

THE FINNISH NGO FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, KIOS

ANNUAL REPORT 2012 – SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights (KIOS) was established in September 1998 by eleven Finnish non-governmental organisations working with human rights and development issues. KIOS provides financial support for projects of local civil society organisations that work to promote or protect human rights in developing countries. The overall goal of KIOS is to promote human rights in developing countries as they are defined in the treaties and instruments of the United Nations and in other equivalent regional human rights instruments.

According to the strategy for the years 2011–2015 the geographic focus areas of KIOS are Eastern Africa and South Asia. In Eastern Africa KIOS' funding focuses on:

- Burundi
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (the Kivus)
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Rwanda and
- Uganda.

In South Asia the funding focuses on:

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka and
- Tibet.

During year 2012, altogether 229 applications for funding were discussed in the meetings of the Executive Board of KIOS, out of which 36 were granted financing. At the end of 2012 KIOS was funding in total 71 projects.

The political and security environment and the human rights situation are in most of the focus countries so fragile that human rights work needs special expertise and especially very good knowledge of the current situation in the country. Therefore the field trips are a crucial part of monitoring the projects and evaluating new applicants. In 2012, KIOS made five monitoring trips to the focus countries in Africa and Asia.

KIOS worked on its country strategies and at the end of 2012, eight out of 12 country strategies had been approved by the Executive Board of KIOS. An essential part of strategic framework of KIOS was also its work in the Advisory Board on International Human Rights Affairs.

KIOS receives financial support for its activities from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The grant from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the foundation was 1.6 million euro in 2012.

2. PROJECT FUNDING

Appraisals and funding

In order to encourage qualified applicants to apply funding KIOS has worked proactively in making the foundation better known in the focus countries. Internet, seminars, monitoring trips to focus areas, and existing contacts with embassies and local NGOs have been important ways of networking.

Through carefully looking over the appraisals of each application KIOS wanted to ensure the success and effectiveness of the supported projects, as well as guarantee an equal and open appraisal for all applicants. KIOS put special emphasis on the reliability, expertise and previous experience of the applicant organisation.

Approved projects

KIOS registered altogether 192 applications (294 in 2011) in 2012. The amount of the applications decreased because of the better awareness about the focus areas and the cut off in the application process in summer 2012. The Executive Board of KIOS discussed on 229 project applications, out of which 36 (28 in 2011) were approved. Around 16 % (10 % in 2011) of the applications were approved.

The trend of KIOS' funding has been towards larger projects. In 2012 the average amount of funding for a project was around 40,500 euro. The Executive Board had set objectives for the distribution of funding by the geographic focus areas. In total 18 of the approved projects were from the African focus areas, 16 from Asian focus areas and 2 projects were regional Asian projects.

A great number of the projects receiving a positive funding decision aimed at prevention of human rights violations through awareness raising, training and lobbying, or provided legal aid for victims of human rights violations. The organisations receiving funding were mostly small and medium sized organizations that monitor the human rights conduct of the governments and perceive international human rights agreements as important tools for a change in their societies.

On-going projects at the end of 2012

At the end of 2012 KIOS had 71 on-going projects in 18 countries. The countries with the largest number of on-going projects were Kenya (12 projects), Uganda (9 projects), Pakistan (7), and Bangladesh (7).

Monitoring

In addition to formal reporting periods, KIOS stays in close contact with the organisations throughout the project period and gives them, for example, information and training. Field trips are also a crucial part of monitoring the projects and evaluating new applicants. In 2012, KIOS' staff made field trips to Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Uganda, Rwanda, Nepal and Kenya.

Evaluation and quality assurance

In 2012, the post-evaluation process for the projects was finalized. The post-evaluation questionnaires were sent to previous project partners of KIOS in the late 2011 and early 2012 to the NGOs that executed KIOS-funded projects, which had ended from two to five years ago (i.e. projects ending between 2006 and 2009). Mostly KIOS-funded organisations assess the outcomes of their projects positively. Positive impact was made in capacitating local NGOs through organisational development, in influencing decision making processes at different levels and in ensuring that marginalized people, particularly women, have greater knowledge and understanding of their rights. The analysis of the post-evaluation questionnaires also suggests that there is a link between human rights and development. The impact KIOS-funded projects have had on the development of human rights can be shown to have had an impact on the wellbeing of the communities or societies in question also on a larger scale.

