



HUMANITY
UNITED



A Strategic Framework

Mosaic

A Participatory Strategy, Grantmaking, and Learning
Process Led by Migrant Workers and Survivors



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Mosaic Strategic Framework

2026

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About the Portraits & Illustrations

Throughout this document, five illustrations are inspired by past and current Steering Group members, as well as grantee partners who have played a central role in shaping Mosaic. They reflect not only their individual migration journeys, but also the many dimensions of their lives, including their families, communities, and personal hopes and aspirations, drawing on insights from interviews.

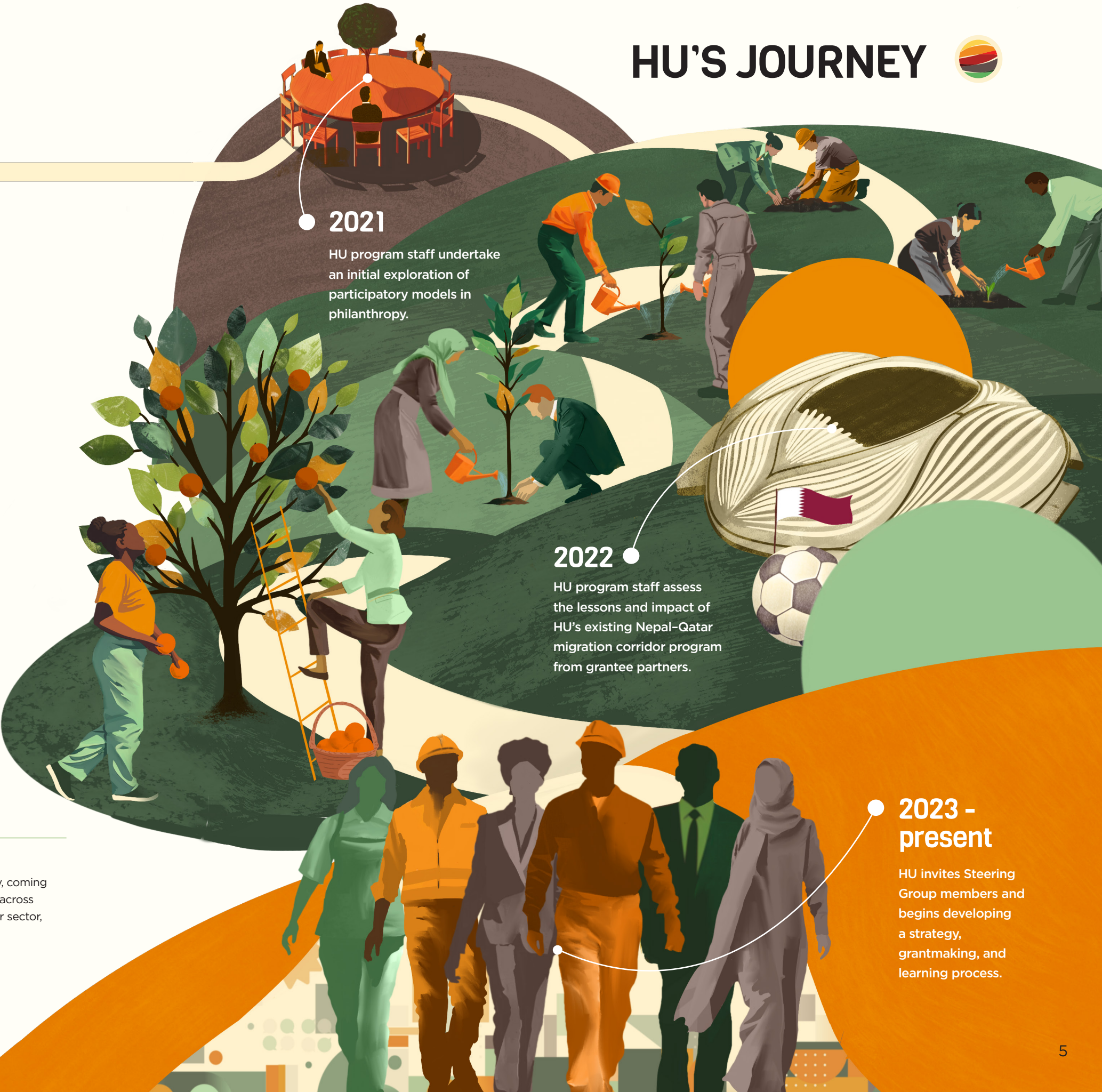
Introduction

Mosaic is Humanity United’s (HU) first participatory strategy, grantmaking, and learning process, led by and centered on the experiences of migrant workers and survivors from the Global Majority.¹

