

KIOS STRATEGY 2016–2020

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1. MISSION STATEMENT

The objective of the Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights KIOS is to strengthen the role of human rights in developing countries. The foundation funds NGO projects promoting human rights and the development of democracy in developing countries. The foundation also actively engages in human rights policy advocacy and communication activities. KIOS was founded in 1998, and it is a non-political and non-religious human rights foundation. KIOS performs unique work in Finland by funding human rights organizations based on their own project ideas and proposals in developing countries. Human rights-based approach is the starting point for all activities of KIOS.

Human rights are a precondition for lasting peace, reduction of inequalities and the prevention of both societal conflicts and human suffering. The activities of KIOS are founded on human rights as defined in the human rights treaties and instruments of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Additionally, other regional human rights instruments and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are taken into account.

The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights KIOS was founded by eleven Finnish civil society organizations working on human rights: Amnesty International Finnish Section, Disability Partnership Finland, Finnish League for Human Rights, KEPA, Finn Church Aid, Finnish Refugee Council, Finnish Peace Committee, Committee of 100 in Finland, Finnish National Committee for UNICEF, Finland National Committee for UN Women and UN Association of Finland. KIOS' work is financed by Finland's development cooperation funds, and the emphasis of the activities is in the focus countries selected by the KIOS Executive Board.

2. CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Human rights work and its funding have become increasingly challenging in recent years.

Similarly, the ability of human rights defenders to operate has deteriorated in many countries. In many of the KIOS' focus countries, states have limited and hindered the activities of civil society by, inter alia, enacting laws constraining civil society organizations' ability to receive foreign funding, restricting freedom of assembly, and by freezing the funds and assets of civil society organizations. However, civil society's human rights work also supports the development of rule of law as well as preconditions for development more broadly. Furthermore, it supports public discussion in developing countries on the promotion of human rights and of the challenges related to that.

In some countries extremist movements lacking respect for human rights are on the rise. At the same time, many states appeal to national security and the threat of extremism while using, inter alia, counter-terrorism laws in contravention of human rights conventions to restrict civil rights. Economic development does not always guarantee the realization of human rights. It is essential that special attention will be paid to the protection and promotion of the human rights of women, children and vulnerable groups of people. The development of information technology brings both challenges and opportunities for human rights work.

Societies in the Global South are badly affected by climate change as the citizens of developing countries have limited means to adapt to its consequences. The phenomenon may have unpredictable indirect consequences on human rights issues. Research predicts that climate change will particularly weaken the situation of vulnerable groups of people. Climate change may lead to an increase in armed conflicts and disputes over natural resources.

The work of the organizations working on human rights is risky in many countries and they need support for promoting their security. Strengthening the capacity of the organizations is important in order for their work to be more effective and as risk-free as possible. With its own work, KIOS wants to further and support the development of new global partnerships.

3. VISION, VALUES AND OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Vision

The vision of KIOS is a world, in which equal human dignity and universal human rights of all human beings are recognized, and in which the states are committed to human rights in their legislation and its practical implementation. The states' administration is transparent and in accordance with democratic principles. Civil society is a significant, independent sector, and the states are not trying to restrict its activities. Media is able to operate freely. The rights of women, children and vulnerable groups of people are protected and promoted.

Values

In addition to the vision, the activities of KIOS are guided by the following values:

Commitment: KIOS is committed to achieving the set goals in a responsible manner and committed to those projects it has accepted. KIOS works courageously towards the set objectives regardless of the challenges posed by the working environment, nevertheless, in a responsible manner and ensuring security.

Quality: KIOS' activities are of high quality, professional and strategic. KIOS' activities are driven by a constant pursuit to efficient use of resources.

Civil society ownership: A key feature of KIOS' approach is the partners' strong ownership of their projects. KIOS functions, above all, as an enabler of the work of the organizations working on human rights, and supports the empowerment of its partners.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE - KIOS 2016-2020

The overall strategic objective of KIOS for the period of 2016–2020 is to be a competent and significant human rights actor, whose activities are known in its focus countries, among international actors and in Finland. KIOS is a support channel for civil society's human rights work in the world, a human rights policy advocate as well as an expert on the situation of human rights and civil society of its focus countries. During the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' funding period 2016–2018, the funding of KIOS is subjected to a cut, but the foundation is aiming to increase its funding volume and the effectiveness of its work.

