting statelessness. It contributed a chapter on "Counting the world's stateless" to the 2013 UNHCR statistical yearbook, and launched its Statelessness Working Paper Series.

NGO network building

The Institute is an expert partner and advisory committee member of the ENS, a steering committee member of the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, a partner to the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness and is working towards establishing an Asia-Pacific network on statelessness.

Communications and awareness raising

The Institute launched its Monthly Statelessness Bulletins in January 2015, which has a readership of over 1400 persons. Its staff spoke at various forums including the Annual UNHCR NGO Consultations, Commission on the Status of Women, European Parliament, Chatham House and UK Parliament's All Party Human Rights Group. They have also given interviews to international media (including Reuters, the BBC, the Guardian and Al Jazeera) and national media in various countries.

The Institute's people

The Institute was founded by its Co-Directors Dr Laura van Waas and Amal de Chickera and Senior Researcher Zahra Albarazi. The Institute is also served by a Senior Finance and Administration Officer and a Junior Researcher and benefits from contributions by trainees, interns and volunteers. The Institute's staff collectively have extensive expertise on statelessness both geographically and thematically.

The Institute is governed by an international **Board of Trustees** with extensive experience and expertise within civil society, academia and the UN. The Board of Trustees is chaired by Stefanie Grant. Other Trustees are Rachel Brett, Professor Nicola Jagers, Professor Linda Kerber, Joop van Waas and Dick Oosting. The Institute also benefits from the advice, guidance and support of its international Advisory Council. The present members of the **Advisory Council** are Prof. Ernst Hirsch Ballin, David Baluarte, Prof. Seyla Benhabib, Prof. Jackie Bhabha, Greg Constantine, Prof. Cees Flinterman, Thomas Hammarberg, Prof. Jane McAdam, Dr Benyam Mezmur and Saiful Huq Omi.