Historically, HU’s strategy design and grantmaking decisions were led exclusively by HU staff in consultation with grantees and stakeholders.² This approach subtly reinforced a structure in which power remained concentrated with a Global Minority funder at the top, limiting the potential for transformational change at the grassroots level. Breaking from this traditional top-down approach, Mosaic seeks to create safer conditions for migrant workers and survivors through organizing, representation, policy influence, and narrative change.

The name Mosaic reflects the many pieces each member brings, both professionally and personally, coming together to form something larger than any one individual. We chose English as a shared language across Steering Group members and HU staff. It is also a name that moves beyond any single geography or sector, opening space for dialogue with funders and other partners.

1 - The term “Global Majority” is commonly used to refer to Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other racially marginalized communities that together make up the majority of the global population.
2 - Over time, HU’s approach to systems change has also evolved. Earlier strategies often positioned HU at the center of the system, directing change from the top. Later, the focus shifted toward centering partners and their expertise. With Mosaic, those most impacted are now placed at the heart of the system.



Background

In 2021, during the concluding stage of HU's Nepal-Qatar Migration Corridor Program, which aimed to protect the rights of low wage migrant workers ahead of the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup tournament, program staff conducted extensive research and external interviews with practitioners and funders using participatory approaches, existing HU grantees, and individuals with direct lived experience. The objective was to prioritize the perspectives of those most significantly affected by the issues HU addresses, especially migrant workers and survivors of labor rights abuse.

Following approval from HU leadership, HU staff and partners began laying the groundwork for this new approach. In November 2022, a five-member Steering Group (SG)—composed of individuals selected by the Global Migrant Workers Network, a new worker- and survivor-led organization—co-designed the strategy, grantmaking decisions, and learning agenda alongside HU program staff.

Purpose of the Strategic Framework

This Strategic Framework serves three core purposes: First, it provides a shared vision, set of principles, and defined goals that guide Mosaic's work. Second, it articulates our understanding of global trends (e.g., closing civic space, geopolitics, emerging labor markets, climate change) and their impact on the broader labor migration ecosystem, while identifying the areas where we believe HU can meaningfully contribute. Finally, it outlines how we aim to learn, scale, and connect with partners across the philanthropic sector, while also explaining our desire to center migrant workers, survivors, and grassroots organizations in our approach to grantmaking and funding decisions.



About Humanity United

Humanity United is a philanthropic organization focused on advancing the dignity and voice of those most affected by violent conflict, exploitation, and injustice. Established in 2008 to cultivate conditions for enduring peace and freedom, today HU focuses on systemic change across three pillars of work: Peacebuilding, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking, and Racial Justice and Equity, with a strong emphasis on leveraging public engagement across these issues. HU is part of The Omidyar Group, a collection of independent, mission-driven organizations united by a commitment to invest in a better future.

These core pillars guide our programmatic work, which includes efforts to combat migrant worker exploitation in the global seafood industry, advance migrant rights along the Nepal-Qatar migration corridor, and protect workers across global supply chains.

Our approach is grounded in deep collaboration. We work alongside civil society leaders, peer funders, companies, and broader human rights, social justice, and environmental movements to drive systemic change. By aligning strategies and fostering learning across portfolios and sectors, we seek to shift power and help build more just, equitable systems for migrant workers around the world.

VISION

We envision a future led by **migrant workers** and **survivors**, grounded in the principles of **intersectional feminism**.

In this future, migrant workers and survivors—especially at the grassroots level—are holistically empowered to lead, represent their own interests, and shape the systems that affect their lives.



COO
Country of Origin



COD
Country of Destination





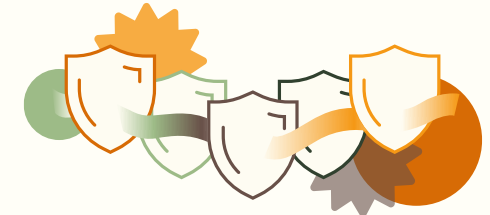
PRINCIPLES

We believe in solidarity that is inclusive across race, gender, class, and nationality, with respect for everyone.

