

# D+C

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DEVELOPMENT  
AND COOPERATION

**D+C**

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**Cattle**  
Destructive  
change in  
Argentina

**Biodiversity**  
Managing nature  
reserves in  
southern Africa

**Faith**  
Islamic principles  
can facilitate  
development



## International NGOs

## Focus: International non-governmental organisations

### INGOs in Africa

In Africa, the cooperation of local non-governmental organisations with northern counterparts has proved beneficial in many ways. However, it does have some downsides, according to **Agnes Abuom**, a Kenyan development consultant. [Page 14](#)

### New Indian authoritarianism

INGOs have brought important improvements to Indian society. The government, however, dislikes what it calls “interference in domestic affairs” and is making their work more difficult, as **Aditi Roy Ghatak**, an Indian journalist, reports. [Page 16](#)

### Unequal partners

Civil-society organisations in the global south depend on INGOs in important ways. They do not have equal access to governments and international organisations. **Antonio Tujan Jr.** of the Philippines-based IBON Foundation assesses the situation. [Page 18](#)

### Experts, advocates and activists

It is hard to imagine world politics without international INGOs today. Some experts praise their cosmopolitan role, while others express scepticism. German scholars **Charlotte Dany** and **Andrea Schneider** look into the matter. [Page 21](#)

### Change agenda

The current rapid changes in terms of politics, technology and the environment challenge INGOs. They should learn from each other and find innovative solutions, write **Helene Wolf** and **Åsa Månsson** of the Berlin based International Civil Society Centre. [Page 24](#)

### Protecting activists

Amnesty International (AI) is known worldwide for defending human rights. Local human-rights groups are important AI partners, as **Selmin Çalışkan** of AI Germany told Sheila Mysorekar in an interview. [Page 26](#)

### Religion's creative potential

Eight out of ten people in the world say: “I belong to a faith community!” Religion still matters in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and especially in the global south. Faith leaders' influence is a potential source of creative, non-governmental power. In the eyes of **Bernhard Felmborg** from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), development agencies should become better at tapping this potential. [Page 28](#)

## Editorial

# Important lobby

➔ What would the Brazilian rainforest look like today if international environmental organisations hadn't campaigned for its protection for decades? How far could human-rights activists in authoritarian states go without enjoying attention from international partners? And how much of an impact would many local NGOs have without funding from influential supporters?

International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) play important roles. They put issues on the global agenda, they influence world politics, and they speak for people who otherwise wouldn't have any lobby.

A recent example: In mid-June, Djerlar Miankeol, a Chadian activist and D+C-author, was arrested because he had, in a radio interview, spoken of corruption within the judicial system. Miankeol and his local NGO Ngaou-bourandi fight for farmers' rights in southern Chad. At the beginning of July, he was sentenced to two years in prison and a hefty fine. Amnesty International quickly mobilised its network of thousands of supporters in protest, first against the arrest and later the judgment. At the end of July, a higher-level court acquitted Miankeol and set him free.

We don't know to what extent the judges were impressed by the international attention the case got. But Miankeol would probably still be in prison without Amnesty's intervention.

Sometimes INGOs rise to challenges that overwhelm government agencies. This is particularly true of emergency aid, for instance after earthquakes, floods or draughts. During the Ebola epidemic in west Africa last year, Doctors without Borders, the prominent INGO, established treatment centres and implemented prevention measures. Unlike the governments of the countries affected, it had the necessary experience and professional staff.

Furthermore, INGOs step in when authorities deliberately turn a blind eye to certain situations. Nobody would care for the Rohingya in Myanmar if Malteser International and similar organisations didn't.

Large INGOs from industrialised countries are dominant in global politics, in public perception and in regard to resources and influence. They get a say at UN summits, they negotiate behind the scenes, and they shape policies and international law. INGOs sometimes aspire to speak for groups whose realities of life they don't really know however. Some people find them overbearing. Not all sex workers want Amnesty International to decide what's good for them for example. Relevant agencies feel neglected. Local NGOs that represent the interests of communities from poor countries often fail to get much attention on their own at UN climate conferences and global summits – while the top dogs bark all the louder.

Both local organisations and global players are important. Unfortunately, both are currently facing new restrictions. Increasingly authoritarian government leaders – from Kenya to Cambodia and from Russia through China to India – want to control civil society. Their repression can only be fought off if all parties concerned joined hands: local and international organisations, political parties and civil society, donors and beneficiaries, activists, journalists and ordinary citizens. Without civil-society engagement, politics is a top-down process that disregards grassroots reality. ←



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## Tribune



Burchberger

## Protecting nature

Tourism can and must contribute to making nature-protection areas feasible. This is only one of many things that the managers of southern Africa's cross-border conservation areas must pay attention to.

**Laura Rupp, Maxi Springsguth and Alfons Üllenberg** from SLE, a training and evaluation centre at Humboldt University in Berlin, have assessed projects. [Page 34](#)

## The rights of Muslim women

Gender roles are changing in the societies that are marked by Islam. Progress may seem slow, but it is making a difference. Islam scholar **Martina Sabra** reviews relevant publications on the matter.

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## Debate



Nahil/AP Photo/picture-alliance

## Restricted press freedom

In Egypt, the government is telling the media how to report on events and claims that only its own version of facts is correct. **Ingy Salama**, an Egyptian journalist, comments on the restrictive new law. [Page 43](#)



# Closing the gaps

**The UN members have adopted a new development agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to guide developmental action for “people, planet and prosperity” over the next 15 years. While the goals are ambitious and cover a broad range of important issues, their success depends on funding and implementation.**

➔ The UN member states, represented by a record number of heads of state and government, adopted the document titled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” on 25 September at a special UN summit in New York. The SDGs

replace the expiring Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that provided guidance for international development aid over the past 15 years. It will come into effect on 1 January 2016. The agenda is the result of a two-year process of negotiations that involved a broad range of civil-society organisations. It aims to complete what the MDGs did not achieve.

According to UN data, around 800 million people still live in extreme poverty

and suffer from hunger. Water scarcity affects 40% of the world population and is projected to increase. Some 946 million people still practice open defecation. Gender inequality persists in spite of more representation for women in parliaments and more girls going to school. These are just some of the gaps that need to be closed.

The preamble to the post-2015 development agenda, recognises that “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions [...] is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development”. It also states that the SDGs, comprising 17 goals (see box below) and 169 targets, go beyond the MDGs, because they address the root causes of poverty and pledge to leave no one behind. The MDG agenda was criticised for not sufficiently addressing disabled people, for instance, while the new goals explicitly aim to be inclusive. Furthermore, they recognise the key role of the private sector in pursuing and financing sustainable development, in partnership with governments and civil society.

Another important difference is that the new agenda applies to all countries rather than just the developing world. For industrialised countries it is particularly

important to change consumption and production patterns. Furthermore, their current economic systems tend to foster inequality. Oxfam warns that the SDGs will be impossible to meet without policies enabling the poorest to benefit most from economic growth. According to the NGO’s research, “200 million people will be trapped unnecessarily in extreme poverty by 2030 unless poor people’s incomes grow faster than those of the rich”. Wealth does not automatically trickle down to those who need it most, Oxfam states, so appropriate policies need to be implemented. Other critics argue that the SDG concept does not break with the notion of economic growth as the basis for development, which they regard as a contradiction to the principle of sustainability.

## Success hinges on implementation

No doubt, the post-2015 agenda is very ambitious. Thanks to the involvement of stakeholders from all relevant sectors, it tackles a broad range of issues. Its implementation will show if it is successful or not. Communication is important too. Since many people never heard of the MDGs, the UN have launched a big “Global

## Monitor

## Sustainable Development Goals

The list of Sustainable Development Goals as it was adopted by the UN:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development





Around 800 million people still live in extreme poverty. This Rwandan cowherd is one of them.

Goals” campaign to “make the 17 UN goals famous and to push for their full implementation worldwide”.

Evaluation is another crucial factor. Experts say that better data is needed to track progress. They say that underlying statistics are often inaccurate, geared to donor priorities, released after long time lags or unaware of marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities, women, the elderly and the disabled. According to the international lobby group One, a third of all births and two thirds of all deaths among newborn and children are not registered.

Many relevant questions have not been fully answered yet. Examples include how progress will be measured and

tracked and who is accountable for what. A framework of indicators is currently being developed and set to be finalised by March 2016. National governments, moreover, will define indicators of their own.

Reliable funding will be crucial to achieve the SDGs. It is estimated that \$ 3 trillion per year are needed. However, the action agenda that the UN adopted at the financing for development conference in Addis Ababa in July remains rather vague and lacks binding commitments (see comment by Bernd Bornhorst in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2015/08, p. 43).

Pledges started to roll in during the SDG summit. For instance, Ban Ki-Moon, UN secretary-general, announced more

than \$25 billion in commitments from governments and international organisations to help end preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents.

Civil-society organisations urged governments to commit to binding timeframes and reiterated their appeal to the developed nations to finally fulfil their old – and often repeated – pledge of spending 0.7 % of GDP on official development assistance.

*Katja Dombrowski*

#### Links:

**Sustainable development topics related to the Sustainable Development Goals:**

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics>

**Oxfam:** Inequality and the end of poverty.

<http://oxf.am/ZmJR>

## In brief

### UN want special court for Sri Lankan war crimes

The UN want to establish a special court to try war-crime perpetrators in Sri Lanka. Presenting a report in Geneva, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN commissioner for human rights,

said both sides “most likely” committed war crimes in the final stages of the civil war. The war between rebels of the Tamil minority, known as “Tamil Tigers”, and government forces lasted 26 years and ended in 2009. The UN investigation unveiled abuses including torture, executions, forced disappearances and

sexual abuse by security forces as well as suicide attacks, assassinations and recruitment of child soldiers by Tamil rebels.

The UN want the court to investigate individuals responsible for the worst atrocities. They also want it to be “hybrid”. Hybrid courts typically have international

and local judges who apply international and national law. Since Sri Lanka has so far opposed any international investigation of the matter, a hybrid court could be a compromise. President Maithripala Sirisena promised both to cooperate with the UN and to promote reconciliation. (kd)

# “Someone who kills innocent people will not become a martyr”

**ISIS is recruiting volunteers and supporters internationally. The terror militia is especially interested in young people.**

➔ More than 20,000 volunteers from the Middle East and North Africa as well as Europe have gone to Syria in past years in order to support ISIS. The volunteers' motivation is quite diverse, but there is a common pattern. Extremists generally attract persons who feel weak, frustrated and alienated.

Imam Husamuddin Meyer works in a German prison for juvenile delinquents. He is aware of increasing radicalisation, with religious extremists telling the youngsters that, in view of criminal action, they can only escape hell by doing something “great”. Options include joining fundamentalist fighters or even launching a suicide attack. The fanatics often exploit the identity problems of young people from migrant families. Many members of this group feel alienated in Germany as well as in their parents' home country. Meyer says ISIS offers a sense of supranational identity, inviting people to join a grand cause, the resurrection of the caliphate.

Speaking at an event hosted by the newspaper Frankfurter Rundschau and GIZ in September, Meyer pointed out that Islamic teachings are hardly made available in German. As a consequence, young members of migrant families are not well versed in Koranic principles, and that makes them easy prey for extremists. Meyer reports that young prisoners often ask him whether Islam permits terrorism. “Obviously, the faith does not permit terrorism, and someone who kills innocent persons will certainly not become a martyr,” the Imam says.

Personal growth matters beyond faith education, moreover. “If we manage to boost youngsters' sense of self-esteem just a little bit,” Meyer says, “that reduces the risk of radicalisation and violence considerably”.

In Afghanistan, several extremist organisations are trying to attract followers.

Masood Karokhail is the director of the Liaison Office, a non-governmental agency. He mentions the Taliban, who control large parts of the country, and various new groups. He adds, however, that ISIS is particularly well organised and well funded. Because of political instability, there is a lot of scope for extremist activism, especially in rural areas, according to the NGO leader. In his eyes, both the government and civil society are overwhelmed.

Most worrisome, growing radicalisation is affecting universities. Karokhail says young people must be addressed in a faith-based perspective: “We need more cooperation of civil-society organisations with religious authorities.” Karokhail wants donor governments to support this approach.

In Jordan, refugee numbers are rising and tensions are growing, as Gudrun Kramer of GIZ reports. For a long time, Pal-

estinian refugees have made up a big share of the country's population of 6 million. Since civil war has erupted in Syria, an additional 600,000 refugees have entered Jordan. At first, the Jordanian population responded in a sense of solidarity, but now the competition for jobs is intensifying while housing rents and the cost of living in general are rising. People are becoming more aggressive, according to Kramer, and extremists are best placed to agitate in refugee camps where social bonds tend to be weak. ISIS is only one of several militant organisations, she adds.

Kramer's assessment of Lebanon is similar. She says that extremists are particularly active in UN camps, where the national government is not in control. But not every young person is inclined to join extremist groups, she explains: “Most Palestinian youngsters' dream is a Palestinian State, not a caliphate.”

*Eva-Maria Verfürth*



ISIS fighters march in Raqqa, Syria, in 2014.





Members of the pro-democracy organisation Balai Citoyen protest against the coup on 20 September in Ouagadougou.

### Coup fails in Burkina Faso

Michel Kafando, Burkina Faso's interim president, is back in office after an attempt to oust him by violent means failed. Leaders from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) flew to Ouagadougou, Burkina's capital, on 23 September to ensure that coup leader General Gilbert Diendéré stepped down.

Diendéré is the head of Burkina's Presidential Guard. He had arrested Kafando a week earlier and soon after proclaimed himself president. Protests erupted immediately, and at least 10 people were killed. It soon turned out that, while Diendéré could rely on his troops, he did not have the support of the entire military. Indeed, as ECOWAS was increasing its diplomatic pressure on Diendéré, regular troops surrounded the capital, threatening to disarm the Presidential Guard.

The Presidential Guard was powerful and feared during the reign of Blaise Compaoré, the former president who was toppled by a broad-based popular movement one year ago. Diendéré is one of his close allies and supported him in the coup that overthrew leftist leader Thomas Sankara in 1987. Diendéré has a reputation for violence. Authorities in Burkina had recently discussed disbanding his Presidential Guard. After its reinstatement, the interim government decided to do so.

