

# OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

## A BRIEF HISTORY

The Open Society Foundation for South Africa began its work in 1993, as the country was preparing for its first democratic elections the following year. But George Soros, chairman and founder of the Open Society Foundations, had already been engaged in South Africa. In 1979 he launched a scholarship programme for black South African students to study at the University of Cape Town—his first ever venture into philanthropy. And in 1987, Soros provided financial support for a first dialogue between South African business and political leaders seeking to dismantle the apartheid system.

The new Foundation supported efforts to build a more just society in South Africa—providing funding for both civil society groups and government initiatives such as the provision of housing, an important deliverable for the government of President Nelson Mandela.

Over the years, groups partly funded by the Foundation have taken a leading role in efforts to realise the rights promised by South Africa’s progressive constitution—including the right to education, healthcare and housing. Today, many of the projects and organisations the Foundation supports focus on protecting the constitutional rights of marginalised groups including refugees, sex workers and LGBT communities—and on promoting transparency and accountability in the state and private sector. Since its earliest days, the Foundation has also strongly supported efforts to give all South Africans equal access to the protections of the law.

## QUICK FACTS

2016 FOUNDATION  
PROJECT FUNDING

**R91M**

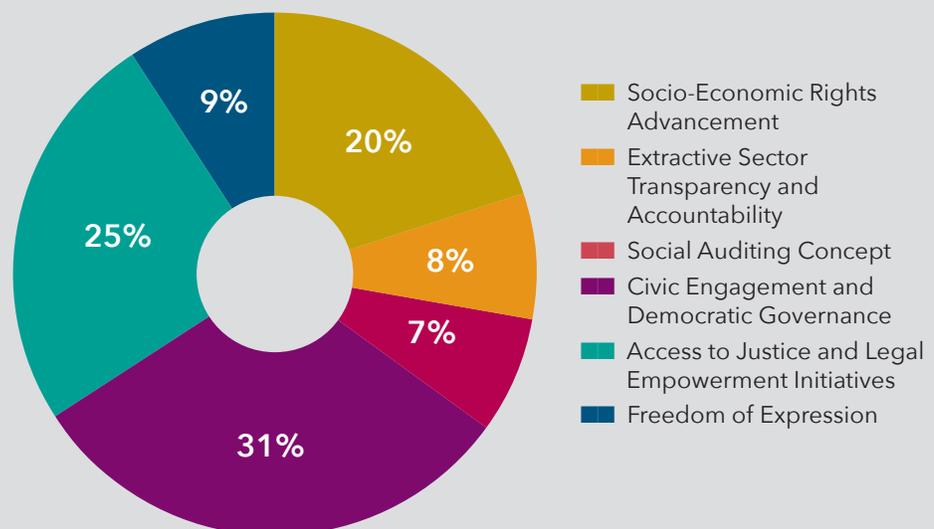
TOTAL FOUNDATION  
FUNDING IN SOUTH AFRICA  
SINCE 1994

**R1.14B**

SOUTH AFRICAN  
GRANT RECIPIENTS  
IN 2016

**80+**

FOUNDATION FUNDING BY SECTOR IN 2016



<sup>1</sup> South African Rand equals  
0.075 US Dollar

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### FACTS ABOUT OUR WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

- 01** In 1995 the Open Society Foundations partnered with the government of South Africa on the creation of the National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency (NURCHA), a 20-year financing partnership that supported the construction of over 250,000 housing units for poor South African families.
- 02** We have supported some of South Africa's best known social movements and civil society groups, working on a diverse range of issues, from promoting the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS to seeking equal access to healthcare, housing and education.
- 03** The Foundation has worked closely with the government on the development of an effective national network of community advice offices.
- 04** The Foundation has supported the growth and training of community radio stations, including children's radio, across South Africa.
- 05** We have supported community and civil society groups that can carry out research and advocacy campaigns to increase accountability in South Africa's mining sector.
- 06** We have supported organisations which encourage and facilitate greater citizen engagement in the day-to-day business of government, including a 2016 report on the performance of national parliamentary committees.
- 07** The Foundation's work on strengthening local government accountability has included supporting community-led "citizens' audits" to monitor the delivery of basic services and public infrastructure, such as public sanitation and schools.
- 08** During the build-up to the 2016 elections, we supported an online civil society group which ran an "Election Analysis Room" to provide independent analysis.
- 09** In recent years, we have had a dedicated focus on supporting and funding younger grantees of colour, to promote broad transformation objectives, and to ensure that over time our grantees represent the demographics of South Africa.