

Annual Report 2023

This report covers the period January 2022-December 2023.

The 2022 is available via the CICTAR website [here](#)

In 2023, contributions from our partners and supporters have allowed CICTAR to achieve increasing impact, to extend our operations (including with unions in the Global South) and to plan for future growth. Demand for CICTAR's skills now significantly outstrips our ability to support unions, so the continued support of our core partners is critical, as well as the opportunity to work in partnership and ensure that the work that we do has maximum impact in winning for workers.

Below is an outline of some of the key development and impacts in 2023.

1. Reports

1.1. *Care UK*

Our report on [Care UK](#), one of the five largest care home operators in the UK, was released at the start of February 2023. The report highlights the vast profits being extracted from the care system through real estate investment and provides recommendations for reforms. The report led to an [excellent comment piece in the Guardian](#) and was covered in PSI's global update. The report was subsequently presented at [two events](#) arranged and hosted by Unison Cymru (Wales) in October 2023. One with local authority leaders and Senedd (Welsh Parliament) members. In November 2023 the report was also presented to Unison Scotland and members of the Scottish Parliament.



1.2. Brookfield

In early June 2023 we published a [multi-country analysis of Brookfield Asset Management](#), Canada's largest alternative asset manager. This report outlined the reasons behind Brookfield's title of 'Canada's top tax dodger'. It also provided case studies from the UK, Brazil, Australia and Colombia, showing how profits are extracted for investors from sectors as diverse as water, energy and healthcare while paying consistently low rates of tax and exploits global tax havens and loopholes.

The report was developed in support of the proposal for Brookfield to adopt the Global Reporting Initiative standard on tax transparency put forward by our partners BC General Employees' Union at the company's annual meeting in Canada on June 9th. The report received significant media attention across the globe and in Canada, our partner, NUPGE [highlighted the CICTAR report](#) on Brookfield in support of the shareholder vote.

1.3. Cofinimmo

Another major CICTAR report was also published in June 2023, developed in partnership with the European federation of Public Service Unions, EPSU and colleagues from Belgian and Dutch unions. [The report](#) reveals the extraordinary level of profits being made by the Belgian property company, Cofinimmo, through its increasing specialization in care home property ownership. The report was covered in n both the Dutch-speaking and Francophone media in Belgium.

1.4. Other research

In addition to the large reports, [research developed by CICTAR](#) was used by International Transport Federation (ITF) exposing the low effective tax rates paid by the shipping giant Maersk and more recent work by CICTAR that was used by the Herald Sun in Australia to expose potential profit shifting to reduce tax payments by the [Australian biotech company CSL](#) (a company that has lobbied hard against changes to Australian legislation to require greater tax transparency). This was followed up with a new [report on DP World](#) in October which received significant media attention.



2. Organizational development and evaluation

2023 saw significant developments for CICTAR as an organization. Following a decision by the steering committee, CICTAR was officially established, at the end of 2022 as a non-profit Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) in the UK. A number of different options were examined, but the option of a CLG in the UK was considered most appropriate. From the start of 2023 we were able to operate as an independent legal entity.

The registration process included the submission of a comprehensive 'Articles of Association', which lays out in detail, the basis on which the organization will be governed. These are available via Companies House, [here](#). The current system of governance is replicated in the short to medium term, but with options to change in the future, if needed. After a prolonged process, we were able to obtain a UK bank account (with Metrobank) and were able to receive funds from existing hosts. We worked with our accountants, [Godfrey Wilson](#), to set up systems to enable accountable financial management and employment. The new organization will replace the current role of the Tax Justice Network (TJN) in the UK, who have hosted us up until now. We are very grateful for TJN's support, without which we would not have been able to operate in our early years. Given the need to employ people and manage funds elsewhere, we will continue our relationships with PSI as a CICTAR host.

2.1. New Website

In early 2023 we launched a new version of the [CICTAR website](#), replacing the old WordPress version. As well as being clearer and simpler in lay-out, the main advantage of the new website is that it can be more quickly and easily be kept updated and kept current with new research reports, media coverage, blogs, etc.

2.2. Organizational Review

A challenge for CICTAR has always been trying to balance the many opportunities to support partners with the limits imposed by our available resources. Having been operational for five years, and with the new organization registered and functional, it was a good time to think carefully about how we plan ahead, how to manage our resources for greatest impact and how to increase the resources we have available.

To this end CICTAR commissioned an external review from the organization '[Purpose Union](#)' to help us to evaluate our work to date, understand what makes us effective and help to plan for the next stage in our organizational development, moving from being a small, agile and effective organization to becoming a larger agile and effective organization.

