

Human Rights in the Era of Post-2015 Agenda

Future Roles of Civil Society in Promoting
Justice and Accountability

KIOS, Seminar Report 2015



Elisabeth Naclér • Liisa Laakso • Sima Samar • Kabanda David • Nimalka Fernando • Alexis Rusine • Priti Darooka • Phyllis Omidu • Aino Pennanen • Jaakko Kangasniemi • Antto Vihma



The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights KIOS was founded in 1998 to fund projects that promote human rights and development of democracy in the developing countries. The foundation is an independent, non-political, non-religious and non-governmental foundation. KIOS is a consortium of eleven Finnish organisations working for human rights and development issues: the Amnesty International's Finnish Section, Committee of 100 in Finland, Finn Church Aid, Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association (FIDIDA), Finnish League for Human Rights, Finnish Peace Committee, Finnish Refugee Council, UN Association of Finland, the Finnish NGO Platform KEPA, Finnish National Committee for UNICEF and UN Women Finland. The mission of KIOS is to channel development cooperation funds of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland effectively and with good quality to human rights projects of the developing countries. The KIOS office is located in Helsinki, Finland.

www.kios.fi

Table of Contents

4 PART I – 1st Seminar Day

Building Partnerships for Including Human Rights in the Post-2015 Agenda – Introduction

- 6 Elisabeth Naclér:** Human Rights in the Era of Post-2015 Agenda – Future Roles of Civil Society in Promoting Justice and Accountability
- 8 Liisa Laakso:** The Dialogue between States and Civil Societies
- 10 Sima Samar:** Promoting Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict Societies – Necessary Steps Forward
- 12 Kabanda David:** Institutionalizing Human Rights Principles – What Can NGOs Do?
- 14 Nimalka Fernando:** The Role of Civil Society in Peace Mediation
- 16 Alexis Rusine:** Human Rights Driving Poverty Reduction – Best Practices
- 18 Panel discussion:** Promoting All Aspects of Human Rights When Implementing the Next Development Agenda? – Contradictions, Solutions and the Roles of Civil Societies

25 PART II – 2nd Seminar Day

KIOS Future Workshops – Introduction

- 26** The Idea and Structure of the Future Workshop Method
- 27** Future Workshop 1: Civil Societies and Peace Processes
- 28** Future Workshop 2: Environmental Protection and Human Rights – Developing New Working Methods for NGOs
- 29** Future Workshop 3: Poverty Reduction – Assessing Civil Society Initiatives
- 30** Future Workshop 4: Enhancing Civil Society's Capacity to Promote Human Rights
- 31** Conclusions

PART I – 1st Seminar Day

Building Partnerships for Including Human Rights in the Post-2015 Agenda – Introduction

By arranging this seminar, KIOS intended to contribute to the on-going discussion on the new development programme of the UN, at this point often referred to as the Post-2015 Agenda or the Sustainable Development Goals for 2016-2030.

Several CSOs have been and are active in the process, commenting on the first proposals and the potential outcome of the Post-2015 Agenda. However, from a broader perspective, there still might have been insufficient possibilities for an active participation in the process, on behalf of the civil society in a majority of the member states of the UN. For example, civil society actors are not being consulted in countries where the governance is not democratic or democratic structures are still vulnerable.

When assessing the role of the essential UN human rights treaties, one must recognize that their principles are widely accepted. For example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has been ratified by 162 states and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by 168 states. The number of the ratifications of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is even higher, namely 194 ratifications.

Therefore, when only having a look on the ratifications of the central human rights treaties, it might look self-evi-

dent that the work for the Post-2015 agenda would be based on human rights principles. For KIOS and its founder organizations, it is obvious that the integration of different aspects of human rights into the Post-2015 Agenda is essential.

However, many leaders of autocratic regimes or vulnerable states criticize human rights based thinking and claim that human rights are not approved by all the governments. Even though human rights were duly recognized in the outcome documents of the OECD's aid effectiveness conferences in 2008 in Accra and 2011 in Busan, a human rights working group never saw daylight, due to absence of the governmental support from the south. The promotion of human rights were considered as a continuation of the developed world wielding its power and dominance over the developing world.

Indeed, even though a large majority of countries have ratified the most essential UN human rights treaties, the implementation of these treaties is often weak. During recent years, human rights organizations have reported annually about severe human rights violations in more than one hundred countries.

The same way, the role of the existing UN human rights treaties, when working on the Post-2015 Agenda, is unfortunately not clear. As the co-operational caucus underlines:



”... embedding human rights into the core of the sustainable development agenda means, at the least, respecting and reflecting pre-existing human rights norms, standards and commitments in the sustainable development goals, targets and indicators themselves.”

The report of the UN’s Open Working Group for sustainable future in July is one of the starting points for negotiations of the new development agenda. Even though the sustainable development goals in this report have no focus on civil and political rights, there are some positive aspects in these goals: for example, they include a demand for the complete eradication of poverty and the integration of environmental sustainability with other aspects of development.

The new programme would therefore provide a totally new point of departure: The development agenda has to be made for the entire globe and for all of its citizens. We also need to understand different interconnections and interdependencies. In the world of new technologies and new forms of networking, a new page for cooperation may be opened.

Therefore, there are also reasons to hope, that civil society actors would have a stronger role in the evaluation, assessment and monitoring of the Post-2015 Agenda in com-

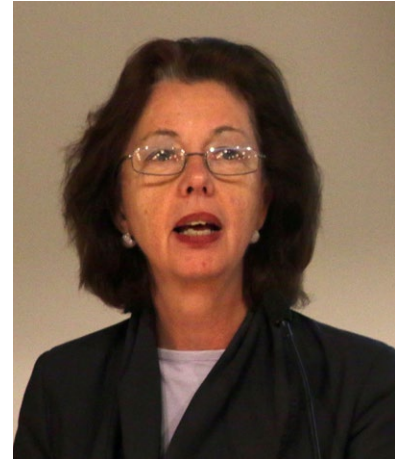
parison to the Millennium Development Goals that were quite strictly set by the member states of the UN without any stronger advocacy on behalf of the civil society.

This seminar, held by KIOS, served as a platform for communication between civil society activists and human rights defenders from different parts of the world. The aim was to strengthen the human rights based approaches on the Post-2015 Agenda and the potential co-operation of civil society actors, having already in mind also the phase of implementation of the forthcoming agenda.

This report aims to describe the speeches, discussions and outcome of the seminar. The first day offered perspectives on the roles and relationship between states and civil societies, examples of the human rights work done by partners of KIOS, as well as perspectives to the on-going Post-2015 Agenda negotiations. The second day consisted of group work, in which the future workshop method was applied. Collaboration methods of civil society actors need to be discussed in order to build global, regional, national and local partnerships for the promotion of human rights, and to make civil society efforts for a better future more influential.

Reference: Government of Finland Human Rights Report 2014.

Elisabeth Naclér: Human Rights in the Era of Post-2015 Agenda – Future Roles of Civil Society in Promoting Justice and Accountability



Elisabeth Naclér held the opening speech of the first seminar day, addressing human rights and the Post-2015 Agenda from civil society point of view, but also reflecting on the parliamentarians' role. Ms. Naclér has served as a member of the Finnish Parliament since 2007, and acts also as the chairperson of the parliament's human rights group.

