



ANNUAL REPORT 2017



**KIOS
Foundation**

Human rights are the foundation of sustainable peace and development

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**SUPPORTED BY OFFICIAL
DEVELOPMENT AID FROM THE MINISTRY
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND**

The objective of KIOS Foundation is to promote and defend human rights in the Global South. KIOS was founded in 1998 by 11 Finnish organizations working for human rights and development issues.

KIOS supports and funds human rights projects planned and implemented by local civil society organizations in East Africa and South Asia. The foundation also actively engages in human rights policy advocacy and communication activities.

Together with our partners we work for a world, where dignity and human rights are being recognized for all human beings, and states committed to ensure them.



Funding Human Rights since 1998



In the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, the atmosphere for promoting human rights was globally more positive and optimistic than today. However, the armed conflicts in the Balkans, Rwanda and many other parts of the world manifested, that the end of the cold war did not mean the end of violence. Instead, the need to promote and defend human rights was greater than ever.

For KIOS, the year 1998 is of special importance. Not only was KIOS founded in 1998, but also the UN Declaration on human rights defenders was adopted. The declaration was a milestone for the international human rights movement : the member states of United Nations accepted the rights of every individual to promote human rights.

KIOS Foundation was founded earlier in

the same year. Eleven Finnish civil society organizations and the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs agreed about the initiative to promote human rights by founding a specific foundation for this purpose.

The Ministry had been determined and active for improving mechanisms of development aid to support human rights, disability issues and environmental issues. Mr. Pekka Haavisto, Minister for Development and Environment, and his team enhanced strongly the decisions for KIOS and its' sister foundations Abilis and Siemenpuu to be founded by providing a guarantee of state funding for these initiatives. On the 6th of August 1998, the representatives from the founding organizations of KIOS gathered to make the decision, and KIOS Foundation was born.

The mandate of KIOS was in funding human rights projects and activities of civil society in the global South. The first funding decisions of KIOS took place in 1999. Nowadays, KIOS focuses on human rights work in East Africa and South Asia. A number of success stories constitute a crucial part of KIOS and its partners' human rights work.

Unfortunately, global development itself has not been a clear success story for human rights. Due to the shrinking or closing space for civil society many of KIOS partner organizations face serious challenges. Many

states have learnt from each other how to restrict peaceful human rights work. Fighting terrorism is used as an excuse for wide restrictions concerning freedom of expression, the legal status and freedom of civil society organizations.

It is also essential to remember, that much positive development for strengthening human rights has taken place recently. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities was adopted in 2006. The Universal Periodic Review has provided a new platform for global dialogue for defending and promoting human rights.

Due to the challenges of human rights work, KIOS develops its own working methods to support human rights organizations.

New ways to support human rights work are needed. Cooperation of human rights funders is also important, if the global development in a number of countries proceeds towards more restricted civil society. Advocacy for and with human rights defenders is crucial for KIOS.

KIOS's 20th anniversary also provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and persistent work of KIOS partner organizations for a more just world.

Ms. Ulla Anttila

Executive Director of KIOS in 2012-2017

(on research leave 1.2.2018 – 31.3.2019)

“Today, human rights organizations and human rights defenders have become the most endangered species.”

– KIOS' partner, South Asia

KIOS IN NUMBERS

456

supported projects since
1998

47

supported projects in 2017

28 182

direct beneficiaries in 2017

7 144

individuals received legal aid
in 2017

HOW WE WORK

WE IDENTIFY

We identify reliable and relevant human rights organizations in South Asia and East Africa

WE FUND

We give direct financial support to local, national and regional human rights actors. Some partners also engage in international advocacy.

WE GUIDE AND MENTOR

We mentor and give guidance to our partners on financial and project management, networking and reporting.

WE COMMUNICATE

We share news of the work of our partners, participate in campaigns and organize human rights seminars and trainings in Helsinki.

WE ADVOCATE

We lobby and advocate for human rights nationally and internationally.

