

Be There Final Evaluation - Executive Summary

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Be There was Amnesty International's first large-scale, multi-year restricted programme, implemented from January 2019 to December 2025. It brought Amnesty's Crisis Response and Refugee & Migrant Rights work together under a single Theory of Change, organised around two pillars: preventing and protecting people during crisis and displacement, and building new lives in safety and dignity. It was delivered across more than 50 countries a year, producing over 700 programme outputs. Including pre-funding and emergency contributions, the programme raised £18.6 million in total.

The Be There Model

The evaluation found that Be There was an overall success. It produced strong, well-evidenced human rights outcomes, and it proved that Amnesty could design and deliver a coherent, multi-year, externally funded programming at scale. Its success depended on several elements working together, amongst those:

- Multi-year strategic and financial planning, Budgetary underwriting at the IS,
- Flexible Theory of Change with multiple teams working under a joint strategy,
- Dedicated programme management and effective grant management 'back office',
- Restricted funding model with strong section leadership,
- Increased accountability and reporting, and
- Ambitious fundraising target.

No single element would have been sufficient alone, but together, they created a supportive environment for achieving human rights impact.

Strategy and Theory of Change (ToC)

The ToC, connecting crisis response with refugee and migrant rights, was found logical and relevant to the environment in which Be There was conceived. Its flexibility to adapt to shifting contexts while staying anchored to a overarching strategy was identified as its defining strength. Within Pillar One, rapid response and digital investigations were the most externally visible workstreams. Work on at-risk populations filled a strategic gap, and the prevention outcome, though deliberated at first and hard to measure, added

a real conceptual value. Pillar Two was highly relevant at the time, though harder to fundraise for and suffered from weaker early ownership. The clearest gap within the ToC was operational rather than structural. The two pillars, though conceptually coherent, run largely in parallel, with collaboration incidental rather than by design. It didn't cause issues with delivery but could have been a missed opportunity. Another lesson was around setting few meaningful indicators from the outset, strengthening the framework and its monitoring.

Human Rights Impact: Pillar One

THE EVIDENCE LAB

The Evidence Lab, a digital investigations team, transformed Amnesty's research model. Thanks to Be There, the team roughly doubled in size, built a strategy, and was able to experiment and innovate. Amongst most notable achievements was the eighteen-month Raqqa investigation which combined satellite imagery, social media verification, and field footage into a VR exhibition shown across Europe and the US. The Mariupol theatre investigation in Ukraine, done entirely remotely under Russian occupation, used a 3D model and blast-wave analysis to prove the strike was a deliberate war crime. Similar methods later underpinned work in Gaza, Lebanon, DRC, and Myanmar. Beyond its investigations, the team trained dozens of researchers from regional offices, global teams and sections, building capacity in digital investigation within the wider organization. The team described itself as having been in "crisis mode" for the past three years, with shrinking physical access to conflict zones (Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan, Iran) pushing up the demand.

AT-RISK GROUPS

One of Be There's most significant contributions was the creation of new areas of expertise within Amnesty. Be There provided the stability needed to develop sustained, cross-cutting bodies of work on at-risk populations and established Amnesty as a credible actor in new spaces. An important finding emerged that approaching conflict through the lens of specific at-risk populations help unlock impact at the broader level. This was true in Nigeria, where focusing on children and older people found pressure points in a counter-terrorism context. It was also the case in Ukraine, where the specific needs of older people and people with disabilities shaped the language of international resolutions. Several other examples of impact were observed. In Nigeria, *We Dried Our Tears* documented children unlawfully detained alongside adults in a donor-funded "reintegration" programme. As a result, donors paused funding, a closed school reopened, and children stopped being held with adults. *The Yazidi Child Survivors* report helped get children abducted by ISIS included in Iraq's 2021 reparations law. In Afghanistan, *Death in Slow Motion* established Taliban treatment of women and girls as crimes against humanity for gender persecution, leading Denmark, Sweden, and Finland to grant Afghan women automatic refugee status. In Yemen, a 2019 disability report was built with local organisations from the outset and released in an innovative, inclusive version. North East Syria's 2024 research contributed to over 4,000 people being released from detention. Work on older people in Nigeria, then later Ukraine, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Argentina, fed into a push for a UN Convention on the rights of older people and Amnesty's ongoing Age Loud campaign.