When Diendéré tried to grab power, the African Union and ECOWAS immediately issued statements that Kafando had to return to office. ECOWAS leaders proposed an amnesty for those involved in the coup and declared that supporters of Compaoré should be allowed to run in democratic elections. Such an option had earlier been ruled out by the authorities in Burkina whose job is to manage the transition to democracy. In Burkina, however, these

proposals are controversial. Democracy activists resent the idea of impunity.

Kafando did not commit himself to the deal proposed by ECOWAS in his first public address after returning to power. Before the coup, the elections to end the transition period were set to be held on 11 October, but government officials now indicate they will be delayed by a few weeks. (*dem*)

### Nepal's new constitution

With a majority of more than 90 %, Nepal's Constituent Assembly has approved a new constitution. It came into force on Sunday 20 September. The country is now divided into seven federal provinces which each will have legislative assemblies and chief ministers. Provincial borders are being contested, however, and political fringe groups have been agitating against the new

constitution. Some 40 people, including some policemen, died in politically-motivated clashes in four weeks. For instance, bloody riots rocked Nepal after the Constituent Assembly turned down a proposal to declare the country a Hindu state. A right-wing party had made the proposal.

In 2006, a comprehensive peace agreement had ended a long civil war, and an interim constitution has been in force since 2007. Progress has been slow since then, and this year people's discontent grew because state agencies proved unable to handle the impacts of a devastating earth quake in April. (*dem*)

### Another important step in Colombia's peace talks

Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos has shaken hands with Rodrigo Londono alias "Timochenko", the commander of the FARC militias, in Havana, where both sides are holding peace talks. They agreed to reach a conclusive peace agreement by 23 March next year.

Their publicly displayed optimism follows the conclusion of a difficult part of the negotiations. Both parties have agreed on a system to deal with crimes committed in decades of violence. While there will be a general amnesty, it will exempt all perpetrators who do not publicly confess and acknowledge their crimes. Moreover, the amnesty will not apply to major violations of human rights. All parties to the conflict, including various rebel movements and paramilitary organisations as well as the regular security forces will be held accountable. Details of how the system have not been published. (*dem*)



## “For us, there is only death”

**Approximately 450 million members of indigenous peoples live in close touch with nature. Their way of life is endangered by climate change as well as rapid industrialisation. If they get in the way of big corporations and governments, however, they are ruthlessly put down.**

➔ Economic growth is political leaders' top priority almost everywhere. The environment, people's needs and human rights tend to be disregarded. The impacts of climate change compound problems. A recent report published by the German civil-society organisation Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (GfbV, Society for endangered peoples) shows that indigenous peoples in particular are negatively affected by environmental problems and massive industrialisation. Individuals who defend their natural habitats are highly at risk.

Examples from ten different countries, including Honduras, Mexico, India and Brazil, indicate how recklessly corporations and powerful landlords proceed

when indigenous groups try to protect the environment or dare to oppose construction projects. Things are particularly worrisome in Latin America. The GfbV points out, for instance, that indigenous conservationists are systematically criminalised and persecuted in Honduras.

In this small Central American state, there are nine indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples, altogether estimated to add up to 1.27 million persons. There is no official census for ethnic minorities. Indigenous activists have founded a civil-society organisation named COPINH (Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras). Jointly, they try to resist to mega-projects which cause dispossession, displacement and environmental destruction. The dam project Agua Zarca in the Río Negro region is a case in point. It is to be built on Lenca land. With 100,000 members, the Lenca are the biggest indigenous community in Honduras. Because of the gigantic project, they are likely to be displaced. They were never consulted or allowed to take part in decision-making.

Resisting mega-projects is dangerous. According to Global Witness, 101 human-rights and environment activists were killed during protests in Honduras between 2010 and 2014. Since the environmentalists stand up for the interests of indigenous groups and often belong to those communities themselves, their murder does not generate headlines. The GfbV similarly states: “Problems of indigenous communities have little repercussion in Honduran public debate.”

Things are not much different in southern Argentina, where the Mapuche people fight against oil and gas production on their Patagonian lands. The fracking technology for gas extraction is poisoning their drinking water. Lagoons that the indigenous people depend on are contaminated with oil and metals, including arsenic. If they dare to protest, the Mapuche are criminalised. Others die because of environmental destruction. As the late Argentinian Mapuche activist Tina Linkopán said in regard to the poisoned water of her native homeland: “For us, there is only death.”

The GfbV warns that Honduras and Argentina are only two of many countries where repression is common. “Important representatives of indigenous communities are targeted and murdered in order to weaken the base of opposition against mining projects, dams or oil production,” the recent report claims.

The GfbV wants to support the voices of endangered peoples, not least in the context of the UN climate summit that will be held at the end of the year. According to the GfbV, the particular imperilment of indigenous groups must figure on the agenda.

Sheila Mysorekar

*An activist stands at the COPINH office in La Esperanza, Intibucá, Honduras.  
The civil-society organisation defends indigenous rights.*



### Links:

**Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker:** Report „Indigene Umweltaktivisten in Lebensgefahr“ (Indigenous environment activists at risk) (in German).

[https://www.gfbv.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Reporte\\_Memoranden/2015/MenschenrechtsreportNr.77-](https://www.gfbv.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Reporte_Memoranden/2015/MenschenrechtsreportNr.77-)

[IndigeneUmweltaktivisten\\_aktualisiert.compressed.pdf](https://www.gfbv.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Reporte_Memoranden/2015/MenschenrechtsreportNr.77-IndigeneUmweltaktivisten_aktualisiert.compressed.pdf)

**Global Witness, report on Honduras:** “How many more?”

<https://www.globalwitness.org/campaigns/environmental-activists/how-many-more/>

# Flawed implementation

Today, the rights of indigenous people in Latin America are protected far better than in earlier times. Of 19 Latin-American countries, 15 have laws on how indigenous groups must be informed of resource exploitation and involved in relevant decision making. In practice, participation processes are often flawed though. Sometimes, they fuel conflicts instead of defusing them.

➔ Latin America has been experiencing a resource boom in recent years. Since the 1990s, commodity exports have been rising, and since 2000, foreign investments in these industries have been growing too. Resource exploitation often takes place in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples (see article by Sheila Mysorekar on the previous page). In the 1990s, governments increasingly began to acknowledge their rights, especially after the ILO adopted its convention no. 169, that deals with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, in 1991. So far, 15 Latin-American countries have ratified the convention.

The right to prior and informed consultation is crucial. The German Insti-

tute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) assesses its implementation in its recent study "Rohstoffabbau in Lateinamerika: Fehlende Bürgerbeteiligung schürt Konflikte" (Resource exploitation in Latin America: Lack of civic participation in decision making fuels conflicts). According to the ILO convention, governments must consult indigenous groups who will be affected by laws or projects prior to their adoption or implementation. This right is stronger than that of local non-indigenous people who also must be informed about major projects, but need not be involved to the same extent.

Consultation with indigenous groups is meant to uncover risks of human-rights violations, draw attention to local concerns, and result in solutions that are acceptable to all parties. Such consultations should have impacts on the design, implementation and control of project, and they should lead to affected groups benefitting from the expected gains. Environmental protection and maintenance of biodiversity are meant to matter too.

However, the GIGA authors found major flaws in the implementation of the participation laws. Latin-American governments tend to ignore them, and so do private-sector corporations. According to the study, consultations either don't take place at all or too late. Sometimes they are rushed through, and sometimes only insufficient information is given.

The authors criticise the indigenous groups too and state they use consultations primarily in order to get the highest compensations possible. Human rights and the environment come second, according to the GIGA scholars. The study identifies three main reasons for the deficiencies of the current form of participation:

- Due to extreme power differences between the state and big companies on one side and indigenous organisations on the other, balanced dialogue is almost impossible.
- Serious compromise and equitable solutions are not the real goals of governmental and corporate players. They do not take seriously the concerns and suggestions of consulted groups.
- Governmental institutions lack the political will and independence to strike a fair balance between economic interests and social, cultural and ecological ones.

In many Latin-American countries, the lack or failure of participation processes fuels conflicts, triggering protests that often lead to violence. Peru's parliament adopted the prior consultation law in 2011. Since then, dozens of people have died in resource conflicts. The example shows that, in practice, a legal right does not necessarily protect indigenous rights. On the contrary, flawed participation processes bear the risk of further marginalisation of already marginalised groups. Thus, positions are likely to harden and conflicts escalate, the study warns.

Katja Dombrowski

## Links:

GIGA-Study (only in German):

<https://www.giga-hamburg.de/de/publication/rohstoffabbau-in-lateinamerika-fehlende-b%3%bcrgerbeteiligung-sch%3%bcrt-konflikte>

Environmental justice atlas:

<http://ejatlas.org>



Indigenous people chant and play instruments in a march for their rights in Santiago, Chile.

Demotix/picture-alliance



# African pension patterns

According to a recent World-Bank publication, nine sub-Saharan countries have introduced pension schemes that are not based on individual contributions, and four countries are currently running pilot programmes.

➔ Mark Dorfman, who wrote the study, states that these schemes can be important instruments for reducing poverty because they close coverage gaps and improve welfare outcomes.

This is especially relevant as African economies are marked by agriculture and informal employment. In these sectors, it is next to impossible to introduce pension systems that are based on compulsory contributions (which in the US are called payroll taxes). However, contributory pension schemes are how rich nations organise old-age protection. In the lack of such options, even modest pension payments for all elderly persons above a certain age make sense.

Nonetheless, Dorfman only cautiously endorses non-contributory pensions. He warns that national budgets are limited and governments must consider other population groups that suffer poverty, especially children. He wants reforms to be designed in a way that non-contributory schemes neither reduce incentives for private savings nor the scope for eventually introducing contributory schemes. At the same time, he makes it very clear that current pension systems in sub-Saharan countries tend to be inadequate



Rural South African grandmother.

because they leave far too many people entirely unprotected. Moreover, many people who are covered suffer poverty nonetheless.

Dorfman points out that, unlike in Europe or North America, poor elderly people in Africa do not normally live on their own. Accordingly, many would benefit from other kinds of government support to poor households. What Dorfman does not consider, however, is what impact it might

have to channel support to poor households through their oldest members. Such an assessment would be interesting given that extended families tend to share resources in developing countries (also note interview with Markus Loewe in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2015/08, p.18 ff.). (dem)

## Link:

**World Bank: Pension patterns in sub-Saharan Africa.**

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2015/07/24786040/pension-patterns-sub-saharan-africa>

## In brief

### Former Guatemalan first lady is candidate in run-off election

Sandra Torres will run against Jimmy Morales in the final round of Guatemala's presidential elections next month. The former first lady leans left, while Morales, a TV comedian, has the support of the country's military and business establishment. With about a quarter of the

votes, Morales was the front-runner in the first round of the elections, in which Torres and Manuel Baldizón, a conservative politician, won about 20 % each.

Baldizón dropped out of the race when it became clear that Torres had gained about 6000 more votes. He also resigned from the chairmanship of his party. He has made bitter

comments about elections being manipulated, but videos that were shared on social media proved that he did not play by the rules all the time himself.

In the meantime, opposition activists in neighbouring Honduras want an international commission against impunity to be established in their country in order to investigate criminal action of government officials.

Their model is the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, which has made many headlines this year. It uncovered corruption networks and thus contributed to the resignation of the previous president, Oscar Pérez Molina, who must now face a court trial. Molina's regular term was nearly over, and the current presidential elections are on schedule. (dem)



# Nowadays: Trees to charcoal

Natural resources management in Malawi has failed miserably. Politicians have been blamed for illegal logging and allowing communities to farm in the forests in exchange for political votes. One sad example is Dzalanyama Forest Reserve, where caravans of illegal charcoal and fuelwood dealers move with bags of charcoal on their bicycles. All over the reserve, there are charcoal kilns or ovens – in plain sight of the forestry guards who are supposed to protect the reserve.

Many trees have been cut. But this natural reserve is a catchment area for Lilongwe River, which supplies water to almost half of the residents of the capital Lilongwe. At this rate of deforestation, the Lilongwe River will run dry in the next three to

five years, causing a serious water crisis. The government has deployed the Malawi Defense Force in the forest reserve in order to keep encroachers away.

The effect, however, is only slight. "We haven't seen the army here," says charcoal seller Thokozani Kumanda. Ebasi Sakisoni, aged 45 and a father of seven children, pushes a bicycle loaded with fuelwood. He is aware that the forest, which used to have lots of wildlife, is now empty because of deforestation. That does not deter him though. He sees selling firewood from the forest as a good business – as long as "you don't meet forestry guards because they confiscate the wood or charcoal".

There are not enough soldiers deployed in the forest to cover



the whole of the 989 square kilometres of land. According to Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, Bright Msaka, army deployment is a "temporary measure".

Annual biomass loss in Dzalanyama Forest Reserve caused by charcoal production for domestic use is around 439,000 tons, according to the Department of Forestry. 80 % of the charcoal consumed in the capital city comes from Dzalanyama. Many forests reserves in the country are on the verge of extinction.

Poverty in Malawi is around 50.7 %, according to the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Electricity is beyond the reach of millions of people, and those who are connected to the national grid are struggling with huge electricity tariffs. An estimated

12 % of 15.3 million Malawians are connected to hydropower.

The collapsed natural resources management systems in the country is contributing to the high rate of deforestation which is currently pegged at 2.6 % per year, according to environmental experts. An economic study done in 2011 by the government of Malawi, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that unsustainable use of natural resources, which include forestry, fisheries and wildlife, is costing this country the equivalent of 5.3 % of the country's growth domestic product (GDP).

Daulos Mauambeta, an environment expert and former director of Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi, says the government is "losing the battle".

*In our column "Nowadays", D+C/E+Z correspondents write about daily life in developing countries.*

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# International non-governmental organisations







*Human-rights defenders  
in the Philippines.*

Mendoza/Pacific Press Agency/picture-alliance

Civil society matters in politics. That is increasingly true of international affairs too. International non-governmental organisation (INGOs) have become quite influential in the past two decades. Some observers praise their role, others express criticism. INGOs help to protect human rights, assist poor and disadvantaged people and promote democratic change. However, INGOs that are based in rich countries tend to crowd out voices from developing ones. Moreover, many depend on funding from donor governments. Nonetheless, it is certainly unacceptable that an increasing number of governments around the world are trying to reduce the space in which civil-society organisations operate.



# INGOs in Africa

Civil-society organisations influence policy in key areas, including HIV/AIDS, peace, sustainable development and women's rights. The cooperation of non-governmental organisations from the global south with their northern counterparts has helped to employ best practices, promote participatory development and advocate for good governance. However, there are also some downsides.

