BUILDING PEOPLE-POWERED DEMOCRACY AMID PANDEMIC AND CRISES
IBON International Annual Report 2020
Building People-Powered Democracy Amid Pandemic and Crises

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The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has fully unmasked the rottenness of a world order that does away with the people’s rights, such as to health and social services, in order to cater to the interests of profit. Privatised health systems, especially in the global South, failed to deliver services to working and marginalised peoples who were rendered most vulnerable. Millions of people lost livelihoods and incomes from mass lay-offs or pandemic-related restrictions.

On pretexts of pandemic response, many states enforced draconian measures that violated civil-political rights. For instance, in the Philippines, the location of our main offices, state-supported killings have escalated. Civic and democratic spaces have been further eroded with the passage and implementation of the 2020 Anti-Terrorism Act, a law railroaded in the legislature amid health and economic crises. Global powers foment militarism and aggression for their economic and political interests. Despite the tremendous difficulties, people’s movements have courageously organised and mobilised to assert their rights and sovereignty, and demand shifts for people’s needs. These times have affirmed that the people are the real drivers of social transformation and justice.

IBON International is a Southern-based institution whose core strength is its rootedness in people’s struggles. We continued to contribute to the capacity development of people’s movements and civil society organisations (CSOs) for human rights and democracy. As an organisation, this year marks the concluding year of our Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2020, bannering Rights-based Democracy.

Message of the Executive Director
We launched conversations within our organisation and with our partners to assess the outcomes of these years.

We proactively exposed the issues arising from the crises of neoliberal monopoly capitalism and worsening repression. We exercised initiative in responding to the pandemic as we forwarded pro-people, systemic solutions, and endeavored to address staff and partners’ welfare. We offered our propositions to protect people’s rights, in our 8 Global Action Points for People-Centred COVID-19 Response and Beyond. As international policy conversations started to talk about the “new normal” for economies, we examined the dominant agenda behind such proposals and offered steps for systemic solutions in a policy brief. Even as the pandemic affected the institution, we adapted to the virtual shift in policy advocacy and campaigns, while maintaining and strengthening relations with the grassroots.

IBON International continued to support grassroots initiatives which serve as models for new systems of people-centred, sustainable development. We held capacity development activities for a People Powered-Sustainable Consumption and Production (PP-SCP) in Kenya and the Philippines. We also released a book that features the PP-SCP practices of the farmers and Indigenous Peoples in the said countries, titled “Rights for Sustainability: Community-led Practices on People-Powered Consumption and Production.” With the global climate talks postponed this year, we organised a series of online dialogues with people’s organisations and civil society to advance climate justice campaigns, especially as the climate crisis and its impacts worsen in the global South.

Our Manila offices continue to weather the serious challenges posed by the Duterte government against all its perceived critics. We continued our human rights desk with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), to ensure staff safety, continued operations, and advocacy for rights. Our hosted network, the Council for People’s Development and Governance, filed a petition against the tyrannical Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020. Our Europe office contributed to strengthening international solidarity, such as through engagement with the European Parliament. With domestic institutions for justice captured by the Duterte administration, we also supported the Investigate PH, an international, people-led initiative to document human rights violations, facilitate international accountability, and contribute to justice.

In 2020, we also published papers on other emerging development issues. We released our International Situation Report 2019-2020, as well as policy briefs on the Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF) and another on the links of neoliberal trade and investment to sustainable consumption and production (SCP). We also released a Transnational Corporation (TNC) Watch paper on Sumitomo Group.

With our networks and partners around the world, we continued to engage key issues in financing for development and development cooperation, including the “triple nexus” of development, peace, and humanitarian work. We participated in the Financing for Development Review Forum, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee
Senior-Level Meeting (OECD-DAC SLM), the SLM of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC SLM), and the UN High-Level Political Forum. We also collaborated with social movements for an online people’s forum against the corporate agenda of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group in October 2020.

To further consolidate our organisation, we held our Third General Assembly of the IBON International Foundation, where the current set of Board of Trustees were elected. We also held our annual Board of Trustees Meeting. IBON International maintains its special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

As my term as the Executive Director concludes in end-2020, I send my deepest regards and gratitude to all the staff, partners, and allies I have worked with in these three fruitful years, as well as the many years prior as Deputy Director. We laud the steadfast passion of our staff in the course of this particularly challenging pandemic year, and greatly appreciate the strong and reliable support of our partner organisations and networks. I also send the warmest of welcomes to our Deputy Director and incoming Director, Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo. We remain steadfast and ever committed to forge on, as we choose to stand up for people’s rights.

Amy V. Padilla
Executive Director
Prospects and Plans for 2021

IBON International will continue working with movements and CSOs for people’s rights and sovereignty. Our new Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2025, which builds on the strategic directions and gains of our previous plan, reaffirms our commitment in advancing People-Powered Democracy (PPD).

We refined and adapted to the current context the strategic objectives of our programmes on Trade and Investment, Development for the People, Climate Justice, and Democracy. In advancing our Democracy programme, we are further strengthening our work on women’s rights and gender equality. To build a democracy founded on people’s rights and sovereignty, we believe in the necessity of tackling the gendered character of oppression, economic exploitation, and the impacts of current health, economic, and ecological crises. We will continue defending basic people’s rights and freedoms and advance PPD also through strengthening campaigns and advocacy against militarism and other forms of aggression.

We will continue developing people’s capacities to assert their rights and sovereignty, including their right to substantively participate in democratic governance and shape their development. In line with this, we aim to optimise our knowledge products on international finance institutions (IFIs), debt issues, trade and investment, transnational corporations (TNCs), and climate finance.

