



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Human Resources Without Borders

*“Acting so that everyone can live with dignity from their work, here and there”*

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## EDITORIAL



**Martine COMBEMALE**  
Founder

“

The fight for human rights at work led by Human Resources without Borders (Ressources Humaines Sans Frontières, or RHSF) is based on **three fundamental ideas**.

**The first is that there is no need to exploit others' misery to lead a good life.** The economic and social history of the developed countries that have gradually put an end to disgraceful situations stemming from the industrial

revolution testifies this. We think that, by the same token, the globalized economy can and must eradicate forced labour and child labour.

**The second idea is that on issues as complex as these, any approach in black and white terms is doomed to fail.** Reconcile the legitimate expectations of the two extremes of the chain of subcontracting, the ordering company and the worker on the other side of the world, it is the mission of Human Resources Without Borders. Our role is not to judge or preach, but to understand the situations of all the people involved in the subcontracting chain and lead them all to bring about change in their practices.

**The third idea is that each party is concerned wherever he or she is in the chain.**

*In keeping with these three fundamental beliefs, **2018 was an important year for our cause and action.***

*First of all, **the new French law on the duty of vigilance marks a step forward towards responsible subcontracting chains. To fully achieve this objective, HRWB created a Club** at the beginning of 2018, which now includes eight major companies. With them, HRWB is working in-depth on responsible practices to prevent child labour and forced labour in subcontracting chains, in accordance with French law and the Guidelines for Fair Recruitment. Exchanges and capitalisation of experiences, launch of a pilot project on fair recruitment, creation of new tools... **The first results did not wait until 2019.***

***2018 was also a year of structural change.** To meet the challenges of the future, HRWB has adopted a new organisation to ensure that research and development projects as well as niche expertise assignments could be performed concurrently while adequately funded. An organisation that, in short, will allow our action to change scale.*

*Yes, 2018 was therefore an important year for our cause and action. **We have taken on new dimensions**, without ever losing what makes up our hearts and souls: the three fundamental convictions that guide us, and our focus on concrete actions that make it possible to prevent risks in a sustainable way, so that everyone can live with dignity from their work, all over the world.*

***Together, we can have a lasting impact on the eradication of indecent working conditions, child labour and forced labour!"***



“

*It is always a great honour to support HRWB and its founder Martine Combemale, a source of inspiration and admiration. With her NGO, she does an enormous amount of work with the ultimate objective of respecting human rights for all, without discrimination, and especially for the most vulnerable. Her weapons are listening to understand and determination to act.”*

**François DELATTRE**  
Permanent Representative  
of France to the United Nations

# 1 – AMBITIONS AND CONVICTIONS

## FACING FACTS



**Child Labour** - The reality of child labour is that 152 million children across the globe are working. With 50% of them involved in hazardous work, there is an urgency to assess and remedy child labour situations in supply chains, mainly in agriculture and manufacturing sectors. For instance, in 2018 in Panama, HRWB brought all stakeholders from the coffee, banana and plantain sectors to the table and co-constructed solutions and action plans with the actors who would implement them.

**Forced Labour** - With an average of 16 million workers under forced labour in our private economy, it's another challenge that must be faced when subcontracting. 50% of them are in debt bondage. That is a focus that HRWB works hard on as too many ordering parties are ignorant of recruitment practices worldwide that lead to this kind of bondage. Therefore HRWB has launched a project on Fair Recruitment and, as it was necessary to resolve local situations, got the Ministry of Labour in Taiwan to issue rules regarding situations of transborder contracts of migrant workers.

*Facing Facts and Risks* – Working in the field since its creation, *Human Resources Without Borders* assessed and worked with numerous production units from various industries. Corporate policies increasingly integrate social risk prevention while Corporate Social Responsibility principles are starting to spread all over the world. In the meantime, tackling human rights abuse in the supply chain requires understanding, culture change and a thorough review of employment practices.

