

KIOS-funded projects and development in human rights

- results from post-evaluation questionnaires

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1. KIOS and its mission

The Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights KIOS was founded in 1998 by eleven Finnish non-governmental organizations which focus on human rights and peace and development issues. Today, the mandate of KIOS is clear: it finances human rights projects in developing countries. KIOS promotes the realisation of human rights in developing countries as they are defined in the human rights treaties and instruments of the United Nations and the Council of Europe and in other correspondent regional human rights instruments. To advance this mission KIOS funds human rights projects of developing countries and is thus a direct channel of support to projects that promote the realisation of human rights of the developing countries and human rights knowledge of civil society actors. It is central for KIOS 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 board of KIOS adopted a new strategy in 2010 and this strategy focuses on funding human rights projects. In the strategy, the legal approach to human rights is of importance and KIOS may also finance other kinds of projects promoting human rights at the local or national level. In the new strategy, KIOS also concentrates its efforts to influencing the developing world. The focus countries are Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (Eastern parts), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda in Africa. In Asia, the focus countries and areas are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Tibet. However, this strategy was not adopted at the time when the decisions on the projects under scrutiny in this study were made. Therefore, the projects of this study represent a wider range of countries. KIOS is working on specific country strategies with regard to each country or area, in which it funds projects.

Each country and each location has its specific human rights challenges, to which local organisations aim to react with specific human rights interventions. Be it through human rights education, reform of judicial systems, or advocacy for ending human rights violations, KIOS strives to assist the promotion of human rights for the most vulnerable. KIOS only funds human rights projects carried out by NGOs and other civil society actors, which means that its mission is unique in the Finnish field of development cooperation. However, human rights projects focus on different issues: some of them tackle inadequacy of the legislation and some others aim to awareness raising with regard to human rights, for example.

2. Human rights and development co-operation

Human rights and development both aim to promote wellbeing and freedom, based on the inherent dignity and equality of all people. Human rights and human development share a preoccupation with necessary outcomes for improving people's lives, but also with better processes. Human rights contribute to human development by guaranteeing a protected space where the elite cannot monopolise development

processes, policies and programmes. The human rights framework also introduces the important idea that certain actors have duties to facilitate and promote development.

Development co-operation aims at improving the conditions for development in the developing world. It has been widely discussed what kinds of means are the best for enabling progress in the developing world. In general, sustainable development and respect for human rights can be seen as cornerstones for development.

About a decade ago, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) affirmed that human rights are an essential part of development co-operation. Human rights and development have increasingly converged ever since. Not only is there growing recognition of the crucial links between human rights violations, poverty, exclusion, vulnerability and conflict, there is also increasing acknowledgement of the vital role human rights play in mobilising social change, transforming state-society relations, removing the barriers faced by the poor in accessing services, and providing the basis for the integrity of information services and justice systems needed for the emergence of dynamic economies. This has led to more effective promotion and protection of human rights as part of a broader governance agenda and the integration of human rights principles into development processes in a more systematic way. Also many OECD member countries and multilateral donors have begun to look at human rights more thoroughly as a means for improving the quality of development co-operation.¹

There is also a growing understanding and consensus that donors should work more strategically and coherently on the integration of human rights and development. Many DAC members and multilateral donors are now seeking to promote human rights more comprehensively as a means to improve the quality of development co-operation. They have adopted policies incorporating human rights and put these into practice. The idea is that human rights and aid effectiveness frameworks should inform each other, rather than progressing on separate and disconnected tracks. It can be argued that human rights are critical development goals in their own right and, consequently, critical objectives of aid effectiveness.²

Human rights

Human rights constitute a unique, internationally shared and accepted normative framework, reflecting global moral and political values. International human rights law has evolved to protect the integrity and dignity of the person, by establishing legal obligations on states. Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights refer to different but indivisible aspects of human dignity and security. Human rights themselves are universal: they are the same for everyone everywhere. In addition to universality, local ownership is a concept that is important with regard to human rights. Local ownership belongs to the idea of reaching progress in human rights. There are different conceptions of human rights and there may be variation in defining the advancement in human rights. International human rights are universally

¹ DAC Action-Oriented Policy Paper on Human Rights and Development 2007

² Ferguson 2008, p. 5

recognized regardless of cultural differences, but their practical implementation does require sensitivity to culture so the ways in which they are implemented vary between regions and countries.³

As mentioned, human rights are universal and undividable. In addition, they are also divided to sub-groups. Usually the distinction is made between political and civic rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. Since the Second World War, several human rights declarations and treaties have been adopted by the United Nations and other international organizations. One of the most influential of them is the Universal Declaration on Human Rights adopted in 1948, soon after the end of the Second World War. It was when the United Nations passed this declaration that human rights came into the global discourse. This was the first global recognition that all humans are inherently entitled to rights. Then in 1976 the UN signed the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, officially endorsing democracy. However, the United Nations endorsement of democracy had little to do with the UN's stance on development.⁴

Human rights into the development discourse

The evolution of human rights organizations and development organizations and the western idea that rights are asserted through responsibilities, duties, transparency, trust, and accountability have led to the development of the rights-based approaches. During the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was developed, where the link was made between democracy, human rights, sustainability and development.⁵ This made the earlier division of Civil and Political Rights and Economic Social and Cultural rights interdependent. This further led to the linkage between human rights and development and enabled policy makers to incorporate a rights-based approach into their policies.