We will work towards enhancing the sustainability of our hosted networks to be able to continue building broad alliances on effective development cooperation and development for the people. We will also continue to develop our regional work based on their specific contexts. As our main offices in the Philippines confront intensifying repression and foreign corporate plunder, we aim to broaden and deepen solidarity with Filipino issues and struggles.

As our staff are foundational to the progress of our work, we will continue to ensure their welfare, security, and development especially amid challenges in the pandemic context.

Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo
Incoming Executive Director
We are a Southern-based service institution with an international character and scope of work. Our defined service role encompasses a broad range of capacity development functions, and is directed towards social movements and civil society constituencies in all regions of the world especially in the global South. Our promotion of capacity development is in the context of our fundamental advocacy of social justice and transformation, with a focus on building and sharing knowledge through research, education, and information, as well as on international networking and partnerships for capacity development.

IBON International strengthens links between local campaigns and advocacies to international initiatives. At the national and sub-national levels, we bring development issues from the international arena in a way that people’s organisations and social movements can engage with them. At the regional and international levels, IBON International organises and co-sponsors parallel and alternative people’s organisations and civil society initiatives. We provide a venue for people’s organisations and civil society organisations to express and build consensus around their concerns and demands, engage official processes meaningfully, and forge cooperation for strengthened campaigns.

We trace our roots in 1978 during the dark days of martial law in the Philippines through IBON Foundation, as an alternative source of social and economic information. International work was initially taken on in the context of generating support for Philippine issues and struggles. Over time, allies outside of the country saw the
importance of sharing the knowledge and skills through capacity development work, partnerships, and networking. This has led to exponential growth of its international work, which necessitated establishing a separate, distinct, but closely coordinated, organisation as IBON International.

IBON International shares the aspirations of the peoples’ struggles all over the world: a society and world of prosperity, democracy that is free from war and strife, inequality, bondage and oppression. This expansive vision has long framed IBON International’s mission of capacity development of people’s movements for rights and democracy. The vision is reflected in our overarching goal, which is to contribute to building global mass movements of oppressed and marginalised peoples to challenge neoliberal globalisation, war, and all forms of oppression, and to advance people’s individual and collective rights, democracy, social justice and equality, ecological sustainability and liberation.

People-Powered Democracy is central in our framework. Our mission is to develop knowledge and capacities with people and their organisations to exercisew and claim their economic, political, social, and cultural rights, and meaningfully engage with other actors for the realisation of a people-powered democracy.
In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects accelerated the crisis of an already troubled pre-pandemic economy. Lockdowns, investment decline, stoppages in production and world trade all contributed into a historic crisis that was described as the worst recession since the Second World War. So-called economic recovery in 2021 is expected to be slower than anticipated, following a 4.3% contraction in 2020.¹

Pandemic profiteering, collapsed health systems, corporate recovery

The systemic inability of neoliberalism to address the pandemic has resulted in severe social impacts. Even in conservative World Bank estimates, the expected number of newly impoverished people this year will increase from the previous estimate of 88 and 115 million people to between 119 and 124 million.¹i According to the International Labour Organisation, the decline of global working hours in 2020, relative to the previous year, reached an equivalent of around 255 million full-time jobs lost. This figure is four times more than during the Global Financial Crisis in 2009.¹ii Losses are higher for women (5.0%) and for young workers (8.7%) than for men and the elderly, respectively. Meanwhile, nearly 500 individuals have become billionaires over the course of lockdowns worldwide.¹v

The risk of a global debt crisis continues to increase, with more than half of low-income countries in the brink of debt distress. Zambia, Chad, Ethiopia, and Suriname are currently in debt troubles, while Pakistan, Lebanon, Argentina were already troubled even before the

2020-2021 International Situation: Multiple global crises, worsening inequalities
pandemic.' With COVID-19, external debts of developing countries have reached USD 10 trillion, double than in 2009. A total of USD 1.1 trillion in debt payments are already due in 2021. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG) continue to promote debt-driven pandemic responses, dominated by big private finance. Relief from debt payments is limited and for the short term; while the emergent G20 framework to tackle debt woes remains driven by lenders.

Decades of neoliberal policies have aggravated pandemic inequalities, which are reproduced in the global vaccination effort to combat COVID-19. As most of the vaccines have been developed and patented by transnational corporations (TNCs), Northern countries, where these TNCs are headquartered, hoard it in large stocks at the expense of the global South. The World Health Organization expressed its disapproval of the “shocking imbalance” between rich and poor countries in the distribution of vaccines. The COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) scheme does not address corporate monopolies and continues to be limited as rich countries make deals with pharmaceutical giants to buy huge amounts of vaccines. Currently, vaccine production is far from the projected 10 to 15 billion doses needed to prevent COVID-19 spread. Only 1.2 billion doses were manufactured worldwide by the end of April 2021.

The slow production is a result of pharmaceutical TNCs’ refusal to give up intellectual property rights as an initial step to expand Southern countries’ capacities for production. The slow vaccine roll-out in the global South could mean that many countries “are unlikely to cover most of their populations before 2023 or 2024”. The global South also faces the problem of emerging virus variants that appear to be resistant to existing vaccines. During the first year of the pandemic, United States-based TNCs Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson enjoyed a massive increase in revenue, totalling USD 125.3 billion.

**Heightened militarism amid the pandemic**

Increasing geopolitical competition and rising alliances among superpowers drive the rise in military spending. In 2020, global military spending was at USD 1.98 trillion, a 2.6% increase from the previous year. Five countries, the United States (US), China, India, Russia and the United Kingdom, accounted for 62% of global military spending.