Dealing with several hundreds of suppliers is an everyday challenge for any company which is committed to ensure risk prevention along its supply chain. Capturing the relationship between mass consumption and violation of human rights at work is equally challenging. That's the reason why HRWB work with a 360-approach, involving all stakeholders to build sustainable solutions and frameworks.

## UNDERSTAND, REFUSE, ACT

Understanding the working routine of rural Malaysians employed as operators in an electronics factory. Digging into the recruitment process of Filipino workers in a garment facility in Taiwan. Listening to coffee farmers struggle in Panama who welcome entire families for the seasonal harvest.

This is where *Human Resources Without Borders* (HRWB) starts.

The organisation founded its core approach on a simple and strong motto:

- ▶ **UNDERSTAND** – Any Manichean approach is doomed to failure.
- ▶ **REFUSE** – There is no need to exploit the misery of others to live well.
- ▶ **ACT** – Everyone can contribute at their level.

Composed of human resources and international relations professionals, HRWB gets to the root of forced labour, child labour and more broadly, indecent work situations. By involving all stakeholders, it designs operational frameworks and supports companies and other stakeholders in preventing abuses of local and migrant workers' fundamental rights at work.

## RECONCILING THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The expectations expressed by the two extreme links in the subcontracting chain are legitimate.

The ordering company must remunerate its employees, invest, provide consumers with good quality products at the lowest possible price...

The worker at the other end of the world has the right to health and safety, to decent pay without excessive overtime... and to all other rights recognized by international law.

Between these two links, the chain of subcontractors can be long. And the more extensive it is, the greater the risk of exploitation, forced labour or child labour.

Reconciling the legitimate expectations of the two extreme links in the subcontracting chain, the ordering company and the worker at the other end of the world, this is the mission that Human Resources Without Borders has set itself.



## 2 – ACTIONS

### ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2006

#### KEY MILESTONES AND PROJECTS



#### TOOLS AT A GLANCE

Within 12 years, *Human Resources Without Borders* led actions across 4 continents, mapped risk of violation of human rights at work in 15 countries and designed guides and operational methodologies (risk assessment at suppliers, excessive overtime reduction) to assess, manage and remedy the situations of indecent work, including forced labour and child labour.



HRWB library - Risk mapping – 2018

### *Information and Training*

Including an online guide on forced labour and a CSR awareness assessment, HRWB provides a web platform whose content and features are carefully selected and designed for every link in the supply chain.



**web platform**

### *Operational frameworks*

“Risk assessment at suppliers” and “Reducing excessive overtime” are tailored frameworks to effectively get to the heart of indecent work situations in supply chains.



**Operational frameworks**

## ROADMAP TO 2025: THE “8.7 CHALLENGE”

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) blueprint of the United Nations, which came into force in January 2016, HRWB provided its roadmap and launched the “8.7 Challenge” in 2017. This roadmap gives high priority to projects which contribute to prevent, manage and remedy the situations of indecent work, forced labour and child labour in the supply chain through the following axis:

*Equip* – Co-construct with all relevant stakeholders operational tools and methodologies, both innovative and replicable.

*Train* - Train organisations (ordering companies, subcontracting companies, media, consumers associations...) and future auditing and CSR professionals.

*Increase awareness* – Increase consumer awareness, with a focus on young people.

*Animate and coordinate* – Contribute to strengthen cooperation with governments, CSOs and all relevant stakeholders..

### SDG TARGET 8.7

*“Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms”*



*HRWB roadmap is also directly linked to target 10.7 (Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies) and SDG 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns).*

## WORKING AROUND THE WORLD

In 2018, HRWB led its activities across 8 countries (China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Panama, France).

### GLOBAL



At a global level, HRWB launched the **Fair Recruitment project** in 2018. It aims to design and experiment an assessment framework for recruitment agencies. This new framework, based on the General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment, may help any organisation, which recruits labour through employment agents, assess and select their partners

based on ethical and conscious criteria. Complementing and operating in coordination with existing initiatives, HRWB has met with the IRIS team of the International Organisation for Migration, the ITUC, which launched a website for workers to rate their recruitment agencies, as well as with the Ministry of Labour in Taiwan, in order to create a framework assessing agencies 360 degrees.