By Agnes Abuom

➔ In Africa, the number of civil-society organisations (CSOs) has increased tremendously in the past decades. One reason was that government support for social programmes declined as a consequence of the structural adjustment policies that were demanded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s and 1990s. To some extent, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) managed to fill the gaps.

International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) play a big role in strengthening African CSOs, for instance by enhancing capacities. African CSOs, in turn, lobby governments and empower communities to campaign for better policies and improved livelihoods.

As they offer leadership, governance, management skills and material supply, the role of INGOs is important. In fact, donor governments have increased their funding to INGOs because these agencies are in touch with various communities in developing countries through their local-level counterparts.

INGOs help national NGOs to network and build linkages, making them stronger advocates for far-reaching reform policies. Moreover, INGOs have a bearing on the policies of donor governments and facilitate the engagement of African CSOs with donor governments.

National-level CSOs often serve as subcontractors for INGO projects or project components, but many also get support for running programmes of their own. Measures are particularly effective when international and national partners interact intensively and foster a spirit of cooperation. Joint action makes change visible. Over the years, INGO funding for local CSOs, including faith-based ones, has increased.

INGOs do more than mobilise funds and transfer skills and knowledge. They boost the voice of African CSOs. Many African countries lack social justice, and many governments make it difficult for local NGOs to engage in advocacy. Cooperation with INGOs results in some protection for African activists. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other INGOs often make the international community aware of repressive

action by national governments. Unfortunately, there is a trend of governments becoming increasingly authoritarian all over the world, including Kenya.

INGO advocacy has promoted the cause of community participation and civic engagement. INGOs speak for the developing world through advocacy. They speak out against abuses of power and demand the rule of law as well as good governance. INGOs have thus been on the forefront in suggesting concrete, integrated strategies as well as supporting those calling for change.

In Kenya, such engagement has helped CSOs contribute to democratisation during the transition from a one-party regime to multi-party democracy in the 1990s. Faith-based organisations, for example, were vocal in calling for good governance and urged the government to open up space for other political actors. Some CSOs provided protection for people who organised protests. More recently, Kenyan CSOs are credited for spearheading the constitutional review process which had stalled for decades, but finally resulted in the new constitution that was passed in 2010.

The interaction of international and national NGOs, moreover, has contributed to raising awareness for how issues of peace, the rule of law and social justice are interrelated. Today, INGOs probably matter most in Kenya's most marginalised areas. In some parts of northern Kenya, for instance, organisations such as World Vision, Action Aid and others provide social services including relief food and water. They assist people when disasters like floods, droughts and famine strike, delivering essential services in places that the national government largely tends to ignore.

## Micro-management and competition for staff

For a long time, local NGOs mostly implemented programmes, while their international counterparts did the fundraising and some advocacy. Local groups, however, have become more self-confident. Accord-



*Vocational training:  
hairdressing school run  
by a Kenyan NGO.*

ingly, the interaction of national and international organisations has been changing.

A huge number of African NGOs came up in the early 1990s. At the time, most of them failed to deliver services effectively and efficiently. Their capacities were quite limited, and donors insisted on prudent use of funds. For good reason, they still demand solid accounting and financial reporting. INGOs have developed sophisticated systems to ensure compliance with their requirements. Their requirements can lead to tensions and conflict however, as African organisations sometimes feel sidelined. National-level activists often consider the rules too strict. It is necessary to strike a balance between the needs of all parties concerned, involving African organisations in decision-making related to procedural rules.

Some INGOs have set up offices in Africa, not least in order to stay in control of the financial flows. The problem is that those offices all too often start to micro-manage things, thus undermining the ownership of national NGOs and limiting the scope for capacity building. When an INGO has an office in an African country, its staff is likely to visit projects more often. To some extent, this enhances monitoring, but the risk of INGO managers taking too many decisions is great. Moreover, INGO priorities begin to trump local priorities. Especially the growth of small national-level CSOs is thwarted by such practices.

Making matters worse, INGO presence in Africa can reduce local agencies' scope for resource mobilisation. INGOs are better placed to submit bids to embassies, other agencies of donor governments and supranational institutions. Obviously, their understanding of donor languages and their knowledge of donor regulations helps them. Moreover, local INGO offices tend to recruit the most competent staff, poaching professionals from local CSOs that cannot offer competitive salaries and working conditions.

Some INGOs have decided not to establish African offices but to rely on African consultants instead. Bread for the World, the Protestant German agency, is an example. The consultants do not only handle financial reporting and related matters, but also contribute to developing national CSO capacities. This arrangement ensures that national-level CSOs play their role effectively and deliver much impact.

Generally speaking, the heavy presence of INGOs is sometimes perceived as an attempt to eclipse African NGOs. To avoid conflicts, it is good to have more intensive collaboration and involve all parties concerned in funding activities. Transparency is essential too. Fortunately, communication between INGOs and local-level organisations has generally improved. African partners are no longer passive and timid recipients, but have become active partners that want to take part in agenda setting. ←



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# New Indian authoritarianism

International NGOs have their weaknesses but they have brought important improvements to Indian society. The government, however, dislikes what it calls “interference in domestic affairs” and is making their work more difficult, for instance by restricting national NGOs’ access to foreign funding.

By Aditi Roy Ghatak

➔ In the blistering heat of an Andhra Pradesh summer, a curious campaign popped up in the villages: “Adopt a granny”. Posters were hung up in every conceivable place by a well-meaning and well-funded international NGO (INGO). It apparently had no clue that, in the joint family system in Indian villages, grannies live with their grandchildren. The children needed schools, medicines and playgrounds. Grannies they had.

In spite of occasional cases of INGO ignorance and considerable domestic development efforts, India needs global NGO presence for meaningful intervention. Kailash Satyarthi, the Indian children’s-rights

activist, won the Nobel peace prize despite getting no support from India. Support came from abroad. Elsewhere national activists are making a difference across the socio-ecological landscape. There is funding too with Indian companies required to spend a mandatory two percent of profits on Corporate Social Responsibility, thus channelling some 20 billion rupees (\$ 300 million) every year into development aid.

INGO support often strengthens Indian civil-society organisations, empowering them to stand up to the Indian state agencies, not least because international attention provides some protection against repression. That was evident, for instance, in the Ford

*Tens of thousands of NGOs help people in India to fight for their rights. These women in Uttar Pradesh fight for women’s rights and against violence of men, corruption and police arbitrariness.*



Bohling/Photography



Foundation's support for Teesta Setalvad's activism in defence of victimised minorities in the western Indian state of Gujarat or Anna Hazare's anti-corruption campaign in 2011. Greenpeace India provides another example of standing up for the rights of indigenous Indian communities that are being trampled upon by the mining mafia. Such activism bothered the current national government so much that it has begun to crack down on foreign funding for NGOs in general (see Dinesh Sharma in D+C/E+Z 2015/03, p. 43), cutting Greenpeace India's access to funds from abroad in September.

The state government of Gujarat has similarly accused the Ford Foundation of "interfering in the internal affairs" of India and "abetting communal disharmony". The national government has limited the access of Setalvad's NGO to foreign funding.

This is a troublesome development. The Ford Foundation has been active in India since 1953. So far, its total donations amount to half a billion dollars. Amongst other things, it has supported campaigns for civil liberties and environmental protection, two crucially important matters in India. Human-rights and environmental activists have benefited considerably from INGO support.

INGOs are often better in touch with grassroots-level needs than the aid agencies of donor governments. The development activist and scholar David C. Korten said: "Disillusioned by the evident inability of USAID and other large official aid donors to apply the approaches that had been proven effective by the non-governmental Ford Foundation, I eventually made my break with the official aid system."

It is worth bearing in mind, of course, that corporate interests do not only have a major impact on governments in rich nations, they also have an impact on civil society. Consider the World Social Forum (WSF), for example, which is arguably the most potent forum for non-government organisations, advocacy groups and other formal and informal social movements. It has been funded by a consortium of corporate foundations under the advisory umbrella of Engaged Donors for Global Equity (EDGE), earlier called the Funders Network on Trade and Globalisation.

To Indian activists, the dominance of experts from northern countries in international civil society is sometimes irritating. There is no doubt, however, that the overall impact of INGOs is helpful, not destructive.

### Three million NGOs in India

Reportedly, there are more than 3 million minuscule to large NGOs in India. Around 40,000 are registered under laws regulating federal funding. From 2002 to 2012, they received funds worth about \$7 billion under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA),

according to private sources. The government places the figure at \$14 billion. US-based organisations topped the donor list, followed by organisations from the UK and Germany.

In 2010, the previous Congress-led government amended the FCRA, specifically seeking to regulate foreign-funded NGOs. Since then, 13,500 foreign-funded NGOs saw their registrations cancelled because of failure to file returns as mandated. The current BJP-led government has even made sure that the Supreme Court Bar Association which organises lawyers and the All India Lawn Tennis Association no longer get foreign money. The same is true of many premier educational institutions like the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Sardar Patel University and the National Institute of Fashion Technology.

There is little doubt, however, that the NGO community, warts-and-all, is a bulwark of a democratic way of life. It is currently under attack in India. Ironically, the government is sending out the message that foreign direct investment is fine but international engagement in domestic human-rights and justice battles is not. This trend of authoritarianism, unfortunately, is also evident in other countries, from Russia to Uganda and from Cambodia to Kenya.

As the Indian government wants to move ahead with industrialisation, it is neglecting and repealing environment laws, promoting deforestation and trampling on tribal rights. It sees international support for civic opposition in India as contributing to slowing down and even stalling development projects such as nuclear power plants, uranium mines, coal-fired power plants, farm biotechnology, mega industrial projects, hydroelectric plants and extractive industries.

Global watchdog presence has proven very useful in cases of campaigns against nuclear power plants being built without people's consent and other socially relevant projects. In 2014, for example, researchers from top US universities exhibited prototypes of the next-generation toilet at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's "Reinvent the Toilet Fair" in India. The current anti-NGO position may affect such close collaboration to address India's critical needs and cut the country off "from a lot of potential benefits in the world, not just money but also real inventions and innovations", warns Thomas Blom Hansen, a professor of South Asian studies at Stanford University in the USA. His chair, by the way, is named after Dhirubhai Ambani, the founder of Reliance industries, India's leading corporate giant and sponsor of Stanford University. Corporate influence goes both ways in today's globalised world, and so should civic activism. ←

**"INGOs are often better in touch with grassroots-level needs than the aid agencies of donor governments."**



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# Unequal partners

Civil-society organisations in the global south depend on international non-governmental organisations in important ways. They do not have equal access to governments and international organisations.

By Antonio Tujan Jr.

➔ The UN recognises the critical role that civil-society organisations (CSOs) play in international decision-making. However, it still faces the big challenge of giving appropriate space to voices from the developing world. An even more challenging issue is to give that space to the poor and marginalised who make up the majority of people in the countries concerned.

Striving for more equality, the UN wanted to involve more people than previously in the post-2015 process to define an agenda to follow up on the Millennium Development Goals. Relying on online technologies, it did make some progress. In developing countries, however, fewer people have access to the internet.

It matters even more that online engagement cannot replace immediate involvement in decision-making. Digitised communication is no substitute for strategically planned and sustained eye-level interaction at consecutive international meetings. CSOs have been able to engage in UN processes such as the General Assembly, ECOSOC or the UNEP in this way. CSOs have also been made members in international multi-stakeholder forums such as the UN Development Cooperation Forum or even the Committee for Food Security of the FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization).

The snag, however, is that voices from the global south remain marginalised nonetheless. The reason is that northern-based international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have a hegemonic stranglehold on CSO involvement in international affairs. Well-known, truly global INGOs like OXFAM, CARE or Save the Children are only the tips of the iceberg. Many other, less prominent INGOs are relevant too.

Typically, they are based in the various countries that belong to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), in which the donor countries are united. They normally have close links to their national governments. They get framework funding, for instance, or serve as subcontractors for development programmes and humanitarian aid in the global south. At the same time, they finance some of their international activities with fund-raising campaigns and philanthropy.

Advocacy is an important component of their work. INGOs are heard by their respective national governments, and they have access to the UN, the European Commission and other international bodies. These ties make them influential, but they also help to acquire additional funding. To a considerable extent, INGOs depend on the governments and organisations they liaise with.

CSOs from the global south can only dream of having such immediate access to the most powerful players in the international arena. Moreover, there are only very few truly Southern INGOs. They did not emerge thanks to donor support, but managed to create an independent niche in international affairs.

The Third World Network, IBON, CUTS, and Focus on the global south which operate at the global level, are examples. Specialised organisations such as BRAC and Grameen, both of which focus on micro finance, also operate globally. Regional CSO networks are more common.

These organisations are exceptional however. Most CSOs in the developing world depend on northern-based INGOs in two important ways – for funding and for getting access to international meetings. INGOs often bring delegations from partner organisations to international events in order to further their agendas.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that INGOs necessarily have interests of their own. To keep their operations going, the mobilisation of funds is crucial. INGOs typically have strong management know-how to motivate individual donors and volunteers, are capable of running development projects and humanitarian relief and are well versed in advocacy.

To some extent, international federations of mass-membership organisations such as trade unions, farmers' unions or women's associations provide a counter-balance to INGO dominance. However, these international federations again tend to be dominated by their rich-world constituents. Moreover, there is a tendency of strong secretariats taking over and pursuing their own agendas.



*Participants in NGO meeting ahead of the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in 2008.*

## Telling choices of slogan

The post-2015 process was very illustrative. Government-funded INGOs from OECD nations banded together and promoted their agenda with hardly any concern for critical NGOs or mass-membership organisations from the global south. The choice of slogan was indicative in this context. Activists from the global south demanded “social justice” and the reduction of inequality, whereas INGOs from the OECD emphasised “poverty eradication”. CSOs from developing countries had an alternative vision and expressed different concerns. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly in view of their donor support, the INGOs prevailed.

INGO dominance does not mean, of course, that CSOs in the global south are merely INGO puppets. What it means is that they do not get the attention and respect they deserve.

A particularly irritating episode occurred a few years ago. Asian CSOs and rural associations were suddenly criticised for being beholden to “INGO imperialism” because they campaigned against genetically-modified organisms. This accusation was nonsense. The Asian civil-society activists’ autonomous position was based on bitter experience with pesticides and fertilisers. Nonetheless, a consultancy in Australia managed to use the common knowledge of INGO influence to discredit them – with considerable impact.