We will:



Work on behalf of the most marginalized and most vulnerable groups



Create safe and brave spaces for frontline defenders



Take an intersectional feminist approach



Ground our work in local political and cultural realities in countries of origin and destination, strengthening and nurturing local leadership



Challenge power

We believe in

the power of grassroots organizing, led by migrant workers and survivors--in countries of origin and countries of destination--who are directly connected to the communities they serve.

COO
Country of Origin
 **Philippines**

COD
Country of Destination
Kuwait 

GOALS

Our goal is for migrant workers and survivors in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and selected countries of origin in Asia and Africa, to fully exercise their rights without fear, realize their future potential, and represent themselves directly.

We strive to enhance migrant worker and survivor representation. This includes working alongside platforms like the Global Migrant Workers Network, a worker- and survivor-led organization uniting migrant workers and providing access to leadership development, mentorship, capacity-building, and spaces to amplify their voices.



COO
Country of Origin

 Cameroon

COD
Country of Destination

Bahrain 



COO
Country of Origin

 **Philippines**

COD
Country of Destination

Bahrain 

Our View of the World

Today, more than **one billion people are on the move globally**, including **281 million international migrants³** and **more than 763 million internal migrants.⁴**

Migration is a powerful engine of economic growth and development, generating more than \$831 billion in remittances, the majority of which flows to low- and middle-income countries.⁵ Yet despite this scale and significance, systems designed to govern migration continue to fall short, especially when it comes to protecting low-wage migrant workers in sectors such as construction, hospitality, and domestic work.

The experiences of migrant workers throughout the labor migration system are also shaped by the political, legal, and economic systems that impact their countries of origin across the continents of Asia and Africa. Depending on national histories, governance structures, and institutional capacity, the protections available to migrant workers and survivor returnees can vary dramatically, impacting their vulnerability throughout the migration journey and their ability to access justice, remediation, reintegration, and wellbeing support.

3 - [pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/12/16/key-facts-about-recent-trends-in-global-migration](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/12/16/key-facts-about-recent-trends-in-global-migration)

4 - gem-report-2019.unesco.org/chapter/introduction/internal-migration

5 - worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-2/international-remittances

These systems are increasingly shaped by broader global trends, including: **rising authoritarianism** and **shrinking civic space**, where workers, civil society, and journalists face intimidation, surveillance, and repression.



Emerging geopolitical trends,

such as the war in Ukraine and genocides in Gaza and Sudan, are reshaping international norms, weakening multilateral cooperation, and emboldening regional powers in the GCC to assert diplomatic leadership while insulating themselves from international scrutiny.



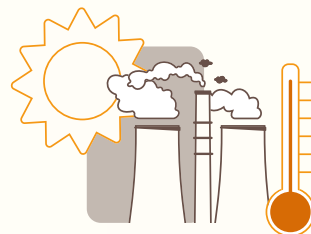
Changing global and regional labor markets,

including the GCC's traditional reliance on construction and domestic labor, is beginning to shift, with growing demand in sectors such as IT, care work, as well as transport and delivery services. These shifts could disrupt existing worker solidarity and create new hierarchies among migrant workers.



Climate change

is driving new migration patterns while exacerbating the working conditions of GCC migrants in sectors exposed to extreme heat, such as construction and security. Our strategic framework seeks to confront these intersecting systems and global trends. By shifting power to migrant workers and survivors through organizing, representation, policy change, accountability, and narrative change, we see a path toward a more equitable and resilient world of work.



Our Choices

Legend

GCC
Gulf Cooperation Council

Africa & Asia
Migration origin regions



The Kafala system

Also known as “the sponsorship system,” the kafala system is a labor migration regime primarily in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries where a migrant worker’s legal status, including residency, work permit, and mobility, is tied to a local sponsor (or kafeel), usually the employer. This system often restricts the worker’s ability to change jobs, leave the country, or challenge abuses without the sponsor’s consent, which human rights organizations say creates structural vulnerabilities to exploitation.

CHOICE 01 Geography

We will focus on countries of destination in the GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), as well as the continents of Asia and Africa. Migration flows in these countries are shaped by deeply unequal systems of global labor mobility, characterized by a structural power imbalance between countries of origin and countries of destination, exploitative recruitment practices, and legal regimes such as the kafala system that restrict worker agency.

CHOICE 01 - GEOGRAPHY

Why do we focus on the GCC?