### ASIA

In Asia, where the prevalence of forced labour is the highest, many projects and initiatives took place in 2018. Ordering parties and suppliers request more and more awareness programmes. HRWB highlights how business practices may benefit from an effective compliance of local labour laws associated with a more holistic approach to respect human rights at work.

**Risk mapping** in Cambodia and Vietnam

**Risk assessment** of factories in Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and China to find sustainable solutions to prevent forced labour

**Training** on CSR and human rights at work for suppliers in China

**Methodology deployment** in China to decrease overtime

Last November, in partnership with a local organisation, Serve the People Association, HRWB passed a major milestone in Taiwan by convincing the Ministry of Labour to issue rules regarding situations of transborder contracts of migrant workers. This cooperation is very encouraging and will be fostered to support the deployment of the Fair Recruitment Project (see above) in Taiwan and the building of a legal framework that prevents more effectively.



## AMERICAS

In the Americas, HRWB continued to work on Child Labour issues and specifically in Panama where coffee farmers are expected to act.

**Child labour risk assessment** of coffee plantations in Panama

**Training of farmers and animation of stakeholders meeting**

**Action Plans adoption** by 63 coffee, banana and plantain farmers

Together with IIECL (International Initiative to End Child Labor), HRWB built trust with coffee farmers and crafted with them and all stakeholders, including indigenous workers, a code of conduct and an action plan they could leverage on to implement fundamental pillars of child labour prevention.



## EUROPE



In Europe, HRWB's action in 2018 was focused on education. In a region where the increase of modern slavery risks is the highest according to the Modern Slavery Index, it becomes urgent to set the basics at school and spread awareness across consumers' groups.

**Support to the Occitania Region to develop a plan for the prevention of forced labour risks in the construction sector** – analysis of the Region's policy in the context of their calls for tenders, implementation of concrete solutions, information and training of stakeholders

**Launch of a helpdesk** for victims, confidants, witnesses and companies in Toulouse  
**Awareness and education programmes** in France, including the creation and coordination of a Group 8.7 to raise awareness of consumers

**International conferences and meetings** held by European and International bodies

## WORKING WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders' diversity makes child labour and forced labour issues very complex. Along the supply chain are involved private and public organisations, groups of employers, unions, supporting charitable organisations, etc...

Because it is essential to remain in direct contact with realities in the field to build solid and sustainable solutions, HRWB maintains a continuous collaboration with many international and local stakeholders.

Here are some of the organisations and initiatives with which we worked in 2018.

## WORKING WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS



Collaboration with Serve the People Association in Taiwan to clarify local practices of migrant workers' recruitment. Conduct of workers' interviews and collection of data to foster the Fair Recruitment project

Reception of modern slavery victims in France in partnership with the association Comité contre l'esclavage moderne (CEM).  
[www.esclavagemoderne.org](http://www.esclavagemoderne.org)



Monitoring and information sharing on forced labour and recruitment practices in Malaysia with Tenaganita, association founded by Irene Fernandez, 2005 Alternative Nobel Prize.  
[www.tenaganita.net](http://www.tenaganita.net)

## WORKING WITH EUROPEAN AND FRENCH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



Collaboration with European agencies, the European Commission and more than 20 European organisations to foster the integration of foreign workers in European labour markets and to develop tools and methodologies to support vulnerable people in the creation of social enterprises.



Collaboration with the Occitanie Region in France to build an operational framework to prevent and manage risks of forced labour in the construction and agriculture sectors in the context of public tenders.



Launch of a helpdesk with the support of Toulouse city council. Creation and coordination of a Group 8.7 to raise awareness with the support of Haute-Garonne prefecture. Education programmes with the support of departmental council.

## WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS



Collaboration with Caritas Internationalis to spread the Exhibition “Behind the barcode”.  
[www.caritas.org](http://www.caritas.org)

Contribution to FLA’s report on child labour and forced labour in palm oil industry in Malaysia.  
[www.fairlabor.org/](http://www.fairlabor.org/)



Collaboration with IIECL on child labour project in Panama.  
<http://endchildlabor.net/>

Collaboration with ITUC to leverage on their Fair Recruitment initiative and deploy HRWB’s assessment framework.  
[www.ituc-csi.org/](http://www.ituc-csi.org/)



Promotion of human rights at work in supply chains among business leaders.  
<http://www.uniapac.org>

## CONTRIBUTING TO INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES



Contribution to the campaign led by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and its partners to convince at least 50 countries to ratify the Protocol on Forced Labour



Participation in working groups of the Alliance 8.7, the global partnership to act against forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour under SDG Target 8.7

## AN EXPERIENCED TEAM



**Martine COMBEMALE**  
Institutional & corporate  
projects  
Management



**Aziz AHAMMOUT**  
Operations & Institutional  
projects  
International stakeholders



**Estelle ECKEMAN**  
Communication &  
Institutional projects  
European stakeholders



**Hui CHEN**  
Corporate projects  
China



**Magali CROESE**  
Corporate projects  
Asia

## OUR SKILL-BASED VOLUNTEERS

HRWB's permanent team is assisted by volunteers throughout the year. Their help, know-how and time are immensely valuable.

Jean-Marc AUDOUIN

Emilie GIBBONS

Sabine PROUVOST

Jean-Pierre AUDOUIN

Alain GUIDON

Tony TIRATAY

Susan BAINES

Marianne MAILLOT

Guy CLAVEL

Quentin ORDENER

And all the young volunteers committed to our cause in France

## OUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' NETWORK

Corinne ADAM (Canada)

L. Diane MULL (IIECL, United States)

Tenaganita (Malaysia)

RSE et PED and its network of more than 40 contributors and partners (17 countries)

Dr. Davuluri VENKATESWARLU (India)

## 3 – FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Common interest drives HRWB's action and development.

### INCREASING MEANS OF ACTION

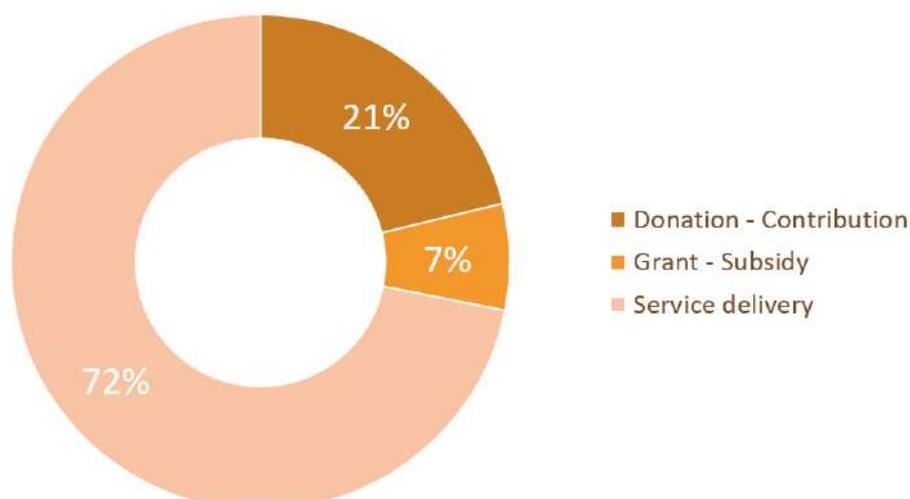
Thanks to its new organisation in 2018, *Human Resources Without Borders* increased its overall funding by 34%.