WE FUNDRAISE

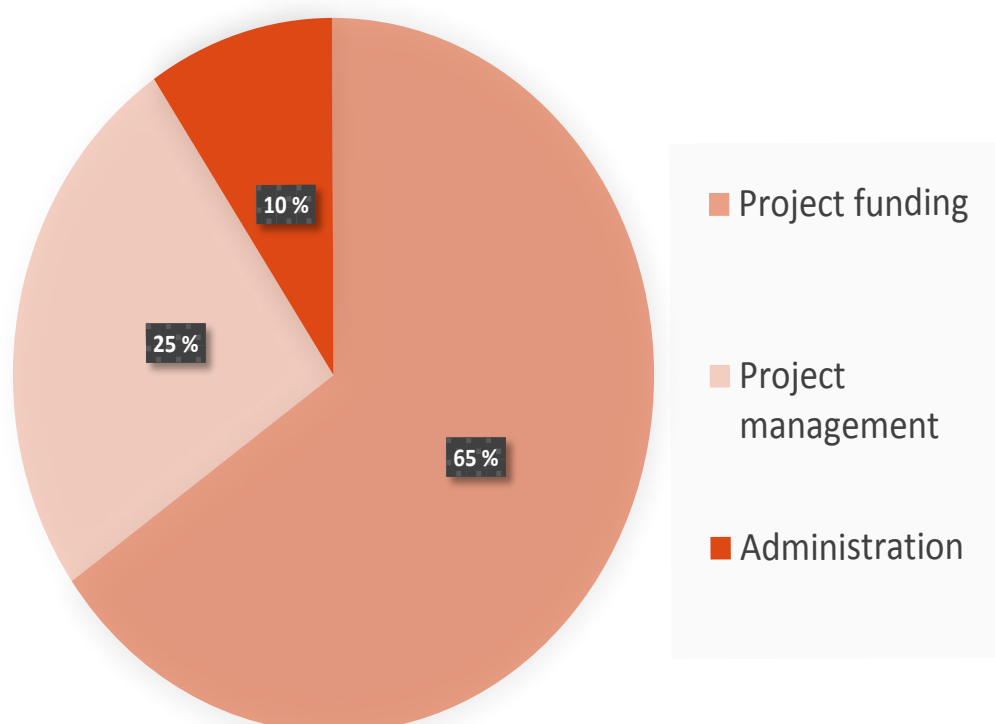
We develop our fundraising strategies and methods in order to ensure long-term and flexible support for human rights work.



KIOS IN FINLAND

The professional and dedicated staff of KIOS is working in Helsinki. Besides the direct financial and technical support channeled to the Global South, KIOS engages in human rights policy advocacy and communication activities in Finland. In 2017, for instance, KIOS organized a Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Seminar and participated in the World Village Festival in Helsinki.

KIOS expenses in 2017 were 1 076 100 EUR.





Phil Bloomer Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, UK
(Photo: KIOS)

Human Rights and Corporate Responsibility

KIOS Foundation organized **Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights seminar** on 16th of May 2017 in Helsinki. The seminar brought together corporate responsibility and human rights experts from the Global North and South to share their views and experiences on the topic. All the speakers agreed, that corporate responsibility needs regulation.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted in 2011, were a great step forward in the field of corporate accountability. The principles give a set of guidelines for states and companies to protect and respect human rights as well as remedy the human rights violations.

The principles do not create legal obligations, but they work as guiding principles for companies and states. In his speech, the ED of **Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, Phil**

Bloomer reminded, that even though the principles are not binding, they are developed in mutual understanding between UN and corporations and should be respected by all actors.

Every supply chain includes slavery

Despite the progress in the field, Bloomer argued, that every supply chain still includes slavery and the responsibility cannot be left for the consumers.

"Consumers have to be detectives to figure out the supply chain of a product,", said Bloomer. He stressed the need for transparency as an essential part of corporate responsibility. Identifying and acknowledging the problems are the first steps.

In the opening speech of the seminar, the Finnish Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, **Kai Mykkänen**

named **SOK** and **Kesko** as examples of progressive companies in the field of corporate responsibility. After **Finnwatch** revealed serious human rights violations in their supply chains, both companies have started to strive for improvements in their responsibility.

The space for human rights defenders is shrinking

NGOs have a significant role to bring into attention human rights violations of corporations; however, the space for civil society has been shrinking all around the globe.

“Our work with corporate responsibility and human rights is often claimed as anti-development,” described KIOS partner, **Phyllis Omidio** from Kenya.

During the East Africa and South Asia seminar panels, KIOS partners addressed that blackmailing, harassment and threats are not exceptions in the work of human rights defenders.

Especially environmental activists have

been under serious attacks. Bloomer mentioned **Berta Caceres**, who was murdered presumably because of her work against land grabbing related to Aqua Zarca dam in Honduras. Bloomer added, that the Finnish development finance institution **Finnfund** had not committed enough to human rights due diligence by funding the project. According to human rights due diligence, companies should identify, prevent and mitigate its potential and actual human rights impacts. The principle guides companies, for example, to consult relevant stakeholders, such as local communities. Finnfund has suspended its funding for the project.