In any case, the systemic predominance of INGOs perpetuates the status quo in the global arena. It actually strengthens it. By and large, the OECD countries dominate international discourse and decision making. INGOs supplant the voices and role of the poor in international affairs in various ways. At the root of this power is their funding for southern CSO partners. Ultimately, INGOs thrive on OECD governments aid policies.

The point is that, however well meaning INGO managers may be, their influence is a systemic element of the multilateral system. A few INGOs, especially the particularly prominent ones like Action Aid, try to buck the system and act provocatively. However, even if Action Aid has nationalised its branches, they are still not genuine voices of the marginalised speaking from the global south, and they too are defending their own specific positions of influence.

Many INGO leaders are uncomfortable with this setting, and they even express criticism. They increasingly understand that they must give account not only to the public of their home countries, but to other constituencies as well, especially the poor in the developing countries and the CSO they partner with. Spelling out this challenge, however, is easier than rising to it. INGOs can operate without doing so, but they will collapse if they lose the faith of the people in their home countries. The attempts to reform CSO engagement in international affairs made so far have been worthy, but much more needs to happen. ←



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## Best practices

Civil-society involvement in international affairs has been promoted by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service and UN Research Institute for Social Development. However, effective engagement of civil-society organisations (CSOs) in the international arena has not been easy. Nonetheless, there have been some positive developments.)

The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) is an example of inclusive cooperation being possible. The CPDE evolved in the context of the multi-lateral High-Level Forum on Development Effectiveness which were organised by the OECD. That agenda is now being continued by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

*Covering an NGO press conference in Accra in the context of the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2008.*

The CPDE is the non-governmental member of the steering committee of the GPEDC. It benefits from the lessons learned in the decade-long series of international meetings to improve aid effectiveness and development co-operation.

For their advocacy to be convincing, CSOs must obviously be effective and accountable themselves. Relevant rules for international cooperation among non-governmental organisations without marginalising partners from the global south include:

- operate as an open platform where all CSOs are encouraged to participate and are free to engage in CPDE according to their own terms,
- reserve at least 20 % of leadership positions at all levels for feminist organisations and
- ensure that organisations from the global south hold more than half of the leadership positions.

Among other things, the CPDE relies on concepts developed by Betteraid, an international umbrella organisation of CSOs. Moreover, the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness was created at the



global level. This open platform culminated in a conference in Istanbul in 2010. In Istanbul, eight principles for CSO effectiveness were defined:

- respect and promote human rights and social justice,
- embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls' rights,
- focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation,
- promote environmental sustainability,
- practice transparency and accountability,
- pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity,
- create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning and

- commit to realising positive sustainable change.

Two other promising models are the Civil Society Mechanism which represents CSOs in the context of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the newly organised Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Mechanism, which engages with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Both are less developed than the CPDE and still in the process of building up. Their success depends on CSOs and multistakeholder partners. They deserve attention as the UN tries to build an equitable global partnership, without drowning out southern voices, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. (at)

# Experts, advocates and activists

It is hard to imagine world politics without international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) today. They are as diverse as their activities and the academic debates on their role and impacts. Some experts praise INGOs' cosmopolitan role, while others express scepticism.

By Charlotte Dany and Andrea Schneiker

➔ The cosmopolitan camp sees INGOs as important and constructive players because of their potential for challenging conventional power politics at an international level. In support of this view, cosmopolitans point out examples of INGO success in influencing political processes and the actions of other players. INGOs have even managed to exert influence in areas of "high politics" which affect national sovereignty.

In 1998 alone, several such successes were recorded. For example, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which had been formed in 1992, helped to bring about the Ottawa Convention. By now, the Convention has been signed by 162 nations. INGOs were also involved in drafting the Rome Statute, the international treaty that established the International Criminal Court. The negotiations were conducted by government representatives, but they unofficially relied on information and advice from INGOs (Deitelhoff, 2006). In the same year, widespread INGO protests forced Shell, the transnational oil corporation, to abandon its plans to dump the Brent Spar platform at sea. Instead, the corporate giant had to dismantle and dispose of the facility on shore. That was among others the result of years of headline-grabbing campaigning led by Greenpeace.

During the Cold War, international politics was more or less exclusively a matter for governments. Today, the media routinely report when INGOs complain about human-rights violations in various countries, when INGOs campaign for the compliance with labour standards in the global textile industry or when INGOs provide humanitarian relief after environmental disasters.

INGOs are seen as a legitimising force in the global arena. This is so because they do not pursue national interests but are potentially advocates for affected groups worldwide. They put specific interests and issues on the agenda of international organisations. They raise awareness for important topics and feed them into the political process.

Over the past decade, however, a more critical view of INGOs has been gaining ground. Critics point out the limits of INGO influence (Dany, 2013) and raise questions about the organisations' own legitimacy (Steffek/Hahn, 2010). Unlike governments, INGOs are not elected, so they lack a democratic mandate for taking decisions that are mandatory for others. Because of a north-south divide which is evident in INGO involvement in international negotiations, their legitimising effect on international policy is questionable. INGO involvement from the global south tends to be exceptional, whereas INGOs from the global north often claim to speak for developing countries.

Sometimes, INGOs, however, take binding decisions – not for society as a whole, perhaps, but certainly for specific groups. Prime cases in point are organisations that implement aid programmes and determine who receives support and who does not for example. Moreover, some constituencies that are championed by INGOs in international contexts feel misunderstood and poorly represented. Examples include child labourers or sex workers (Hahn/Holzschneider, 2013). For good reason, INGOs are thus criticised for cementing rather than breaking up international power structures (Sending/Neumann, 2006; also note Tony Tujan on p. 18 f. of this issue).

## A heterogeneous field

In the past 40 years, the number of INGOs has increased from around 2,000 to more than 7,000. It is difficult to say exactly how many there are however. INGOs are not entities of international law, and there is no generally accepted definition of what an INGO is.

Political scientists usually regard non-governmental organisations as organisations that are not for profit and not dependent on government funding. Accordingly, INGOs are neither state agencies nor market-driven actors. They operate in the so-called third

sector that comprises civil society (Frantz, 2010: 191). International NGOs have members in at least three countries and work transnationally. They are distinct from social movements in that they have a fixed organisational structure. However, many INGOs owe their existence to social movements. Greenpeace, for example, emerged from the environmental movement.

In reality, however, there are numerous examples of organisations that are generally recognised as INGOs even though they only partially meet the criteria listed above. Many humanitarian INGOs, for example, get government funds for their programmes and even run programmes on behalf of governments. Therefore, they cannot be said to be fully independent.

The question of what constitutes an INGO becomes politically relevant when it determines eligibility for certain rights, for instance in the UN context. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) keeps a register of NGOs that are entitled to participate in UN conferences and preparatory meetings. However, the UN also accredits private-sector organisations as INGOs. The World Nuclear Association is an example, it represents the nuclear industry.

### Diverse roles

INGOs play various roles in global politics. Their scope for influence varies as do their legitimacy problems. INGO members serve as experts, diplomats, advocates for specific issues or groups, protesters and activists. In their role as experts and diplomats, they cooperate closely with governments. INGOs often have extensive expertise in a particular field and thus provide valuable advice to other actors that lack such relevant know-how. Some small countries, for example, appreciate INGO consultants on climate policy.

INGOs sometimes even represent governments. During the 2005 UN World Summit on the Information Society, for instance, INGO and business representatives were invited to participate in government delegations because of their knowledge of internet governance. During the West African Ebola epidemic in 2014, it became clear that the INGO Médecins Sans Frontières was particularly well endowed with the expertise and human resources needed to set up and run treatment centres, so it assumed a major role in health care.

In diplomacy, INGOs are often active behind the scenes, participating, for example, in the drafting of international rules and norms. Especially when it comes to establishing standards for transnational corporations, INGOs are often invited based on the idea that they can and should ensure that civil-society demands are taken into consideration. For the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), for instance, INGO



Martin Zingel/Arzte ohne Grenzen

representatives contributed to formulating international standards concerning sustainable forest management and to the development of a certification system for a sustainable forest and product chain (chain of custody). Contributions of this kind are useful for voluntary codes of conduct. However, INGOs also contribute to the continuous development of international law.

All these activities supplement the INGOs' role as international advocates of the world's weak, vulnerable and underrepresented people. Environmental organisations work to protect endangered wildlife, for example, and human-rights organisations support the Muslim Rohingya minority of Myanmar. Often, INGOs use forms of protest that attract media attention in order to generate public interest and put pressure on governments or business.

INGOs use their expertise and special credibility to inform societies and governments about particular issues and raise awareness for specific problems. In 1985, for instance, the organisation International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for "spreading authoritative information and (...) creating an awareness of the catastrophic consequences of atomic warfare" (Nobel Foundation, 1985).



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*During the West African Ebola epidemic in 2014, the INGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) assumed a major role in health care: MSF-centre in Foya, northern Liberia.*

## Competition and rivalry

INGOs face growing competition among one another, and each one must make sure it stays viable. The consequences may be serious, even if unintended. After the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, for example, INGOs working in refugee camps in Goma realised that these camps not only provided shelter to victims, but also served as meeting place for perpetrators of violence. Nonetheless, many INGOs preferred to continue their operations and kept quiet. Only a few withdrew, foregoing a big opportunity to stay in the business of helping refugees (Terry, 2002). The desire to stay despite evident problems and to cover up negative impacts of their work was partly due to the knowledge that other INGOs would quickly take their place and pocket donor money (Cooley/Ron, 2002).

The Rwandan tragedy proved that the work of INGOs – however well-intentioned – may have negative consequences. It also showed that INGO action is influenced by the institutional setting. Humanitarian INGOs, in particular, increasingly attempt to address problems by drafting general rules of conduct which are meant to strengthen their accountability not only to donors, but also to affected communities as well as the governments of the countries concerned (Lewis, 2014).

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# Designing the change agenda

Many international civil-society organisations (ICSOs) are currently implementing change processes, reviewing their missions and updating strategies and activities. The current rapid changes in terms of politics, technology and the environment provide threats but also opportunities. ICSOs should learn from each other and find innovative solutions in order to boost their impact in favour of a more equitable and more sustainable world.

By Helene Wolf and Åsa Månsson

➔ The conditions under which most ICSOs work are changing fast. Persistent poverty and rising inequality are triggering conflicts, a fast growing middle class is increasing the pressure on scarce resources, climate change is progressing unabated, and biodiversity is under threat. Furthermore, shrinking political space limits ICSOs' room for action and mobilisation, and the internet is compromising traditional forms of communication. Another challenge lies in the financial basis of ICSOs. Supporters are ageing, and the younger generation has new expectations.

Instinctively, ICSOs often perceive these changes as threats. Indeed, if an ICSO does not adapt, its very existence may be threatened. At the same time, growing challenges such as the overstepping of our planetary boundaries and violations of human rights more than ever require strong engagement from ICSOs. Neither governments nor businesses will speak out for – or act in solidarity with – the people most affected by war, droughts or poverty the way ICSOs do. ICSOs have a unique responsibility and unmatched experience in organising meaningful campaigns and delivering life-changing programmes.

ICSOs generally have very powerful visions: to end poverty, to protect the environment, to save children or to end the discrimination of marginalised groups. Most of their activities, however, are rather small-scale initiatives. A holistic approach is necessary. For example, climate change is already affecting and sometimes even undermining ICSO visions, yet many organisations' activities do not systematically take this issue into account.

The new agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may not address all the aspects ICSOs were advocating for, but they do spell out an ambitious agenda that aims to link some of the most im-

portant issues to each other. One example is the goal of an inclusive economic development in all parts of the world that takes into account scarce resources and the environment.

At the same time, many governments are increasingly restricting and controlling civil-society action, limiting the space for advocacy, mobilisation and programme implementation. The threat to democratic, people-centred and sustainable civil-society work affects all CSOs around the world and requires collective answers.

Many of the questions at stake cannot be decided by the heads of CSOs alone. Staff, activists, volunteers and donors must work together to develop ideas and implement the changes that are needed. Are we ready for personal sacrifices in order to be more environmentally friendly? Are we willing to fundamentally change relationships with partners in the global south? Can we accept changes to how we work? Do we take the risk to challenge our donors about their lifestyles? And are we willing to make room for new forms of activism and virtual engagement that could mobilise people?

These are just some of the questions many ICSOs are tackling, and there are no one-size-fits-all answers. But we can share the experiences of individual change processes and collectively think about the future of the entire sector.

The International Civil Society Centre invites all CSO staff, activists and supporters to discuss the future of ICSOs and to develop creative approaches on its online discussion platform "Disrupt&Innovate". Based on the book by the Centre's Executive Director Burkhard Gnärig, "The hedgehog and the beetle – Disruption and innovation in the civil society sector",



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the platform aims to support international as well as national CSOs – whether they are big or small, well-established or new – in their search for solutions.

## Strategic issues

Based on the Centre's work with many of the largest ICSOs over several years, we have identified issues that are relevant for a broad range of organisations, including smaller and less established CSOs:

- **Alliances:** No organisation or sector can eradicate poverty or ensure education for all children on its own. How do we form effective alliances within the civil society sector but also with frontrunners in governments and private-sector businesses to look for solutions together?
- **Culture:** New strategies or more flexible decision-making structures often require fundamental changes to the way organisations work. How do we create an organisational culture that embraces entrepreneur-like approaches, including innovation and change as part of the daily work?
- **Transparency:** Increasing scrutiny from the public and donors, in combination with digital technologies, put new demands on ICSOs' own accountability and transparency. How can we rethink transparency to use it both as a tool for accountability towards the outside world and for our own continuous learning and improvement?
- **Business models:** Changing fundraising patterns and virtual campaigning opportunities are putting into question the traditional business models of many ICSOs that deliver humanitarian or other services to people in need. How do we adapt and diversify our business models to replace or complement our activities without losing sight of our visions and missions?
- **Identity:** The global power shift questions the patterns of donors in the global north transferring funds and knowledge to the global south. We have to reconsider the values that guide our work: How can we empower beneficiaries and contribute to a more equitable world?
- **Governance:** Increasingly fast and complex challenges require fast and flexible decision-making. How do we design appropriate governance systems for our organisations? These should allow for participation and at the same time enable us to move quickly and boldly when needed.

No one alone can find the answers to these and many other questions that will keep our sector busy over the coming years. That is why the "Disrupt&Innovate" platform offers an open space for sector-wide debate, exchange and mutual learning.