The US remains the top military spender in 2020, at USD 778 billion. While the US has shifted its defence priority to “great power competition” against China and Russia, its so-called “anti-terror” campaigns continue in the global South, especially in West Asia and North Africa, the rest of the Africa region, South and Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

The US “war on terror” that began during the Bush administration has killed over 929,000 people in Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, and Yemen. Many more have died from the impacts of war such as “malnutrition, damaged infrastructure, and environmental degradation,” while 38 million people have become war refugees and internally displaced persons.
While US alliances with EU countries, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), are facing instabilities, China and Russia are bolstering their alliances and military ties. China and Russia’s “security cooperation” and possibility of a “full-fledged defence alliance” threatens to disturb “US interests, including to the regional security balance, US-led sanctions, and US military freedom of action and access.”

China has steadily expanded its influence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with over 138 countries involved in BRI projects. Africa has become “the largest market for China’s overseas construction contracts.” The China-led security alliance, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, “reaffirmed their support” of the BRI in its 2019 summit.

Meanwhile, Russia secures its economic interests in Africa through arms sales, security agreements, and training programs. These threaten established US links. For instance, Russia is developing ties with known US allies Tunisia and Egypt; with Libya, a known NATO stronghold; and with former French colonies Mali and the Central African Republic.

Both China and Russia continue to flex their military prowess amid the pandemic. Russia has conducted military drills in Crimea in March 2020. China continues to assert its forces in the disputed West Philippine Sea, and conducts military drills.

Competition and compromise between the global powers hinder Southern peoples from realising political and economic self-determination in an increasingly unstable world. War and militarism, especially led by the US, have worsened the effects of the pandemic on the people. Millions of refugees and forcibly displaced people are more vulnerable to infection as they live in cramped living conditions without sanitation and access to health services.

Many elite-led states have responded to the pandemic with prolonged lockdowns and measures that violate people’s rights. According to the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, basic rights to expression in 56 countries, and rights to assembly in 159 countries, have been harmed by these repressive measures.

**Stronger resistance**

Amid the continued crises, peoples and their organisations remain resolute in fighting for their rights. The protests that defined 2020 is likely to continue throughout 2021. Despite restrictions on movement, peoples and social movements expressed their dissatisfaction and demands in various countries.

Healthcare workers, from the US, Spain to Bolivia, held smaller actions during the first months of the pandemic, with common demands around measures to protect health workers. By April 2020, unionised nurses in 15 branches of US private hospital chain HCA Healthcare condemned how the “wealthiest hospital corporation in the United States” has shown disregard for health workers. Workers for Amazon’s Whole Foods launched a national refusal to come into work, dubbed a “sick-out,” to demand paid leaves, free testing, and doubling of hazard pay.
In Europe, workers’ strikes broke out despite of, and because of, state and corporate response to the health emergency. In Basque Country in northern Spain, 5,000 workers of car company Mercedes-Benz shut down a factory after they were forced to work amid risks of contracting COVID-19. In Italy, automobile workers in Fiat launched strikes against similar measures of forcing work despite a nationwide lockdown, and a lack of basic protective equipment. The Fiat strikes later spread to shipbuilders and steelworkers. Workers for Amazon in France also demanded to stop operations.

In Bolivia, Indigenous Peoples and workers protested against the former right-wing interim government’s postponement of the election. Later, they successfully voted out the interim government. In Chile, after massive protests of 2019, the people successfully voted
to scrap the old neoliberal and elitist constitution, instead
commencing the process for a new constitution that, they hope, could
protect the rights and welfare of the poor. The massive protests
against racism and police brutality in the US heightened indignation
against Trump’s pro-big business and racist governance, and even
revived similar demonstrations in several parts of the world.

In Kenya, people held mass demonstrations to demand for social
amelioration and the end to police brutality and extrajudicial killings.
Millions of Thai youth have flocked to the streets to protest against
their military-based constitution, and government repression of
critics. Indonesian workers and Indian farmers organised strikes to
oppose the disastrous neoliberal policies proposed by their
governments.

In Bangladesh, the millions of workers in the garment industry,
supplying big clothing retail chains, were faced with mass layoffs as
corporations’ orders decline. In response, various unions fought for
paying workers during factory closures, and for protective equipment.
Campaigners have also called on big companies to bear responsibility
for the millions of garment workers, preferred by TNCs for cheap
labour costs, by taking measures to ensure sick leaves and workers’
wages despite quarantines.

In the Philippines, where government pandemic response was
primarily militarist and repressive, the President sparked outcry over
remarks that he will order the shooting of quarantine “violators,”
resulting even to calls for the President’s ouster. Amid threats to civil-
political rights and the emerging de facto military dictatorship in the
country, activists held protests against the controversial Anti-
Terrorism Act, criticised for a loose and overbroad definition of
“terrorism” likely to be used against dissenters.

3 ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Seventh edition
4 Forbes World’s Billionaires List 2020
5 UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2020
7 UNDP. 2021. New UNDP study reveals the magnitude of limited debt relief eligibility for developing economies. April 1.
exploitative-covid-19-vaccine


Ibid.


International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, United Nation Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. “COVID-19 Civic Freedom Tracker.” https://www.icnl.org/covid19tracker/


Ibid.
Programmes and Themes

People-Powered Democracy

In 2020, civic and democratic spaces continued to erode with states’ repressive pandemic measures. Such directions undermine people’s rights, especially the right to participate in development processes and governance. IBON International continued to assert people’s rights and sovereignty amid health and economic crises, through our analyses and demands presented in various online CSO gatherings and policy engagements. We joined the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) People’s Forum, where we presented our analysis on the socio-economic roots of repression and the attacks on civil-political rights today, while also highlighting people’s resistance. We collaborated with people’s organisations in Indonesia and the Philippines in a webinar on militarism and resource plunder in Southeast Asia.