Corporate responsibility needs regulation

All the speakers agreed, that companies' responsibility to respect human rights should not be based on voluntary commitments, but needs regulation. Bloomer highlighted, that respecting human rights through supply chains is a key to sustainable development.

An external evaluation addresses the effectiveness of KIOS

KIOS was evaluated among other 21 organizations receiving programme-based support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. According to the evaluation, the funding for KIOS and the other organizations is justified, since their work is successful and reaches the most vulnerable people in the South.

KIOS
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26

human rights
projects

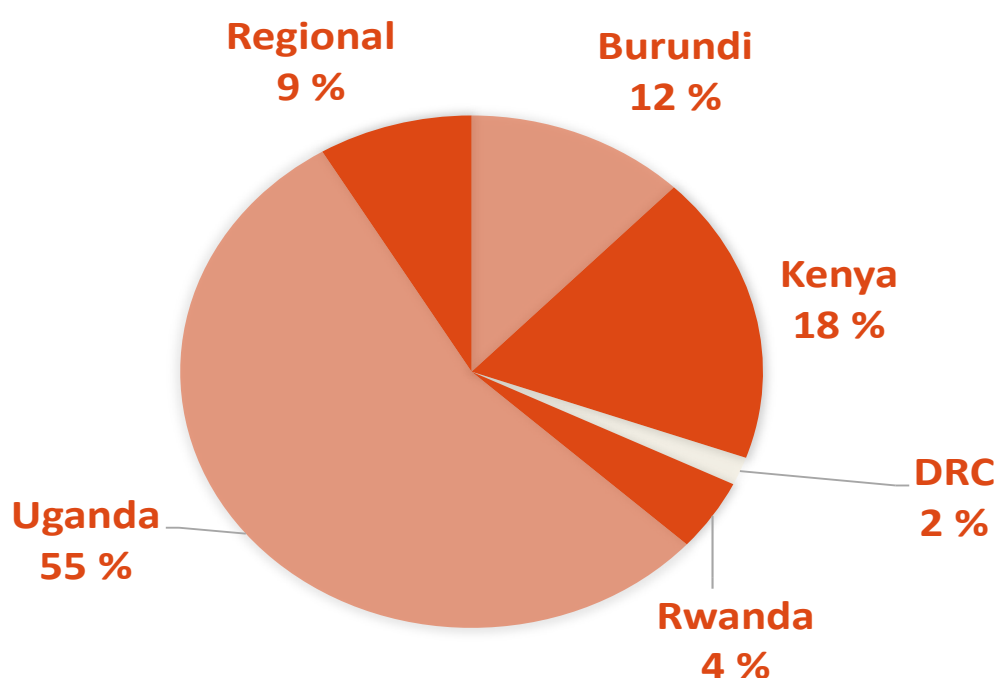
KIOS IN EAST AFRICA

KIOS focus countries in East Africa are Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. Some support is also channelled to partners in Burundi. In 2017, there was still one on-going project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but the project ended during the year. Due to limited resources, KIOS exited DRC in 2017.

In addition, KIOS supports regional projects for greater human rights impact in the region.

Some of the core themes of KIOS supported human rights work in East Africa are economic, social and cultural rights, access to justice and corporate responsibility.

In 2017, KIOS channelled 312 200 EUR to human rights work in East Africa.





Jane Meriwas, Samburu Women Trust and a beaded girl (Photo: SWT)

Supporting women's rights in Kenya

KIOS partner Samburu Women Trust fights against girl child beading in Kenya

Sustainable Development Goals recognize gender equality as one of the 17 goals and seek to universally eliminate all harmful cultural practices, which violate women and girls. One such practice is girl child beading in Samburu communities.

The practice was relatively unknown to the public in Kenya until "Silent Sacrifice" and "Beads of Bondage" documentaries were made by **Samburu Women Trust (SWT)**, an organisation founded in 2009 by a group of young educated Samburu women.

According to the beading tradition the warriors in the Samburu community are allowed to have temporary marital relationships with very young girls from the same. The warrior buys red beads for the girl after getting the mandate from the family of the girl. The main objective of the beading is to prepare the young girl for marriage in the future, but in the actual beading relationship marriage and pregnancy are forbidden. If a beaded girl gets pregnant, it is terminated by elder women in the community.

Most often beaded girls are between the age of 9 to 15 years. In addition to life threatening early pregnancies and unsafe abortions, the practice of beading exposes young girls to physical, mental and sexual violence. This harmful cultural tradition also leads to girls' school dropouts.