Major destination for low-wage migrant workers



According to recent estimates, more than 24.1 million migrant workers are in the Middle East, where GCC countries account for a significant share, representing 14 percent of the global migrant workforce.⁷ Demand for domestic workers is particularly high, with an estimated 6.6 million domestic workers in the Arab States overall, concentrated largely in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait.⁸

Lack of progress on labor reforms



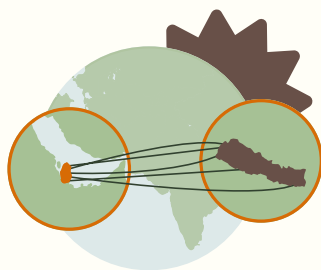
Despite recent efforts to dismantle core elements of the kafala system, GCC countries have failed to fully implement these reforms, and civic space continues to shrink, impacting worker organizing.

Increase in mega-infrastructure projects and events



Despite the region's growing geopolitical influence, there still seems to be a desire to connect to the Western world. Recent examples include decisions to host major global gatherings, including the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup tournament in Qatar and COP28, the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, which took place in the United Arab Emirates.

Opportunity to build on HU's existing work on the Nepal-Qatar migration corridor



While Qatar has implemented some labor reforms, progress remains constrained by internal power dynamics and entrenched business interests. HU's past efforts fostered strong organizing networks in Nepal and focused advocacy efforts in Qatar, particularly around the experiences of Nepali workers. However, this corridor-specific approach introduced risks, such as Nepali workers being perceived as proxies for international campaigns and Qatar feeling unfairly targeted. Expanding from a single-corridor lens to a broader regional strategy presents an opportunity to build on past lessons, reduce political sensitivities, and engage more holistically with migrant labor challenges across the GCC.

7 - ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_808935.pdf
8 - ilo.org/regions-and-countries/arab-states/domestic-workers-arab-states



Legend



Middle East & North Africa



GCC Gulf Cooperation Council

Challenges

Navigating a complex environment

The GCC's current context presents significant challenges, marked by restricted civic space and heightened risks for activists.

Diminishing influence of international pressure

As the GCC's economic and political power grows, external pressure from Western governments, civil society actors, and journalists becomes less effective in shaping the region's policies. At the same time, Western governments have increasingly prioritized defense and economic security interests over human rights.

Why do we focus on the continents of Asia and Africa

Increase in migration from the African continent to the GCC

The GCC, especially Saudi Arabia and UAE, remains a key destination for migrant workers from many African countries, employed across sectors including domestic work, hospitality, retail, and construction. High unemployment and limited job opportunities at home, combined with geographic proximity and the prospect of significantly higher earnings abroad, continue to drive many young people to work in the region.

Vulnerability in Africa

The GCC, especially Saudi Arabia and UAE, remains a key destination for migrant workers from many African countries, employed across sectors including domestic work, hospitality, retail, and construction. High unemployment and limited job opportunities at home, combined with geographic proximity and the prospect of significantly higher earnings abroad, continue to drive many young people to work in the region.

Compounded challenges for migrants

Migrants from Africa endure the challenges common to all migrant workers in the GCC, such as wage abuse, poor working conditions, and additional layers of discrimination based on race and nationality. This compounded stigma further limits their access to fair treatment, safety, and opportunities.

Change in migration from Asia

As economic needs in the GCC grow and opportunities decrease in many origin countries in Asia, migration from countries such as Nepal and the Philippines continues to rise. This is particularly evident among younger people who are beginning to consider migration, motivated by the prospect of higher earnings and greater economic stability.