In 1997, the Secretary General to the United Nations called to mainstream human rights into all work of the United Nations. Then in 2003, various organizations and agencies met to develop a "Common Understanding" of a human rights based approach.⁶ This includes six main principles: universality and inalienability, indivisibility, inter-dependence and inter-relatedness, equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion and accountability and rule of law. The United Nations developed these guidelines due to the significant changes occurring in the international development community with the adoption of human rights in development work. Since the UN has published their standards and steps to a rights based approach to development, many bilateral donor agencies as well as international NGOs have taken similar steps.⁷

³ DAC Action-Oriented Policy Paper 2007

⁴ Forsythe 1997, p. 336

⁵ Hamm 2001, p. 1007

⁶ UNDP 2006

⁷ *ibid.*

The transition of human rights into the development discourse has brought along with it a certain kind of language of rights. This brings a moral resonance to development rhetoric that is hard to avoid in today's development discourse. Rights are defined as entitlements that belong to all human beings regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic class.⁸ All humans therefore are the rights holders, and it is someone's duty to provide them with these rights. It has been largely debated who actually is responsible to give these rights, in other words who are the duty bearers. In rights-based approaches it is usually the government that assumes the duty bearer position, but often especially in developing countries the governments do not have the resources to fulfill this role. This is where non-governmental organizations come and try to help these governments fulfill their roles and duties to their people.

Currently there is an under-fulfillment of human rights, which has been directly linked with poverty.⁹ Poverty includes the assessment of standard of living, health, and wellbeing. These are social and economic human rights, also known as second-generation rights, which have just recently been included in development discourse.¹⁰ First generation rights, or civil and political rights, have dominated public policy in the past. However with poverty on the rise and public policy failing, social and economic rights are becoming increasingly important in development of policies.

Affluent or rich countries feel they should help the poor out of charity or humanity.¹¹ Rights-based approaches contribute to shifting the paradigm away from charity and towards moral duty imposed on the world through the international consensus of human rights, and change the nature of development aid from help more towards mutual co-operation. Non-governmental organizations are adopting the "full spectrum" of human rights into their development policies.

There are different conceptualizations of the relationship between human rights and development, but the most common ones define this relationship as constitutive of four different aspects:

1. Human rights and aid effectiveness: realising the potential for the international human rights framework and the Paris Declaration¹² to reinforce and benefit from each other.

⁸ Nussbaum 1998, p. 273

⁹ Pogge 2005, p. 1

¹⁰ Sen 2004, p. 316

¹¹ Pogge 2005, p. 4

¹² The Paris Declaration (2005) outlines the five fundamental principles for making aid more effective:

- Ownership: *Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.*
- Alignment: *Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.*
- Harmonisation: *Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.*
- Results: *Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured.*
- Mutual accountability: *Donors and partners are accountable for development results.*

2. Human rights and poverty: establishing more common ground between human rights and the pro-poor economic agenda.

3. Human rights, conflict prevention and peace-building: identifying ways of reconciling and integrating human rights and peace and security strategies.

4. Human rights assessments: contributing expertise on human rights assessments and indicators to donor approaches to governance assessments.

It is clear that the importance of human rights for development is nowadays widely recognised. The widely accepted view is that human rights and equitable, sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. Human rights have intrinsic value, and achieving them is seen as an objective in its own right. In addition, human rights are also seen a critical factor for the long-term sustainability of development.¹³

Discrimination and exclusion, lack of accountability and abuse of state power are widely recognised as structural causes of poverty. By establishing basic rights and corresponding duties, human rights underpin the relationship between citizens and the state. Human rights add a qualitative dimension to national development strategies by ensuring a consistent focus on equitable outcomes and the poorest.

Human rights are at the heart of effective states, democratic governance and empowered citizens. Effective states are those that control their territories, have open, transparent, accountable and inclusive political institutions, thriving economies, low levels of corruption, and are built on the principles of the rule of law. They have the commitment and ability to deal with poverty and discrimination, and protect the human rights of people under their jurisdiction. Human rights empower citizens and strengthen and underpin accountability mechanisms: people can hold their governments accountable through appropriate mechanisms for redress. They are a vital means to address abuses of power and elite capture.¹⁴

There is growing consensus on the value of human rights principles¹⁵ (such as participation, non-discrimination and accountability) for good and sustainable development practice. The application of these principles builds on and strengthens good and sustainable development practice, with equal attention to process and outcomes. A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

In summary, a rights-based approach to development is a “conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Essentially, a rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development.”¹⁶

¹³ DAC

¹⁴ Tsikata 2009, p. 35

¹⁵ UN agencies have agreed on the following catalogue of principles: universality and inalienability, indivisibility, interdependence and inter-relatedness, equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion and accountability and rule of law.