Ms. Naclér started her speech from presenting the starting point for the Post-2015 Agenda negotiations, which according to her, is the many shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals:

"We have not eradicated poverty, we have not even reached the goals of right to an adequate standard of living, the right to food, the right to water and sanitation, the right to health, the right to education, the right to development, all human rights in the context of sexual and reproductive health, labor rights and fundamental rights at work, gender equality, and the right to self-determination. But we have made a change," she stated.

"Economic and social rights were represented in several goals, but were never recognized as human rights in themselves. The private sector and international financial institutions have not been included in the way one would have expected," she added.

From setting the context, Ms. Naclér moved on to stating the importance of including human rights and the participation of civil society in the Post-2015 Agenda: "The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, has in detail laid out how human rights elements and aspects should be included in the Post-2015 Agenda. Ten points are stipulating the most essential issues," Naclér concluded.

"It is impossible for the states or the international community to reach any these important goals without the inclusion of the civil society, and thereby the people. The important thing is to never doubt the importance of the civil society in the work of bringing in human rights to this process," she added.

"The important thing is to never doubt the importance of the civil society in the work of bringing human rights to this process."



“The world is full of bystanders, but I cannot see one single in this room today.”

However, instead of elaborating more on the inclusion of civil society and human rights in the Post-2015 Agenda, Ms. Naclér wanted to use the opportunity to focus on the point of view of a parliamentarian: “Parliamentarians do have a role to play when shaping the Post-2015 Agenda, whether in national parliament, in international contexts such as the IPU or the African Parliamentarians initiative, or on an informal basis.

Ms. Naclér pointed out a useful hint for civil societies: The Belgrade principles on the Relationship between National Human Rights Institutions and Parliament were adopted in a seminar attended by experts from ten countries. The aim is to encourage parliaments which have not yet have formalized their work on human rights.

“This is not a legally binding agreement, but it advises parliaments to draft legislation for the establishment of a national human rights institution and develop a legal framework which secures its independence and account-

ability. The principles are about the necessity of financial independence, about ensuring openness and transparency of the appointment process, about reporting to the parliament, about the institution and parliaments in relation to international human rights mechanisms,” Ms. Naclér explained.

In the end of her speech, Ms. Naclér set an encouraging atmosphere for the seminar day by giving credit for the work of human rights defenders present: “It is impressive that so many experts, activists and officials have gathered here to find new paths forward in integrating human rights obligations to different aspects of development. The world is full of bystanders, but I cannot see one single in this room today,” she concluded.

See the whole speech at: <http://www.nacler.ax/category/speeches-and-material/>

Ms. Elisabeth Naclér, Finland

Elisabeth Naclér is a Swedish-born Finnish independent politician. She has served as a member of Finnish parliament since 2007. She is the single Member of Parliament for the autonomous region of Åland. She also acts as the chairperson of the Parliament's human rights group. Ms. Naclér has a degree in law.

<http://www.nacler.ax/>

Liisa Laakso: The Dialogue between States and Civil Societies



Liisa Laakso, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from the University of Helsinki, held a presentation dealing with the relationship between states and civil societies. In the presentation Dr. Laakso delivered four different approaches to the topic, setting a fascinating theoretical background for the seminar.

Dr. Laakso started from the definition of civil society. In short, civil society refers to the private sphere distinct from government and business - the realm of public participation in non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations, trade unions and the like. Sometimes the term is, however, used in a more general sense, referring to elements such as freedom of speech, an independent judiciary or other elements of democratic society.

The first approach to the relationship between state and civil society, Dr. Laakso introduced, relates to the circumstances needed for the civil society to be. According to Dr. Laakso, “legally constituted civil rights, rule of law and political legitimacy based on law are necessary for political participation of individuals. Freedom of assembly and opinion can be limited but they have to exist,” she summed.

Therefore, from the perspective of liberal theory, the greatest obstacle for civil society is, “absence of law, personal or arbitrary power, chaos or war”, as Dr. Laakso listed.

The second approach to relationships between civil societies and states relates to the functionality of civil society for the stability of the state. The mechanism for political stability, according to Dr. Laakso, is based on trust, which very often is thought to be born through the existence of civil society. Trust provides democracy and that contributes to good governance, and to having and accountable government and parliament in the state.

Dr. Laakso pointed out that civil society is especially important in pluralistic and multicultural societies in which people have multiple distinctions such as religion, race, caste, clan, tribe or customary groups.

In these societies free belonging to associations is important to enable people’s multiple affiliations and loyalties. “Without these features cleavages might turn into cumulative and mutually reinforcing, which might lead into isolative political mobilization and self-protective groups and identities,” she elaborated.

The third approach that Dr. Laakso brought up regarding the relationship between civil societies and states, relates to the role of civil society for the efficiency of the state. Dr. Laakso explained that neocorporatism refers to the voluntary agreement between government, labor and business interests. This approach has been popular in Nordic contexts and its purpose is to make a society competitive in international trade, while still enhancing the domestic standard of living.

Now, in this model, also civil society has a role of making the system efficient. Dr. Laakso gave an example from Sweden: “The spread of HIV-epidemic was effectively stopped in Sweden, when the government started to support the associations for sexual minorities. These voluntary associations had much better access to the vulnerable groups than authorities or civil servants, or even the public health care system.”

Indeed, in the contemporary neoliberal ideology, the legitimacy of developing civil society is based on the idea that civil society is substituting the services of the welfare state. This issue is seen also in the context of global development and developing countries: Some authors have suggested that civil society has been seen as “the magic bullet for development and welfare”, according to Laakso.

Finally, the fourth approach to the relationship between civil society and state, relates to the aspect of multi-level governance, relevant especially in regions without a stable and efficient state.

“In conflict regions it is often most efficient to international actors to interact with warring parties if there are



“The mechanism for political stability is based on trust, which is thought to be born through the existence of civil society.”

civil society organizations. Governmental authorities in particular cannot interact with rebel groups or with groups that are not recognized by international or national authorities. Peace-building activities require non-governmental organizations and independent actors,” she elaborated.

“Today, civil society participation is almost a norm in all areas of global governance. The role of civil society has gained more and more importance. But is it still enough to create a functioning global civic, independent public sphere?” Laakso asked.

“So my question is: Whether such organizations are able to constitute a new, increasingly autonomous political arena for participation? Are the new non-governmental organizations and the new global social movements a global scale key, or are they able to construct an alternative social and world order where economic inequalities would be put into question in the global level decision making?” Dr. Laakso concluded.

Dr. Liisa Laakso, Dean, University of Helsinki, Finland

Liisa Laakso acts as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Helsinki. She is a Doctor of Social Science, a Professor of World Politics at the Department of Political Science. Her areas of expertise include conflicts, democratization and development cooperation in Finland, the European Union and among non-governmental organizations.

Dr. Laakso has published in several academic journals and has co-authored and co-edited several

books and journals focusing on African nation states and state building. She is the chair of the Advisory Group of CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development), member of the Executive Committee of the EADI (European Association of Development Research and Activities Training Institutes) and member of the Development Policy Committee of the Government of Finland.

Sima Samar: Promoting Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict Societies – Necessary Steps Forward



Sima Samar, a human rights advocate, politician and doctor from Afghanistan shared her views on the role of human rights in post conflict societies. In her speech, Samar outlined firstly how the lack of respect for human rights contributes to the erupting of conflicts, and secondly the necessary steps for sustainable peace in post-conflict situations.

However, Dr. Samar begun with a notion that lack of respect for human rights is lack of respect for human dignity and existence. She added that a single human rights violation is a violation of human dignity for all human beings. Therefore there is a universal obligation to prevent these violations and protect and promote human rights.