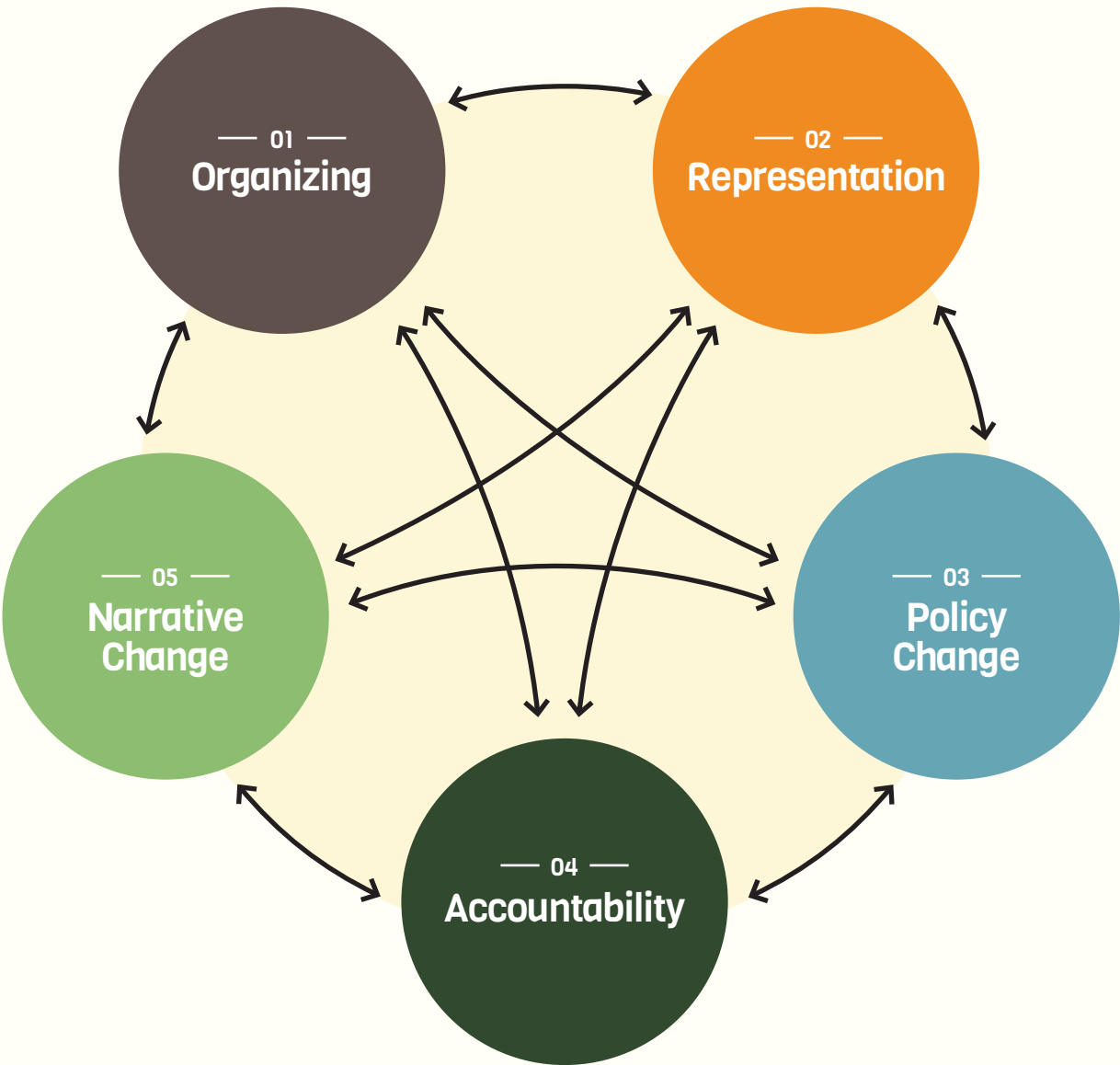
Challenges

Economically disadvantaged countries on the African continent

Pressing region-specific issues in Africa include lack of worker representation in decision-making, weak migration governance capacity, heightened economic vulnerability of migrant workers, and insufficient accountability and national-level protection mechanisms in countries of origin.

Dimensions of Change

Our approach is to focus on five key dimensions of change:



How it works

The above graphic illustrates how these five dimensions of change are deeply interconnected. Our strategy begins with supporting workers and survivors who are organizing to make their workplaces and communities fairer and more just. We believe that worker organizing creates the conditions for transformative shifts across other dimensions of change, including representation, policy change, accountability, and narrative change.

CHOICE 02

Dimensions of Change

Our approach is to focus on **five key dimensions of change**



01

Organizing

Definition

Worker organizing is the process through which workers build collective power, leadership, and shared strategy to advocate for their rights, improve conditions, and influence the policies and systems that shape their lives.

The Challenge

Migrant workers face immense challenges throughout the migration cycle, from departure to life in destination countries, and upon return home. Restrictive policies and hostile environments make it nearly impossible to navigate these systems alone.

The Opportunity

By supporting worker organizing at every stage, in origin countries before departure, in destination countries, and at key international forums we aim to create the space for workers to build solidarity.