¹⁶ The High Commissioner for Human Rights 2004

The rights-based approach has also made its way into the Finnish development policy. In February 2012, the Government of Finland adopted Finland's Development Policy Programme, which steers Finland's development policy and development cooperation for the duration of its term of office till 2015. The programme strongly emphasises human rights. Due to the need to assess long-term impacts of development cooperation, it is important to develop methods for assessment and evaluation of projects. This question is particularly relevant with regard to the human rights projects.

3. Aim of the study

An evaluation of a project is a systematic and balanced assessment of on-going or completed activities, their design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the fulfilment of objectives, resource efficiency, developmental effectiveness, and the impact that the fulfilment of objectives has on the overall human rights goal of the project.¹⁷ What are evaluated are the design of the project, the relevance of objectives and their fulfilment, the effectiveness in fulfilling objectives, and the effectiveness in goal achievement, that is, the impact that the project has had on human rights situations. Effects may be intended and positive, but it has to be noted that projects are often accompanied by unintended negative effects. Sustainability is an additional component that is important to consider in any evaluation, just as the effects on institutional capacity and competence.¹⁸

Human rights projects can have impact at different levels. On the one hand, a project may facilitate or strengthen the capability of an individual rights-holder to claim his or her rights. This may imply for example that a rights-holder gets a better capacity to make a plea for legal protection of rights. This may occur, for instance, through awareness-raising campaigns. In these kinds of cases there is impact on the individual level. However, in addition to individuals, also many other actors are important in making pleas for the protection of the rights of the citizens, particularly non-governmental organisations or public institution. Organisational or institutional support is often a requirement for enabling individuals to demand for the protection of their rights. This way, human rights projects can have an impact also at the institutional level through enhancing the capacity of human rights organisations and institutions to respond to individual demands.

Evaluation of impact can be important in terms of inspiring complementary and follow-up projects. The success of a project may trigger an expansion; failure may trigger another attempt, or the termination of support. In summary, the thrust of human rights impact assessment is to examine how a project or programme influences the general processes of human rights change.¹⁹

The aim of this study is to analyse the results of the post-evaluation questionnaire which was sent to the NGOs that executed KIOS-funded projects which have ended from two to five years ago (i.e. projects ending between 2006 and 2009). The objective of the study is not so much academic but more practical –

¹⁷ Andreassen & Sano 2004, p. 20

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 18

¹⁹ Andreassen & Sano 2004, p. 15

it is to understand how the projects funded by KIOS have influenced their environment and the contemporary human rights situation.

The purpose is to assess the impact and relevance of the cooperation of KIOS with its partners. It is important to analyse whether the activities carried out were relevant and whether they had an impact on influencing the development of human rights.

The main research question on this study is:

How have the projects funded by KIOS influenced the development of human rights?

In regard to specific themes of human rights, there has been variation in the themes of funded projects. Therefore it may be difficult to try to compare the results with each other.

This post-evaluation may have certain kinds of limits. When a post-evaluation is made by the same organisation which has decided about project funding there may be some restrictions about the feedback which is received through the questionnaires. The results are interpreted by taking into account the potential bias that is caused by the nature of this post-evaluation questionnaire.

4. Questionnaire and the target group of the study

The questionnaire (annex 1.) was developed by the KIOS staff in 2011. It is short and based on the idea to study how well the projects have reached their aimed goals, and what might have been the unintended consequences of the projects. In autumn 2011, post-evaluation questionnaires in English and French were sent to 77 organisations. Altogether 32 questionnaires were returned to KIOS in 2011. The Spanish-language version of the questionnaire was sent in spring 2012 to six projects that took an end in the period between 2006 and 2009. Only one was returned. Of the returned questionnaires 18 are concerning Africa, 9 Asia, 5 Europe/Middle East and 1 is concerning Latin America. Answers came from 18 different countries.

The target group of the study consisted of NGOs and other civil society actors that had received grants from KIOS. The projects had ended between 2006 and 2009. Some of the respondents answered on behalf of two projects carried out by the organisation.

Because the new strategy of KIOS was adopted in December 2010, the decisions about the projects that are evaluated in this study have been made before the new strategy. Therefore, the number of the countries in which the projects were carried out is larger than the number of the focus areas in the current strategy of KIOS. The new strategy has also made the focus of KIOS's funding more precisely oriented toward human rights.

The questions asked from the NGOs are as follows:

1. What short-term impact has the project had so far on the promotion and protection of human rights?
 - a) How the Human Rights situation has changed due to the project?

- b) Was there any unforeseen positive change? Please give an example.
 - c) Have you observed any unforeseen negative change? Please give an example.
2. Is it possible to foresee any long-term impact in the future? Please, give an example.
 3. How did your organisation benefit from the project in long term?
 - a) Did the project lead to any changes in project planning, organisational development, policies, skills or attitudes?
 - b) What were the main lessons learnt?
 4. Is there anything you wish you had done differently during the project? Please, give an example.
 5. How did you experience the cooperation with KIOS?
 6. Who participated in answering to this form?

5. Methodology

For the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire answers are given values from -1 to 3 according to the impact the organizations feel the KIOS-funded project has had on the development of human rights (the bigger the score the larger the impact, see table 1). The impact is identifiable but usually not very remarkable or long term. In addition, it has to be noted that the projects are very different one from another, so a comparison of the answers is somewhat challenging.