Lack of prevention of human rights violations, lack of promotion and protection of human rights are reasons for conflicts in the first place, according to Samar. Sharing her experience especially from Afghanistan, Samar explained how violations of both political rights as wells as economic, social and cultural rights contribute to the eruption of conflicts.

In Afghanistan, various different regimes have tried to rule during recent history, which all have imposed restrictions of political and civil rights: "People were not able to speak. People were not able to listen to BBC. That's why they stood up," Samar summed.

Samar also shared her view that people in Afghanistan have used religion as a tool to fight back oppressive regimes, even though the key issue was losing rights and freedom, including the freedom of religion. Therefore the restrictions of political and civil rights all contribute to conflict.

However, economic, social and cultural rights are important as well. The vicious circle of poverty and inadequate resources, contributing to lack of education and awareness, fuelling also the lack of access to basic social services is all too well known as the mechanism for engendering conflicts.

Dr. Samar pointed out that both in Afghanistan or Sudan, the vicious circle exists because of the lack of political will and leadership to distribute resources inclusively to all people.

"All social, economic and cultural rights are interconnected to each other. The people feel that they are victims, and think that there is a small group of people that has the access to the services. So they start to do some violent attacks which grows into a bigger conflict", Samar summed.

What are then the necessary steps in a post-conflict situation? Firstly, the broad definition of peace is needed. Sustainable peace means that human rights are respected. Peace does not mean just the absence of fighting, bombs and violence, but human security, according to Samar. For Samar, it means that a daughter can go and return from school without harassment, and a mother does not need to worry how to feed her.

Dr. Samar outlined, that in a post-conflict situation, it needs to be understood that war destroys all structures, including the relationships between people. Samar explained how forty years ago in Afghanistan - even ethnic discrimination existed - the issue of violence along ethnic lines was not as grave it is today.

Secondly, she pointed out how the vulnerable carry the pain of the war: Women, children, elderly and people with disabilities. The trauma is worst carried in the grassroots level and goes unnoticed. This is why accountability and justice are so important, according to Samar: "If we undermine accountability and justice, we just fuel the culture of impunity on violence against women, sexual violence and crimes against humanity. Peace building should not be the signing of a piece of a paper between the two leaders," she summed.

To ensure sustainable peace, the law should be reformed according to human rights principles. "Religion and culture should not be used as excuses to push away equality and rights," Samar stated strongly.



“If we undermine accountability and justice, we just fuel the culture of impunity on violence against women, sexual violence and crimes against humanity.”

In addition, action plans to implement ratified human rights treaties is of course needed: “Most countries sign treaties and then put them on a shelf. We have resolution 1325, but women are not involved and we don’t have an action plan for it”, Samar reflected on the situation in Afghanistan.

A concrete and important step in post-conflict societies, according to Samar, is the establishment of a national institution for human rights. This is something that does

not happen without strong political will, but it is essential to have an organization with a mandate to prevent and monitor violations, and to protect and promote human rights.

Finally, Dr. Samar mentioned labor intensive economy that gives work for the young generation, provision of basic social services that builds the trust towards the regime among the public, and good governance fighting corruption, as the necessary steps forward in post-conflict societies.

Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan

Sima Samar is an Afghanistan human rights advocate, a politician, and a Doctor of Medicine. She is the founder of Shuhada Organization that focuses on educating Afghan women and girls. Currently, Dr. Samar is the Chairwoman of the Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), where she inter alia oversees the conduct of human rights education programs across Afghanistan.

In 2001-2002, Dr. Samar served as the Deputy Chair and Minister of Women’s Affairs for the Interim Ad-

ministration of Afghanistan. During this administration, Samar established the first-ever Ministry of Women’s Affairs in Afghanistan. In 2005, she was appointed as the United Nation’s Special Rapporteur on Situation of Human Rights for Sudan. Dr. Samar has received multiple international awards, honors and prizes, and she continues her impressive work in Afghanistan.

<http://www.aihrc.org.af>
<http://shuhada.org.af>

Kabanda David: Institutionalizing Human Rights Principles – What Can NGOs Do?



Kabanda David is a human rights advocate and has contributed in advocacy and policy development in health rights, especially through public interest litigation, research and invoking health equity. David works with CEHURD, with a mission to pursue human rights and social justice, especially in the field of access to health, women's reproductive health rights and gender equality.

In his presentation, drawing from the work that CEHURD has been doing in Uganda and internationally, he presented examples how NGOs can contribute to the institutionalizing of human rights principles in today's world.

In his presentation, he gave a tangible example of the reality of health care and the work of CEHURD has been doing in order to enhance the right to health. A longer process started from a single case, which Mr. David shared with the audience.

A Ugandan woman died due to maternal health complications because in the health center she attended were no skilled staff nor the needed commodities. In reaction to the media uproar that rose from the case, the government started a legal case against the personnel of the particular health center. However, the personnel were not to be held accountable for the fact that the health center did not have the needed resources.

Realizing this, David and his partners did not accept that the story would be forgotten and the same problems would go on. Instead, CEHURD started a public litigation process and sued the government for not fulfilling its obligation in implementing the right to health treaties.

"How many women are going to die unnoticed? The non-provision of those indispensable maternal health commodities is a violation of human rights, guaranteed in international instruments that the Ugandan government has signed," he summed.

The particular case is still in the process in the extreme court of Uganda, and since then CEHURD has started

many similar cases. Even though the processes in court takes time, CEHURD has reached immediate results, due to the pressure the litigation has created.

"Even before we went to the extreme court, we saw a lot of panic within the government. They called us to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to produce a manual about human rights and training for the health personnel," Mr. David elaborated.

Since then, the government has also arranged, among other measures, maternal death audits in regional referral hospitals and increased the number of personnel.

Due to public support, CEHURD has been able to form a coalition on health collaborating with different actors: "We need a lot of team building and we have a coalition of over forty health organizations. We mobilize the cases through the coalition, so the court is packed with people, making more pressure," David summed.

The right to health in Uganda has recently been under threat also because of foreign construction companies in the area. The construction sites have, for example, contaminated wells of villages and people have been forcefully relocated, and even death cases have emerged.

CEHURD has started legal cases against international companies even though the work in this context is challenged by intimidation of both, the communities and the lawyers, lack of political will, and the high expenses of geological evidence.

However, taking these violations to court has produced results quickly, even though the court processes take time. In this case, CEHURD has seen new practices by the company, such as, compensations for disturbed natural environment, alarm systems for communities and the establishment of village committees to monitor the construction activities.

Public interest litigation is, however, not the only working method of CEHURD. As many Ugandans are not aware about their right to health, the working methods



include grassroots level advocacy and empowerment of communities.

In a KIOS-supported project, CEHURD worked to improve the access to health services by health camps arranged in remote locations. CEHURD has also supported women that suffer from exclusion and social stigma, due to carrying out abortion. Unsafe abortions are a major health risk in Uganda and CEHURD has worked with the social dimensions of the issue, offering vocational training for young women.

What are then the role of NGOs in the process of creating the Post-2015 Agenda? CEHURD has been involved with a GO4 Health project, coordinated by the Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp. In this project, CEHURD coordinated the data collection in Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

“We have documented many voices. And we can look

into the question how communities participate in decision making,” David outlined, emphasizing the bottom up approach.

The overall project has suggested a single, over-arching Post-2015 global health goal: the realization of the right to health for everyone, and has worked on suggestion from targets to indicators.