We released statements and communications and joined actions in solidarity with peoples’ pushback against militarism, repression, and systemic inequalities. In the Philippines, we joined people’s movements in opposing the government’s militarist pandemic responses and the 2020 Anti-Terrorism Act, and in calling for health-based pandemic responses. We supported the Investigate PH initiative, continued our work with International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), and engaged at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) as part of our contributions to people’s efforts for rights and state accountability in the Philippines.

We made relevant updates to our handbook on security for human rights defenders (HRDs) in response to changes in the pandemic context of lockdowns, new repressive laws, and a virtual shift in civil
society work. The updated handbook, set for release in early 2021, was developed through our human rights desk supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

In 2021, we will continue to develop people’s capacities for rights and democracy, and contribute to people’s efforts for accountability in the Philippines, such as in Investigate PH and through engagement with the UNHRC. While our work on Democracy has always covered the gendered impacts of economic and political issues in the global South, we will further strengthen our programme work on women’s issues in 2021.
Development for the People

In 2020, IBON International worked with its partners and networks to challenge the corporate agenda of the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG). We co-organised the webinar, “Reclaim Our Rights: Freeing tomorrow from the IMF-World Bank neoliberal pandemic.” In the webinar, people’s organisations and civil society tackled people’s issues in the global South, such as debt, as well as the continuing corporate-driven approach to development and pandemic responses. In collaboration with the People Over Profit (POP) network, we also joined the Peoples’ Forum on the Asian Development Bank (ADB), tackling similar issues.

We also advanced people’s concerns on democratic participation in policy-making and governance towards sustainable and people-centred development in the virtual United Nations (UN) High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. We also proposed our recommendations and critiques on the corporate capture of development, the profit-driven trajectories of international finance institutions, and on dwindling official development assistance and public finance in other policy arenas, such as the virtual UN Financing for Development Forum, the Civil Society Policy Forum at the Annual Meetings of the IMF-WBG, and at the High-Level Meeting of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC).

In 2021, we will continue to tackle the issues of corporate recovery, debt-driven responses, and pandemic profiteering, especially through campaigns with social movements on the IMF-WBG. We will also pursue advocacy engagements at the UN HLPF, and the policy spaces of the IMF-WBG, the ADB, and other international financial institutions.

Lorelei Covero speaking during an online session of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Trade and Investment

The liberalisation of trade and investment has tied Southern economies to commodity exports, natural resource extraction, and corporatised food systems. While driving unsustainable consumption and production patterns, these directions come at the expense of people’s rights, needs, and development.

In 2020, IBON International continued to tackle the neoliberal trade and investment regime, advancing policy recommendations for sustainable and people-centred development in policy engagements. We advanced our recommendations on sustainable consumption and production at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), and the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). We released a statement against continuing neoliberal trade negotiations amid the pandemic, from the World Trade Organization (WTO) to free trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP).

We continued to work on our framework for a People-Powered Sustainable Consumption and Production (PP-SCP). Our new book on PP-SCP, “Rights for Sustainability: Community-led Practices on People-Powered Consumption and Production,” documented community-based practices in Kenya and the Philippines that promote people’s rights, sovereignty, and development.

We also held online seminars and dialogues with civil society organisations and policy-makers in Kenya and the Philippines about operationalizing PP-SCP in the context of COVID-19. We supported the capacity development of three communities in the Philippines for sustainable livelihoods – the Indigenous Aeta Hunguey community in Tarlac City, the Indigenous Lumad students and teachers of the Save Our Schools Network in the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and the Sabokahan Unity of Lumad Women in Davao City.

In 2021, we will focus on issues on free trade agreements, especially in Africa, and continue our work on People-Powered Sustainable Consumption and Production. We will organise campaigns and pursue advocacy engagements at the WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to raise people’s issues in these spaces.
Climate Justice

In 2020, IBON International continued to advance climate justice in cooperation with our partners. We organised an online Climate Justice Festival, which involved national dialogues on climate issues and strategy meetings with partner organisations in six countries – Bolivia, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, the Philippines, and Senegal.

We held the Global Convergence for People’s Climate Action, an online dialogue where 76 CSOs in 24 countries shared perspectives on the linkages of the climate crisis and the pandemic. Participating social movements and CSOs also shared about their struggles in countering state and corporate plunder against people's rights and the environment.

In 2021, we will continue working with our country partners towards People-Powered Climate Action, and will endeavour to strengthen solidarity across the global South to fight for climate justice. We will also continue to engage official arenas, such as the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was suspended in 2020, and the UN Environment Assembly.
CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness

The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) is an open platform that unites global civil society around the effective development cooperation (EDC) agenda. In 2020, like the rest of the world, it carried out its mission while confronting the challenges brought by COVID-19.

CPDE aligned its advocacy and programme to the context and impact of the pandemic, producing a rich knowledge base across constituencies. It conducted a survey on civil society initiatives on COVID-19, and developed an effectiveness framework, which would guide its global, multi-stakeholder research that reviewed pandemic responses. Webinars were organised to present the findings, which revolved around the uneven application of the principle of democratic country ownership, the limited engagement, if not exclusion, of civil society in response planning and implementation, the weak adherence to principles of transparency and accountability, and the lack of a results orientation across countries.

At the same time, the platform sustained its policy engagement on EDC, especially helping highlight the issue of shrinking civic spaces in global policy arenas, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), and the office of the UN Deputy Secretary-General.