4. STRATEGIC GOALS

4.1 Strengthening the effectiveness of organizations working on human rights

KIOS strengthens the capacity of civil society organizations and groups working on human rights so that they could improve human rights awareness and more effectively pressure their respective governments to comply with international human rights conventions, to prevent human rights violations and to hold to account those responsible of them. KIOS will develop its funding models during the strategic period.

Types of action:

4.1.1. Allocation of Project funding

During the strategic period of 2011-2015, KIOS directed its funding to 12 countries and regions. The demarcation of focus countries has made it possible to direct support in a centralized manner and develop expertise. During the strategic period of 2016-2020, the focus countries and region, with regard to the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, will be in East Africa Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, and in South Asia Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Tibetan civil society organizations within the refugee community. Funding is continued in Bangladesh, Burundi, Ethiopia and Pakistan especially for organizations which are conducting strategically important work. KIOS strives to receive also other funding for human rights work and regional cooperation done in all the above mentioned countries. KIOS' geographical scope of operation is widened only, if additional resources are obtained through EU funding or other additional funding.

Projects of regional cooperation in East Africa and South Asia are a priority for KIOS. The projects of regional cooperation are directed to the focus countries and their neighbouring areas. Support for these projects is channelled primarily through regional organizations and networks, and granting direct project support is adapted accordingly. Particular regional projects can be extended to other nearby countries in case the project's model of operation supports also regional networking.

At the beginning of the strategic period, KIOS prepares country-specific strategies for each focus country as well as a strategy for regional projects. The strategies will be revised accordingly to adapt to the changing situation in the countries. In the country-specific strategies the following issues are defined: the most vulnerable groups, special issues regarding the realization of women's rights and country-specific key activities with regard to human rights work. Attention will also be given to work focusing on the security of human rights defenders. Thematic focuses guiding the allocation of funding will be further defined in the country-specific strategies and, if necessary, in other documents.

4.1.2. Development of monitoring and evaluation

During the strategic period, monitoring and evaluation processes are developed in the focus countries. The results of the post-evaluations are utilized in the process of developing evaluation and feedback systems. Indicators will be further developed during the strategic period. KIOS will use with consideration the services of local human rights experts in finding potential project partners and in

evaluating the progress of the projects. An external evaluation is planned to be conducted of all the major projects, namely of projects funded with over 100 000 euros.

4.1.3. Increase of funding

In the beginning of the strategic period, the funding of KIOS received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is subjected to a cut of 41 percent. Due to the major cut in the budget of KIOS and the need in the focus countries for greater funding, KIOS will aim at increasing and diversifying its financial resources. Additionally, financial support is needed for developing the activities as well as for advocacy work promoting the work of the partner organizations. During the strategic period, KIOS aims to receive funding from the EU and other sources to strengthen the foundation's resources and the support directed to project partners. This is done in order to exceed the volume of the year 2015 in the long-term in terms of the foundation's funding and other activities promoting human rights.

As the projects funded by the EU require that KIOS engages in at least some degree of fund-raising, every project proposal addressed to the EU will require a self-financing plan. It is intended that the self-financing requirements of EU-funded projects and other similar needs for additional funding will be met through KIOS's own fundraising activities and letters of intent from the founder organizations or from any other external entity that might be interested in providing partial contribution to the realization of an EU project. KIOS examines whether it is functional to raise funds for the capital supplementing the foundation capital. The profits of the capital can be used to support the human rights work funded and conducted by KIOS.