In conclusion, David stated that he has seen a change in Uganda, where civil society has gained the trust of the public as an integral part of the society, bringing positive change:

“In Uganda you may find that the citizens trust civil society more than they do their government. Ladies and gentlemen, civil society can and will deliver on global goals. If it is properly coordinated and human rights issues are synergized for wider issues, they can pursue human rights and social justice.”

“The non-provision of those indispensable maternal health commodities is a violation of human rights, guaranteed in international instruments that the Ugandan government has signed.”

Mr. Kabanda David, Programmes Coordinator, Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), Uganda

Kabanda David is a human rights advocate, Master of Law and PhD Candidate. He has contributed in advocacy and policy development in health rights through public interest litigation, research and invoking health equity, and the doctrine of public trust.

Kabanda has led several human rights campaigns and he is also the lead counsel in the famous consti-

tutional petition case on maternal health. Currently, Kabanda is working on a Post-2015 development project in CEHURD, informing the process of setting new global goals for health beyond 2015, and to follow-on the UN Millennium Development Goals.

<http://www.cephurd.org>

Nimalka Fernando: The Role of Civil Society in Peace Mediation



Dr. Nimalka Fernando is a Sri Lankan lawyer, women's rights advocate and a human rights trainer, with experience spanning more than three decades. Dr. Fernando shared her experience of the role of civil society in peace mediation in the context of Sri Lanka.

"Unfortunately, Sri Lanka is a country where peace remains illusory. The absence of war itself do not give us peace automatically. Civil society organizations and activists in Sri Lanka, and also elsewhere in South Asia, involved with peace mediation face continuous threats, harassment – and are at times eliminated," Dr. Fernando opened.

Fernando continued elaborating how the failure of addressing questions of accountability is an obstacle for sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. Instead of addressing

questions of accountability, she sees an ethos of "development at any cost".

This refers to the tendency of compartmentalizing the issues of peace, human rights and development. "If you are enjoying the benefits of development, they tell us don't ask questions about democracy and peace building," Fernando described the political climate of Sri Lankan society.

Regarding the role of civil society taking part in peace mediation, the first challenge, according to Fernando, was to mobilize people in order to build a forum bringing people interested together. After thirty years of experience in work among the civil society groups and individual activists, the activities of civil society in Sri Lanka and among peace mediation include constituency building,

"If you are enjoying the benefits of development, they tell us, don't ask questions about democracy and peace building."



facilitating peace research, and facilitating dialogues across communities.

Dr. Fernando continued stating, that no sustainable peace is built without addressing the issues of justice, and that this has also been on the agenda of some civil society organizations: “There have been groups who focused on development issues alone, not wanting to get involved in serious issue of needing to address the political aspect of peace. But unfortunately just building houses or roads - the hardware - cannot bring peace and peaceful coexistence in a country like Sri Lanka,” she stated.

Nimalka Fernando has been involved especially with work among women’s groups, working with the issue of disappearances and the people who have lost their family members in the conflict: “The search for loved ones is directly linked to ending the conflict. This is how the role of civil society and women’s movement got defined in Sri Lanka. It is linked to developing conditions, which will remove pain and agony, discrimination, violence, violations committed by those in power. So it becomes a democratic struggle,” Fernando explained.

Through this work, the civil society facilitated the formation of “communities for peace” which have been active despite the intimidation and harassment of the state, as well as right wing fascist groups in Sri Lanka, according to Dr. Fernando.

In the case of Sri Lanka, the hegemonic political history narrative has viewed efforts of civil society in peace

Dr. Nimalka Fernando, President, International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), Sri Lanka

Nimalka Fernando is a Sri Lankan attorney-at-law, Doctor of Divinity, a women’s rights advocate and a human rights trainer. She is the President of the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) that has a special consultative status in United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Dr. Fernando is a co-chairperson of South Asians for Human Rights and co-convener of Platform for Freedom Sri Lanka. She is a founding member of Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA) and was a member of the ARENA Executive Board 1994 – 1997. Dr. Fernando has been awarded with Citizen’s Peace Award 2012 by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka.

<http://imadr.org>

mediation as activity supporting the division of the society, supporting terrorism or western forces conspiracies, according to Fernando.

Despite this political climate, Fernando concluded: “However, we have had to hold onto our ideals of equality, universality of human rights. Be firm that human rights is for all. This position therefore defined our campaigns for seek a just peace.”

Alexis Rusine: Human Rights Driving Poverty Reduction – Best Practices



Alexis Rusine is a human rights advocate, who works at COTRAF RWANDA (Congrès du Travail et de la Fraternité des Travailleurs). His work includes monitoring workers' rights and advocating social dialogue on the issue.

In his presentation, Mr. Rusine shared his experiences on advocating workers' rights in the context of Rwanda. Rwanda, being a society covering from a genocide for the past twenty years has seen both, attempts to build the political system, as well as the economy.

The work of COTRAF is based on the economic, social and cultural rights. Setting the context, Mr. Rusine underlined that working with the workers' rights, they are directly linked to right to education, right to food, right to health, right to housing, right to work and right to social security.

"Our task as trade unionists is to make sure that economic and social rights are really implemented and that they are written in the policies of enterprises," Rusine summed.

COTRAF produces an annual report monitoring the realization of workers' rights in Rwandan enterprises. In 2013, the report of COTRAF was able to monitor 28 enterprises. "A small initiative, but which can bring institutional change", stated Rusine.

In this report COTRAF has focused on three aspects of workers' rights: freedom of association, freedom of speech at workplace and the right to negotiate.

The report of COTRAF well illustrates the situation on the grassroots level. Even though the right to association and right to freedom of speech at work exist in the Rwandan legislation, the implementation lacks behind. Workers willing to join trade unions might easily get sacked or harassed, and the same applies to workers that have been vocal on violations of workers' rights at work places.

The rejection from the state actors, has also been reality in recent past of COTRAF's work: "When international business came. Our government told us: You trade unions

keep silent! We need foreign investment. Don't confront them," Rusine illustrated.

However, COTRAF has made its effort to show that neglecting basic workers' rights has unwanted consequences on individual and household level, on enterprise level, as well as national level. While immediate effects include phenomena, such as, deterioration of purchasing power and incapacity to satisfy decently health and nutrition needs, the short term effects include confrontational industrial relations, costly labor disputes and lack of innovation, all contributing to decrease in productivity. In addition, long term effects include inequality, insecurity, exclusion, poverty, social tension and unsustainable economic performance on a broader macro level, according to Rusine.

"When looking at UNDP reports on MDGs, Rwanda has achieved many, but eradication of poverty has not been achieved, even though economic growth is there," Rusine continued.

As an example of best practices, Rusine explained that COTRAF decided to focus on the right of workers to organize and negotiate. As a result of the advocacy, the first collective bargaining agreement in Rwanda was born, an achievement celebrated also by the ministry of labor. Therefore, the empowerment of workers to negotiate better wages and working conditions is the key, according to Rusine.

The first collective bargaining agreement was established in a tea factory. The improvements of working conditions for workers ranged from increased wages to longer maternity leave and to access to information about the financial status of the company, just to mention a few. However, also the employer has expressed its contentment as the agreement has brought increase in productivity, due to the motivation of workers and decrease in labor disputes, for example.

In addition to promoting collective bargaining agreements, Rusine maintained that monitoring workers' rights



*“Our government told us:
You trade unions keep silent! We
need foreign investment. Don’t
confront them.”*

is such a crucial activity that it can be considered as another best practice in promoting poverty reduction.