In time for the HLPF, CPDE released its study on Voluntary National Reviews (VNR), which showed that the Sustainable Development Networks

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2020: AT A GLANCE

JANUARY
- Published a policy brief on the INFF, “National financing for development: Corporatised or democratised process?”
- RoA and CPDE published “Towards Measuring South-South Development Cooperation”

FEBRUARY
- Joined a Fact-finding Mission in militarised communities in Palawan, the Philippines
- CPDE released the Civil Society Manifesto for Effective Development Cooperation, also known as the CPDE Manifesto, a document that captures CSO asks and demands on EDC

MARCH
- Released a statement in commemoration of the International Working Women’s Day
- Responded to the pandemic with the statements, “Responses to the Coronavirus must defend, build int’l solidarity for people’s rights” and “Today’s pandemic shows a need for system overhaul!”
- Published the TNC Watch paper, “Sumitomo Group: Risking public interest for superprofit”
- CPDE engagement with the GPEDC Work Programme
- RoA-AP published “AIIB & NDB: Paradigm Shift or Rehashing Corporate-led Development?”

APRIL
- Released our policy recommendations, “Eight Global Action Points for People-centred COVID-19 Response & Beyond”
- Published “Rights for Sustainability: Community-led Practices on People-Powered Consumption and Production”
- Engaged the UN Financing for Development Forum
- RoA-AP and partner organisations launched the first Aid Talks webinar, “The Fragile Case of COVID-19”

MAY
- Extended solidarity to mass actions in the US and across the world against racial inequalities and police brutality, as exemplified in the killing of Black American George Floyd
- RoA-AP engaged the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

JUNE
- Submitted statement at the UNHRC’s 44th Regular Session calling for an independent investigation on the Philippine rights situation
- CPDE released results of survey on civil society initiatives on COVID-19
- RoA-AP and partner organisations held the second Aid Talks webinar, “Cancelling Debt in Asia Pacific: Tackling the COVID-19 Health and Economic Crisis”
JULY
- Engaged the 2020 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- CPDE showed SDGs off-track in a survey on the implementation of the SDGs and the Voluntary National Reviews
- CPDE released the paper, “Why effectiveness matters in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic”
- IBON Europe was part of an all-women panel of the webinar “Politics of Prisons” organised by the Cenl Kurdish Women’s Office for Peace

AUGUST
- Published the policy brief, “Beyond Efficiency: Transforming Trade to Achieve Sustainable Consumption and Production”
- IBON International West and Central Africa Office gave inputs in a webinar on the West Africa Monetary Union Agreement

SEPTEMBER
- Engaged the UNHRC’s 45th Regular Session
- IBON Europe reported on the European Parliament’s resolution condemning human rights violations in the Philippines
- Engaged the ADB’s Annual Meetings of the Board of Governors
- CPDG filed a petition against the 2020 Anti-Terrorism Act in the Philippines
- CPDE called on developed countries to fulfil 0.7% of GNI as ODA, during the 75th UNGA

OCTOBER
- Engaged the Annual Meetings of the IMF and the WBG
- Collaborated with the People Over Profit Network for the webinar, “Reclaim Our Rights: Freeing tomorrow from the IMF-WB neoliberal pandemic”
- Organised the Global Convergence for Peoples’ Climate Action
- IBON Africa organised a webinar series on People-Powered Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Published the policy brief, “Is the ‘new normal’ really new?: Systemic change or a re-established old system?”

NOVEMBER
- Convened the IBON International Foundation 3rd General Assembly
- Organised the online workshop, “Defending rights in Southeast Asia amid repression, economic & health crises” at the ASEAN People’s Forum
- CPDE co-organised the webinar, “Towards a convincing evidence base to enhance effective development cooperation”
- RoA-AP published “CSO AID Observatorio Training Handbook” and conducted a pilot workshop based on the handbook

DECEMBER
- Co-organised the webinar, “On Militarism and Resource Plunder in Southeast Asia”
  CPDE Feminist Group organised the webinar, “CSO development effectiveness in COVID-19 context from feminist perspectives”
- RoA-AP launched the CSO Aid Observatorio
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Goals (SDGs) are off-track and under further threat amid COVID-19. And as the United Nations celebrated its 75th anniversary, CPDE called on wealthy countries to meet the 50-year-old pledge to provide 0.7% of their gross national income as official development assistance to the world’s poorest.

CPDE also strengthened its commitment to supporting country work around development cooperation. This year, for instance, it rolled out the National Campaigns on Shrinking Civic Space programme.

Other notable engagements for 2020 include the webinar in partnership with the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, on monitoring EDC, the release of a policy research on conflict and fragility, and its continued participation in the DAC-CSO Reference Group and the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment.

The platform prides in being able to sustain activities and governance functions while adjusting its ways of working to the pandemic, as it conducted committee and task force meetings, as well as its global assembly and policy conference, virtually. Contractual obligations were generally met, and systems were established to support programme implementation in the coming years.

Finally, the year saw CPDE reach an important organisational milestone: achieving internal consensus around the Strategic Plan for 2020-2023, titled “Leveraging Effective Development Cooperation for Inclusive Partnerships to Deliver the 2030 Agenda.”

In 2021, still amid the pandemic, the persistent poverty and inequality, and continued shrinking of civic spaces, CPDE is committed to bolster its engagement in effective development cooperation especially at the country level, to continue striving to ground its work in the realities of its constituents, and help strengthen civil society response to the social crises of our time.
The Reality of Aid Network

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 in 2020, the Reality of Aid Network (RoA) persisted in its role as a pre-eminent global CSO network calling for structural reforms in the international aid regime.

In late March, RoA released a statement in solidarity with peoples around the world, expressing gratitude towards frontliners, and urging effective pandemic responses for vulnerable sectors and communities especially in least developed countries.

