



STRATEGY 2019-2021

Human Rights in our time

Courageous voices - collective responsibility

Human rights are coming under pressure. In the current political climate, many of today's heads of government lack the will to ring-fence democracy and to use human rights to inform policy development. At the same time, authoritarian policies are gaining more support from popular movements.

In awarding the Rafto Prize, the Rafto Foundation spotlights human rights defenders who set an example for anyone striving to create a better world. The Rafto Prize Laureates are courageous activists who champion work to promote human dignity, freedom and democracy using non-violent means. Promoting human rights requires a capacity for critical thinking and a belief that it is worth standing up for what you believe in. The Rafto Foundation works to promote an understanding of and to inspire such work.

The Rafto Foundation carries a legacy from the Norwegian School of Economics, where Thorolf Rafto was a Professor. The Rafto Foundation was established to commemorate his work to support human rights defenders. Thorolf Rafto inspired engagement among his colleagues and students. This legacy obliges us to continue the work to support activists and to inspire engagement. We will work to urge states and the business community to promote human rights and encourage citizens to explore their own engagement in human rights.

The Rafto Foundation underwent a significant development in the previous strategy period. The Foundation has established stronger links with relevant centres of expertise and is working on several major, long-term projects. We have also expanded and established a more stable revenue base. Consequently, in the coming period it will be necessary to work in a more results-oriented manner, with a sharper focus on selected areas rather than simply on further growth.

The Rafto Foundation is well known in Bergen and recognised among those who work in the human rights field. This platform, along with new media technology, will enable the Rafto Foundation to further raise the international profile of our prize and our human rights work.

The Rafto Foundation's object clause

The Foundation's object is, in the spirit of Thorolf Rafto, to promote human rights, primarily intellectual, political and economic freedom. This work shall be performed on a humanistic basis without geographic demarcation in order to promote human dignity. The Rafto Foundation shall award the Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize (the Rafto Prize). The Rafto Foundation's work shall be performed through follow-up of the Rafto Prizes, educational initiatives and other communication.

Strategic goals 2019-2021

- 1 The Rafto Foundation shall help to strengthen the influence of the Rafto Prize Laureates' work on human rights and facilitate network-building with other Rafto Prize laureates and fellow human rights defenders.
- 2 The Rafto Foundation shall increase its ability to influence the work of the business community and schools on human rights.
- 3 The Rafto Foundation shall reinforce its work by developing partnerships and collaboration agreements with centres of expertise.



Above: Ombudsman Adam Bodnar (Poland) gives his keynote speech at the Rafto Conference in 2018. Photo: Ingvild Festervoll Melien/The Rafto Foundation. Right: Torch light procession honoring the laureates Parveena Ahangar and Parvez Imroz (Kashmir) in 2017. Photo: Magnus Skrede/The Rafto Foundation

The Rafto Prize shall put human rights on the agenda, recognize and inspire

The Rafto Prize is relevant, gives recognition and inspires people around the world. In the field of defending human rights, we are all dependent on people being willing to stand up and defend these rights. The Rafto Prize spotlights people or organizations who make a special contribution to human rights in areas where these are coming under particular pressure. We wish to use the Rafto Prize to recognise their work in the context of a global responsibility and work to honour human rights.



The Rafto Prize shall:

- Make human rights relevant and put them on the agenda
- Recognize the work of the Prize Laureate, afford protection in the form of visibility and inspire human rights defenders
- Inspire public engagement and international solidarity



Above: The Rafto Prize shall create a community where the laureates support each others work. The Rafto Prize Laureates Rebiya Kadeer (2004) and Yanar Mohammed (2016).

Photo: Lind og Lunde/The Rafto Foundation Right: Thorolf Rafto Challenge 2017.

Photo: Ingvild Festervoll Melien/The Rafto Foundation.

We shall support the laureates, build networks and influence decision-makers and businesses

Human rights defenders can often feel in a vulnerable position. When a human rights defender receives the Rafto Prize, this marks the start of a long-term relationship with the Foundation. The Rafto Prize creates a community where Laureates support each other and raise each other's profile. The Rafto Foundation promotes work in networks that reinforce compliance with human rights and that influence stakeholders such as states and the business community to accept responsibility for ensuring that human rights are not violated..



The Foundation shall:

- Support the Prize Laureate's work on human rights
- Build networks and link key players in order to reinforce work on human rights
- Influence decision-makers and the business community with responsibility, leverage and obligations with regard to the honouring of human rights



Above and right: Education for students at the Rafto House. Photos: Mangus Skrede/The Rafto Foundation.

We shall inspire and empower students in Norway to show engagement for human rights

Democracy is a continuous process where trust can only be built through discourse and transparency. The Rafto Foundation regards democracy as the best system for administering human rights. A living democracy requires disagreement, the courage of one's convictions and engagement for human rights. The Rafto Foundation's educational initiatives shall encourage students to get to know about their own engagement and explore human-rights-related dilemmas and values.



The educational initiatives shall:

- Inspire and empower students to engage in critical democratic thought and show engagement for human rights
- Equip teachers with the competence and skills required to provide well thought-out democracy and human rights education
- Be a leading organisation in Norway that builds bridges between education for democracy, human rights education and practice in classrooms



The campaign #tacklehomophobia at Bergen Pride Parade in 2018. Photo: Nikita Solenov

Right: Sharing in social media during the Rafto Conference 2018.

Photo: Ingvild F. Melien/The Rafto Foundation

We shall make human rights relevant and engaging

We shall increase peoples' knowledge and engagement for the Rafto Prize and our work, and be a clear and credible voice in media. The current media landscape is more diverse than ever, but is also more polarised and commercialised than it was even a few years ago. Each year the Rafto Foundation introduces a new Prize Laureate to a Norwegian and international audience. We shall be a clear and credible voice in media that can make human rights relevant and important for modern society.



The Rafto Foundation shall through communication:

- Increase engagement and knowledge of the Rafto Prize, the Laureates and their work
- Be perceived as an organisation with both influence and an authoritative voice on matters relating to human rights defenders, the business community's responsibility for defending human rights, and democracy and human rights education
- Generate engagement and participation through digital channels



Torch light procession for human rights is each year organized by a voluntary student group. Photo: Ingvild Festervoll Melien/The Rafto Foundation

We shall be a meaningful community for volunteers and an attractive workplace

The Rafto Foundation's work is founded on a strong commitment to human rights and is dependent on committed employees and volunteers. The Rafto Foundation shall be an organisation that people can commit to for a long period, where they feel they are valued and gain from their engagement. Volunteers are an important resource for the Foundation.

The Rafto Foundation shall:

- Be an organisation that attracts and retains the most able and engaged colleagues
- Be a meaningful community for volunteers who contribute to the Foundation's work
- Be a professional organisation known for the high quality of its activities



Photo: Ingvild Festervoll Melien/The Rafto Foundation

We shall have a predictable economy and a good balance between private and public revenues

The Rafto Foundation does not generate significant internal revenues and our work to promote human rights is reliant on generous supporters. It is critical that the Foundation retain political independence and integrity. We believe that more people will support the Rafto Foundation's work if we can become more adept at communicating what we stand for and what we achieve. This will provide us with a more varied income basis.

The Rafto Foundation shall:

- Secure adequate financing that provides stable and predictable support for our work
- Ensure that the organisation maintains its independence and integrity in the financing of its activities



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