Prospective project planning related to potential EU-funded projects will be targeted primarily to the focus countries and their neighbouring areas. However, in some instances project planning of EU-funded projects can be directed to support the cooperation of human rights defenders more broadly, and for specific reasons, to projects outside of KIOS' focus areas. EU-funded projects are aimed to be implemented mainly in a way that the local actors of the developing countries are responsible for the actual human rights work and KIOS will focus on advocacy, supporting the development of the organizations working on human rights, and on communication. At the EU-level, KIOS will at first aim to become a partner in a project application led by another organization. Similar principle will be followed in case KIOS' traditional role as a funder will have to be re-evaluated when drafting applications to other funders. Projects funded by KIOS will be defined, if needed, into thematic or geographic entities in order to find new funders for them.

4.1.4. Developing project administration and application processes

KIOS funds projects that focus on civil and political rights or economic, social and cultural rights. The objectives of the projects are, inter alia, to raise general awareness on human rights among the public, to increase human rights capacity and to promote the implementation of human rights in practice. Methods of action include, inter alia, human rights campaigning, advocacy work, human rights monitoring and reporting, human rights education, legal aid and protection of human rights defenders. During the strategic period, the aim is to increase the average project size and the number of regional projects. New partnerships will be proactively sought for by meeting new civil society organizations during the staff's monitoring visits. The overall project application process will be developed to, inter alia, limit the number of project proposals to correspond with KIOS' resources and its financial ability to fund new projects. The calls for proposals may have thematic or geographical limitations.

4.2. Enhancing the security of human rights defenders

KIOS will support the operational prerequisites of human rights work undertaken by civil society by strengthening the position of human rights defenders. In order to strengthen the security of human rights defenders and enhance their mutual networking, new models of action based on the needs and situational assessments of the human rights defenders, will be developed. Support will be prioritized to those human rights defenders who work to strengthen the rights of people in the most vulnerable position.

Modes of action:

4.2.1. Funding security activities

KIOS will develop its project concept and other potential tools with a view to increase the security of human rights defenders' work. Additionally, KIOS will support initiatives aimed at developing the networking between civil society's human rights actors. Supporting these initiatives requires KIOS to cooperate with strategic partners. KIOS aims to obtain additional funding for this activity.

4.2.2. Developing networking

A particular emphasis is given to networking of KIOS and of its project partner organizations during the strategic period. In addition to the work done at the local and national level, KIOS' partner organizations engage in regional and global cooperation to promote human rights.

Regional co-operation often facilitates the arrangement of security cooperation and security trainings, and enables more efficient advocacy work in the focus countries. Mutual networking is a key activity in enhancing the security of human rights defenders. KIOS will also strengthen the cooperation with international human rights organizations and funders as well as utilizes their extensive networks for the benefit of strengthening the partner organizations' capacity building, advocacy work and communication. Prospective EU projects will also support the networking of KIOS.

4.2.3. Human rights policy advocacy work and communication

Human rights policy advocacy work supports human rights defenders cooperating with KIOS. KIOS will maintain and develop its preparedness to respond rapidly to acute situations. In these acute situations, the ultimate object of the advocacy work is often the state, where the human rights defender, who has been, for example, assaulted, is operating. Additionally, more extensive and long-term advocacy work is undertaken in Finland in order to develop modes of actions that support the work of human rights defenders as a part of the Finnish foreign and development policy and the initiatives relating to it.

Communication work undertaken by KIOS will increase the awareness among the Finnish general public on the significance of the work of human rights defenders in preventing human rights violations and in advancing structural societal changes that support human rights. Media cooperation will be used as a means of influencing the position of particular human rights defenders when it is possible considering the security situation.

4.3. Promotion of human rights work and its prerequisites in developing countries

KIOS will further develop its communication with regard to its focus countries' human rights situation, the position of human rights defenders and the importance of civil society in respect of human rights work. Developing communication will support fund-raising and advocacy work. Starting and developing the foundation's fund-raising is essential.

Modes of action:

4.3.1. Developing communication

KIOS will continue to develop its communication in a continuous way during the strategic period 2016-2020. A separate communication strategy will be developed for the strategic period. Developing communication is not only its own separate strategic objective, but also a key feature in achieving other objectives.