RoA strengthened relationships with donors and partner CSOs through its continuous engagement and contributions on policy issues. RoA shared its reflections on the 2019 OECD Development Cooperation Report (DCR) at the OECD-Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) Dialogue in March. RoA’s statements on COVID-19 and on the 2019 ODA trends based on the DCR reinforced the call to preserve the credibility of ODA, and to ensure that ODA will be used to strengthen public services and promote people’s rights.

The network continuously engaged the GPEDC’s Action Area on Triangular and South-South Cooperation as well as the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). RoA also co-organised two roundtable discussions with the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), and a study session on the OECD Development Cooperation Report and Climate Action Paper.

Strengthening the network’s organisational structure and alliances was a key aim for RoA. Rebuilding the RoA-Latin America and Caribbean Steering Committee in 2020 was key in the work towards this goal. The LAC constituency is now led by Movimiento Tzuk Kim-Pop, based in Guatemala. RoA also remained a key member of the CPDE South-South Cooperation (SSC) Working Group and the Southern CSO Alliance on South-South Cooperation.

RoA continues to develop research on contemporary aid trends. It started collecting contributions for its 2020/2021 Global Report, with the theme “Aid in the Context of Conflict, Fragility, and the Climate Emergency.” The Report will be released in 2021.
The DAC-CSO Reference Group (DAC-CSO RG), hosted by the Reality of Aid Network, persisted in engaging the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and its subsidiary bodies. The DAC-CSO RG held various webinars, consultations, and coordination work with DAC’s Foresight, Outreach and Policy Reform (FOR) unit responsible for CSO engagement.

In 2020, the DAC-CSO RG endeavoured to finalise the Terms of Reference that would support the establishment of its secretariat. The Reference Group leadership coordinated the process of drafting the Memorandum of Agreement and hosting arrangements, towards stabilising secretariat operations.

In January 2020, the DAC-CSO RG discussed with the DAC its plans, as well as how DAC members should work with civil society. In April 2020, the DAC-CSO RG circulated and released a joint CSO statement urgently calling on DAC donors for effective aid and development cooperation in the time of COVID-19. The statement was supported by 56 CSOs.

The Annual DAC-CSO Dialogue in 2020 was held virtually, with DAC Chair Susanna Moorehead present along with representatives from the DAC-CSO Reference Group and the OECD.

The DAC-CSO RG also launched its website in the year, providing members and the public transparent information on the platform’s structure, calendar, activities, and statements. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Thematic Working Groups of the DAC-CSO RG continued their research and advocacy, using these in the Annual DAC-CSO Dialogue in June, the DAC High Level Meeting in September, and the High-Level Meeting dialogue in October.
Council for People’s Development and Governance

The Council for People’s Development and Governance (CPDG) is a broad Philippine network of sectoral and regional networks of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and people’s organisations (POs) engaged in genuine development work. It was formed to respond to Philippine development issues and to consolidate development networks based in the country.

CPDG works on substantive issues of the people, from actions and efforts in alleviating poverty, aid and development effectiveness, democratic and corruption-free governance, environmental protection and preservation, gender equality and women empowerment, the protection of the rights and welfare of children, and community-based disaster risk reduction frameworks.

In 2020, CPDG staunchly opposed the repressive Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 2020 in the Philippines. The Council filed a formal petition against the ATA at the country’s highest courts, adding its voice to a broad range of concerned groups and petitioners demanding that the law be declared unconstitutional. It also engaged the country’s Commission on Human Rights, and the Philippine office of the United Nations (UN), particularly on the key issues with the October 2020 UN Human Rights Council resolution that mandated capacity-building and technical cooperation with the Philippine government.

In 2020, CPDG continued to work closely with working peoples, peasants, and other marginalised sectors and their organisations, highlighting the important role of activism, organising, and campaigning to assert people’s rights and development. CPDG joined people’s organisations and civil society for a Global Day of Action for the Philippines on International Human Rights Day. It also organised several online forums on activism and state accountability.

Other key activities on Philippine concerns were “Nasaan na talaga tayo?” (Where are we, really?), a webinar on Philippine state responses to COVID-19; “What’s behind the red-tagging spree?” which highlighted the main drivers of the government’s anti-insurgency program and repression against progressive organisations; and “Terror Error: A Protest Gig Against Terrorism and Negligence”, a cultural activity against the state’s failed responses to both the pandemic and to the natural disasters that ravaged the country during the year. CPDG also worked with faith-based organisations to reveal the harmful effects of “red-tagging” to development work.

CPDG is also among the co-organisers of a webinar series on People-Powered Sustainable Consumption and Production, in addition to workshops on people’s responses to the pandemic at the ASEAN People’s Forum in early-November and the Asia Pacific People’s Forum in late-November.

In 2021, CPDG will continue work to advance the full range of people’s socio-economic and civil-political rights in the Philippines, especially the people’s right to shape their development. The Council will respond to the issues of human rights defenders and shrinking civic spaces. It will engage the Sustainable Development Goals, in time for the 2021 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, from the perspectives of the organisations of workers, peasants, Indigenous Peoples, and other concerned sectors.
Africa

East and Southern Africa Office

Nairobi-based IBON International Africa leads our work in the East and Southern Africa region. IBON International Africa enhanced people’s capacities to launch campaigns and advocacy for rights and sovereignty in the context of COVID-19.

In 2020, IBON International Africa supported our Climate Justice programme. It shared its experiences and learnings from the 2019 climate talks, the COP25, with its partners, people’s organisations and civil society. It participated in the Global Convergence on Climate Justice, which gathered CSOs and POs across regions in online plenary sessions to discuss climate issues and demands for climate justice. Online dialogues and CSO strategy meetings were also held in preparation for climate advocacy engagements in 2021. The Office also organised a webinar on people-powered climate actions in the context of COVID-19.