The values for the answers are given based on an evaluation of whether the project has had an impact on the development or improvement of the human rights situation in the community or society in question, and how clear or long-lasting this impact has been. It is clear that the possibilities of a single project to impact the overall human rights situation are limited but, however, looking at the answers it is clear that KIOS-funded project have in some cases had a clear positive impact on the human rights situation in the community and sometimes even on a national level.

A negative score was given to answers where the respondent has stated that the project has either had a negative impact on human rights or the general situation has gotten worse. A zero score was given when there was no impact perceived by the respondent. Scores 1 to 3 were given based on how clear the impact of the KIOS-funded project was on the development of human rights. Questions 1 through 4 were scored on a scale from -1 to 3 and question 4 on a scale of -1 or 0. Question 5 was left out of the analysis. (See table 2). In regard to the question 1c, the scale was more limited: -1 expresses any negative impact and 0 no negative impact.

Direct quotes from the answers will be provided in the analysis of the data to illustrate it with examples of different kinds of changes and challenges the respondents have mentioned. However, to keep the NGOs' anonymities all organization names and any references to countries, areas or communities have been left out of these examples

-1	negative impact, the situation has gotten worse
0	no impact
1	little impact
2	impact but no breakthrough
3	clear impact

Table 1. Scale of analysis

question 1a	-1...3
question 1b	-1...3
question 1c	-1 or 0
question 2	-1...3
question 3a	-1...3
question 3b	-1...3 ²⁰
question 4	-1 or 0 ²¹
question 5	no score ²²

Table 2. Scores per question (maximum score: 18)

Examples of answers:

Score -1:

“Our engagement with some of the Human Rights Defenders has resulted in them receiving threats on their lives through SMS/phone and mails.”

²⁰ Positive impact if the organization learned how to do things better and negative impact if they learned how bad the situation was.

²¹ -1 was given if the organization felt that they should have worked differently from the project plan to achieve the goals as the planned activities were not appropriate. 0 was given if the organization felt that they should have done other activities *in addition* to the ones planned.

²² Question 5 was left out of the analysis as all the answers were positive and praising the co-operation with KIOS.

“Our organization was unable to help individuals with more general issues like livelihood assistance, counselling and medical assistance.”

Score 0:

“The situation of women human rights could not change due to the project supported by KIOS.”

“The human rights situation in our country could not evolve as we had planned due to the socio-economic situation.”

Score 1:

“As a result of the human/women rights courses, women embarked to establish women councils to address conflict and participate in social affairs.”

Score 2:

“... because of the project supported by KIOS, the people and community are enlightened that their rights are guaranteed and protected in CEDAW.”

“The project provided us the opportunity to further strengthen our human rights work...”

Score 3:

“Community sensitization regarding the rights of women in the area was a milestone for future development. The project has provided a substantial contribution to the emancipation and empowerment of women.”

“We may say that these projects carried out made valuable contributions to the prevention of torture...”

6. Results

Organization	Continent	Score	Overall impact	Score q. 1a	Score q. 1b	Score q. 1c
Organization 1.	Asia	7	1	1	2	-1
Organization 2.	Africa	8	1,14	2	3	-1
Organization 3.	Asia	8	1,14	2	3	-1
Organization 4.	Asia	6	0,86	1	2	0
Organization 5.	Asia	8	1,14	3	1	0
Organization 6.	Africa	8	1,14	1	3	0
Organization 7.	Africa	11	1,57	2	3	0
Organization 8.	Middle East	7	1	2	3	-1
Organization 9.	Asia	5	0,71	2	2	0
Organization 10.	Europe	7	1	1	2	0
Organization 11.	Asia	11	1,57	3	2	0
Organization 12.	Africa	7	1	2	1	-1
Organization 13.	Africa	6	0,86	1	2	0
Organization 14.	Africa	7	1	1	2	-1
Organization 15.	Africa	5	0,71	2	0	-1
Organization 16.	Africa	4	0,57	0	0	0
Organization 17.	Asia	11	1,57	3	2	0
Organization 18.	Europe	6	0,86	1	1	0
Organization 19.	Africa	9	1,29	3	2	0
Organization 20.	Middle East	7	1	2	2	-1
Organization 21.	Africa	7	1	2	2	-1
Organization 22.	Africa	7	1	2	1	0
Organization 23.	Africa	8	1,14	2	2	-1
Organization 24.	Africa	7	1	2	2	-1
Organization 25.	Africa	6	0,86	2	1	-1
Organization 26.	Asia	7	1	3	1	-1
Organization 27.	Africa	6	0,86	2	1	0
Organization 28.	Asia	6	0,86	2	1	0
Organization 29.	Africa	6	0,86	2	2	-1
Organization 30.	Europe	6	0,86	2	1	0
Organization 31.	Asia	9	1,29	3	2	-1
Organization 32.	Africa	6	0,86	2	2	-1
Organization 33.	Latin America	7	1	1	2	0
Total		236	1,02	1,88	1,76	-0,48

Table 3. Impact of KIOS-funded projects on the development of human rights

Analysis

According to Andreassen and Sano²³ human rights projects may create three types of human rights changes. The first type is state reform and implementation of policies such as administration of law, enforcement of law or legal reform for example. This type concerns the conduct of states and their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. It requires that political elites and the state institutions have a political will to adhere to human rights principles. One important indicator of political will is the ratification of international human rights treaties.