During the first months of the online discussion, we saw a lot of engagement from colleagues commenting on the way many CSOs work today. With our campaign #BeTheHedgehog, we encouraged users to look for new answers to global challenges. When the commu-



Bohling/Photography

nity was asked to nominate innovators, we learned about partnerships with companies to fight Ebola, new ways to engage youth in organisational governance, and how skateboarding can make a difference in children's education. Some participants shared their individual organisational difficulties and how they address them, looking for feedback or advice from others. Guest blogs by leaders from organisations such as Oxfam, 350.org, Transparency International and CIVICUS brought up specific questions about accountability, corruption, climate change or the defence of civic space.

In the months and years to come, we hope to build a community that produces ideas and innovations that will drive the sector forward. Our aim is to develop a change agenda for ICSOs. In addition to our online discussion, the Centre will bring together change-makers for a workshop in October called "Managing Disruption".

Even the most well-designed change process is likely to be outdated by the time it is fully implemented. Organisations that embrace change as part of their daily work and constantly learn from their experiences are the most likely to not only survive but make a real difference to people's lives. ←

### Links:

#### Disrupt&Innovate:

<http://www.disrupt-and-innovate.org>

#### International Civil Society Centre:

<http://www.icscentre.org>

Twitter: @CSODisruption

*Climate change affects ICSO visions, yet many organisations' activities do not systematically take this issue into account. In many countries, monsoon rains are becoming increasingly unpredictable: woman in Bombay.*



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# Protecting activists

Amnesty International (AI) is known worldwide as the biggest non-governmental organisation for human rights. International organisations cannot work effectively unless they have good local contacts. So local human-rights groups are important AI partners. Selmin Çalışkan, secretary-general of AI Germany, talks to Sheila Mysorekar about relations between AI and small human-rights groups on the ground.

## Interview with Selmin Çalışkan

### ➔ How would you describe the cooperation between Amnesty International and local human rights groups at country level?

Amnesty International is a global human-rights organisation with more than 7 million members in over 150 countries. We see ourselves as part of a global movement for human rights and work closely with human-rights groups all over the world. Amnesty often relies on information from those groups in order to assess the local situation and make recommendations accordingly. At the same time, we represent their interests at international level and provide them with moral and financial support for the work that, in many cases, could cost activists their lives. Amnesty uses its name and expertise to draw international attention to the human-rights work done on the ground.

### What form does that local cooperation take?

Many of the reports that Amnesty publishes on human-rights violations worldwide would be impossible to compile without the cooperation of local human-rights groups. They often get to the scene much faster, they have relevant contacts and they put us in touch with witnesses and victims. In many cases, talking to local human-rights defenders is not just essential for our reports. Often, this is how we get evidence and provide quotes from survivors and other witnesses. We also rely on local contacts for research in countries where Amnesty is denied access or where we cannot go for security reasons. In Syria, for example, we cooperate closely with local activists, humanitarian workers and local human-rights organisations to document the serious human-rights abuses and war crimes that are perpetrated by all conflict parties. On the other hand, it is sometimes safer for AI to denounce human-rights abuses than for local groups who would put themselves at risk. In many cases, local activists are the ones who draw our attention to abuses of human rights. That is the case in India or Cambodia, for instance, where many people are forcibly evicted from their homes to make way for major industrial projects.

### How does AI respond to news that local activists are in danger?

Amnesty supports human-rights defenders all over the world. If people are in danger because of their work, we put pressure on the relevant authorities to secure their release from prison, end torture or grant personal protection. Within hours, a network of nearly 80,000 people in 85 countries swings into action. By fax, e-mail and airmail, we send appeals to authorities in the country where human rights are being violated. The swift and massive wave of protest has saved many lives. At the local level, AI pays for security equipment for threatened human rights activists' offices or pays for travel expenses if they need to leave the country. Amnesty shoulders the cost of treatment for victims of torture and supports political prisoners' families. Let me give you a concrete example of a successful urgent action: in March 2015, the five feminist activists Wei Tingting, Wang Man, Li Tingting, Zheng Churan and Wu Rongrong were arrested in China. They are members of the Women's Rights Action Group, a network that promotes gender equality. Their "crime" was planning events to protest against sexual harassment on public transport, which is a daily occurrence in many Chinese cities. The five women were charged with "disrupting public order in a public place". Amnesty launched a number of urgent actions. Thousands of people worldwide demanded the women's release in communications by post, e-mail and social media. In April 2015, the four women were released from detention on bail.

### How do the dynamics between national governments and small local human-rights groups change when Amnesty gets involved?

Every two years, the German section of Amnesty awards a Human Rights Prize to men or women who work for human rights in particularly difficult situations. Such awards attract public attention to human-rights defenders and emphasise the relevance of their work. They become known well beyond the borders of their country. Such publicity facilitates their work and protects them from harass-



*Christian Mukosa, Amnesty researcher for central Africa, collects testimony in Bangui, Central African Republic, during the conflict in December 2014.*

ment by governments and state agencies. Last year, Alice Nkom won the prize. She is a lawyer who defends homosexuals and transgender exposed to prosecution for homosexuality in Cameroon courts. In 2003, she founded ADEFHO, the first NGO in the country to advocate for the rights of lesbian, gay and transgender persons. The prize boosted Alice Nkom's status in Cameroon, enabling her to generate more public support for ADEFHO's work. In spring this year, I visited Alice Nkom together with colleagues and Amnesty members. The trip was organised for the specific purpose of supporting her call for LGBTI rights in Cameroon and supporting local groups that tend to lack access to government representatives.

#### **Are there ideas for improving cooperation?**

Amnesty has been working for a number of years to strengthen its basis in the Global South and East. That means that regional teams are no longer based at the headquarters in London, but operate from various offices all over the world. Goals include improving the exchange with regional and local human-rights activists, speeding up the response to human-rights violations and further developing

long-term relationships. One important function our offices perform is to provide local support for people working for their rights and to strengthen or develop a human-rights culture. One reason for AI to reorganise this way is that it helps us to better contribute to conflict prevention. Respect for human rights and a strong civil society are the basis for peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, serious human-rights abuses drive and aggravate conflicts and violence, especially if the perpetrators go unpunished. Many policy makers seem to be unaware of that connection. They are more likely to express moral outrage than to implement effective action plans. We think that this is a major shortcoming. Because of the lack of stringent action, entire world regions do not get peace, stability and development. Millions of people become refugees. Amnesty International does vigorous global campaigning and engages in political advocacy to put pressure on policy makers so that human-rights violations are exposed, condemned and terminated. Of course, we also strive to ensure that individuals, institutions and private-sector companies that violate human-rights standards are brought to justice and that the victims of human-rights abuse are rehabilitated and compensated. ←



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# Religion's creative potential

Eight out of ten people in the world say: "I belong to a faith community!" This statistic shows that religion still matters in the 21st century. It is particularly important in the countries of the global south. Religious leaders' influence is a potential source of creative, non-governmental power. Development agencies should become better at relying on this potential.

By Bernhard Felmberg

➔ In 40 of the countries that are partners of German development policy, four out of five people say their faith religion is "very important" to them. In Nigeria, 90 % of the people go to church or mosque every week. In comparison, only about six percent of Germans attend church services regularly.

In developing countries, religion and religious communities have a bearing on the development process, albeit sometimes in ambivalent ways. In the name of religion, people have been – and still are – tyrannised, persecuted and killed, and development progress that had been made is undone again. Animosity, attacks, a lack of state protection and discrimination by government agencies affect members of all religions around the globe.

On the other hand, the World Bank estimates that faith-based agencies provide almost half of all health and education services in sub-Saharan Africa. Churches and their partners are the only ones to ease the suffering of people in crisis situations and unstable countries, where development cooperation between state agencies is not, no longer or not yet possible.

Development agencies must find ways to address these challenges. Without a doubt, the relevance and urgency of questions surrounding the role of religious communities in development has grown considerably. Among other things, these questions concern faith-based organisations' relationship with the state and their potential influence on attitudes and decision-making. It is amazing that these questions have not played a major role thus far.

Religion defines many people's values, so enormous opportunities arise. Around the world, many people's world views, life styles and social attitudes are shaped by their faith. Shortly after taking office, Gerd Müller, Germany's federal minister for economic cooperation and development, said: "Religion can

build bridges and motivate people to help others and protect the environment. We have neglected this potential for far too long."

We must find ways to better involve moderate religious forces in developmental efforts and cooperate with them to promote peaceful coexistence. To that end, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has set up an internal task force on values, religion and development. Moreover it regularly invites prominent faith leaders to share ideas in an informal setting in a new event series called Religion Matters. An entire chapter of the BMZ's Charter for the Future is devoted to the topic. This charter spells out how we want to live in the future and is based on a broad-based dialogue with civil society.

The BMZ is also advancing this topic at the international level. In July, the BMZ, together with the World Bank, the UN and the largest bilateral donors, organised a conference in Washington on the role of religion in international cooperation. A follow-up conference will continue to facilitate networking between development agencies and faith-based organisations in Berlin on 17 and 18 February 2016. Better coordination is the only way to make religious communities part of the new global partnership the UN envisions for the post-2015 agenda.

## Independence from the state

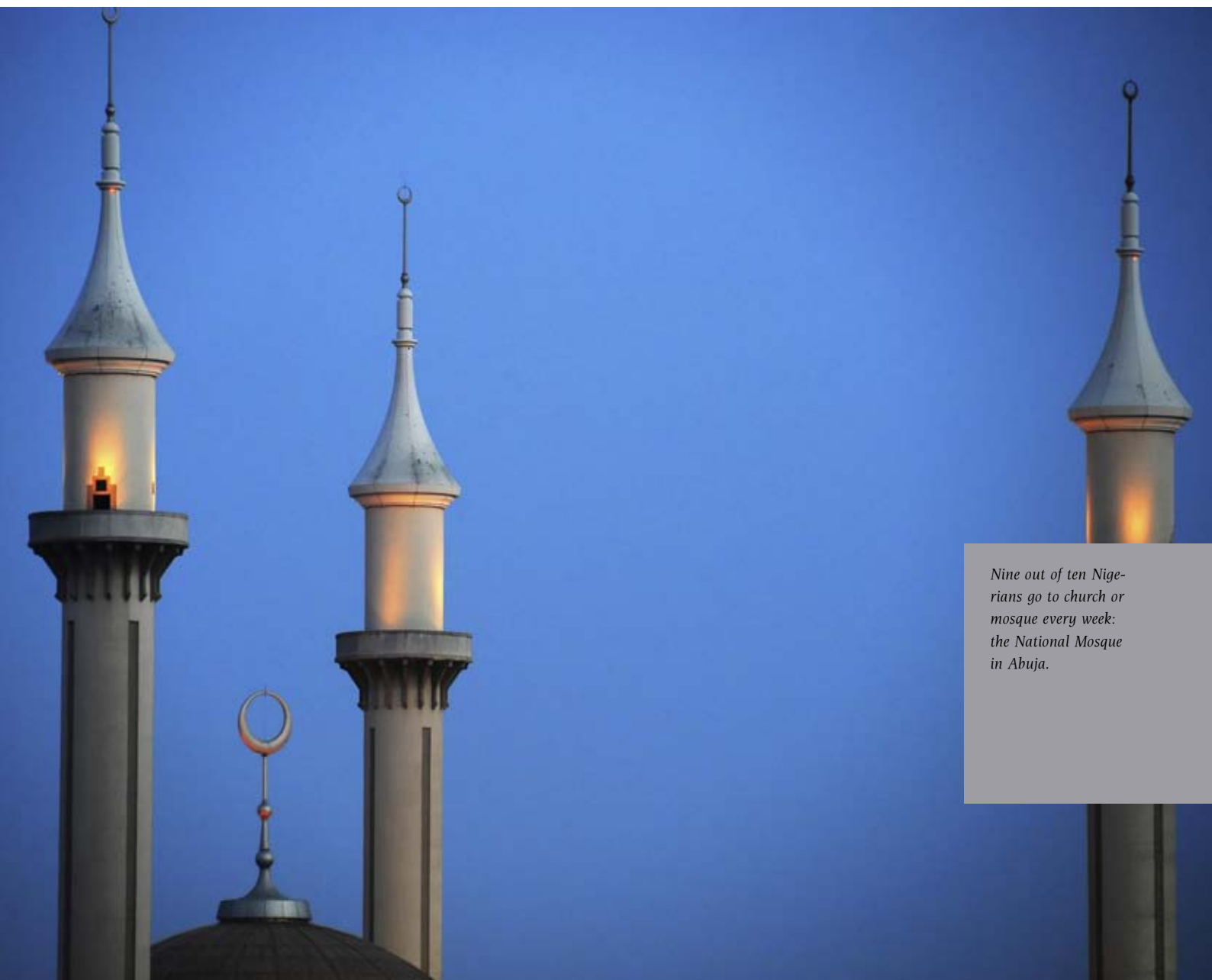
Cooperation of church and state is nothing new of course. The BMZ has worked with the two main Christian churches for over 50 years. Churches occupy a unique position among the agencies the BMZ provides with funds. The advantage of church-run projects is that churches work independently of the state. Moreover, they are committed to cooperating with anyone who applies for their assistance. The BMZ values their experience of many decades, their strong



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*Nine out of ten Nigerians go to church or mosque every week: the National Mosque in Abuja.*

networks and links to partners, and their proximity to the poorest of the poor.

A recent example was that, following the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, churches were able to act faster than state agencies. Their long-standing contacts helped, and they could rely on the initiative of local partners.

The Ebola epidemic also provided a good example of how essential religion is for overcoming crises and breaking with destructive traditions. The ritual of washing dead bodies was one reason why the virus spread so quickly. According to west African tradition, the dead are washed before burial by their families,

and they are sometimes even embraced as a way of saying good-bye. The greatest infection risks are linked to these practices. Only after priests and imams pointed out that the tradition is dangerous in an Ebola context, but not morally required, did people begin to heed international advice to abandon it.

When a faith community starts something, it often enjoys support from large sections of society. In the long run, its initiatives can result in firmly established institutions with an impact on economic and political life.

This is not only true of developing countries. It happens in Germany too, and fair trade is an example.

The idea grew from an initiative started by Catholic and Protestant youth associations which were supported by Misereor and Brot für die Welt, two faith-based development agencies. In 1970, “hunger marches” were organised in 70 German cities, and this movement gave rise to civil-society activism to improve trade with the developing countries. Ultimately, it led to the opening of fair-trade shops.