The East and Southern Africa Office also supported our work on Trade and Investment, including sustainable consumption and production. It held webinars on People-Powered Sustainable Consumption and Production, and an online multi-stakeholder dialogue on the same. The webinar focused on practices by the Ogiek, Maasai, and Luo communities in Africa, as well as the impacts of the pandemic to Sustainable Development Goal 12 on SCP. Overall, the PP-SCP webinars helped participants understand its history and development
as a framework and practice, calling for transformation of the prevailing unsustainable consumption and production systems to address today’s multiple global crises. The webinar also shed light on people-led actions towards sustainability, and shared learnings from these community practices, for developing policies at the national and international level.

The Office also monitored the regional situation and policy trends, participating in the webinar, “Accelerating Digital Transformation in a Post-COVID Global Economy: State of African Countries,” organised by the UN Commission for Africa in collaboration with People’s Voices in National Climate Plans.

In 2021, the East and Southern Africa Office will continue the work on issues related to climate justice, trade and investment, debt, and sustainable consumption and production.

West and Central Africa Office

In 2020, the West and Central Africa hub worked on issues of Climate Justice as well as Trade and Investment.

Under the Climate Justice programme, the regional hub facilitated a national dialogue with the participation of 11 civil society organisations in Senegal in the context of climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic. The core group of CSOs collaborating on the Climate Justice work was headed by the Africa Research and Cooperation for Endogenous Development (ARCADE), based in Dakar. In the regional hub’s participation at the Global Convergence for People’s Climate Action, they presented people’s key asks and demands. On issues of Trade and Investment, the regional hub contributed their inputs as a speaker in a webinar on the West Africa Monetary Union Agreement in Africa.
RoA-AP continued to work on the issues of aid and development in CSO spaces and through partnerships. We began a new publication, in partnership with CPDE Asia and the Peace & Security Thematic Working Group of the DAC-CSO Reference Group, on the development effectiveness of the triple nexus approach in conflict-affected, fragile states. The publication will be released in 2021. RoA-AP also launched the Aid Talks webinar series in partnership with Aid/Watch Australia as an avenue to discuss the mounting debt of countries in the global South, the urgent need for debt relief to address people’s needs, and the impacts of COVID-19 in conflict-affected, fragile states. We also brought our key messages on aid to regional CSO spaces such as the ASEAN People’s Forum, and the Asia Pacific Peoples’ Forum.

A key output for RoA-AP was the CSO Aid Observatorio, an online database of development projects funded by official development assistance and IFIs. It collaborated with CPDE Asia on the design and development of the platform, launched a related training handbook to strengthen CSO capacities for monitoring aid towards evidence-based policy, and conducted a pilot workshop on the said handbook. RoA-AP also participated in CPDE’s global research, “Evidencing Development Effectiveness in COVID-19 Response,” and coordinated case studies from its members in Kyrgyzstan, India, and the Philippines. The network’s members presented the findings of the book in a webinar.

In its communications work, the network launched “Resisting Repression, Recovering Together”, a section on its redesigned website that provides a space for CSOs to share their experiences, best
practices and expertise towards people-centred pandemic responses. To strengthen the network, RoA-AP continued to hold regular consultations with its members. It pursued fundraising initiatives, strengthened its relations with its partners, and also built new partnerships.

In the face of worsening corporatisation of development, state repression, and shrinking civic spaces in the Asia Pacific, RoA-AP aims to consolidate its membership, ramp up policy and advocacy initiatives, produce evidence-based research and publications, and increase solidarity among CSOs in the region, towards promoting rights-based, people-centred sustainable development.
Europe

IBON International Representative Office in Europe

Like the rest of the world in 2020, the European continent was hit extremely hard by the pandemic. The crisis resulted in more than half a million deaths by the end of the year, exposing weak public health systems and creating rising unemployment and a gripping economic crisis. Amid these challenges, IBON Europe continued to maintain its research, advocacy, and institutional work.

IBON Europe released the situationer, “Europe as Epicentre of the ‘Coronacrisis’: Unprepared, incoherent response, with massive bailouts ahead,” which analysed the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic in the continent, as well as the responses of selected European states and the European Union (EU).

Coming from a vibrant year of putting Philippine human rights issues in the agenda of EU institutions in 2019, IBON Europe continued its advocacy with key European and Belgian institutions and political actors. In the run-up to the United Nations Human Rights Council’s (UNHRC) 45th Regular Session, it engaged key officials of the government of Belgium, federal parliamentarians, and members of the European Parliament. Specifically, the work aimed to support the clamour of Filipino human rights organisations and international civil society for the UNHRC to work towards the adoption of a resolution on the Philippines, one that establishes an independent, international, investigative mechanism on extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations committed in the Philippines since 2016.

IBON Europe likewise supported the preparation of Investigate PH, an initiative of peoples from around the world to hold independent investigations on the human rights violations in the Philippines, and to further substantiate the landmark June 2020 report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the Philippine rights situation.

IBON Europe was one of the speakers of an all-women panel organized by the Cenî Kurdish Women for Peace, on the Politics of Prisons, in July. The panellists from Palestine, Turkey/Kurdistan, Colombia, the United States, and the Philippines discussed the state of prisons and the situation of political prisoners, shared insights and perspectives on anti-carceral and anti-incarceration systems, amplified the links between state violence, racism, colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism, and shared alternative ways of seeking justice.