When negotiating about the rights to monitor enterprises in Rwanda, Rusine and his colleagues often face rejection: “Many employers tell me that, Alexis, it’s you who are bringing problems,” Rusine illustrated.

However, in the work of COTRAF, they are determined to convince Rwandan employers that their approach to monitoring is based on building mutual respect and accountability. Rusine emphasized the importance of civil society monitoring, as a way to increase transparent dialogue with employers; to supplement the under resourced labor rights regulation done by the government institutions; and thirdly, as a way to give input for the periodical human rights reviews.

“We are trying to show with monitoring, we are bringing all to the same boat,” Rusine summed.

To conclude, Rusine stated that the work with workers’ rights is meant to pave the way towards the creation of decent jobs, increase in the access to services, and this way, finally contribute to the birth of inclusive and just economic growth.

Mr. Alexis Rusine, Project Coordinator, Congrès du Travail et de la Fraternité des Travailleurs (COTRAF), Rwanda

Alexis Rusine is a Rwandan applied sociologist, a Master’s Degree candidate and a human rights advocate. Rusine works at COTRAF RWANDA on workers’ rights monitoring and advocating social dialogue.

Mr. Rusine is the President of the Rwandan Union of Professionals and Managerial Staff Union affiliated to COTRAF RWANDA and UNI GLOBAL Union. He has experience in participatory project design, monitoring and evaluation, and has been part of project evaluations in several developing countries.

<http://www.cotraf.org>

**Panel discussion:
Promoting All Aspects of Human
Rights When Implementing the
Next Development Agenda? –
Contradictions, solutions and the
Roles of Civil Societies**



Panelists



Ms. Priti Darooka

Executive Director, the Programme on Women's Economic Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR), India

Priti Darooka has a Master's Degree on Women's Studies, and she is the founder and executive director of Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. PWESCR addresses issues of poverty by engendering policy, law and practice at local, national, regional and international levels. It works closely with the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and with various UN rapporteurs.

Ms. Darooka is a founding member of SAFA (South Asian Feminist Alliance) and a member of Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors' core group. She is also the focal person for South Asia for CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness. Previously, Darooka has worked at the Ford Foundation in New York and at United Nation's Development Funds for Women (UNIFEM) on violence against women in Afghanistan. She has recently been appointed member of the Global Reference Group for Bread for the World.

<http://www.pwescr.org>



Ms. Aino Pennanen

Advocacy and Policy Officer, the Finnish NGO Platform (KEPA), Finland
Aino Pennanen has specialized in human rights and POST-2015 agenda. Pennanen serves as an Advocacy and Policy Officer at the Finnish NGO Platform.

www.kepa.fi



Dr. Antto Vihma

Senior Research Fellow, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), Finland

Antto Vihma PhD, serves at the Global Security Research Programme at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Vihma's expertise areas are i.e. multilateral negotiations and strategies, global climate governance, legal aspects of international agreements, and North-South politics. Vihma has written several international publications.

www.fia.fi/en





Dr. Jaakko Kangasniemi

Managing Director, the Finnish Fund for Industrial Cooperation Ltd (FINNFUND), Finland

Jaakko Kangasniemi has graduated in economics (Ph.D.) and serves as a CEO/Managing Director at FINNFUND. Kangasniemi has specialized in developing countries and has previously served as an economist at the World Bank and as an Economic Advisor for the Finnish Foreign Ministry.

<http://www.finnfund.fi>



Ms. Phyllis Omido

Founder, Center for Justice, Governance and Environmental action (CJGEA), Kenya

Phyllis Omido is a Kenyan environmental and human rights advocate and a lobby leader. Phyllis founded CJGEA in 2009 in order to address environmental challenges facing settlements near industrial areas in Kenya. CJGEA is advocating for human rights, policy change and better implementation of environmental legislation in Kenya. Currently, CJGEA is pursuing a class action litigation against the Government of Kenya and the industrialists responsible.

<https://www.centerforjgea.com>



Priti Darooka:

“How to integrate human rights in the Post-2015 Agenda? Everyone is unanimous that human rights should be there but how and what interpretation of human rights?”

“What we mean with human rights based approach to development? We put people in the center of development. This is challenging these times when development is talked about in terms of economic growth. We are saying that people are in the center: human rights, life in dignity to all.”

“Human rights are not just a goal, but provide a procedural mechanism to implement a development agenda and give a blueprint to good governance and accountability. All policies: economic, social, agricultural, foreign investment – all policies should have a human rights dimension to it.

On Accountability

“The heart of human rights is that it requires right holders to hold the duty bearers accountable. Accountability.”

“Therefore, in Post-2015 there is a need for paradigm shift – emphasizing human rights means also emphasizing right holders, accountability and monitoring.”

“There is a need for capacity building for duty-bearers and right-holders to hold them accountable. While implementing programs and trying to get rights realized, it doesn’t happen without capacity building on the accountability mechanisms. For

example, access to justice for poor is a huge human rights problem. Excluded do not have a voice and new innovation is needed to tackle this.”

On North-South Dynamics

“So the key part of human rights is accountability. So who is holding whom accountable? Who is setting the agenda? When we talk about rights, it is not outside the existing power relations and inequalities.”

“The North-South tension plays a very important role in the overall development agenda setting. If you look from the point of view of many countries in the South, let’s say my country India, they don’t feel very happy about human rights, because they see it as a Western phenomenon and ask, why should we have to engage with that.”

“In the heart of this problem is how the human rights mechanism has been employed. Where our international human rights organizations are located at? Most international human rights organizations are located in the West.”

“What is the relationship with North and South in doing human rights work? The south comes in as the poor case studies as we provide the evidence for the North, to develop the reports to hold our governments, our country accountable for human rights violations. No one likes that process, at least not in the South.”

“They look at it as domination from the North, and not as equal

participation of the South. They look at human rights as an instrument in the hands of North, twisting things like trade negotiations. We as a civil society need to get a note of this, and think is this the best we can do for human rights.”

On Approaches to Human Rights

“The way we interpret and work with human rights, according to my learning, comes from years and years of work with the civil and political rights. The main approach has been the violation approach, and the civil society engagement has been through documenting violations.”

“Now working with economic, social and cultural rights, the violation approach is not the best approach. The key principle for realization of these rights, is a pro-policy approach, which is that gradually, step by step you are achieving the realization of that right.”

“If you want to have a dialogue with the government, the violation approach will not necessarily open the door for pro-policy. How do we get the human rights defenders to look at the pro-policy approach and to develop new models of accountability?”

“The violations approach – naming and shaming – falls back to the power relations mentioned earlier: Who can name and shame who? Civil society should find alternative methods to strengthen the human rights principles.”



Aino Pennanen:

“More than million people gave their voices for the UNDP consultations and were underlining that human rights should lay the foundation for the Post-2015 Agenda.”

“So where are we at the moment, if we compare the negotiations and the draft of the sustainable development goals that are, at the moment, 17 on the table.”

Positive Perspectives on the Post-2015 Agenda Negotiations

“Unlike the MDGs, which was a donor and developing country pact, this should be a universal agenda: All countries should develop now, also Finland is a developing country. It is not only an agenda about charity, but an agenda of multiple sustainable development questions and it is related to people everywhere. And this agenda should tackle the root causes.”

“Regarding human rights commitments, there are some positive aspects in the development goals at the moment. For example education, our Tanzanian partners have complained that quality of education is not good. People get to schools but don’t learn. Now, there should be free basic education that is good quality and non-discriminatory as a goal. That is progress. And the health goal, the coverage should be universal.”