02

Representation

Definition

Workers have meaningful representation and are independently heard in key national, regional, and global arenas.

The Challenge

Migrant workers and survivors (in both countries of origin and destination) are excluded from decision-making tables at the national, regional, and international levels, where policies and initiatives are decided without their meaningful input.

The Opportunity

Representation is the next step after organizing. When workers can represent themselves at decision-making tables, the solutions become more legitimate and effective.



03

Policy Change

Definition

The process of establishing or improving the formal rules—including laws, standards, and agreements—that set the conditions for protecting the rights of migrant workers and survivors.

The Challenge

Governments systematically fail migrant workers at every stage. Origin countries neglect their own citizens before, during, and after migration. Destination countries silence workers through restrictive laws that block organizing and make it dangerous to speak up, while also obstructing civil society support. Discriminatory laws and protection gaps in both origin and destination countries enable companies and employers to exploit workers with impunity. Meanwhile, the UN and other multilateral bodies fail or lack the capacity to hold actors accountable, leaving migrant workers and survivors with no effective path to justice.

The Opportunity

Stronger laws, policies, bilateral agreements, and enforceable standards can expand rights, remove restrictive barriers to organizing, and create obligations that protect migrant workers and survivors. When these reforms are grounded in worker leadership and supported by better data and sustained advocacy, policy change becomes a powerful tool for ensuring rights are upheld in practice.



04 Accountability

Definition

Ensuring that the formal rules and policies that protect migrant workers and survivors are upheld through enforcement, consequences, transparency, and worker-led oversight that compels violators (e.g., governments, companies, employers, individuals) to change their behavior.

The Challenge

Even when policy reforms that protect workers exist on paper, enforcement remains weak or nonexistent. Therefore, governments, corporations, employers, recruitment agencies, and other actors operate with impunity, violating workers' rights and leading to ongoing exploitation.

The Opportunity

Strengthening accountability mechanisms ensures that policies are implemented, workers have access to real protections, and actors who violate worker rights face consequences. When paired with worker organizing and representation, accountability efforts can shift from top-down enforcement to worker-driven monitoring and advocacy.

05 Narrative Change

Definition

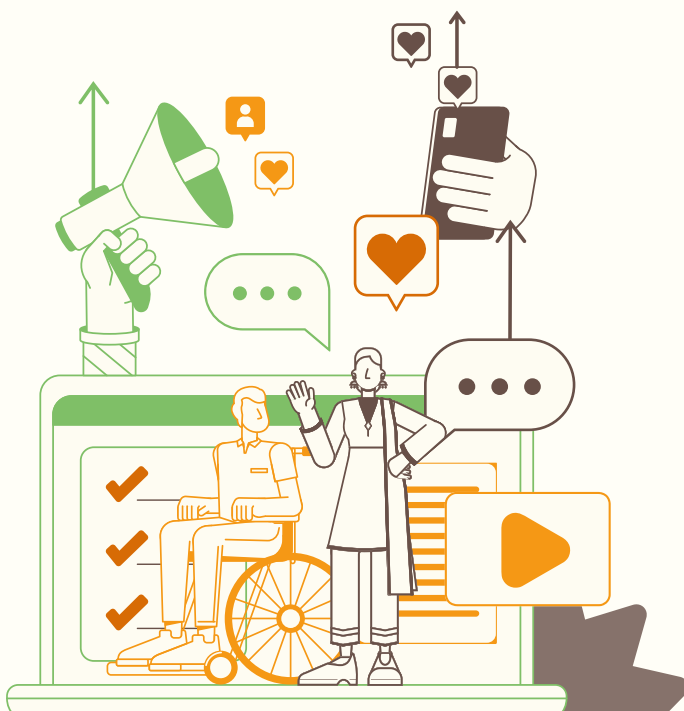
Narrative change is the process of altering shared stories and beliefs that shape our understanding of the world, with the goal of influencing attitudes, behaviors, and policies.

The Challenge

Harmful narratives about migrant workers and survivors are widespread and often dehumanizing, racist, and disempowering. They are used to justify discriminatory policies and exploitative business practices, and are reinforced through media, government talking points, and entrenched stereotypes. These narratives shape public attitudes and enable harmful outcomes including restrictive migration controls, weakened protections, and social stigma, while leaving migrant workers with few opportunities to challenge or reshape how their stories are told.