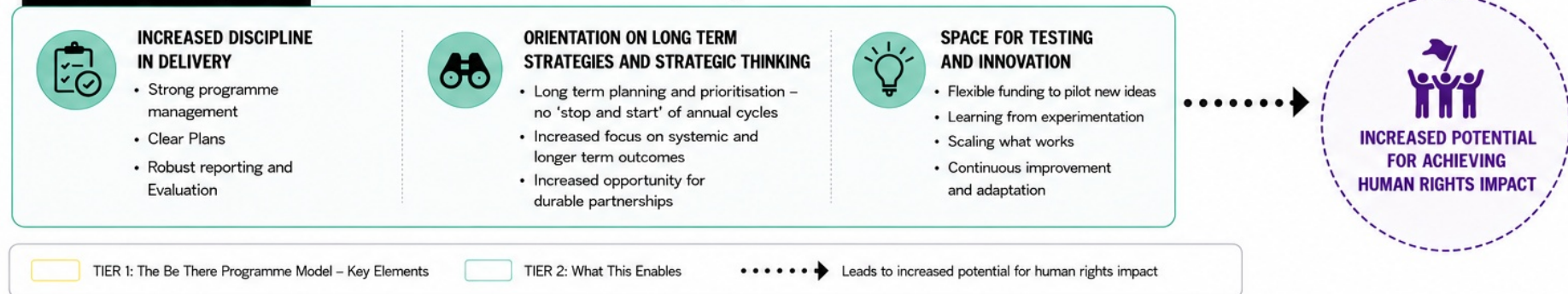
BE THERE PROGRAMME MODEL

A long-term, strategic, accountable and innovative approach to increasing our human rights impact

TIER 1 | THE BE THERE PROGRAMME MODEL – KEY ELEMENTS



TIER 2 | WHAT THIS ENABLES



COUNTRY-LEVEL RESPONSE

Country-level response delivered some of the programme's most significant impact. In Myanmar, the *Deadly Cargo* investigation traced aviation fuel shipments sustaining the military's air strikes, linking at least nine shipments to deadly attacks. Canada banned jet fuel exports to the junta, four other governments imposed sanctions, and the UN Human Rights Council resolution on Myanmar cited the research directly. In Gaza, Crisis Team and Evidence Lab documentation from October 2023 onward, including tracing US weapons to specific strikes and the razing of Khuza'a, fed into Amnesty's genocide determination and a temporary US pause on a bomb transfer to Israel, with the evidence later cited in ICC proceedings. Ukraine saw over twenty outputs in the first six months of the invasion, including the Mariupol theatre investigation, and record emergency fundraising restricted to the work (£3.7 million in three months). It also produced lessons around political sensitivity and analysis. In Sierra Leone, innovative research on conflict-related mental health, contributed directly to a government bill replacing an outdated mental health law. In the Philippines, sustained reporting on Duterte's 'war on drugs', causing over 6,000 killings from 2019 onward, became one of the most-cited evidence base in the ICC's charges against him following his 2025 arrest.

THE DIGITAL VERIFICATION CORPS (DVC)

The DVC proved a strong model combining research, education and movement-building. Hundreds of students were trained in open-source investigation, geolocation, verification, and metadata analysis. The DVC contributed directly to Amnesty's research, from tracing internet shutdowns alongside civilian killings in Iran to processing over 300 pieces of footage of police violence in Cali, Colombia, later used in court. A survey of 33 participants found universal satisfaction (no dissatisfied responses) and real career influence. The model, although effective, depends heavily on a small IS team and committed faculty leads across nine universities. Participants saw real

room to grow, particularly into computer science and engineering faculties, already piloted in Berlin.

Human Rights Impact: Pillar Two

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Amnesty helped strengthen the community sponsorship model for refugees, engaging local communities to directly welcome and support newcomers. Working in partnerships and starting from what communities could practically do rather than from the problem, Amnesty helped grow sponsorship projects from 2 to 19 countries, with over one million people sponsored globally by 2025. Sections in Argentina, Ireland, and Australia turned early programmes into lasting national infrastructure, with Open Community in Ireland, CRSA in Australia now running independently of Amnesty. Amnesty's distinct contribution was a human rights lens: pushing partners on power dynamics and charity-based narratives and creating space for inclusion of refugee leaders. The model showed that hyper-local, solution-oriented work can move policy where conventional advocacy has stalled, offering a template relevant beyond refugee rights.

REFUGEE ACTIVISTS AND REFUGEE-LED ORGANISATIONS IN AFRICA

Between 2021 and 2023, the RMR team's work with LGBTQI+ refugees in Kenya's Kakuma camp, conducted jointly with Amnesty Kenya and the National Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission documented hate crimes and near-total police impunity. The work showed what meaningful participation looks like in practice and contributed towards a European Parliament resolution. It was also an example of sustainability of Be There's interventions, with over 160 refugees across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania

trained in advocacy, now using their own voice to claim their rights, and LGBTQI+ refugees deliberately included from the outset.