Developing communication work is driven by the aim to make KIOS and its work more known. Central tools of KIOS' communication are multi channelled web and media communication, seminars and other events as well as publications. The continuous professional development of the staff in communication supports the overall implementation of the communication strategy. As KIOS has a lot of knowledge on the human rights work that is being carried out in developing countries, the foundation will develop its communication, within the limits of its resources, so that it also supports human rights education.

4.3.2. Communication supporting advocacy work and fund-raising

Through advocacy work, KIOS influences both the position of individual human rights defenders in developing countries and human rights policy in Finland. Important partners in Finland are the decision makers affecting on human rights policy as well as their assistants and civil servants of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Due to the limited personnel resources, they will be strategically prioritized and communication supporting advocacy will be developed. New partners, information and methods of operation will be achieved for advocacy work through planned networking.

Communication is a key feature in developing fund-raising, and the chosen methods of fund-raising will determine communication needs. At the beginning of the strategic period, the foundation will analyse measures for developing fund-raising considering the challenges of the starting point.

Fund-raising and efficient advocacy work will require that KIOS is made more known and its public profile as an expert is strengthened through active media cooperation. The goal is also to raise the general awareness of journalists on the human rights work being carried out in developing countries and to increase its visibility in the Finnish media discussions.

4.4. Competence development

KIOS will develop its expertise through staff trainings, continuous assessment processes and specific organizational development projects. KIOS will develop the evaluation methods of the projects that it has funded. In addition, KIOS will assess regularly its own competence and the choices of operational emphases in collaboration with the partner organizations. KIOS's own database system will be developed in a way that it also serves the development of evaluation.

Modes of action:

4.4.1. Development work and organizational development

KIOS will be developed as a learning organization. This means that the activities and functions are constantly modified based on new information and experiences, and that the staff is encouraged to learn and study. The inter-organizational structure, the division of labour and internal communication shall be developed to correspond with the changing working environment and the strategic objectives. Additionally, clearly defined objectives and goals will direct target-oriented learning and accountability. The organization's expertise, development and the needs of further development shall be assessed and monitored on a regular basis. The development of fund-raising is a new area to be developed.

The aim of knowledge-based development is to ensure that KIOS will be able to perform its key function of project funding in a high quality and efficient manner, but is also able to engage in advocacy work and communication, and to develop its operating models and to react to changing environment. The plan to develop KIOS as a learning organization and the training of the staff will be addressed in connection with the personnel policy guidelines.

4.4.2. Developing knowledge-management and information system

The organizational knowledge management and database will be developed within the available resources in a way that information can be created, acquired and transferred efficiently, and utilized for the achievement of the strategic objectives. The development of the knowledge management system will enable the development of indicators, improve the monitoring of the projects' results and make the management of the project proposals more efficient. The development of the knowledge management and feedback systems will also support the activities as a learning organization.

4.4.3. Wellbeing of staff

Enhancing the wellbeing of the staff is a central principle for KIOS. KIOS' work on human rights is often related with information about grave human rights violations. Furthermore, the monitoring trips to the focus countries include risks related to travel safety. Therefore, the procedures and operating models of KIOS are revised and continuously developed to support the staff's mental wellbeing, the everyday wellbeing at work and their travel safety.

5. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The country-specific strategies and the annual action plans will guide the implementation of the strategy. Additionally, a separate communication strategy will be produced at the beginning of the strategic period.

Indicators and their baselines are defined before the beginning of the strategic period. During the strategic period, the chair and the vice-chair of the board of directors and the staff of KIOS will assess the practical impact of the new strategical emphases in the everyday work of the office and job contents.

KIOS will develop indicators related to the strategic objectives and the documentation of its work in such a way that the achievement of the strategic objectives can be evaluated as accurately as possible at the end of the strategic period. The realization of the strategy will be monitored by using objective-specific indicators. An evaluation of the progress will be made on annual basis. A more extensive mid-term evaluation will be conducted after the first half of the strategic period. In this evaluation, the strategic objectives may be revised if deemed necessary. It is also possible to revise the classification of focus countries should the focus countries' situations, the financing situation or other significant external factors change.