With the funding from KIOS, SWT has done research, published and disseminated reports and materials as well as advocated against the beading-tradition. According to SWT, their work has directly reached over 60,000 members of the Samburu communities, including opinion and political leaders. As a result the taboo subjects like beading, forced abortions, child marriage and female genital mutilation have entered into a public discourse among the communities.

The Executive Director of SWT, **Jane Meriwas**, tells that a very remarkable result has been the change in the attitudes among the ones who have been the strongest spokesmen for treasuring all Samburu traditions: The community elders. They have prohibited traditional huts (Singira), which were constructed to facilitate sexual contact between warriors and the underage girls.



Supporting right to health in Uganda

Promoting and defending human rights through strategic litigation

Center for Health, Human Rights and Development CEHURD is an Ugandan human rights organization founded in 2007. KIOS has supported its work since 2011. With KIOS support, the organization has been training journalists on health rights, initiated strategic legal cases and trained grassroots health advocates.

CEHURD lawyers has strong links to the grassroots. CEHURD gathers knowledge from the ground and uses it to initiate strategic legal processes and to do national advocacy work on health rights issues.

One of the cornerstones in CEHURD's work is their strategic litigation case against Mulago Hospital. Jennifer Musimenta went to give birth to Mulago National Referral Hospital based in the Ugandan capital Kampala. Musimenta and her husband Michael Mubangizi were in the firm belief, that they were to have one baby. After delivering the baby, they realized that Musimenta had been expecting twins. However, they left the Hospital with only one child. Some

days after the birth, the couple was given yet another child, but according to the DNA tests, the child was not theirs.

Musimenta and Mubangizi reported to the police and sought legal help from CEHURD. CEHURD filed a case in 2013 regarding the missing newborn. In the beginning of 2017 the High Court of Uganda decided, that there had been a breach of the right to health and of the right to access to health information.

The case has received a lot of attention in the media and has put pressure not only on Mulago Hospital, but also on the Ministry of Health. The tragedy of one family has revealed serious loopholes in the public healthcare system. CEHURD continues to protect and promote right to health through strategic litigations.

KIOS
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21

human rights
projects

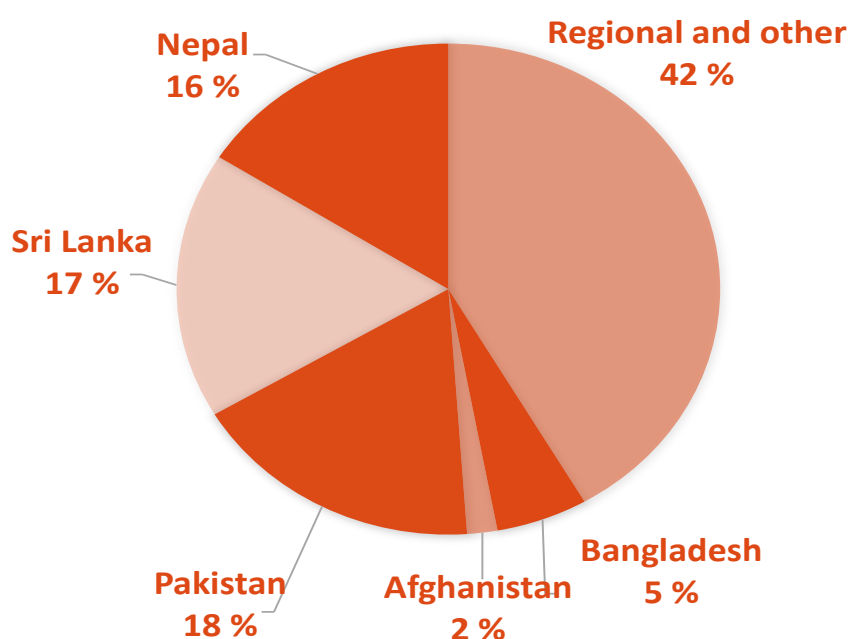
KIOS IN SOUTH ASIA

KIOS focus countries and groups in South Asia are Nepal, Sri Lanka and Tibetan civil society in exile. Some support is also channelled to partners in Bangladesh and Pakistan. In 2017, there was one on-going project in Afghanistan, but the project ended during the year. Due to limited resources, KIOS exited Afghanistan in 2017.

In addition, KIOS supports regional projects for greater human rights impact in the region.

Some of the core themes of KIOS supported human rights work in South Asia are women's rights, gender equality and the rights of marginalized groups.