PUSHBACKS AND UNLAWFUL DETENTION

Amnesty's RMR team filled a strategic gap, documenting unlawful detention of refugees crossing the Lithuania/Belarus border (amounting to torture). Amnesty reporting brought results. The 'temporary accommodation' procedure ended, with nearly 3,000 people released, and the right to asylum reinstated in Lithuanian law. The work continued into litigation, including cases before the European Court of Human Rights and a class action for 77 detained asylum seekers, brought about largely through one detainee collaborating with Amnesty. Work on Lithuania and Belarus demonstrated the difference Amnesty can make by taking a stand in a smaller, less-monitored country.

Engagement across the movement

Sections engaged with Be There in three ways: fundraising, using programme outputs, and direct delivery. Feedback on communications products and other programme outputs was overwhelmingly positive. Sections engagement in Be There went beyond funding. They co-delivered community sponsorship, Age Loud campaign, the Sierra Leone mental health research, and the Afghanistan gender-persecution report, shaping and championing work rather than just supporting its delivery. Regional Offices collaborated on Be There bringing complementary expertise and contextual knowledge. The collaboration worked best where it was structured from the outset, such as in Myanmar, Niger, and Haiti. Where it wasn't, regional offices flagged challenges in follow-through. The 2025 joint strategy meeting on Sudan, bringing Crisis, advocacy, and regional staff together, was seen as a model worth replicating elsewhere. Global South entities

participated meaningfully throughout, though the financing model with restricted income raised predominantly by Western sections, concentrated some of the strategic influence there too. Successor programmes have begun addressing this through open calls for participation, though questions of strategic coherence remain.

Financing model

Be There was based on a financing model where sections, particularly AI Switzerland, raised restricted funds and transferred them to the IS, which underwrote a baseline guarantee from its own budget. That underwriting was the condition participants pointed to most consistently as critical for the model to work. Successor programmes (Be There Two and Three) haven't fully replicated the same multi-year underwriting commitment, leaving them financially more fragile. The restricted funding mechanism, where sections transfer restricted funds raised and receive 20% credit on assessment, worked reasonably well, though smaller sections questioned the incentive. Challenges with prioritizing international over section's own domestic fundraising are a hindrance. Several alternative models were explored such as upfront payment arrangements, or section-set targets, amongst others.

Organisational learning

Long-term, multi-year planning was the most consistently valued element of Be There across every stakeholder group. 85% of interviewees described it as beneficial. Be There demonstrated that restricted fundraising is viable at Amnesty at scale without compromising programmatic integrity. The programme shifted the internal conversation from whether to pursue restricted income to how much of the total mix it should represent. Some argued the same planning discipline and accountability should apply

to unrestricted funding too, rather than being treated as something only donor scrutiny can justify. Increased accountability requirements were generally seen as good practice and credited with building capability. Seven years on, Be There's teams are perceived as one of IS's highest performing, having learned to plan, prioritise, and package their work for funders. Dedicated senior programme management was central to all of this. The Head of the Be There Programme's combined skillset was consistently seen as key to the programme's success, alongside the work of the Global Restricted Income Manager in building the finance systems and cases for underwriting that let the programme grow.

Sustainability

Be There didn't have a clearly articulated exit strategy from the outset, but the transition to business-as-usual went relatively smoothly, helped by moving staff onto permanent contracts, and embedding core parts of the programme within the Amnesty portfolio. Its legacy is that Amnesty chose to replicate the model, with Be There Two and Be There Three carrying forward most of its core architecture. This reflects institutional confidence in what the original achieved. What remains somewhat unresolved is financial sustainability with teams now back on annual budget cycles. Flat budgets and inflation may pose some risk over time. Challenges were also raised around the level of ambition in underwriting the new Be There programmes, and the need to combine inclusion and ownership with strategic coherence.

Recommendations

MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL PLANNING

Commit to multi-year financial planning and IS underwriting as an entry condition for future restricted programmes.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT MODEL

Embed Be There's programme management model, shared Theory of Change, rigorous accountability, dedicated management, across priority workstreams regardless of funding source.

INNOVATION AND ADDED VALUE

Ensure new global interventions demonstrate clear added value alongside regional and section portfolios, rather than duplicating them to ensure meaningful engagement.

INTEGRATION OF COMMUNICATION AND RESEARCH

Where possible, embed communications thinking into research design from the outset.

JOINT PLANNING

Formalise joint planning, with shared objectives, division of roles, follow-through and exit plans, for a defined set of priority countries.

EVIDENCE LAB

Sustain investment in the Evidence Lab to close identified expertise gaps and mainstream digital methodologies more broadly.