Second, interventions may facilitate social changes conducive to human rights norms. Social prerequisites inherent in human rights can be for example policies addressing social inequities, gender discrimination or health policies.

Third, civil society organisations often have important functions in human rights promotion. Their effectiveness, however, relies on a variety of factors, for instance their capacity to monitor human rights or to network and campaign for human rights promotion, and lobby for the state to undertake its treaty obligations. Indicators would typically be indicators of competence and capacity building, with the objective of enhancing institutional capacity.

I will next take a look at the human rights changes KIOS-funded projects have had from these three perspectives: how project have influenced legislation, how they have impacted the social context, and to what extent they have strengthened the capacities of civil society actors. As mentioned earlier, it is clear that the possibilities of a single project to impact the overall human rights situation are limited, however, looking at the answers it is clear that KIOS-funded project have in some cases had a clear positive impact, and overall some impact on the human rights situation in the communities and societies in question. Sometimes there has even been impact on the national level.

The overall general impact of KIOS-funded projects is 1,02 on a scale of -1 to 3 (see table 3). This means that the projects have had some positive impact on the development of the human rights situation. However, this impact cannot be seen to have been particularly long-lasting or a breakthrough. It can thus be interpreted that KIOS-funded project fulfil their own goals and affect the lives of the direct beneficiaries sometimes even in a considerable way, but that these changes do not spill over or are not strong or influential enough to have an effect on the broader context.

The impact on question 1a (how has the human rights situation changed?) is 1,88. This implies that the average human rights situation in the respondent communities has improved due to KIOS-funded projects. Thus, the evaluation shows that KIOS-funded projects have succeeded in putting in place the resources and developing the skills and confidence of local NGOs to make a positive change in the human rights situation.

Many respondents stated for example that there have been less human rights violations occurring as a result of the projects. Also many concrete results were reported, for example increased participation of women in elections, great numbers of people that have received legal aid, significant raises in figures of girls' school enrolment and clear reductions of domestic violence.

²³ Andreassen & Sano 2004, p. 16

This result is compatible with the result for the overall impact of KIOS-funded projects. It shows that in a smaller scale on the local or community level the changes achieved by these projects are significant, but they do not affect the broader human rights situation in an equally intense way. Thus the impact of the projects become weaker the further we move away from the immediate level and context of the execution of the project.

When it comes to unforeseen positive change (question 1b) it is clear to see from the data that here there has been a clear impact. The score for unforeseen positive change is 1,76. This means that the projects have contributed to quite some change in areas where it was not expected or planned. This unforeseen positive change has in most cases had to do with unexpected positive cooperation from the authorities or a surprisingly good reception of the project by the beneficiaries.

“At the same time we learn that some of the government departments usually pegged as anti-reformists such as the Prisons department actually welcomed change and readily embraced our project.”

“The religious leaders and Muslim clerics were supposed to oppose the project, but they played positive role in supporting the local committees formed during the project and further they spoke in support of women rights in the perspective of Islam.”

With regard to question 3a on the impact that co-operation with KIOS has had on the organisational culture (i.e. project planning, policies, skills, attitudes) of the developing country NGOs the average score is 1,8. This means that co-operation with KIOS has had clear positive impact on the abilities and working methods of the organizations.

“The main long-term impact will be the increased organisational and human rights capacity of the pilot groups in the partnership programme.”

“[The organisation] is beginning to learn how to follow up on the Concluding Observations from the UN office... [The organisation] is also a part of a wider network of women’s rights actors locally, regionally and internationally because of KIOS.”

“Implementation of the project has accumulated our experience in the field of human rights... It also provides us with new ideas for future planning...”

“The project was an empowering process for the staff at our organisation.”

In addition, cooperation with KIOS has also helped the organisations build their credibility and get new donors.

“Other funders came on board through the project implementation... we believe that this came from the trust we were having with KIOS and experience in handling donor fund.”

“The project as a pilot phase permitted us to secure additional funding...”

The positive impacts of cooperation with KIOS are thus not only in affecting the development of human rights but also in strengthening the capacities of the partner organizations. This means that KIOS-funded projects have managed to create human rights changes on different levels by affecting both directly the possibilities of people to fulfil their rights as well as the capabilities of civil society actors to promote and work towards the realisation of these rights.

The average score for observed unforeseen negative change is -0,48 (question 1c). Taking a closer look at the organisations’ answers it is clear that there is somewhat a pattern: most negative impacts are not attributable directly to cooperation with KIOS but rather to the changes of the local political environment. Also many of the projects that scored a low score are projects that were implemented in extremely difficult circumstances, which makes it unlikely for a single project to have some or even any impact on the human rights situation.

“We feel that the impact of our efforts is very limited due to the continuous adoption of laws that target this minority group.”

