DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN AN AGE OF INEQUALITY
1993: CESR is founded by Roger Normand, Sarah Zaidi and Chris Jochnick as the first international human rights organization with a dedicated focus on economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR).
1994: CESR challenges oil giant Chevron Texaco by revealing Amazon communities’ exposure to toxic oil waste in Ecuador
1995: CESR documents the impacts of UN imposed economic sanctions on child mortality rates in Iraq
1996: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright grilled about child mortality rates in Iraq on 60 minutes, where CESR’s findings are cited.
1996: CESR conducts workshop on rights and negotiations with the Secoya of the Ecuadorian Amazon.
1997: CESR’s report on Iraq sanctions results in hearings at the UK House of Commons
1998: CESR supports establishment of Mashriqiyyat, a women’s rights NGO in Palestine
1999: CESR exposes sweatshop-like working conditions for immigrant garment workers in the US
2000: CESR’s office in Ecuador officially becomes its own NGO—Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES)
2001: CESR investigates human rights abuses by the gold mining industry in Honduras, informing UN recommendations
2002: Nigeria held responsible for abuses against the Ogoni people after CESR and SERAC present the first ESC rights test case before the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.
2003: CESR helps found the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)
2004: CESR supports the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to expose violations of farm workers’ labor rights in the US
2005: CESR begins developing an ESC rights monitoring methodology which eventually becomes the OPERA framework.
2006: CESR builds works with human rights activists in Equatorial Guinea to hold their government to account before the UN Universal Periodic Review
2007: CESR opens an office in Madrid, Spain, under the leadership of Eitan Felner
2008: CESR begins its innovative Visualizing Rights country factsheet series, using statistical data to illustrate human rights concerns.
2009: CESR is the first human rights NGO to address the human rights consequences of the global financial crisis
2010: CESR and ICEFI’s report linking unjust tax policy to high levels of chronic malnutrition and maternal mortality in Guatemala contributes to tax reform in the country.
2011: CESR and ANND bring ESCR violations in Syria to the attention of the UN Universal Periodic Review
2012: CESR mobilizes coalition around a shadow report on austerity measures in Spain, eventually leading to restoration of access to health care by undocumented migrants.
2013: CESR holds ESCR monitoring workshops with national human rights institutions in Palestine, Malaysia and New Zealand
2013: Council of Europe adopts CESR’s guidelines on safeguarding human rights in times of crisis
2014: CESR works with Egyptian NGOs to bring evidence of the human rights costs of austerity before the UPR.
2015: CESR convenes global strategy meeting in Lima on tax and human rights with Oxfam and tax justice partners
2015: CESR’s advocacy results in the IACHR holding its first hearing on fiscal policy and human rights
2015: CESR uses the OPERA framework to monitor right to education with the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa
2015: The final 2030 Agenda is rooted in human rights treaties after years of advocacy by CESR.
2016: CESR supports human rights monitoring by the Palestinian Independent Commission on Human Rights
2016: CESR and ISER in Uganda question Uganda’s development model before the UN Human Rights Council
2016: Research by CESR, INESC and Oxfam Brasil enables UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty to condemn Brazil’s 20-year public spending freeze
2017: CESR shapes debates by bringing human rights into discussions on financing for development
2017: CESR and national partners develop a new tool to measure rights and development—the Egypt Social Progress Indicators (ESPI)
2017: CESR brings together diverse actors, including indigenous and women’s groups, to address human rights impacts of fiscal policies in the Andean region.
2017: CESR points out the negative effects of Trump’s regressive tax cuts on human rights in the US and overseas.
2018: UN urges South Africa to end austerity as a result of a submission to the CESC by CESR and Institute for Economic Justice, Section 27 and SPII
2018: CESR and development NGOs co-publish leading civil society report on SDG monitoring.
2018: CESR convenes Beyond Boundaries, gathering diverse actors who ally human rights with struggles for economic and social justice
2018: CESR uses innovative communications to highlight human rights at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

- Peace and equality demand fiscal justice
- Tax havens impede sustainable development
- Measures of SDG progress don’t capture the full picture. In Egypt, inequalities are increasing and many are being left behind.
- Austerity deepens inequalities
2018: CESR’s advocacy results in commitment by the IMF to incorporate stronger gender equality dimension in its technical tax assistance.