The review was carried out over an extended period, with broad consultation and the outcome was finalized in August 2023. Some of the key findings are:

- A broad and enthusiastic appreciation for the contribution CICTAR has already made, a recognition of the calibre of our work and validation of the CICTAR model of working.
- A need to communicate the shared sense of mission and understanding of our theory of change, beyond our core stakeholders.

- A need to become more proactive, and more targeted, in attracting additional foundation funding, while maintaining an appropriate balance with union contributions.
- A need to expand work in the Global South to complement our existing work with the intention of working more globally, connecting union campaigns in different parts of the world.

Purpose Union also provided some very specific recommendations around our internal operations, to provide an appropriate structure as we grow and develop, including how we can continue to work as a strong team, with the challenges of not only being a ‘virtual’ organization, but one which has team members working across three continents and time zones.

We have already started to implement some of the priority recommendations and will use the review’s recommendations as a touchstone for planning from 2024 onwards.

2.3. Expansion and partnerships in the Global South

One sign of our continued growth in 2023, and also alignment with the organizational review recommendations, was the recruitment of a new, full time, CICTAR researcher based in Brazil. Livi Gerbase joined CICTAR at the start of November. This recruitment has enabled us to build on the work initiated in both Brazil and Colombia (see below on ‘Brookfield’). PSI, in partnership with CICTAR and the Colombian Union of Employees of the National Tax and Customs Directorate (Sinedian) organized a press conference on the Brookfield Latin American case studies in Colombia in June 2023, which was followed up by another event during the regional tax summit in Cartagena in July and a regional tax justice event in August involving PSI affiliates from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras and Panamá.

Elsewhere in the world, we have developed a new partnership with the Kenyan Medical Practitioners and Dentist Union, KMPDU. The partnership arose from a presentation made at a region-wide meeting of affiliate unions of Public Services International (PSI). Under this partnership, work was initiated in 2023 to look into global companies involved in pushing privatization of health services in Kenya, and investigating the role of ‘development’ funding from European governments to support these companies. This work will provide opportunities for coordinated campaigning with European unions. KMPDU have worked with their members to collect information at the local level, to complement the ongoing research by CICTAR at the national and global level.

We have also initiated discussions with partners about an exciting piece of potential work in South East Asia, and have developing a draft proposed action plan and MOU.

2.4. New union partners

In 2023 we were happy to welcome International Transport Federation (ITF) and the Australian Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union (CFMME) as contributing partners to CICTAR. Our work with ITF has built on previous [work on Maersk](#) and in October 2023 we worked with ITF and CFMME to launch an [exposé of a major global port operator](#), supporting both an immediate campaign for workers rights and a wider call for tax transparency.

Towards the end of 2023 we also signed an agreement with another new contributing partner, the union-linked organization [‘For the Welfare State’](#) in Norway, to develop research to support a campaign to oppose privatization in the early childhood education sector.

3. Training

In 2023 CICTAR was involved in contributing to a number of forums, including the Australia Council of Trade Unions, the Africa regional tax network of PSI event, held in Addis Ababa, an event by the Australian Democracy Network and a briefing for senior staff at Federated Hermes, one of the world's largest investment managers, who have been consistently supportive of CICTAR's positions on tax transparency. In October 2023 CICTAR work was presented at several sessions of the PSI global Congress, held in Geneva and again at the meeting of the Network of Unions for Tax Justice, held in Berlin in November.

4. Policy impact

4.1. pCbCR

A strong example of the way we work and the impact we have had is our work to influence the Australia Government to introduce Public Country by Country Reporting. A more detailed note on the role that CICTAR played, working closely with PSI, with national unions and with civil society is provided at the end of this report.

4.2. ORPEA

We are continuing to work with our French and European trade union partners on Orpea, the largest care home operator in Europe, and the company reached the verge of collapse towards the end of 2023, with the stock price down 90% from January. Fraudulent union elections have been now overturned and (as CICTAR suggested in our [Orpea report](#)) the new CEO admitted that ethical misconduct, combined with the excessive real estate and international development undertaken by the previous management team, have seriously affected ORPEA's financial situation.

5. Advocacy

Jason Ward, CICTAR's Principal Analyst was included again in the [International Tax Review's](#) 50 most influential figures in Tax, one of only three 'Non-Governmental Organization' figures to be named.

Building on, and facilitated by, work done by CICTAR in partnership with PIRC (see 2022 annual report), a number of further shareholder votes took place on resolutions to require public country by country reporting, ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, and Amazon. As the [US based FACT Coalition](#) reported, these votes demonstrate a 'rising tide' of support for greater tax transparency amongst shareholders. There was also a vote at Brookfield (see above) linked to CICTAR's new report.