“The situation of women human rights in our country could not change due to the project supported by KIOS. It’s because there is a lot of problems in our country regarding political will and commitment from the government... The government does not seriously implement its duty.”

“The most critical negative change ... involves the ongoing attempts to make operation as an NGO for human rights that much more difficult. This is exemplified by the hostile legislation... that includes bills and laws designed to impinge on human rights activism.”

“The approach of elections in our country that year was already having a negative impact on the human rights situation.”

What also came up in some answers was the insufficiency of funds which was seen as one hindrance for the success of the projects:

“To generate a good project, sufficient funds are needed so they can cover the activities properly.”

“Due to the economic hardships... [there is a] need for income generating projects to help them sustain the difficult situation.”

Besides these myriad of contributing factors mentioned by the respondents that have led to both positive and negative change, also three overarching themes can be identified that emerge as important contributors to the development of the human rights situation. These are first of all raising human rights awareness, second the role of women and third affecting legislature and local authorities or religious leaders. Next a closer look will be taken at these three different themes.

RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

It is a sad fact that the worst human right violations take place with the silent consent of the wide majority. Without a widespread culture of human rights, democracy is not by itself a guarantee of respect of human rights. Essays, reports, and research papers have shown and analysed situations in which people assimilate and spontaneously accept discrimination and exploitation of the civil rights of individuals and minorities. In the vision of KIOS the creation of a human rights culture through education and information is the ultimate, even if long-term solution against human rights abuses. This theme also emerges from the analysis of the answers to the post-evaluation questionnaire.

"[The project] has impacted on people's (men, women and children) knowledge and awareness of discrimination, women's and children's rights."

"Community members raised their voices collectively against human rights violations. As a result, these people will no longer keep silent when their human rights are violated."

Human rights define our quality and way of life. It is crucial to remain alert and committed to making them a reality for all people in the world. In order to do so, it must first be understood what basic human rights are as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1948 the United Nations wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that established international standards to help nations educate their citizens about the rights and freedoms they are entitled to in their daily lives. Despite this effort to guarantee universal rights for all human beings, human rights violations still occur around the world. Today, the challenge for all of us is to make all people aware of the rights guaranteed to them by of the Universal Declaration and other human rights treaties and instruments of the United Nations and the Council of Europe and in other correspondent regional human rights instruments.

"... because of the project supported by KIOS, the people and community are enlightened that their rights are guaranteed and protected in CEDAW."

"The project created awareness about fundamental human rights... The rights-based education imparted by the project encouraged the local community to demand their rights and raised voices against violations of human rights."

The importance of raising human rights awareness is clear also from the answers of the KIOS-funded NGOs. Many of them see the most important impact of KIOS-funded projects as providing people with knowledge of their human rights. Another point that was raised in several answers was also the importance of raising public awareness of the situation of oppressed groups of society. People can start to advocate for their rights only if they are aware of them. Raised awareness of human rights was also seen as an important factor for the sustainability of the project and the achieved results.

"Because of the training and [raised] awareness the women themselves started to protect their rights. They started their struggle from their houses and [made their husbands] aware. [This] decreased the women's rights violations."

“As the project was mainly based on awareness [raising] and advocacy so, its impact is long lasting. The project created awareness about fundamental human rights and equipped the local target groups... with knowledge and capacity that is a permanent resource.”

Also the lack of human rights knowledge of the population was seen as one big reason for a bad human rights situation. On the other hand, raising human rights awareness was seen by the respondents as one of the most effective ways to affect the development of human rights.

“Publication of the books will help [the situation] in the long run by making the International community know about the struggle and the sufferings of these people who were unknown before the publication of the books... Through this we have received immense support across the world and as a result pressure is now on the ... government to respect basic human rights...”

“By receiving awareness [training] on Human/women rights now they know about the ... human rights and due to [this] awareness ... they feel their responsibility toward their daughters to send them to school...”

Raising human rights awareness was also seen as beneficial for maintaining peace. When people are aware of their political rights, for example, violence is contained as other peaceful means of conflict resolution are provided.

“[Due to the project] the people accepted the election was a solution for the conflict and it has given their representatives [the possibility] to speak about the problem in the parliament, no need to go underground fighting like before.”

HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN

Improving women’s rights is largely seen as an important pre-condition to achieving development. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is one of the Millennium Development Goals to be reached by the year 2015. The anti-poverty targets set by the international community in 2001 can only be achieved if real progress is made in improving women’s rights. This is widely seen as the only way forward to achieving sustainable development in a number of key areas.

Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the UNO, stated in 2010 in a meeting to prepare a review by ECOSOC on gender equality, that it is crucial to achieve significant progress in realizing women’s rights as a means to addressing the targets set for sustainable development and thereby attacking pressing issues such as poverty, hunger and illiteracy. More importantly, Asha-Rose Migiro considers that women can carry out crucial roles in resolution of armed conflicts, crisis management and post-conflict development of governments, institutions and civil society. “When women and girls have the same freedoms and rights as men and boys, we will have more stable economies and stronger, more peaceful societies,” she added.²⁴

²⁴ Migiro 2010

This same view can be seen from the answers of the NGOs. Many respondents point out that the improvement of women's rights and the emancipation and empowerment of women is one important factor in increasing the overall impact of the human rights projects.