“Access to justice is mentioned, unlike in MGDs and it is more equality sensitive. However, there is no standalone goal for inequality, something which NGOs fought for long.”

“Gender is there, more cross-cutting than before. The inclusion of vulnerable groups is mentioned. There is also a kind of punchline of “no-one left behind” now, that everybody is repeating, but we should think what this means in practice.”

On Shortcomings

“But then there are many, many shortcomings: Especially accountability. In the negotiations the whole accountability mechanism was deleted and I think it is shameful, it is terrible.”

“And it’s not only the accountability of governments, there should be also accountability mechanism for all the development actors, also for the private sector. The kind of positive partnership discourse, I think it covers some important contradictions, for example land-grabbing, human rights violations and environmental defenders’ role.”

“From the civil society perspective, free easy access to information, freedom of expression and assembly were deleted during the last round of negotiations. So were women’s rights, gender equality and empowerment. And also sexual health and reproductive rights, these were deleted.”

“One big battle that the civil society lost, was that we should not only tackle extreme poverty, we should also tackle extreme wealth. At the moment, 85 people that could be fitted into one bus, own as much wealth as the 3.5 billion poorest people of the world.”

“I would like to also go to financing. How are we going to finance

economic, social and cultural rights, if not with tax pays? Well, if you look at the draft that is on the table, there is now, that we have to improve the tax collecting capacity of developing countries, but this is not enough. We have to look at capital flights also.”

Antto Vihma:

“From the point of view of environmental negotiations, what do we have common with human rights regimes? What can international law do for us? And what can we do for international law?”

“There is one challenge we definitely face together. In academic research, we pay a lot of attention to international agreements in the legally binding, hard law form. World Trade Organization has its own dispute settlement, or if we’re talking about IMF, which has real sticks and carrots in their hands.”

“But human rights and environment do not have this. We are in the realm of what you might call soft law. And that is also because of states’ fundamental unwillingness to make these agreements legally binding in a hard law form.”

“In this reality, we face similar challenges. Soft law, it cannot do everything. And it certainly sounds a bit helpless in cases when brave people challenge big investment projects in places where rule of law is not always respected.”

“Another issue is the role of UN, an issue we face together. There is more and more information, bodies,



decisions, ministers and money as well coming in. So we are sometimes lost with our key competence.”

“The third issue is the North-South relations, which are not easy in neither the environmental nor the human rights field. They are a problem because of the structural inequalities that we are very well aware of. And secondly, they are a problem because there is an open invitation for populism, both sides of the border.”

“If a southern leader does not like a policy, let’s say an environmental policy, it is very easy to play the anti-western card. In the environmental negotiations, for us in the North, it’s very easy to say that nothing changes if China does not do something – nothing matters but China. That’s one way of northern populism in North-South relations.”

Jaakko Kangasniemi:

“We fund private sector projects in developing countries and exist for one purpose only: To promote economic and social development. We don’t phrase this in the human rights language, but we work with issues such employment, access to finance, access to services such as electricity or clean water and so forth. We also talk about safeguard policies, we talk about social, environment, governance issues.”

“There are four challenges that came to mind about the topic of the panel.”

“How to make sure that we know what is actually going on in our target

countries in our projects? What is going on the ground in terms of human rights? What are the impacts, all the policies related to social and environmental governance put in place?”

“Secondly, to know that the supported companies are with us on these matters. That if violations happen and we raise a hell, that they will raise a hell too. That the customers, financiers, shareholders, management of the company, everybody get concerned. Sometimes they do, sometimes they don’t.”

“Thirdly, what do we do, if what we require, insist and impose on, makes industrial companies operation so costly, that they cannot compete with others who don’t care about human rights issues? There are challenges in this.”

“Fourth, what do we do in situations where our invest companies see something that would have a big potential and development benefits, or human rights benefits, but people cannot do it because of local legislation or having politically exposed persons as shareholders?”

“It is much easier to function in countries where there is an active civil society. The role of civil society is also to get the information. Of course we put in place different mechanisms of monitoring, but in addition we need someone who is outside that system.”

“Civil society is needed to implementation of safety, health, environment, human rights. Simply put: Responsible businesses need and depend on active civil society.”

Phyllis Omido:

“People working with environmental rights are in the most risk globally. We started advocating for a community that has been affected by a smelter licensed by the government. During the work I have been harassed and arrested by the government and forced to flee.”

“In this case, the government finally started monitoring the environmental effects of the industry, but only after we had provided them with scientific proof what was happening. It took five years to get this result.”

“Therefore, setting up an industry requires access to information and participation from communities. In Kenya, the law is progressive, ensuring the right to clean environment, but there is a gap in implementation.”

“There is no way a community will enjoy other basic rights, if there is no right to clean and healthy environment. We are talking about food security and right to health, but environment needs to be in the core of all these decisions, and we are able to reach the fundamental rights of people.”

Antto Vihma:

“When we are dealing with international agreements the role of civil society and other domestic constituencies come to play very strongly. What soft international texts and agreements can do for you, is that they can empower domestic constituencies in domestic politics, to some extent.”



"I have been an NGO campaigner, and I remember very well how good it felt, when you could meet the government officials and ask: Have you heard about this agreement, paragraph this and this, and that it has been enforced since year this and this."

"It gives civil society actors some legitimacy. And it is not limited only to civil society, there are also other domestic constituencies that refer to the international law for their lobbying."

"The second thing is that they can provide transparency. It elevates our informational status. We know what our government is doing, get better data, and know also what the others are doing. Another way of empowering progressive domestic constituencies."

"And I posed a question on the key competencies of United Nations. Related to this, I say that these kind of reviews, information and measuring where countries are, is very important. Anyone who has been in international negotiations know that governments do not like to be reviewed. It is actually quite ambitious to try to get decent data about the recent policies, human rights issues and so on. It can be ambitious and useful."

"Thirdly, I posed the question of North-South issue. My pragmatic answer is that the progressive countries should stick together. We have seen this mobilization couple of times in climate negotiations. I hope these kind of political mobilizations will happen also in the human rights field in the coming years."

Aino Pennanen:

"One of the most important things for civil society is to stick together and speak with one voice. I have seen how it is sometimes difficult, and I am afraid we are winning small fights but losing the war."

"We need a holistic approach, we have to think about economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights and environmental rights, for example, all here, and the coherence across all policies."

"On accountability: The democratic, just and effective governance is something we have to fight for that it would be on the agenda. This should be reached also into fiscal policies. How is the money used? Are countries doing all they can to collect money for economic, social and cultural rights?"

"When we focus so much on the public-private partnership, I think we should focus also on the global partnership. And also there use the international laws as means, for example implementing the Maastricht principles on international corporations."

"Corporate mandatory reporting on human rights assessments, demanding mandatory reporting so we know how much Finnish companies pay taxes to different countries, how much to tax havens. Inequality is very central, and a high level panel said that we should have an overreaching target, that none of these targets are achieved, if they are not achieved for all the income and social groups. And this is something that was not taken into account in MDGs."

Priti Darooka:

"Regarding human rights, one important thing is the issue of capabilities. Right to food is not just to be free from hunger if you are given a kilo of rice. Right to food is enhancing a person's capability to feed oneself. Therefore it is central how are peoples' capabilities enhanced to realize human rights?"