Today, fair trade is firmly established in Germany. This retail segment is growing at a remarkable rate. In 2014, fair-trade sales amounted to over € 1 billion – 10 times more than in 2004. What started as a small faith-based initiative has become a successful marketing system. It is an alternative model to the standard economic practices of industrialised countries. In countries of the global south, the fair-trade system

guarantees fair wages and decent labour conditions, thus helping people to take their fates into their own hands.

“A different world is possible – and it exists in this one.” This quote by the French poet Paul Éluard describes what development policy can achieve. Successful development builds on existing structures, taking into account culture and religion. Our goal is to enable people around the world to live self-determined lives in freedom, peace and dignity – regardless of their nationality, gender, ethnicity or religion. ◀

#### Link:

Charter for the Future (in German):

<https://www.zukunftscharta.de>

## How faith shapes politics

*In Burundi, churches play an important role. Germany's Civil Peace Service is working with them. The husbands of the widows gathered here in a church in Bujumbura died in the civil war.*

Religious communities have a decisive influence on social attitudes and societal decision-making. Churches and mosques give people a forum to talk about what matters to them: health, family planning, environmental protection, peace. In publications and memoranda,

pastorals and encyclicals, religious leaders deal with socio-political challenges and offer solutions.

The best example is the Pope's recent encyclical on climate change. It not only pointed out the deficits of current climate policy and called for political and economic leaders to rethink their practices, but also offered specific solutions. The head of the Catholic Church thus inspired international debate. His encyclical showed that religious leaders can influence policy makers, development processes and every individual person that belongs to their faith.

Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is aware of this potential and is seeking out opportunities to cooperate with religious leaders in development contexts. This approach is successful. In Indonesia, for example, setting up an office to register



Börling/Photography

citizens in Aceh only became possible after the Islamic Council of Scholars, in the wake of the 2004 tsunami, published a statement asserting that official registration served the common good. Previously, large numbers of people had rejected registration as a supposedly Christian concept.

In Algeria, imams and government representatives received support in their efforts to draft positions on environmental protection. The resulting manual for the training of imams has the title “The role of mosques in environmental education”. It is used in Koranic schools and, in south-

south cooperation, is about to be adapted for use in Pakistan.

Religion can even help achieve peace between warring parties. In many cultures, religious leaders have traditionally served as mediators. In Burundi, Germany's Civil Peace Service is working with local churches to get opposing groups to sit down at the table. In Nigeria, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, imams and bishops are joining forces to promote dialogue. These examples illustrate the simple but important insight that wherever religion is part of the problem, it should also become part of the solution. (bf)



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The Pamoja Dance Group in Kenya consists of dancers with and without disability - and moves its audience more than others! Find out why:







# From dream to nightmare

Argentina used to breed free-ranging cows on open grasslands, but its ranchers have shifted to industrial meat production in fattening corrals. This change has increased problems like deforestation and carbon emissions.

By Leonardo Rossi

➔ Internationally, Argentina is known for its excellent beef, a result of cattle bred on the wide grass lands of the Pampa region. However, things have changed considerably in the past decades. The economy has been restructured with a focus on grain exports. Soy beans matter especially. About 90 % of cattle breeding is now geared to the domestic market (see box next page) in Argentina.

Grain cultivation requires land, and as a consequence, animal production is now done with more intensive methods. Cows are kept in closed pens. These fattening corrals are also called feedlots. The environmental consequences are immense.

Tribune

## A contaminating industry

In general, the ranching industry is considered a great polluter. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), it accounts for almost 15 % of human-caused greenhouse-gas emissions. The FAO states that “the production of meat and cow milk causes the greater part of these emissions, with 41 % and 29 %, respectively.”

The UN agency points out that beef production of South America in particular “emits around 1 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)” annually, which equals 15 % of total emissions produced by the global stockbreeding sector. A report by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) states that agriculture is

responsible for almost 45 % of Argentina’s climate gases, and cattle production alone accounts for almost 30 %.

A report by “Alianza del Pastizal” (Grasslands Alliance), a collective of civil-society organisations, maintains that each step in the production chain must be considered to understand the impact on climate change. Methane that results from cows’ digestion is only part of the problem. Changes of landuse and feedstuff production matter too. The NGOs argue that “the emissions of the industrialised processes are 12 times higher than those of free-range cows on grassland” (also note article by Christine Chemnitz and Barbara Unmüsig in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2015/07, p. 18 ff.).

In the fattening corrals, many animals are kept on limited land. Depending on the business model, 100 to 500 cows stay on a single hectare. In the past, cows were free to use one to 10 hectares throughout the year, depending on region, climate and grass.

Saladillo is a small town in rural Buenos Aires province. It is called “the capital of the feedlots”. In the past ten years, more than a dozen of these establishments were started here. The environmental impact is terrible. Gabriel Arisnabarreta, an agronomist and owner of a small family farm, lives in Saladillo. He has founded a civil-society environmental organisation, “Ecos de Saladillo”, which deals with these issues.

“The enormous quantity of manure and urine which is accumulated in the

feedlots cannot be transformed by micro-organisms in the ground. It filters through to the aquifers and contaminates the groundwater,” Arisnabarreta says. “The huge amount of rotting dung in a small space expels gases like methane or nitrous oxide which stink, are poisonous and make life nearly impossible here.”

Dung used to be “a blessing for the soils”, Arisnabarreta adds, but the fattening corrals have turned it into “a serious problem”. A feedlot of 10,000 animals with an average weight of 200 kilos each produces 100,000 kilos of manure and urine per day. The civil-society activist insists that micro-organisms in the soil cannot transform such vast amounts into nutrients. A full grown cow weighs more than 500 kilos.

Claudio Sarmiento, an agronomist from the Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, which is based in the middle of the Pampa, agrees: “In pastoral animal husbandry, manure is not a problem, on the contrary, it is a benefit. Each cow produces around 4,000 kilos of dung per year and about the same in urine, which the animal distributes evenly, thereby increasing the fertility of the soil.” (also see article by Cornelia Heine in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2015/08, p. 38 f.) Things are different in feedlots, the researcher points out: “The nitrogen of the cow urine converts into nitrates, which dissolve in the water and filter down to the groundwater.” Such contamination is unhealthy.

Moreover, 3 million hectares of forest were destroyed in the past decade to make space for grain production and grazing land. On the other hand, areas which historically produced excellent Argentinian beef are now used to grow grain that is exported to feed cattle in Europe and Asia. According to official data, 20 million hectares are used for soy production today, and 95 % of the harvest is exported.

## Better options

Forest-pasture systems have been on the rise in the last few years. According to the INTA (Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria), an Argentine institution concerned with agro-technological development, they are in use on 34 million hectares, which include commons and indigenous land. There is a great variety of forest-pasture systems.



Gaucha on horseback, Buenos Aires province, Argentina.

Fifty families who live in an area called La Libertad (Freedom) in Córdoba province are an example. Their community-owned land is part of the Chaco Árido, a forest that gets little rain. Horacio Brito belongs to the Movimiento Campesino de Córdoba, a local farmers movement. He appreciates that the La Libertad community “practices cattle ranching with natural feed stuff.” The cows feed on grass, but also on fruits and leaves. “The

animals wander off some kilometres and return a few days later,” the agronomist says.

Virgin forests matter because they prevent desertification. They can be used for traditional and indigenous, extensive animal husbandry. A healthy forest, Brito says, is resilient even when there is little rain. Deforested land, however, is prone to soil erosion.

## Towards the future

Climate experts predict that from 2020 to 2029, Argentina will have two to eight percent more rainfall than the historical average in the centre and east of the country, while rainfall will decrease by up to 12% in the northeast. Average temperatures are expected to rise by 0.7 to 1.2 degrees.

If Argentina is to contribute to slow down this trend, it must take livestock production into account. Environmentalists have several proposals:

- The government should prioritise forest protection and adopt a different economic model accordingly.
- It would make sense to boost natural production, for instance by granting tax advantages to farmers depending on how meat is produced. Laws that stimulate a rotation of land use, in order to avoid monoculture, would be helpful.
- Industrial feedlots should be prohibited, because the country has the natural conditions for producing high-quality meat. ←

### Link:

Alianza del Pastizal:

<http://www.alianzadelpastizal.org/en/>



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## Argentine beef is not what it used to be

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Argentina was the second biggest exporter of beef worldwide. This has changed dramatically. In 1920, the country held 60 % of the global meat market. Today its share is a mere seven percent, according to the non-governmental organisation Food and Water Watch.

In the 1970s, there still were 60 million cattle in Argentina, but the number has been around 50 million since the early 1990s. Today, stockbreeding is driven by 90 % on domestic demand. There are political initiatives to make Argentina an internationally leading beef exporter again. The government has plans to increase the cattle stock from 49 to 54 million

heads by the year 2020. This will mean even more intensive production and more environmental destruction.

Regional patterns are changing too. In 1994, the Pampa grassland region in the middle of the country had 60 % of cattle livestock. In the meantime the share has gone down to 55 %. On the other hand, the north of the country now has 37 % of all livestock. To make space for animal production in this region requires the destruction of forest land. Today, the country still has 20 million hectares of virgin forests, but the forest law allows 60 % to be converted into cattle grazing land. In the past decade, 3 million hectares of forest were destroyed.

According to the Cámara de la Industria y Comercio de Carnes y Derivados (the chamber of commerce for meat and meat derivatives) Argentinians consumed almost 60 kilos of meat on average last year. The country has 40 million inhabitants. The meat, however, is not of the same quality as in the past. In 2009, even the Instituto de Promoción de la Carne Vacuna, the institute of beef promotion, admitted that fattening in a corral was part of producing some 75 % of the meat sold in Argentina. (lr)

### Link:

Food and Water Watch:

<http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org>

# Transcending frontiers

**When contiguous ecosystems straddle national borders, it makes sense for countries to manage conservation areas together. Cross-border cooperation can succeed if national laws are harmonised, the necessary infrastructure is put in place and all actors and affected parties become involved.**

**By Laura Rupp, Maxi Springsguth and Alfons Üllenberg**

➔ Ecosystems do not stop at national borders. Accordingly, efforts to manage protected areas across international boundaries are growing. The double goal of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) is to preserve biodiversity and foster sustainable local-level socio-economic development.

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a regional organisation made up of 15 member states, there are 18 TFCAs. Successful implementation cannot be taken for granted however. Poor cross-border coordination, lacking community involvement and other problems may thwart success.

In order to promote cross-border management of natural resources, SADC and GIZ have been cooperating in a regional TFCA programme since 2012. Pilot projects have been designed to facilitate learning and improve cross-border cooperation. Per project, funding worth € 50,000 was made available. For a project, two partner agencies, one from either side of the border, must implement measures together in nine months.

Four of nine projects have already been evaluated and allow us to draw first conclusions concerning what makes cross-border cooperation successful. We will elaborate these matters on the basis of two pilot projects related to tourism.

The first project concerned the Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park (ARTP), which links protected areas in Namibia and South Africa. ARTP contains one of the world's most species-rich semi-arid ecosystems. As part of the "Desert Kayak Trails" pilot project, a kayak tour was designed on the Orange River. This river marks the border between the two countries. National-park agencies from both Namibia and South Africa are involved in the project, led by Namibia Wildlife Resorts, a parastatal institution.

The second project concerns the Lubombo Mountains, which belong to the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (LCG TFCA) in Mozambique and Swaziland. The Lubombo Conservancy in Swaziland comprises several protected areas with different statuses. The stakeholders have organised in an NGO that is also called Lubombo Conservancy.

## Cross-border network of trails

On the Mozambican side, the Goba district has been made part of the TFCA. However, it does not yet have legal conservation status. The project "Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative" was supposed to build a cross-border network of trails for hiking, mountain biking and all-terrain vehicle tours, including eco-lodges and campsites operated by local communities. On behalf of partner

communities on both sides of the border, the pilot project was planned by the Lubombo Conservancy NGO in cooperation with the Maputo office of an Italian NGO.

Cross-border TFCAs depend on pre-existing structures. In the case of ARTP, there are established park agencies on both sides of the border, and the TFCA is administered by the Park Management Committee, which includes park managers from both protected areas as well as a leading manager from Namibia Wildlife Resorts.

The partners are responsible for day-to-day management, joint planning of conservation measures and developing the infrastructure for tourism. Both governments cooperate at the policy-making level. The pre-existing structures facilitate cross-border cooperation, including when it comes to new projects like "Desert Kayak Trails".

Cooperation should take place at eye-level moreover. In the LCG TFCA, both partners are NGOs with similar points of departure, interests and expertise. That should have been a solid foundation for successful collaboration. However, they were not involved in project design and discussions with SADC/GIZ equally. The Swazi partner, Lubombo Conservancy NGO, implemented most of the project activities and was also in charge of managing the funds. Its dominant role led to frictions and, ultimately, to the end of cooperation.

Successful cooperation, moreover, requires the participation of all parties concerned at the local, regional and national levels. In the case of ARTP, these parties included officers at the ministerial level as well as representatives of local communities, who stand to benefit from the pilot project. Accordingly, successful long-term cooperation looks probable. However, it





Local kayak guides with the evaluation team in Sendelingsdrif at the border river Orange.

would be good to involve community members in the project and in the management of the TFCA even more in the future.

Another decisive issue is the existing infrastructure, including roads, border crossings and communication networks. In the case of LCG TFCA, a solidly paved road links the protected areas, and a border checkpoint is open around the clock.

Cross-border projects tend to link areas with diverging socio-cultural, political and economic backgrounds. In order for binational projects to succeed, these local contexts must be taken into account and measures designed accordingly. The people who are in charge of implementation must have a good understanding of the entire project region. In doubt, it is necessary to carefully assess the environmental and social contexts, the needs of local communities, possible conflicts of interest and other potential risks in advance.

In the case of LCG TFCA, project partners lacked knowledge of the grassroots reality in Mozambique. They were insufficiently informed about existing institu-

tions, lingering social tensions, the protection status of the area and other matters. Poor information and incorrect assumptions resulted in cooperation with a partner organisation that did not adequately represent the community. The role and responsibilities of this organisation remained unclear. Furthermore, administrative structures and internal conflicts were ignored. Ultimately, the grassroots communities were not involved and cooperation failed.