"The organisation has been implementing human/women rights awareness training workshops ... due to which the following changes were observed in the life and attitude of beneficiary communities: parent's conservative attitudes were changed positively to send their children particularly their daughters to school,..., women freely participate in public ceremonies,..., reduction of domestic violence,..., high level participation of women in two rounds of parliament and presidential elections."

Securing women's human rights and making them aware of their rights is also mentioned to be important from the point of view of the sustainability of the projects. Women are seen as an important motor for societal change. What is also clear from many of the answers is that improvement of women's rights and positions in society are beneficial for overall development. Women's rights are thus seen as an important prerequisite for further development.

"An understanding of human rights will be passed on to future generations and contribute to positive change in the ... society."

"... Community sensitization regarding the rights of women in the area was a milestone for future development."

What can also be seen from the answers is how interconnected these themes of awareness raising and women's rights are. This came up in the answers as the importance of involving also men into the processes; not only women but also men must be aware of women's rights for these rights to be fulfilled.

"Human rights awareness is not only important for women, it is important for men as well, because, if men are not aware of woman rights they don't respect it and the problem will not be addressed thoroughly."

"The backlash from the patriarchal society, that women are proud because of their rights, is solved because men are involved [as well as] the school children."

From the perspective of KIOS, it is important to find out that women's rights were widely acknowledged by the local NGOs. Although KIOS funds projects that focus explicitly on women's rights and, therefore, the support to women's rights is an obvious part of a funded project, the recognition of the central role of women's human rights on behalf of the NGOs can be a sign of a social change that may lead to a broader promotion of women's rights.

INFLUENCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Despite claims by political leaders about the value of democracy and human rights in creating a more secure world, there is a gap between this rhetoric and the reality on the ground. According to the

respondents of the post-evaluation questionnaire, the projects had a greater chance of having an impact on the development of human rights when local political or religious leaders were influenced. This influencing may take place in the form of mobilizing the leaders to support of human rights, fighting corruption or convincing them of international obligations and the need for policy change.

“Local governments today fail to meet their duties to achieve gender equality.”

“The mobilization of Muslim clerics is a positive experience and the lesson learnt is that religious leaders can become an asset and support for promotion and protection of women rights in Muslim countries.”

“Surprisingly the Prisons Department often known for its anti-reform stance warmly embraced the project.”

The respondents also view the possibilities of affecting legislation through these projects as one big step in affecting the development of human rights.

“As a result of the activities of the project, there would be improvement in the country’s legal framework... Thus, these studies we finalised during the project would present an important contribution to the democratization of the country.”

Corruption and other resistance from the authorities were brought up as a challenge for the success of the projects.

“[One of the lessons learnt is] addressing issues of corruption in the local leaders and police which hinder prompt reporting of human rights abuse...”

“The mobilization of victim communities and the creation of awareness of rights have caused the administration and police in most states to become more hostile...”

In addition, the importance of broad cooperation with different actors on different levels was seen in many answers as an important factor contributing to the success of the project.

“The lessons learnt include ... working together with religious, education and health institutions, police, court, local level committees on elimination of HTP, local level administrative officials and other community based organizations and strengthening their participation in the program to ensure women’s rights.”

“The project had effects on increasing the dialogue between different social actors and the government on human rights issues and the prevention of torture.”

These answers show that KIOS-funded projects have brought about also some institutional changes. This kind of change that starts by influencing local authorities is crucial for achieving state reform and implementation of policies such as administration of law and enforcement of law or legal reform in the long run. From the perspective of KIOS, it is important to find out that projects have, in addition to influencing rights on the individual level, a possibility to influence also the conduct of states and remind them of their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. This is important because affecting the human rights situation requires that political elites and the state institutions have a political will to adhere to human rights principles.

7. Conclusions from the study

The overarching goal of human rights interventions is to improve the conduct of public authorities in terms of respect for and protection of rights. An equally important goal is to facilitate and improve actual enjoyment of human rights by citizens and groups. However, it is often difficult (and maybe even impossible) to assess the impact projects have on human rights enjoyment at the individual level, and on human rights compliance at institutional and national levels. Evaluation of human rights projects is an attempt at this. The purpose of this human rights assessment of KIOS-funded projects is to examine how a project influences the overall human rights situation in a local or national community. The assumption that a single project contributes to the overall human rights situation is, of course, benign but often very hard to document. An assessment study, nevertheless, should address this issue, and at least discuss the limitations of making realistic assessments of the aggregation of impact from the project level to macro level.²⁵

It is clear that there are important limitations to impact assessment, such as the problem of attribution and measuring sustainability of projects. The scale of impact and indicators for measuring scales, are also big challenges.²⁶ Also this post-evaluation study has its limits. One of the most important of these limits is the fact that the data was collected by the donor and not a third party. This naturally affects the reliability of the data. However, although it can be argued that the credibility of impact assessment in the evaluation stage requires assessments by external (i.e. independent) evaluation in most cases, impact analysis has to be made also by the organisation or institution itself. In this case, an added function of impact assessment is to provide a framework for institutional control and correction.²⁷

Another limitation of this study is the fact that the projects are very different from each other when it comes to their type, objectives and impacts. They are also implemented in very different environments and circumstances. Therefore, the numerical measurement of the results made it somewhat easier to compare the results of different projects. In addition, as always with these kinds of questionnaires, there is plenty of room for interpretation both when it comes to the respondents understanding of the questions as well as the analysts understanding of the answers.