The Opportunity

Through storytelling, campaigns, and media, we aim to amplify positive narratives grounded in the lived experiences of workers and survivors—reflecting their realities, challenging harmful stereotypes, and supporting their efforts to self-organize.



CHOICE 02 - DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE

Assumptions

Our strategy begins with supporting workers and survivors who are organizing to make their workplaces and communities fairer and more just. We believe that worker organizing creates the conditions for transformative shifts across other dimensions of change, including representation, policy change, accountability, and narrative change.

In early 2024, HU program staff and Steering Group members convened in Nairobi to explore what is needed to support strong and sustainable worker organizing. **Two critical conditions emerged:**

01

Credibility & legitimacy

Leaders must have internal legitimacy, earned through accountability to their communities, and external credibility, gained through recognition and respect from other actors in the system.

02

Sustainability

Effective leadership must be supported by strong networks and access to resources that promote mental well-being, financial stability, and opportunities for personal and leadership development.



How We Learn, Scale, and Connect

Learning

Developing a learning strategy that centers communities with lived experience is, by nature, an emergent process—one that depends on deep relationships, humility, and a willingness to adapt. We recognize that progress toward systems change rarely moves in a straight line; uncertainty, learning, and course correction are all part of the work.

Therefore, our approach to learning remains fluid and responsive to feedback and new ideas. Together HU program staff and the Steering Group remain committed to collaboratively creating and refining a learning framework that surfaces key questions, which will evolve from emerging insights and the priorities of the impacted communities.

Scaling & Connecting

While worker organizing is central to our strategy, the complexity and scale of the GCC and connected countries of origin demand a broader approach.

To deepen our impact, we aim to:

Scale efforts

by supporting organizing models that can be adapted and replicated across different contexts and corridors, while remaining responsive to those at the grassroots level.

Foster alignment across movements

by connecting grassroots and worker-led organizations with Global Minority partners and linking labor migration work with broader struggles for racial justice, gender equity, climate justice, and workers' rights in other sectors.

Build strong connections with peer funders

to strengthen the funding ecosystem that supports actors working to transform labor migration systems, share learning, and coordinate resources more effectively.

Through these efforts, we seek to create a more connected, resourced, and resilient movement working on labor migration issues locally, regionally, and globally.

How We Approach Grantmaking

Centering Migrant Worker and Survivor Leadership

Aligned with our vision, principles, and goals, the initial round of grantmaking prioritized funding for grantees that are led by migrant workers and survivors—specifically those on the grassroots level who also take a feminist approach to their work—while also ensuring geographic balance, prioritizing organizations based in the Global Majority. This focus was also driven by the recognition that these organizations have historically been excluded from funding opportunities.





Worker- and survivor-led organizations

Organizations predominately led by migrant workers and survivors with lived experience.



Grassroots organizations

Connected and accountable to the local communities and movements they serve.



Intersectional feminist approach

Supporting movements to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.

In addition to the above criteria, the initial round of grantmaking prioritized flexible, longer-term funding for grantees, along with dedicated resources for organizational strengthening. We also partnered with organizations that demonstrated the necessary strength and sustainability to ensure our investments would be secure. Relational depth was a key factor in assessing these dimensions, which HU’s due diligence process addresses.

Supporting the Broader Labor and Migration Ecosystem

Aligned with our vision, principles, and goals, the initial round of grantmaking prioritized funding for grantees that are led by migrant workers and survivors—specifically those on the grassroots level who also take a feminist approach to their work—while also ensuring geographic balance, prioritizing organizations based in the Global Majority. This focus was also driven by the recognition that these organizations have historically been excluded from funding opportunities.

Allied movements, international NGOs, Global Minority-based activists

who can leverage their platforms and access to amplify worker voices and apply strategic pressure, while also working at the intersection of racial justice, gender equity, and economic rights.

Academic institutions and policy think tanks

who can leverage their platforms and access to amplify worker voices and apply strategic pressure, while also working at the intersection of racial justice, gender equity, and economic rights.

Independent journalists and media organizations

which can investigate abuses, hold power to account, and shape public narratives.

Legal advocates

who provide direct services and, in some cases, pursue strategic litigation.

Together, this approach puts support for worker and survivor leadership at the heart of our work, while also recognizing that real change requires many different partners working together, each bringing their own strengths, relationships, and ability to make change possible.