I would look into, how the whole development agenda is in line with existing accountability mechanisms. So when countries are coming into Universal Periodic Review or report to treaty bodies, they would also report on the development goals, whatever they will finally be. This way there would be one robust global accountability mechanism within the human rights mechanisms."

"In Millennium Development Goals, the stakeholders were the donor and the receiving government, but we are all stakeholders now. What does the model of inclusive partnership, from the point of view of accountability, mean, and how are we going to hold multiple actors accountable?"

"How are we going to talk about human rights when the environment for human rights defenders is so dangerous? Enabling an environment for human rights defenders is part of our work."

"Human rights should not be only a responsibility of civil society. The human rights framework will not become a general agenda, unless it is talked about in parliaments, corporate boards, UN, EU, and civil society. How can we make human rights everyone's agenda? Let's all become human rights defenders in post-2015!"

PART II – 2nd Seminar Day

KIOS Future Workshops – Introduction

The second seminar day consisted of group work, in which the future workshop method was applied. Future workshop is a methodological approach to create and work with different type of scenarios. A future workshop is meant to be a participative, democratic and cooperative problem-solving method that emphasizes critique, learning, team work, democracy, and empowerment through group creativity and synergy.

Regardless what the outcome of the Post-2015 Agenda negotiations will be, it is clear that stronger global and local cooperation of civil society actors for the promotion of human rights is needed and that it can make a difference. However, methods of this cooperation need to be developed and this was an important motivation to arrange these workshops.

The goal set for the workshops was that the discussions would benefit the future oriented work of NGOs, especially promoting human rights in developing country contexts. Other NGOs have not applied the future workshop method to any large extent, so the focus was also in developing the method.

The future workshops were attended by people from NGOs, students from universities, activists, and human rights and development experts. The attended people were from more than ten countries. In each of the workshops, the discussion were facilitated by an expert. In addition, the whole workshop day was facilitated by Kai Vaara, a Finnish expert having a long history of realizing future workshops.

The crosscutting theme for all four workshops was looking into the future prospects of promoting human rights and development. The topics were: 1) Civil Soci-

ety and Peace Processes, 2) Environmental Protection and Human Rights - Developing New Working Methods for NGO's, 3) Poverty Reduction - Assessing Civil Society Initiatives and 4) Enhancing Civil Society's Capacity to Promote Human Rights.

Arranging the workshops was an experiment and a challenge. During the day, it was noticed that the topics of the groups were so wide, that it was challenging to fruitfully discuss them in a duration of just one day. In addition, the heterogeneity of the participants added to this challenge. Even though having participants from different backgrounds is definitely an asset in this kind of workshopping, the fact that the groups did not have a geographical focus, but participants brought knowledge across the world, added to the challenge of having too wide topics. This is why the visioning of the groups stayed on a rather general level.

However, the workshops were useful to comprehend that some challenges in building stronger civil societies are the same across the world. If there would have been more time to continue the workshops, it would have been fruitful to examine the specific challenges of different geographical areas.

In addition, according to the feedback gotten from many partner organizations, participants were delighted to have been introduced to a very participative and democratic method, possibly fruitful for their work in their own local contexts.

In addition to the summaries presented of each workshop below, see comprehensive notes by visiting: http://www.kios.fi/english/helsinki_2014/



The Idea and Structure of the Future Workshop Method

“Methodological approach to create and work with different type of scenarios that can be described as democratization of future.”

The idea is that a group of people cooperate to create ideas and strategies for the future of defined topic or problem.

The main purpose is to activate a basis, which through a joint critique of the establishment is able to develop a proposal for a desirable future.

The method activates citizens to participate on decision making processes, enables a group of people to develop new ideas or solutions, in addition to the ones proposed by the establishment, and produces material to support and guide decision making processes.

The approach has been used in local communities, municipalities, organizations, schools, NGOs and private firms. It also functions as a strategic cooperation method and can be used for strategic objectives.

The temporal duration of the FW can vary from one day to several weeks and months. The workshop consists of five phases.

Historical highway plan

In 1987 municipality leaders announced to build a highway through marginalized neighborhood in Austria.

Austrian developers of the method, academics Robert Jungk and Norbert Müller, held a future workshop.

With the participation of locals they ensured the municipality to support the development of the area instead of building the highway.

Reference: Jungk, R. and Müller, N. (1987). Future Workshops: How to create desirable futures, Institute of Social Inventions, London, UK

Team Work

Learning **Democratic** Critique-friendly
Hope for future **Participative** Group creativity
Problem-solving method **Tool of social learning**

Synergy **Cooperative**
Increase of self-confidence

Future Workshop Phases

1. Preparation

2. Critique

3. Fantasy

4. Implementation

5. Follow-up



Future Workshop 1: Civil Societies and Peace Processes

Facilitator:

Matthias Wevelsiep, the Finn Church Aid

Synopsis:

When comparing to the 20th century, mortality rates of armed conflicts have decreased. However, durable peace has been difficult to achieve in various conflict and post-conflict regions. Non-state armed groups are involved in many of today's conflicts, and it is often a great challenge for civil society actors to realize peace initiatives. At the same time, however, civil societies might have a greater potential in solving contemporary conflicts.

In this workshop group, the aim was to modify and innovate new working methods for civil society actors to realize and strengthen peace mediation at the various levels of the conflict and post-conflict processes.

1. Critique Phase

In the workshop, a vivid brainstorming moment took place as the participant presented the difficulties, challenges and shortcomings related to the topic. During this critique phase, the problems were assorted into topic groups on the go, and this resulted in having 8 problem groups.

These topic groups were then reformed by combining the themes into four topics which were:

- 1) Aid dependency and conflicts
- 2) Political will to resolve conflicts (including the women)
- 3) Actors of peace: Social exclusion and inequality driving conflicts
- 4) Root causes of conflicts: Social exclusion and inequality driving conflicts.

After this, the workshop group voted on which topic it would want to address. After the voting and some rephrasing, a problem statement was set for the workshop as follows:

Discrimination based on different factors as one of the root causes of conflicts.

2. Fantasy Phase

In the phantasy phase, problems related to the chosen problem statement were turned into positive visions. Again, they were collected and organized on the go, this time into five different sub-categories.

After voting, reworking and rephrasing, the group presented its vision in one sentence:

Inclusive participation in decision making, where everyone's opinion needs to be heard and accepted.

3. Implementation Phase

In the final phase of the workshop, the implementation phase, this group divided its efforts into two aspects of it, layering the topic into two levels:

- 1) The role of civil society, and
- 2) The role of state.

The group then brainstormed the ideas, what would be needed, both, on the CSOs level and state level, that the chosen vision would come realized. The ideas of the implementation phase included for example, mobilizing and building constituencies, building their capacities and networks.

After voting, reworking and rephrasing, the group presented its vision in one sentence:

Inclusive participation in decision making, where everyone's opinion needs to be heard and accepted.



Future Workshop 2: Environmental Protection and Human Rights – Developing New Working Methods for NGO's

Facilitator:

Timo Kuronen, Siemenpuu
Foundation, Finland

Synopsis:

The starting point for this workshop group was to innovate new working methods that make the efforts of civil society more tangible in environmental protection and sustainable adaptation to climate change.

Human rights defenders working with environmental protection and rights related to environment are among the most threatened activists by hostile state and non-state actors. In addition, climate change is among the most pressing, vast and complex challenges of the time. The degradation or a more sudden devastation often affects those communities that are vulnerable or excluded in the first place.