However, all in all, the results of the post-evaluation show, that KIOS-funded projects have had a positive impact on the development of human rights. Positive impact was made in capacitating local NGOs through organizational development, in influencing decision making processes at different levels and in ensuring that marginalized people, particularly women, have greater knowledge and understanding of their rights. The analysis of the post-evaluation questionnaires also suggests that there is a link between human rights and development. The impact KIOS-funded projects have had on the development of human rights can be

²⁵ Andreassen & Sano 2004, p. 7

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 23

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 20

shown to have had an impact on the wellbeing of the communities or societies in question also on a larger scale.

Of course these results are only suggestive. For example, it may be that all the effects and impacts of the projects are not mentioned when filling the questionnaire. Also, the numerical values given to different answers are based on only one person's opinion. However, it is clear to see from the answers that the rights articulated in the UDHR, if applied broadly, have a great chance of leading to a massive reduction of human rights violations across the world. But any human rights charter, no matter its aspirations, has no practical use unless it is known, understood and applied. Believing, therefore, that greater awareness of the UDHR will lead to greater exercise of its principles, also KIOS has concentrated on human rights education and awareness raising in the projects it funds. Awareness, education, and action are key to the advancement of human rights, whether locally or globally.

Even if there are many methodological problems connected to making accurate impact analysis of human rights projects, it is still possible to develop better methods and analytical tools for making inferences about the impact of human rights projects than has been done so far. According to Adreassen and Sano²⁸ it is very important to pay attention to indicators, goals, objectives and monitoring of human rights projects. First of all, the construction of accurate indicators is clearly needed in order to establish the possible impact of and obstacles to the success of human rights projects.

Second, an important objective of human rights projects is to facilitate changes in institutional, legal and social rules, procedures and behaviour. However, due to the lack of appropriate descriptions of project goals and objectives it is often difficult to document such changes. Therefore, there is a need for identifying indicators that can be used effectively to document changes, or, put differently, measure and identify changes based on knowledge about options and obstacles to the implementation of projects in social, cultural, economic and political contexts.

What can be observed and summarised from the post-evaluation questionnaires of KIOS-funded projects is that while human rights situations in the partner societies and communities have been enhanced to an extent, the precise extent to which the project interventions have contributed to the improvement of the situation may not easily be determined due to the lack of utilisation of baseline indicators in the monitoring and reporting of project progress. KIOS and its partners could focus more on creating clearer indicators, goals, objectives and monitoring of human rights projects already in the planning stage of projects. This way evaluating the impact of KIOS-funded projects would be easier.

The promotion of human rights is a multi-level process that consists of both changes in attitudes and general awareness as much as in the legislation and justice system. KIOS has funded projects focusing on different levels of societies. In the future, some further analysis of the results of the projects will be required and more attention should be paid at in which level of society the projects are making impact. This issue should be taken into account when making the questionnaire for a study. On the other hand, KIOS itself can influence the focus of the projects that it funds.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 5

The impact at the institutional level is important for sustaining human rights impact at the individual level. For example, if an organisation is unable to respond to demands by individuals who have become aware of their rights through an awareness raising campaign, but does not have the resources to make effective human rights complaints, the impact of the awareness raising will not be sustainable. In other words, long term sustainability of human rights awareness-raising is basically institutional, and non-governmental organisations are often effective in promoting its realisation. This is why it is important to continue to incorporate and strengthen right-based approaches to development in NGOs' work. The challenge for KIOS and its partners is in taking the next step: to ensure sustained change in practice and an increased knowledge and awareness more widely to embed a human rights based approach and ultimately improve the respect for human rights.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Post-evaluation questionnaire



Post-Evaluation of KIOS Funded NGO Projects - Evaluation Questionnaire to NGOs

Name of the organisation
Title of the project
Project duration
Contact information

1. What short-term impact has the project had so far on the promotion and protection of human rights?

- d) How the Human Rights situation has changed due to the project?
- e) Was there any unforeseen positive change? Please give an example.
- f) Have you observed any unforeseen negative change? Please give an example.

2. Is it possible to foresee any long-term impact in the future? Please, give an example.

3. How did your organisation benefit from the project in long term?

- a) Did the project lead to any changes in project planning, organisational development, policies, skills or attitudes?
- b) What were the main lessons learnt?

4. Is there anything you wish you had done differently during the project? Please, give an example.

5. How did you experience the cooperation with KIOS?

6. Who participated in answering to this form?

Date and place	Name and position
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Please respond to the questionnaire on behalf of your organization and return it to the following e-mail-address: kios@kios.fi. On behalf of KIOS, we would appreciate if we could get the answers before 5.10.2011.