The evaluation report *KIOS-funded projects and development in human rights – Results from post-evaluation questionnaires* will be found in website: www.kios.fi > Publications and Reports.

3. PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

Adequate resources, networking and impact of partner organisations are part of KIOS' vision. The first *KIOS – Youth Alive! Kenya Partnership Programme* started in Kenya in 2008. The core idea of the programme was to offer capacity building for the small organisations. The small organizations' need for closer project monitoring and guidance was also acknowledged. One of the objectives of this partnership programme was to increase the capacity of small human rights organisations through enabling wider networking, and ultimately also strengthening the Kenyan human rights movement. In 2012 KIOS funded partnership programmes in Uganda and Bangladesh as well.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ENVIRONMENT IN THE FOCUS COUNTRIES

The human rights work is very challenging and even risky in all KIOS' focus countries. KIOS seeks to develop more strategic way to work in these areas and increase closer cooperation with the local organisations in order to achieve more effective outcomes.

This overview highlights developments in the situation of human rights in the focus countries in 2012. It does not aim to be comprehensive, but to illustrate some of the main trends as emerged from KIOS' work, especially the field trips, during the year.

Afghanistan

The security situation in Afghanistan is still very fragile. The lack of proper judicial system complicates significantly the human rights work in the country. The situation concerning Afghan women's rights has not made progress despite of the fact that it has been a major target in the development strategy of Afghanistan. The projects KIOS is funding in Afghanistan concentrates on the legal aid offered for women and raising awareness on women's rights among women themselves. In 2012, KIOS made the first monitoring trip to Kabul and Bamyan. A country strategy for Afghanistan will be approved in spring 2013.

Bangladesh

In Bangladesh illegal arrests and abuse of the human rights defenders are very usual, and even extrajudicial killings and torture are common. In addition, the trade union activists are in great danger to be harassed and killed in Bangladesh. There are many problems in the field of women's rights and rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups. KIOS has worked closely with the local human rights organisation, Odhikar, which has empowered women as community human rights defenders. In April 2012, KIOS made a monitoring trip to Southern Bangladesh. KIOS is funding also projects against human trafficking and projects promoting rights of Hijra and Dalit people, as well women's and girls' rights. A country strategy for Bangladesh was approved in December 2011.

Nepal

The political situation in Nepal is very unstable even if the civil war in the country is over. Nepal is slowly recovering from the conflict while it tries to construct democracy and infrastructure in general. One major challenge is implementing the laws. Nepal's numerous minority groups and other groups in vulnerable situation have not been treated in equal way even if legislation acknowledges their rights. KIOS works in Nepal mainly with projects on women's and children's rights and rights of persons with disabilities. KIOS made a monitoring trip to Kathmandu and Pokhara on November 2012. A country strategy for Nepal will be approved in spring 2013.

Pakistan

Political instability, radicalization and lack of security are directly reflected to human rights situation in Pakistan. Especially women human rights defenders are in danger. In area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the human rights defenders and organisations have been forced to modify their activities or finish all activities. There's same kind of problems in all Taliban controlled areas. Police does not have enough resources to protect people from the attacks. Pakistan has ratified some of the most essential human rights treaties but there's lack of awareness of human rights and the radical groups are acting against human rights. In Pakistan, KIOS works mostly with projects on women's rights. KIOS did not have any monitoring trip to Pakistan during 2012. A country strategy for Pakistan will be approved in spring 2013.

Sri Lanka

Authoritarian government and corrupted judicial system are the main threats to the human rights defenders and organisations in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government in 2012 continued its assault on democratic space and targeted civil society through threats, surveillance, and clampdowns on activities and free speech. The government continued to ignore the 2011 report of the panel of experts appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, which recommended establishing an independent international mechanism to monitor the government's implementation of the panel recommendations, conduct an independent investigation, and collect and safeguard evidence. In Sri Lanka, KIOS works mostly with projects on women's rights. KIOS received only two project applications from Sri Lanka in 2012. A country strategy for Sri Lanka was approved in 2012.

