

Media Release

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Guerrilla-style grant-making wins German foundation coveted award

Guerrilla Foundation wins 2017 Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards for Brave Philanthropy

It takes bravery to be an activist on the frontlines of social change – taking to the streets and even risking arrest in bold displays of non-violent direct action. It also takes bravery to support these activists, particularly when most funders are looking for risk-free investments.

The Berlin-based Guerrilla Foundation (GF) is on a mission to shake up the global philanthropic community – and for its efforts has been named winner of the coveted Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Award for 2017 in the category of Brave Philanthropy.

Guerrilla Foundation was selected from some 300 nominations from across the globe. They will be honored at a ceremony on 7 December in Suva, Fiji as part of International Civil Society Week.

For the first time this year, the Awards have been run in collaboration with The Elders – a group of independent leaders working together for peace, justice and human rights, founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007. Specifically, the Awards form part of the #WalkTogether campaign, catalysed by The Elders with civil society partner networks. #WalkTogether seeks to celebrate ‘sparks of hope’ like the Award winners, who are inspiring hope, compassion and empathy at a time when the dark forces of fear, xenophobia and hate speech represent a profound threat to global freedoms and unity.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, Deputy Chair of The Elders and former Prime Minister of Norway, extended her congratulations: "I commend the Guerrilla Foundations for providing security, resources and deep partnership to empower civil society organisations to do their courageous work, and for their willingness to walk together with activists."

On being told they had won the Award, GF's Ivan Juric said: "It is an absolute honour. Courage in philanthropy is truly lacking and it is a field that craves bravery far more than it knows. We hope to give a nudge - or thrust - to that end!"

The Awards recognise outstanding efforts in four categories: Youth Activist, Individual Activist, Civil Society Organisation and Brave Philanthropy.

The risky nature of work supported by GF means that some of their grantees can't even publicly acknowledge the funding they receive. GF's grant-making extends across Europe, with a priority on Southern and Eastern Europe. It is also supporting the development of the first European Participatory Fund, which will allow activists to decide where funds go and how they will shape their communities.

"Even though we are not big supporters of 'championing' culture, this award will hopefully spotlight the importance of funding activism as well as out-of-the-box thinking. Our badass grantees and friends are

getting a bigger platform to showcase their work through this award and we couldn't be more glad!", Mr. Juric explained.

Other award winners include a young Guyanese change-maker, an Egyptian journalist and activist, and a Nigerian NGO promoting mental health awareness.

The Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards are led by global civil society alliance, CIVICUS, through the Civic Space Initiative. Together with CIVICUS' [SPEAK!](#) campaign, the Awards seek to celebrate, promote, and defend the voices of ordinary citizens in ensuring a more just and sustainable future for all.

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