1. Critique Phase

The same way than the workshop number 1, the group 2 started with brainstorming the various difficulties related to the topic and ended up categorizing these problems under eight different themes. From here, by rethinking and combining, the group chose and phrased two problem themes to be further worked in the workshop. These were:

- 1) **Activists in danger and indigenous and local rights violations**
- 2) **Impacts of climate change, education and capacity building**

2. Fantasy Phase

For the fantasy phase this workshop divided into two groups, following the two themes presented above. The sub-groups worked on ideas, turning

the problems into positive visions.

Visions for the sub-group 1 included, for example, seeing right-holders as equal partners, better mechanisms for mediation in land disputes, and more autonomy for indigenous communities, to mention just a few.

The other half working visions for the sub-group 2, suggested visions such as climate change better integrated into education curriculums, and forthcoming post-2015 agenda

combining climate and human rights framework, to mention a couple.

3. Implementation Phase

In the last phase of the workshop, the group continue working in above mentioned sub-groups, brainstorming concrete steps and resources to achieve their visions. Both groups listed possibilities, threats, resources, partners and publicity ideas, in order to advance the created visions.



The group chose and phrased two problem themes to be further worked in the workshop:

- 1) *Activists in danger and indigenous and local rights violations*
- 2) *Impacts of climate change, education and capacity building*



Future workshop 3: Poverty Reduction – Assessing Civil Society Initiatives

Facilitator:

Ulla Anttila, the Finnish NGO
Foundation for Human Rights
KIOS, Finland

Synopsis:

Poverty reduction was set as a central target among the Millennium Development Goals. Civil society organizations have employed various methods to promote individuals' rights to fulfill basic needs, for example the right to food. In India, we have seen public interest litigation as one method of promoting human rights in this context. The aim of this workshop group was to assess civil society initiatives and develop new working methods when focusing on poverty reduction.

1. Critique Phase

In this workshop group, the first brainstorming moment produced a long list of problems and shortcomings related to the theme of poverty reduction. The presented problems were roughly categorized on the go under five topic groups. After collecting the problems a voting took place, which was meant to determine the most important issues.

In this session, the issues that got the most votes were related to three themes:

- 1) Education
- 2) Gender inequality
- 3) Social exclusion of marginalized

From here, the workshop group worked on a phrasing that would be chosen as topic to focus on in following phases. In combatting poverty reduction, the group saw education

The group saw education as a central theme and therefore the focus was phrased as: Realization of right to education as a tool to eradicate marginalization.



as a central theme and therefore the focus was phrased as:

Realization of right to education as a tool to eradicate marginalization.

2. Fantasy Phase

The fantasy phase now started with the group focusing on the above mentioned topic and turning problems into positive visions. In the process, education became even more central to the group as the visions the group held as most important ones were all dealing with free accessible primary education for all.

In this group, the workshop advanced with another round of visions, trying to reach the topic with more concrete ideas. The ideas that were most wanted were, for example, free day meals in school, teaching in

local languages, and so forth, making education more accessible.

3. Implementation Phase

After voting on the visions in the end of the fantasy phase, four thematical headings were created. The idea was to deal with these topics in the implementation phase. The idea of the implementation phase is to think of concrete action that would lead into these visions. The headings were:

- 1) Resources for education
- 2) Accessible for all
- 3) Affordable for all
- 4) Appropriate for all



Future workshop 4: Enhancing Civil Society's Capacity to Promote Human Rights

Facilitator:

Sirkku K. Hellsten, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania/Finland

Synopsis:

Starting point for the workshop group "Enhancing Civil Society's Capacity to Promote Human Rights" was set on the functions and actions of governments that have narrowed down the space in which the civil society is free to operate. During the workshop, participants discussed several issues from restrictive legislation initiatives to direct harassment of human rights defenders done by state and non-state actors.

It is clear that freedom of expression is necessary in any society to enable discussion on inequality and injustice. However, development strategies still often neglect the importance of human rights in achieving sustainable development. Therefore, in this workshop group, new ways to enhance the capacity of civil society to promote human rights was worked based on the question "Could strategic cooperation improve the results of civil society organizations?"

1. Critique Phase

As a result of brainstorming problems related to the civil society's capacity to promote human rights, the group ended up having 6 different problem topic groups. In the voting the most votes of the group were placed under two topics:

- 1) Lack of political will
- 2) Insecurity

For the purpose of the fantasy phase of the workshop, these two topics were combined and rephrased as:

Democratic society respecting human rights

2. Fantasy Phase

In this phase, the group started turning problems into positive visions, thinking of ideas that would lead into the defined goal, mentioned above.

This time visions were divided into three vision groups:

- 1) Active civil society and enlightened citizenship
- 2) Duty bearers
- 3) Resources

3. Implementation phase

In the final phase of the workshop, the group concentrated on the active civil society – vision, laying down different aspects such as threats, corrections, possibilities and human resources that would advance this vision.

*This time visions
were divided into
three vision groups:*

- 1) Active civil society
and enlightened citizenship*
- 2) Duty bearers*
- 3) Resources*



Conclusions

From the seminar we learnt that mutual learning processes can strengthen civil society in building a better future together. The first day showed that civil society contribution for the promotion of human rights is essential. For example, when peace building processes proceed, the civil societies should be involved – an idea which was also scrutinized in the workshop number 1, on the second seminar day.

Civil society initiatives can have a strong impact in multiple fields, for example on environmental sustainability, implementation of human rights conventions and principles, and on broader initiatives affecting development policies.

Regarding the future workshops, held on the 2nd seminar day, we can draw a general conclusion that they would have needed more time for making conclusions or recommendations. However, those involved in the workshops worked intensively and the workshops proceeded quickly.

As a method, future workshops are a potential alternative for many actors. For example, when the workshop number 3 proceeded from the theme of poverty to educational issues, it was clear that this workshop had a clear intention to tackle poverty through education. This shows that workshops may re-analyse the questions and prioritize a new perspective on a specific theme. In accordance with the statistics of the UNDP (2014), the workshop appears to be right when drawing conclusions. Namely, of 11 countries with a high primary school drop-out rate (above 50 %), 10 belong to the group of the low human development countries. All those 10 countries are situated in Africa, while the remaining country with a high primary school drop-out rate is Nicaragua, which belongs to the group of medium human development countries.

It would also be recommendable that researchers of international affairs and future studies would be interested

in civil society actors' future workshops. The key issue of the workshops is that through mutual learning and practical problem solving processes, civil society actors can find new ways to build a path for a better future. The seminar of KIOS had a global focus this time, but under different circumstances the future workshop method can be applied to the processes of local problem solving or community-based alternatives for example. Hopefully, the participants of the seminar can apply the method to various new contexts.

KIOS would like to see the forthcoming Post-2015 Agenda or in other words Sustainable Development Goals to be based on human rights. From the year 2016, it will be also important that civil society actors will be involved in the implementation, evaluation and assessment of this new programme. Even though the implementation of the goals will be an intergovernmental process, civil society actors should have their role in different phases. It is important that the states are required to respect the views of civil society on the local, national and international implementation processes.

KIOS works as a funder for human rights projects in developing countries. It also seeks to promote human rights and advocate policies to promote the work of human rights defenders, so that these aspects will be taken seriously in all the dimensions of Finnish foreign policy. The next seminar of KIOS in Helsinki will take place on the 29th of September 2015. For further information, have a look on the website (www.kios.fi) later this year. KIOS also aims to arrange seminars in South Asia and East Africa for its partners bi-annually.

Reference: UNDP (2014): Human Development Report 2014. Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience. UNDP: New York.