Cross-border cooperation is obviously made easier when the laws of both countries are harmonised. For instance, visa regulations within a TFCA have a bearing on cross-border tourism. The ARTP, however, does not have border posts at all points where kayak tourists cross over from one country into the other. Due to an agreement between Namibia and South Africa, however, there is the possibility to liberate tourists from visa requirements, as long as they remain within the TFCA.

The successes and failures of both tourism projects can be summarised as follows:

- In the ARTP, successful cooperation on kayak tourism created the first permanent binational team in this business. It consists of park-management personnel and kayak tour guides from the surrounding communities who were hired by the project. A test run was successful this spring, and commercial kayak-tour operations were set to begin in October. Based on these experiences, the TFCA management is planning additional tourism projects with greater participation from local communities.
- Conversely, the pilot project "Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative" in the LCG TFCA failed. The Lubombo Conservancy NGO is the only partner that remains committed to the project. It is now doing a belated assessment of the situation and looking for a new long-term partner. Preparatory activities and confidence-building measures are being planned for future work with the Mozambican community. ➔

#### Links:

**Study:** Evaluating cross-border natural resource management projects.

[https://www.sle-berlin.de/files/sle/auslandsprojekte/2014/Studie\\_SADC.pdf](https://www.sle-berlin.de/files/sle/auslandsprojekte/2014/Studie_SADC.pdf)

**SADC TFCA network portal:**

<http://www.tfcaportal.org>

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# In pursuit of common objectives

In the past, international development actors have not paid enough attention to religion. But religion has a strong creative power on politics and society: It shapes the world view, way of life and social engagement of many people around the globe. German development-policy makers have recognised this fact and try now to increase cooperation with Islamic organisations.

By **Nabiela Farouq and Ulrich Nitschke**

➔ Worldwide, eight out of ten people feel that they belong to a particular religion. Religion plays a major role in their daily lives and shapes their actions. For this reason, in recent years the first tangible efforts have been made to incorporate the influential potential of religion into international development cooperation.

In many partner countries of the German development cooperation, Islam is the state religion. It is therefore a key factor in politics, economics, law and culture. Rising birth rates in Islamic countries lend credence to prognoses that there will be more Muslims than Christians in the world by the year 2070. Islam provides its many believers with a central point of orientation and a framework for action. It serves as Muslims' moral compass. Islamic values like respect for creation, working for the common good and social justice – interpreted as an obligation to ensure the fair distribution of wealth – offer important starting points for achieving the sustainable development that German policy makers are pursuing (see Martina Sabra's contribution on Islamic welfare in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2015/09, p. 25 ff.).

Appreciation for local traditions and values are a central factor for international cooperation. This attitude encourages accountability between partners and is essential to achieving development goals.

## Better cooperation

Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has asked the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) to identify the potential contribution that religious communities can make to sustainable development as part of its sector programme Values, Religion and Development. GIZ has also been tasked with gathering examples of successful cooperation and highlighting strategies for how religious communities and organisations can work more and better with state organisations.

Examples of successful partnerships between state development actors and religious organisations (ROs) are vital to strengthening a culture of cooperation based on specific values. Empirical examples also increase knowledge about religions and the ability to understand them, which in turn improves religious literacy. This is the first step towards discovering commonalities between different religions.

Based on a preliminary analysis, cooperation with ROs is primarily centred on education, peace and security, health, emergency aid, energy and environment. Religious actors typically sustain cooperation with local people over the long term and establish lasting relationships based on trust through local partner communities. In authoritarian states, ROs are usu-

ally the only effective manifestations of civil society. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, they provide over 60 % of medical care.

Nevertheless, the relationship between religion and development is quite ambivalent: Certain actors have a tendency to exploit religion in order to legitimise their domination and exploitation. Careful attention must be paid to whether religious actors impact development positively or negatively, and why. Religious actors often drive progress in their countries long before state institutions get involved. This fact is still not widely acknowledged. The public is much more aware of the abuse of religion than of its potential.

## Examples of successful cooperation

Below are three diverse examples of successful cooperation between GIZ and Islamic authorities in Jordan, Algeria and Afghanistan. Algeria's economic development and the strong growth of its urban centres are leading to drastic environmental pollution, the overuse of water resources, high waste accumulation and rising levels of exhaust fumes. Yet respect for creation is firmly embedded in Islam, as it is in all of the other major world religions.

This respect was the starting point for the BMZ's Integrated Environmental Management project, which was launched in Algeria in 2007. The project was intended to increase Algerians' awareness of environmental issues. Thirty local imams and Koranic school teachers received a year of instruction in environmental protection. Through presentations on water, hygiene, refuse, green spaces, biodiversity and environmental education, the workshops showed participants how they could motivate believers to act in an environmentally friendly manner.



Jordan is one of the most arid countries in the world. GIZ is trying to raise awareness about water scarcity with the help of religious authorities.

GIZ also created a textbook explaining the importance of biodiversity for human life. The material was made appropriate for Koranic school students and was underpinned by religious arguments. The workshop participants then received training on how to use the textbook and on suitable teaching methods. The textbook is now being used in Pakistan and in many other Koranic schools throughout the region.

### **Promoting water conservation**

Jordan is one of the most arid countries in the world. Population growth, increasing economic development and the growing number of refugees from Syria are putting an additional strain on water resources. Water scarcity is also exacerbating social

tensions between Syrians and Jordanians. As in Algeria, GIZ is trying to raise awareness about water scarcity with the help of religious authorities. Imams and teachers of religion have been recruited as water ambassadors and teaching material and curricula have been developed on the topic of resource conservation. Islam provided the starting point in this case as well. Over 90 % of Jordanians and Syrian refugees living in Jordan are Muslim. The topic of water plays an important role in the sources of Islamic revelation. The traditions about the life of the prophet Muhammad also contain numerous mentions of using water sparingly.

### **Women's rights**

Asserting women's legal and political equality in Afghanistan presents a great chal-

**“Imams and teachers of religion have been recruited as water ambassadors.”**

lenge. For most women, the right of access to education, health care and social protection only exists in theory. This is because several legal systems exist side-by-side: traditional law, Islamic law and constitutional law. The Afghan constitution privileges the Hanafi school of Sunni Islamic law and therefore offers opportunities for realising women's rights.

One goal of the BMZ's programme to promote the rule of law in Afghanistan is hence to improve access to formal legal institutions for women and girls. The Ulema Shura is a state-appointed council



of religious scholars that is active throughout the country.

GIZ has reached a consensus with the members of the Ulema Shura regarding women's constitutional rights. Ulema Shura members are now actively promoting women's rights through their networks and in their Friday sermons, that directly address only men. The Ulema Shura is also carrying out campaigns to raise awareness about women's rights among village councils, councils of elders,

religious authorities. It has proven very important to bring men on board as partners in this process. Their help and acceptance are essential if women's rights are to be realised. In order to win over men, emphasis is placed on the opportunities and benefits their families will enjoy if women are able to exercise their rights. Civil mediators, public prosecutors and lawyers are receiving training in family law and inheritance law and in the process are also learning how to legally represent women.

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## Islamic values

The central importance of social equality in Islam can be seen above all in the institution of zakāt, an alms tax, one of the pillars of Islam. It requires Muslims to give a certain portion of their property to the needy. Islamic aid organisations make use of this mechanism by calling on believers to put their share of the alms tax towards specific measures.

Respect for creation is another central theme in the Koran. The underlying theological principle in this case is tauḥīd (the unity of God). According to the Koran, everything has been created by and strives to return to God, thereby giving meaning to human existence. In addition to the emphasis on the unity of God in a monotheistic sense, the unity of God is also embodied in creation. The theological principle of creation is closely connected to the principle of responsibility. The creation principle assumes that there is a harmonious state of nature (fiṭra) for both people and creation, directed to God.

This harmony has been dramatically altered as a result of continuous industrial and technical development. Despite the aforementioned principle of unity, human beings are thought of as fundamentally different from other life forms because of their capacity for reason. People are aware of the linearity of time and are therefore responsible for carrying out the role of earthly vicegerents for God (Ḥalīfa). They are also responsible for promoting civilisation. Thanks to their cognitive faculties, human beings are capable of rising above their material needs. This capability is the



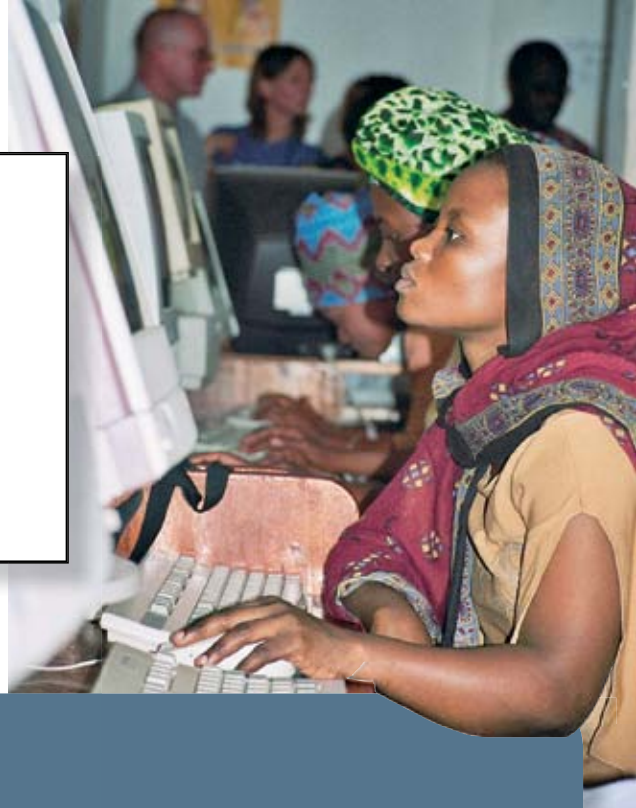
*Ghulam Jelani, Head of Mosques in Afghanistan's Balkh Province Directorate of Hajj and Religious Affairs.*

source of value judgments, the ability to make moral decisions and ultimately of values and standards. The theological treatise of mīzān (balance) calls for moderation and balance. It can be understood as a holistic principle aimed at achieving the harmony of the whole.

Islamic scholars refer to these and other theological principles to demonstrate the

compatibility between Islam and living a sustainable life. An example of these efforts is the Jeddah Declaration (2000), which was passed by Islamic legal experts, scientists and representatives of Islamic countries at the first world forum on the environment from an Islamic perspective. It maintains that sustainable development is Islamic as long as it does not destroy the balance of God's creation. (nf/un)

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# Changing gender roles

Ideas about women and Islam have been changing in view of the active and visible participation of women in the revolts that spread throughout the Arab world region in 2011, the increasing importance of Islamic political movements and the recent recruitment of women by the terror network ISIS. New questions arise about Islam, gender and politics.

By Martina Sabra

→ Mona Eltahawy's book "Headscarves and hymens: Why the Middle East needs a sexual revolution" appeared simultaneously in English and German in April 2015. Since the early 2000s, this Egyptian-American journalist, activist and feminist has been well-known in Arabic- and English-speaking countries thanks to her blog and her work as a TV commentator. In November 2011, she made international headlines when she was seriously injured and sexually assaulted by Egyptian police in the context of a protest rally in Cairo.

Her new book is partly a pamphlet, partly a historical survey and partly an autobiographical essay. It gives readers a vivid impression of the developments that enabled so many women to take part in the Arab uprisings. Eltahawy was born in 1967 in the Egyptian city of Port Said. Her parents are medical doctors who moved with her to England when she was seven and later to Saudi Arabia, where she had to wear a veil as an adolescent. Eltahawy was appalled by the simplistic Islamic sermons she watched on TV. She writes that she will never forget being told that if you are urinated on by a male baby, it is fine to go to prayers wearing the same clothes; but if the same thing happens with a little girl, you have to change.

Ironically, it was in Saudi Arabia that Eltahawy first discovered global and Arab feminist thought in her early twenties. Dur-

ing her studies, she came across works by Arab and Western women's rights activists, including Huda Shaarawi, Doria Shafik, Nawal El Saadawi, Fatima Mernissi and Simone de Beauvoir. Eltahawy admits she does not know who put feminist texts on the bookshelves of the university library in Jeddah, but that's where she found them. They filled her with outrage, tugging at a thread that would unravel everything.

Back in Cairo, the student experienced an identity crisis. She began questioning the purpose of the veil because she was recurrently subjected to sexual harassment even though she was wearing one. At 24, Eltahawy put away her headscarf for good. Her depiction of her personal experience of slow but enduring transformation is one of the book's strengths. The author sees herself as member of a global feminist movement. She positions herself among the anti-colonialist feminist discourses of Latin American and black women.

Eltahawy belongs to the tradition of great Arab feminists of the 20th century, but unlike many of her predecessors, she has no reservations about the notion of feminism and does not shy away from controversy. Her book has all the makings of a milestone in Arab feminist literature.

The book "In the skin of a jihadist" by French journalist Anna Erelle (pseudo-

nym) enjoyed a broad positive reception following its publication in the spring of 2015. Why are young women joining ISIS? How does recruitment work? Hoping to answer these questions, the author assumed the role of a French convert and in the hope of being recruited. She apparently succeeded in becoming close with a leading ISIS militant through months of communication over Facebook. But shortly before achieving her goal, the journalist made a mistake and her recruiters discovered her real identity. She had to abandon her project.

It is hard to understand why this book got such good reviews. Long stretches are boring, the content is thin and full of factual errors. For instance, the Turkish city of Urfa is not an ISIS stronghold. Erelle only superficially discusses ISIS recruiting methods, which have been very well documented by many other sources, and she does not critically assess the role of social media. In mounting undercover research that has been marketed as "sensational", the supposedly professional reporter was remarkably naive. Key questions that a journalist should consider before starting such a project do not seem to have occurred to her.

For instance, she should have been aware of the fact that radical Islamic and terrorist networks have long been monitored by intelligence agencies, so a journalist's open online research was likely to attract „followers“. Erelle's claim that she didn't realise the French intelligence agency was using her before she ended her research is hard to believe.

## Long-term transformation

The public presence of women in the Arab spring demonstrations surprised observers in the western media. But profound social changes have been taking place in





Girls want to have a say too: school girls in Afghanistan.

many Islamic societies for years, leading women to question traditional gender roles and demand reforms. In German, a very interesting collection of essays was published in 2013 (edited by Fuchs et al.). It offers a treasure trove of fascinating approaches and insights. Some of the analyses and portraits that make up the volume are based on presentations from a 2012 conference. Others were written specifically for this book.