In 2017, KIOS channelled 310 600 EUR to human rights work in South Asia.





Supporting LGBTQ rights in Sri Lanka

Working for the rights and wellbeing of LGBTQ community in Sri Lanka

Sexual and gender minorities face serious discrimination, harassment and even violence in Sri Lanka. The most important reasons behind the discrimination are cultural norms and attitudes but also discriminatory legislation, which criminalizes homosexuality. Since 2014 KIOS has supported **Equal Ground**, which works for the rights and wellbeing of LGBTQ community in various ways.

In Sri Lanka the traditional gender roles and responsibilities are deep rooted in the society. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are commonly regarded as abnormal and suffering from psychological disorder. Many consider homosexuality as a manifestation of the sins from previous lives.

Discrimination, harassment and violence can cause marginalization, mental health problems and internalized homophobia. Equal Ground has since 2004 worked for the rights and wellbeing of LGBTQ community

in Sri Lanka. It does advocacy work, provides legal advice, organizes an annual Pride event and provides mental health counseling. Since 2005, the organization has also maintained a LGBTQ crisis phone line.

The organization has faced serious intimidation from state authorities, as well as from Muslim and Buddhist extremists. In 2013 – 2015 Equal Ground worked underground, but the space for civil society improved with the change of the regime in 2015.

The realization of LGBTQ rights as any human rights needs persistent and long-term advocacy work. Awareness of the rights is the first step.

“Violations against the LGBTIQ community still take place, but now more people are aware of their rights and are talking about it. They stand up for themselves more often,” says **Rosanna Flamer Caldera**, the Executive Director of Equal Ground, in the interview by Groundviews online magazine.



Supporting women's rights in Nepal

Women human rights defenders making change in Nepal

Since the 2006 democratic revolution, Nepal started transition to democracy. However, women are severely left behind and discriminated at all levels of the society. In 2014 KIOS partner organization WOREC reported 3125 cases of violence against women: the number is only a tip of the iceberg. Gender-based violence is widespread in Nepal.

Women who defend women's rights are at the greatest risk. Women human rights defenders face risks because of their work and because of their gender. Threats, harassment, violence and even murders are not uncommon.

"Like for other human rights defenders (HRDs), there is issue with the government, the state, the authority, but for the women human rights defenders there is issue even with the family members. So that's why it is necessary that we all feel very supported", explains Renu Rajbhandari, the founder of Women's Rehabilitation Center WOREC.

KIOS has supported WOREC and the National Alliance of Women Human Rights Defenders (NAWHRD), which was founded by WOREC.

The women human rights defenders of the network work around Nepal, and they support each other. The network has been able to influence laws protecting women. As a result of extensive campaigning, a separate article on women's rights was included in the 2015 Constitution (Article 38). Improvements have also been made to Domestic Violence Act and Law against Rape as a result of the persistent work by women human rights defenders in the network. WOREC and National Alliance of Women Human Rights Defenders continue their work to get these laws implemented.

KIOS PARTNERS IN 2017



EAST AFRICA

Association des Femmes Juristes du Burundi
 Association for Research on the environment, the
 democracy and Human Rights in Burundi
 Atrocities Watch
 Center for Justice, Governance and Environmental
 Action
 Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development
 Defenders Protection Initiative
 Haki na Sheria
 Human Rights First Rwanda Association
 Inara Legal Aid Service Uganda
 Initiative for Social and Economic Rights
 Joy for Children Uganda
 Kamukunji Paralegal Trust
 Keeping Alive Societies Hope
 KISORA Self Help Group
 Kituo cha Sheria
 Samburu Women Trust
 SOS Information Juridique Multisectorielle
 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
 Twerwaneho Listeners Club
 Uganda Consortium on Corporate Accountability
 Unwanted Witness

SOUTH ASIA

AGHS Legal Aid Cell Child Rights Unit
 Asian Legal Resource Centre
 Blue Veins
 Childspace Foundation
 Dastak Charitable Trust
 Democratic Commission for Human
 Development
 Equal Ground
 Informal Sector Service Centre
 Justice for All Organisation
 Legal Aid and Consultancy Centre
 Lokenatya O Sanskritik Unnayan Kendro
 Mothers and daughter of Sri Lanka
 Programme for Women's Economic, Social and
 Cultural Rights
 Promoting Human Rights and Education in
 Bangladesh
 Socio Legal Information Center / Human Rights
 Law Network
 South Asian Centre for Legal Studies
 Women's Rehabilitation Center Nepal