Tibet

China has tightened its control over Tibet and restricted further Tibetans' fundamental and human rights. International support to Tibet has faded away because Western countries and neighbouring countries have become more cautious to criticize or act against China. Independent media and human rights observers are prohibited to enter Tibet so it is very difficult to get any verified information on human rights situation in the area. KIOS has not have an opportunity to fund any projects in Tibet but it has funded Tibetan organisations in exile. The aim of funding has been, for example, improving the rights of women among the refugee communities. A country strategy for Tibet was approved in December 2011.

Burundi

Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, and it is still recovering from the civil war. The culture of democracy, judicial system, and civil society are very weak due to the conflict. The National Independent Human Rights Commission continued to work in an independent manner investigating reports of human rights abuses. Widespread sexual violence is one of the most alarming human rights questions in Burundi. In 2012, civil society organisations and media continued to publicly denounce human rights abuses, however, freedom of expression was constantly under threat. State pressure on journalists and civil society activists continued, as the government counted them among the political opposition. Draft legislation placing new restrictions on media freedoms was tabled before parliament. In Burundi KIOS supports monitoring of human rights violations, legal aid for prisoners and promoting women's rights, and rights of the Batwa people. A country strategy for Burundi will be approved in spring 2013.

Ethiopia

The human rights situation in Ethiopia has worsened significantly in recent years. The Ethiopian organisations are not able to work for political and civil rights because the government has prevented their activities in different ways. Ethiopian authorities continued to severely restrict basic rights of freedom of expression, association, and assembly in 2012. Thirty journalists and opposition members were convicted under the country's vague Anti-Terrorism Proclamation of 2009. The Ethiopian government continues to implement its "villagization" program: the resettlement of 1.5 million rural villagers in five regions of Ethiopia ostensibly to increase their access to basic services. Many villagers in Gambella region have been forcibly displaced, causing considerable hardship. In Ethiopia KIOS is mainly funding work for economic and social rights and women's rights. KIOS did not have a monitoring trip to Ethiopia in 2012. A country strategy for Ethiopia was approved on February 2012.

Kenya

Despite of quite advanced new constitution (approved in 2010), Kenya continues to face serious challenges with implementing judicial and police reforms, as well as ending impunity for serious crimes by public officials and security forces. No inspector general has been appointed since reforms were promised following electoral violence in 2007–2008. Compared to its neighbouring countries the civil society is quite strong in Kenya. KIOS is funding in Kenya, for example, IMLU, which documents

incidents of torture, provides the victims of torture with medical, psychological and legal services, and advocates against torture. In 2012 KIOS made one monitoring trip to Kenya and also participated the education session organized by Youth Alive Kenyan. A country strategy for Kenya was approved in September 2012.

The Kivus (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

The security and human rights situation in the Kivus are very fragile. In mid-November, M23 rebels launched an offensive with support from the Rwandan military and took control of Goma, the provincial capital, and the town of Sake. M23 fighters were responsible for widespread war crimes, including summary executions, rapes, and child recruitment. Also other armed groups and the army have perpetrated in serious human rights violations. Particularly sexual violence has increased significantly in the area. KIOS' long-term partner ACADOSHA has done significant work for the victims of sexual violence. In the Kivus, KIOS supports, among other things, monitoring and documenting of human rights violations, and promoting rights of the human rights defenders and the Batwa. Because of the weak security level KIOS was not able to do a monitoring trip to the Kivus during 2012. A country strategy for DRC was approved in December 2011.

Rwanda

It is very challenging for KIOS to support human rights work in Rwanda, because the government has continued to impose tight restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Opposition parties are unable to operate, and independent civil society organisations remained weak due to years of state intimidation. Few Rwandan organisations publicly denounced human rights violations. The Rwandan government and pro-government media reacted in a hostile manner towards international human rights organisations and attempted to discredit their work. The new non-governmental organisation bill has complicated the work of human rights organisations: the registering process may last over a year and the officials can easily deny registration, especially when the organisation works with delicate issues. It has been difficult to find human rights organisations to fund in Rwanda, so KIOS was exceptionally funding the federation of trade unions, COTRAF. KIOS visited in Rwanda on August 2012. A country strategy for Rwanda was approved in spring 2012.