### SOURCES OF REVENUES

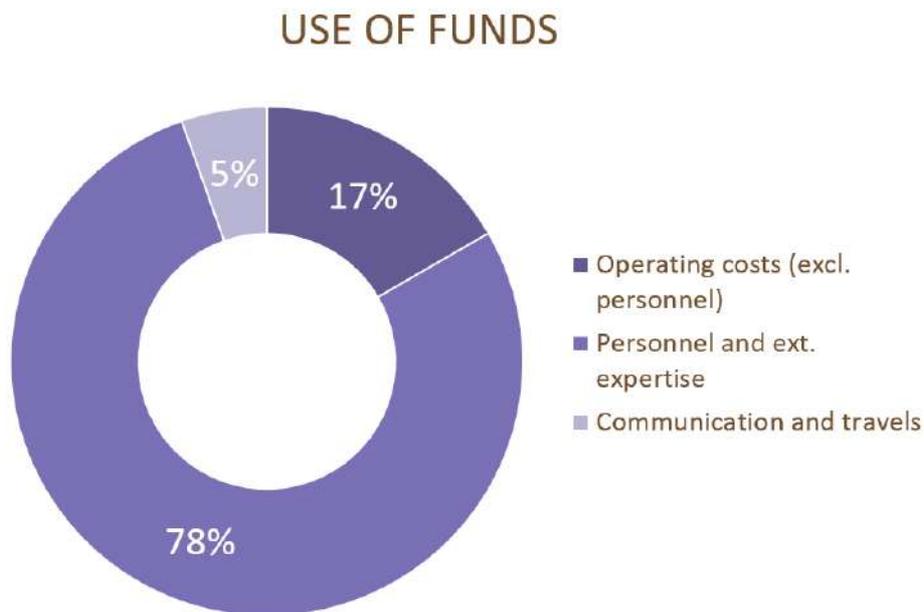
With 72% of self-funding, HRWB anchors its development and builds its capacity for funding strategic field projects. The self-funding is based on service delivery for a diversity of public and private organisations which request HRWB's niche expertise to help building their own practices frameworks (training, assessment, monitoring support, etc).

#### SOURCES OF REVENUES



## USE OF FUNDS

HRWB limited its operating costs at 17% of its operating expenses. Operating costs include administration expenses (lease, utilities bills, bank, legal and accounting fees) and exclude personnel's wages and expenses.



*Mentioned figures and amounts are for information purpose only. At the time of the report writing, accounting is not yet closed nor audited. Official results will be published after the General Meeting is held in June 2019.*

## 4 – NEW DIMENSIONS

### ORGANISATION TO MEET THE CHALLENGES

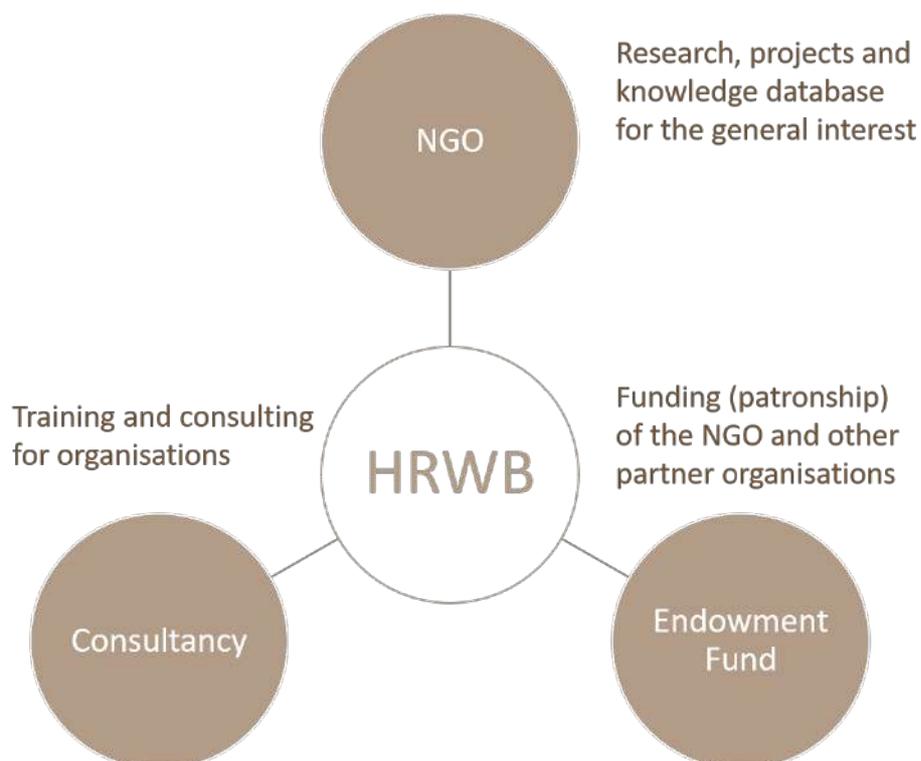
As non-for-profit organisation, *Human Resources Without Borders* was, until 2017, relying mostly on individuals' membership and governmental grants (France, Europe, US) to conduct its actions.