We have made a number of submissions, including a joint submission with TJN on ethics in the audit and consultancy, to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services

6. Media

Over the past year CICTAR has stepped up [its media coverage](#) with over 100 major media 'hits' in major outlets across the globe, as well as multiple re-publications. Some of the highlights include our work on care being cited in the [London Review of Books](#), commentary on [Australia's reform of fossil fuel taxation](#), commentary on the [PWC scandal](#), commentary on the scoop on the [OECD's role](#) in lobbying against improved tax transparency in Australia, coverage of CICTAR's analysis of the biotech firm, [CSL's tax affairs](#) (and the lobbying of CSL against reform) and coverage of [CICTAR's report on DP World](#). We also worked with EPSU to publish an excellent 'long read' article in [Social Europe](#) drawing on the extensive research carried out by CICTAR to make the case that the market is failing to deliver decent social care.

Finally, CICTAR has also been involved in the development of a powerful new documentary, Stolen Time about the care system in Canada, which will feature CICTAR's work. The trailer is available [here](#)

Addendum: Case study on CICTAR's advocacy model

On the 25th of October 2022, as part of the federal budget, the Australian government, announced its [commitment to introduce greater tax transparency](#) for multinational corporations operating in Australia through introducing legislation to require mandatory [public](#) Country-by-Country reporting. Done properly, public CbCR would require large multinationals to report key financial information in every country, so that everyone, everywhere, would have access to the same information on the way that multinationals manage tax obligations.

Building trusted partnerships: CICTAR has been active in Australia since our creation in 2018, hosted by PSI. In that time, we have developed strong and trusted partnerships with unions and civil society. We have worked hard to maintain a very high standard for our research, and to develop reports and analysis that meet the specific needs of our union partners. Our reputation and our connections to the labour movement have generated respect among policymakers and access to high-level discussions.

Building a credible case for change: Our reports in Australia have covered a number of sectors, including care, big tech and procurement and mining/fossil fuels. Whilst we have taken care to address the campaigning needs of partners, we have also used our body of work to make the case for greater financial transparency. This body of work, dissecting the structures and practices of global companies, has given us the credibility required to exert influence.

Creating a solution: At the same time as we were building the case for greater transparency, we were also pushing for a mechanism that would create at least part of the solution. In 2019, CICTAR worked closely with PSI to mobilise unions and investor groups (representing over \$10 trillion of funds) in support of a tax standard at the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), an international independent standards organisation which sets ethical and environmental standards for major businesses.

Building alternative narratives: Another part of the approach to reduce opposition to meaningful transparency has been our work with Pensions & Investment Research Consultants (PIRC) to support the filling of shareholder proposals demanding that Amazon, Microsoft and Cisco adopt the GRI tax standards votes in favour between 21% to 27% is sufficient to indicate a major shift in investor sentiment and put the lie to the claim that business universally oppose greater transparency. The votes were by the Australian government in the justification for the new legislation.

Developing our profile: Over a number of years, the regular production of credible reports has led to CICTAR (and specifically our principal analyst, Jason Ward) building a profile as a 'go-to' voice on tax in the Australian media. As the increasing media attention shows. In the build-up to the recent federal election in Australia it became clear that the Australian Labor Party (ALP) had listened to the arguments and pledged to close tax loopholes for multinationals, rightly judging the issue to be a vote winner. This meant that, once the election had been won, the space opened to push the new government to make that pledge a reality and ensure that any new regulation was as strong as possible in order to set a new global standard.

Exercising power: CICTAR worked with PSI and a number of national union and civil society allies to maximise the number of submissions to the consultations on the legislation and to ensure that there was a consistent line taken during the initial consultation. CICTAR and PSI were also influential in bringing a supportive investor voice to the consultation, from PIRC and individual investment funds such as Norges Bank. At a roundtable discussion, convened by the Australian Treasury ahead of the announcement on the detailed legislation, CICTAR and PSI were able to coordinate a number of union representatives to attend. The explanatory notes that accompany the draft legislation make specific reference to the 'shifting public sentiment for greater transparency and accountability on corporate activity...from investors and capital providers'.

Unfortunately, when the relevant bill was announced on 22nd June the implementation of public country-by-country reporting was not included. Instead, it will be delayed to allow 'further consultation with industry'. It is clear from the [explanatory note](#) that the major reason behind the delay is corporate lobbying.

CICTAR put out a [strong statement](#) in response to the delay, as did our comrades at the [New South Wales Nurses and Midwives Association](#) (NSWNMA). The draft legislation remains unchanged at this stage, and the stated intention remains to implement in the relatively near future. However, any delay brings risks of watering down and the introduction of loopholes. CICTAR will continue to work with partners to keep the pressure on the Australian government to stick with its original intentions.