Uganda

Increasing threats to freedom of expression, assembly, and association raised serious concerns about Uganda's respect for the rule of law in 2012. The security forces continue to enjoy impunity for torture and extrajudicial killings. The government banned a political pressure group calling for peaceful change, stopped opposition groups from holding rallies, and harassed and intimidated journalists and civil society activists in 2012. Organisations monitoring governance, accountability of public resources, land rights, oil revenue, and the rights of LGBTI people face increased obstructions. The notorious draft Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which proposes the death penalty for some consensual same-sex activities, remained tabled in parliament. In Uganda KIOS funded a partnership programme, which was implemented by Action for Community Development (ACODEV). KIOS made a monitoring trip to Uganda on August 2012. A country strategy for Uganda will be approved in spring 2013.

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

KIOS' communication focus on two areas: the organisations promoting human rights in the South and the Finnish civil society. In the South the main target groups are potential applicants, current partners and other actors in the human rights field especially in the focus countries. The aim was to make KIOS more known among the applicants, to contribute to finding new partners and to enhance networking.

In reaching KIOS' target groups, the website (www.kios.fi) is the primary channel. In the website KIOS gives information in English, French, Spanish and Finnish.

The work of KIOS in Finland concentrated on communication and networking, aiming at informing the civil society actors and wider audience about the work of KIOS and the human rights situation in the developing countries. The main target groups in Finland were the founder organisations of KIOS, Finnish authorities and the other professionals of the development cooperation field. Also for the Finnish contacts, the website was the most important means of communication. Moreover cooperation with the founder organisations was essential to KIOS' communications work in Finland.

Networking with Finnish Embassies, other donor agencies and stakeholders was an important part KIOS' communication and project funding work both in the focus countries as well as in Finland. In order to create new contacts, KIOS personnel took actively part in seminars and conferences in Finland and abroad.

The annual seminar of KIOS was organised in Helsinki on September 18–19 in cooperation with KEPA and Finn Church Aid. The title of the seminar was *Right to Food*. Around 120 people participated in the two-day seminar to discuss human rights and democracy. The main speakers were representatives of KIOS' partner organisations from Uganda and India, and the opening speaker was Finnish Minister of International Development Heidi Hautala.

KIOS collaborated closely with two other foundations working on development cooperation: Abilis Foundation, which supports projects empowering disabled persons in developing countries, and Siemenpuu Foundation, which supports environmental projects in developing countries. All three foundations benefited from the cooperation in terms of developing common practices of administration, participating in happenings and meetings together as well as sharing office spaces together with Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association.

6. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Each founder organisation of KIOS appoints one representative to the Executive Board. In 2012 the Executive Board held 7 meetings. The Annual Meeting was held on the 28th of May. The Executive Board also had a seminar on the security manual of KIOS in May. The Chairperson of the Executive Board was Ms. Johanna Lampinen from the Finnish League of Human Rights and as the Vice Chairperson acted Mr. Jussi Förbom from the Finnish section of Amnesty International.

The Executive Board of KIOS in 2012

Founder Organization	Member	Deputy Member
Amnesty International, Finnish Section	Jussi Förbom	Päivi Mattila
Finnish League for Human Rights	Johanna Lampinen	Mikko Joronen
Service Centre for Development Cooperation	Eveliina Salonen/Outi Hannula	Pauliina Saares
Finn Church Aid	Eija Alajarva	Anna Salmivaara
Finnish Refugee Council	Jani Seikkula / Kim Remitz	Kim Remitz
Finnish Peace Committee	Teemu Matinpuro	Karim Maiche
Committee of 100 in Finland	Hanna-Mari Savolainen	Eekku Aromaa
The Finnish UN Association	Heikki Pietilä	Helena Laukko
UNICEF Finland	Pauliina Sarvilahti-Jimenez / Miriam Azar / Annika Launiala	Miriam Azar
UN Women Finland	Henna Hakkarainen	Elina Multanen
Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association	-	-

In 2012 KIOS had a permanent staff of five: an executive director and four coordinators. Also part-time personnel and interns worked at the office during the year.

7. FINANCES

According to the agreement between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and KIOS, the new funding received for the year 2012 was 1 600,000 euro. In addition 302 648 euro was transferred from the previous year. KIOS made new allocations of 1 457 900 euro for human rights projects for 2012 and coming years. Project administration costs in 2012 were 333 157 euro and the general administration costs 110 899 euro.