IBON Europe was also active in issues in the European front such as trade, migration, and climate issues, as it participated in key conferences organised by progressive parties and organisations in the EU and by the European Commission. It also supported the activities of the International People’s Research Network.
In 2020, we adeptly shifted work to strengthening online policy advocacy and communications. As the pandemic accelerated the economic crisis and exposed old policies and systems, we continued to provide a critique of neoliberalism, the current economic order, and their roles in stark inequities, climate change, and COVID-19 vulnerabilities. We also addressed the rise of state repression, as it hinders peoples’ initiatives to defend and assert their economic rights today.

In this context, we provided timely policy recommendations through a piece on “8 Global Action Points for People-Centered COVID-19 Response and Beyond.” We developed these further, tackling emerging conversations through a policy brief on “economic recovery” and the so-called “new normal.”

We also tackled emerging development issues, such as the conversations on Integrated National Financing Frameworks, and the links of neoliberal trade and investment with challenges to sustainable consumption and production (SCP). We also contributed a case study on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for the upcoming Reality of Aid Report for release in 2021.

We brought our positions and recommendations in CSO campaign webinars on international finance institutions (IFIs), as well as policy arenas such as on Financing for Development, as well as at the High-Level Meeting of the OECD-DAC, and UNHRC Sessions.

We also continued publishing papers concerning transnational corporations (TNCs) and the world context, through our TNC Watch
More TNC Watch papers on pharmaceutical corporations and private finance actors are in the pipeline. In addition, as our work cannot be detached from the realities around our central offices in the Philippines, we have a fourth book on the Philippine rights situation, tackling state terror under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 and the pandemic, for release in early 2021.

Communications work continued to be vibrant, productive, and responsive to new developments on issues. Our work ranged from statements, articles, infographics, and social media posts to popularise people's issues in the global South, including, but not limited to, Southern debt, new waves of repression, militarised pandemic responses, the “business-as-usual” trajectories of IFIs, neoliberalism in Africa, and SCP. On the other hand, we highlighted the need for systemic changes, and the roles of working peoples and women in such shifts.

Visits to our website in 2020 doubled compared to previous year. Followers of our social media channels continued to increase—with more than 7,000 for Facebook and more than 1,500 for Twitter. We also opened an Instagram page to widen our online outreach.
With the challenges brought by the health emergency and the political repression in the Philippines, IBON International continued its operations and strengthened support for its staff. COVID-19 health protocols were incorporated in the staff manual and were followed in our daily skeletal office operations. Discussions on health and wellness were held with the staff.

IBON International maintained its regular staff-level discussions on a range of subjects, from international and national issues, to physical and mental health, and cultural topics. Other institutional development activities conducted were trainings on Ethics and Methods for newly hired staff, and on Monitoring and Evaluation, Program Development, and Fundraising. In total, we dedicated 57 hours on internal development activities:

- Staff-level discussions (33 hours)
- Training on Ethics and Methods (12 hours)
- Training on Monitoring and Evaluation, Program Development, and Fundraising (12 hours)

We shaped our Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2025 through a series of discussions and workshops with the Management Committee and senior staff, as well as consultations with our networks and partners. We also held a Strategic Plan Validation process where the staff could input on the new plan. A Management Committee Staff Validation was also conducted, which resulted to a staff affirmation of the mandate of the committee members.

In November 2020, IBON International conducted its Annual Board of Trustees Meeting and Third General Assembly. The highlights of these meetings were the leadership transition and confirmation of the new Executive Director, Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo, and the election of the IBON International Board of Trustees.
IBON INTERNATIONAL
3rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

“ADVANCING PEOPLE-POWERED DEMOCRACY”

NOVEMBER 19, 2020
International Initiatives

IBON Institute for International Development

The IBON Institute for International Development (I3D) is mandated to synthesise our knowledge on social policy, economics and development. The International Situation for 2019-2020, titled “New Crisis, Stronger Resistance,” discussed the worsening neoliberal economic crisis compounded by the pandemic and accelerating climate change. It tackled people’s corresponding resistance despite pandemic-related restrictions and intensifying repression.
Funding Partners

IBON International continues to manage a significant amount of pooled funds, multi-year grants and various donations. As an international NGO, we have sustained a significant degree of capacity, credibility and responsibility as seen in our broad base of support and co-operation with funding partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Partner/s</th>
<th>Project Title and Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread for the World</td>
<td>Peoples’ Climate Agenda 2020: A Capacity Development Initiative to enhance citizen participation and engagement in local, national development planning and international policy-making (2018 – 2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Karibu Foundation</td>
<td>Multi-Country Initiative on Strengthening Southern People’s Power for Climate Justice and System Change amid the COVID-19 pandemic (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)</td>
<td>Promoting the Universal Application of Effective Development Cooperation (EDC) for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2020 – 2021)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Report
# Statement of Financial Performance

*amounts in USD*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>2,440,224.13</td>
<td>2,214,211.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>204,795.32</td>
<td>409,576.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forex gain</td>
<td>(14.65)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>2,645,004.80</td>
<td>2,623,788.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>877,443.11</td>
<td>3,479,074.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admin expenses</td>
<td>252,389.98</td>
<td>174,119.74</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td>1,129,833.09</td>
<td>3,653,193.93</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income</strong></td>
<td>1,515,171.71</td>
<td>(1,029,405.10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Statement of Financial Position

*(amounts in USD)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>1,211,058.80</td>
<td>804,275.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>1,396,048.99</td>
<td>174,121.29</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>2,607,107.79</td>
<td>978,397.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>719,281.54</td>
<td>649,577.14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fund Balance</strong></td>
<td>1,887,826.25</td>
<td>328,819.87</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</strong></td>
<td>2,607,107.79</td>
<td>978,397.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IBON International Board of Trustees

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