2018 was a year of structural change to ensure that research and development projects as well as niche expertise assignments could be performed concurrently while adequately funded. For that purpose, the Endowment Fund was activated early 2018 and the HRWB Consultancy was created end of 2018.

Human Resources Without Borders is now composed of 3 legal entities:

- ▶ HRWB – NGO, non-governmental organisation and holding entity
- ▶ HRWB - Endowment Fund
- ▶ HRWB - Consultancy

Each entity, with its dedicated spectrum of actions, contributes to the mission of the whole: extending decent work along the supply chain.



## A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE TO SHARE EXPERIENCES

2018 is the first year of HRWB's Endowment Fund. Aiming at collecting funds for child labour and forced labour projects, as well as for risk prevention tools design and maintenance, the Endowment Fund goes far beyond a simple funding purpose.

Major companies contributed to the fund since its launch and organisations from various industries show an increasing interest. HRWB built a community of CSR, Risk management and Procurement professionals who can meet and share confidentially about their challenges in the area of human rights at work protection. Brought together within the **HRWB's Club**, these professionals mobilise to support HRWB's projects and develop a comprehensive knowledge platform.

### IN 2018, ACTIVITIES OF HRWB CLUB LED TO

3 major meetings to exchange and progress together on common issues

1 work group dedicated to overtime issues

1 major funding dedicated to the Fair Recruitment project

1 project of professional education under preparation

3 new mappings (map of social risks in Cambodia, map of recruitment costs, map of minimum wage across the world)



To join HRWB Club, contact us :  
[m.combemale@rhsansfrontieres.fr](mailto:m.combemale@rhsansfrontieres.fr)

# THE BOARD

HRWB's board is composed of independent individuals, from various backgrounds. Based out of 3 different continents, they provide structure and guidance to secure HRWB's development in accordance with pragmatic and sustainable principles.

## Board members

*As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2108*

Lydie LALOUM (France), President

Karine ARKACHE (France)

Jacques IGALENS (France), Treasurer

Brigitte DERUY (France)

Lise PETITJEAN (France), Secretary

Sophie THIERY (France)

Dr. Davuluri VENKATESWARLU (India)

Marie-Laure VOLPELIERE (France)

Corinne ADAM (Canada)

Catherine CALMETTES (France)



# ABOUT HUMAN RESOURCES WITHOUT BORDERS

By acting along the supply chain and involving all stakeholders, *Human Resources Without Borders* (HRWB) provides effective solutions to assess and remedy risk of human rights infringements at work.

HRWB is a non-governmental organisation which continuously experiments in the field. Thanks to a strong network of NGOs, governmental representatives, experts and corporate partners, HRWB designs reliable frameworks, connected to our economic reality.

Promoting decent work, and particularly ending forced labour and child labour, has been HRWB core focus since 2006.



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