A similarly exiting collection of essays in German was also published in 2013 (edited by Wunn and Selcuk). The international contributors show that the events of 2011/2012 were not a spontaneous eruption, but must be understood as part of a social and political transformation that began long before 2011 and likely will continue for decades to come. Prime examples include the chapters by Hanna Wetzig and Johanna Block, who describe how Egyptian women are fighting for their right of self-determination beyond the confines of debates about headscarves and religious identity.

In the same book, the late Birgit Rommelspacher tackles the issue of Muslim women and gender from a western perspective in her essay "Feminismus, Säkularität und Islam" (feminism, secularism and Islam), which should be required reading for development experts who work in Arab-Islamic contexts. Rommelspacher analyses the sometimes misleading western self-images and mythologisations.

She also examines the ambiguity of concepts like "equality" and "equality". These ambiguities may very well turn out to be productive, since contradictions and conceptual vagueness often drive progress.

Muslim women activists are working ever more frequently through transnational networks. The global network "Musawah for equality in the family", which was started by women in Malaysia, stands out thanks to conceptual strength and continuous work. For Wunn and Selcuk's essay collection, Claudia Derichs (2013) has written a good assessment of the organisation. By the way, "musawah" means "equality" in Arabic. Family law is an important field of action because in many predominantly Muslim countries it is the only area of law that is still dominated by religion.

One of Musawah's main activities is to organise transnationally-conceived publications on Islamic family law and gender-related legal traditions. In the latest book (edited by Mir-Hosseini et al., 2015), female Islam scholars, academics and activists examine the central concepts that underlie the legal authority of men over women in various Muslim societies.

An earlier Musawah publication (Mir-Hosseini, 2013), was entitled "Gender and equality in Muslim family law: Justice and ethics in the Islamic legal tradition". This book examines the tension between notions of gender and understandings of human rights and justice in Islamic legal tra-

ditions against the background of the emergence of modern nation-states and legal systems. Using examples from Morocco to Malaysia, the authors analyse the complex and often contradictory attitudes of modern government elites to Islamic law. ➔

#### Link:

The network "Musawah for equality in the family":  
<http://www.musawah.org>

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# New silk road

China's decades of spectacular growth are coming to an end. The bursting of the stock-market bubble, which sent shockwaves through international financial markets in July, was merely one indicator. As China's government is struggling with the economic downturn, it is unlikely to give up upon its international infrastructure ambitions.

By Hans Dembowski

➔ There is more evidence of economic problems. China's exports have been slowing, and so have its imports. The central bank has let the exchange rate of the yuan depreciate. Moreover, China's more populous regions now have so many roads, railway lines, airports and harbours that investing in additional transport infrastructure makes little sense. Accordingly, construction companies lack assignments.

When aspiring super powers face domestic problems, they tend to develop foreign ambitions. Indeed, China is becoming more assertive in two ways. It is investing in its military, and it has grand plans for building international infrastructure. The international community should discourage the former trend and welcome the latter.

Yes, it serves Beijing's foreign trade interests to build new roads, railways, container terminals and airports abroad.

However, the economies of the countries concerned will benefit too. Accordingly, China's Communist regime has a reason to expect its rhetoric of a "new silk road" or a "maritime silk road" to be appreciated.

Not everyone is happy however. The Indian government, for example, is uncomfortable with grand schemes to improve transportation options in Pakistan, linking China's western border to the Arabian Sea. It does not like China's plans to expand harbour infrastructure in all of India's neighbouring countries either. India feels that this region is its own "backyard", and its military worries about hostile armed forces using the new transport infrastructure. After all, China is an ally of India's arch enemy Pakistan.

The Russian government similarly eyes China's attempts to build closer links to central Asian nations with suspicion. Former Soviet Republics, in Moscow's understanding, belong to its own sphere of influence. And because

be based in Beijing. From a developmental perspective, their decision was correct. Infrastructure is essential for development, and it makes sense to join forces to build it. Moreover, cooperating with Beijing's authoritarian regime will help to tie it into a multilateral order.

That said, China's partners must be on the watch. They must not accept sabre-rattling in the South-China Sea or elsewhere, and they should limit the access of China's military to all new-build facilities. Moreover, they must pay attention to quality. Chinese companies have a long track record of building infrastructure in other countries and continents. Some results are excellent, but in other cases, the new infrastructure



Chinese construction companies are active on many continents: road project in Ethiopia.

the US administration is worried about China's growing global clout too, it objected to allies joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Nonetheless, Germany, Britain, France and others signed up to the new multilateral financial institution that will

was shoddy and became damaged fast. Whoever deals with Chinese infrastructure providers should therefore thoroughly assess past experience and ensure that future projects result in lasting infrastructure. A guiding principle could simply be to insist that China keeps its word. ◀

## Debate

# Press freedom restricted

“Egyptians are entering an Orwellian world in which only the government is allowed to say what is happening.” This was the comment of Christophe Deloire, the secretary general of Reporters Without Borders, on Egypt’s new anti-terrorism law.

By Ingy Salama



Al-Jazeera journalist Mohammed Fahmy was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of aiding the Muslim Brotherhood. President al-Sisi pardoned him in late September.

➔ According to the new law, journalists will have to pay 200,000 to 500,000 Egyptian pounds (€ 23,000 to 57,000) for disseminating “false” information that contradicts the official version of events. The law also punishes anyone who promotes “ideas” advocating terrorism with five years in prison. It was introduced after the assassination of Hisham Barakat, Egypt’s public prosecutor, in June. At his funeral, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi complained that “the prompt hand of justice” was unacceptably restricted by laws.

Soon after, there were violent attacks by militants on security forces in the Sinai Peninsula. According to the military, 17 soldiers were killed. However, international and local media outlets quoted medical staff who said more than 60 soldiers had died. A series of attacks in Sinai have shocked the public, raising doubts about al-Sisi’s capability to fight terrorism. The regime resents such coverage.

The government has a history of putting pressure on Egyptian and international media, and it is increasing that pressure. The Foreign Ministry has issued instructions to foreign reporters, listing terms they should and should not use. It objects to expressions like

“jihadists” or “fundamentalists” and wants journalists to write “slaughterers” and “assassins” instead. With support from iMediaEthics, a New York-based non-profit organisation, the governmental State Information Service (SIS) instructed foreign journalists to make their reports match those of the Defence Ministry.

Reporters Without Borders compile an annual World Press Freedom Index. In 2015, Egypt ranked 158 out of 180 countries, and that was before the new law was passed. Since the beginning of 2014, at least 30 journalists have been arbitrarily arrested on charges of supporting a “terrorist organisation”, which is how the government calls the Muslim Brotherhood.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an international organisation, 18 journalists were behind bars at the beginning of June 2015, and the charges against them were based on their reporting. Since the CPJ began reporting in 1990, the number of imprisoned media workers has never been this high in Egypt. The CPJ adds that the arrest of local journalists is usually violent and entails beating, abuse, raids of their

homes and confiscation of property. It is certainly no coincidence that the law absolves members of the security forces from prosecution if they use force the government considers to be “necessary and proportionate”.

Foreign correspondents are also subject to repression. A case in point is the detention and questioning of Alain Gresh, the editor-in-chief of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, in downtown Cairo after a woman reportedly overheard him discussing politics in a cafe. Ricard Gonzalez, the Cairo correspondent of the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, fled the country after Spanish authorities warned him that he would be arrested. In August, three Al-Jazeera journalists were sentenced to three years in prison on charges of aiding the banned Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Sisi pardoned two of them in late September. The third one had been deported to Australia in February but remains a convicted criminal.

After passing the anti-terrorism law, the government suspended the circulation of three privately owned Egyptian newspapers. The reason was that they published content that was critical of President al-Sisi.

The new anti-terrorism law has been widely criticised by several international and local human-rights organisations. Human Rights Watch, for instance, argues that it erodes “basic rights”. The government denies that the new law is meant to curtail press freedom, but its impact is precisely that. ←

### Links:

#### Committee to Protect Journalists:

<https://cpj.org/mideast/egypt/>

**Reporters Without borders:** New anti-terrorism law takes Egypt into Orwellian territory.

<http://en.rsf.org/egypt-new-anti-terrorism-law-takes-egypt-17-08-2015,48233.html>

**Human Right Watch: Egypt:** Counterterrorism Law Erodes Basic Rights.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/19/egypt-counterterrorism-law-erodes-basic-rights>



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# Market not a substitute for climate diplomacy

The global community places great hopes in the UN climate conference in Paris in December. Oliver Geden of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs told Katja Domrowski in an interview what would make Paris a success and why he doubts that the two-degree target will be reached.

### Interview with Oliver Geden

➔ **At their summit in June, the G7 committed to a complete decarbonisation of the global economy. The declaration was celebrated as a major breakthrough in climate policy. And rightly so?**  
The declaration was no sensation. The G7 committed to similar goals in 2009. What's new is the notion of decarbonisation, and it indicates an extension of goals: besides the two-degree target, Paris will come up with a decarbonisation target. I don't expect a deadline to be set for that goal though.

**In the run-up to the conference, several countries have published their individual climate goals. Will these intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) limit global warming to two degrees?**  
The individual countries' current commitments are not sufficient at all. That's why we now often hear people talk about "keeping the two-degree target within reach". The contributions would have to be raised significantly in the reviews that are expected to take place every five years after Paris.

**What would make Paris a success?**  
In 2011, the international community decided in Durban to reach a comprehensive global climate agreement compatible with the two-degree target by 2015 the latest. If that doesn't happen, we could say Paris failed. I would personally regard it as a success, however, if the gap between industrialised countries, emerging economies and developing countries could be bridged in a first step. So far, international climate protection is a matter for the old industrialised countries.

**For the first time, the global energy industry's carbon emissions rose only minimally in 2014 without a**

**major economic crisis. Is economic growth starting to become independent from fossil energy?**

No, it isn't. First of all, the numbers need to be treated with caution. Chinese data in particular tend to be unreliable. But even if emissions were reduced: one year in itself doesn't represent a global trend. Yes, positive developments are taking place in China, but other emerging economies such as India and Indonesia are massively expanding their use of coal.

**Technology is improving, so renewables are getting cheaper and more profitable. At the same time, new coal-fired power plants are becoming uncompetitive. Do we still need policy changes – or will the market take care of the global transition to environment-friendly energy provision?**

The market may take care of an electricity transition, in most countries at least. But electricity is only one of three important energy sectors. I don't see any transition in transport yet and only a beginning in the heating sector. So yes, we do need climate diplomacy. The question is: do we need UN treaties that are binding under international law in order to make progress? Or would it be enough for governments to gain trust in each other – trust, that every country contributes to the common goal? Without the bilateral agreement between the US and China, Obama would have a much harder time enforcing ambitious climate policies at home.

**In the future, the greatest carbon emissions will come from countries that are still developing countries or emerging economies today. What does that implicate for international policy-making?**



Bohling Photography

*India keeps on extending its use of coal. Coal-fired power plant in New Delhi.*

The share of the G7 and all OECD countries will decrease. The EU and the USA reached their emission peaks long ago. Now, the development in emerging economies is crucial. However, we cannot seriously tell them not to do what we have done before. It is important that countries like China and India reach their emission peaks within the next 15 years. China is open for such a debate, but India is not. The country is bound to become the next "bad guy" of international climate policy. In the end, technological cooperation and the transfer of know-how will matter more for the transition in emerging economies than long-term emission targets.



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# A good start

Germany has begun to welcome refugees with enthusiasm. This attitude is healthy. Much more must happen, however, as Europe still lacks a coherent policy to rise to the refugee challenge.

By Hans Dembowski

➔ Civil-society activism has changed Germany this summer. For decades, political leaders assumed that people were uncomfortable with refugees and migrants in general. Accordingly, they enforced strict rules to limit access to the country. Indeed, right-wing extremists are still causing trouble, as recurrent cases of arson prove. However, the vast majority of Germans are appalled by such violence. Most people see that refugees are in distress and deserve help. Masses have assembled to welcome them.

This enthusiasm has spread fast. The Federal Government now wants to lend immediate support to refugees, without long bureaucratic procedures. On a single weekend in September, it allowed tens of thousands of refugees, who were stuck in Hungary, into the country. Moreover, it earmarked € 7 billion for subnational authorities so they will be able to rise to the challenges. Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in very clear words that asylum is a fundamental right. She added: "We will cope."

Her stance is correct, and it makes developmental sense. Europe cannot preach human rights internationally whilst insulating itself from refugees. The west must live up to basic humanitarian standards if it wants to win hearts and minds in Muslim countries haunted by fundamentalism. Moreover, the best ambassadors for change in places under authoritarian rule are migrants who have personally experienced democracy and the rule of law.

Germany's new attitude, however, is causing irritation inside the EU. The Federal Government has spontaneously and unilaterally abandoned a principle agreed years ago at a summit in Dublin. That principle is that refugees must appeal for asylum in the EU country they first arrive in. This rule is indeed dysfunctional because all refugees that arrive by sea or land first enter a southern or eastern Euro-

pean country. In view of humanitarian need, it is certainly legitimate to breach it. The snag, however, is that EU agreements are supposed to bind members.

Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, shares the German view of matters. He has proposed new quotas, so all EU members would accept a fair number of refugees according to their size and capacity. The EU's Council of Ministers adopted this principle, but it did not achieve the consensus it normally strives for. Some east European countries voted against the new system. Victor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister, now accuses Germany of "moral imperialism". A special EU summit passed decisions designed to keep refugees away.

A host of issues has not been sorted out. For example, German municipal authorities, which must accommodate the newly arrived, doubt that the funds pledged by the Federal Government will be enough. According to Juncker's ideas, an additional 160,000 refugees will be relocated within the EU this year, but Germany

alone expects to see 800,000 arrive. Moreover, member countries are reintroducing border controls that were discontinued a long time ago.

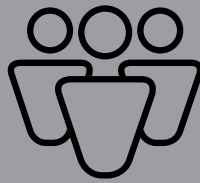
Juncker wants to declare Turkey a safe country from where there is no reason to flee, even though violence is escalating there, with security forces clamping down on Kurdish insurgents. Kurdish forces, however, are needed in the fight against ISIS. The EU is prepared to spend more money in support of refugees camps outside its borders, but the international community knows from experience that huge camps are breeding grounds of extremism. The Taliban are only one example.

Some European leaders appreciate Russian proposals to join forces with Syria's dictator Bashar al-Assad in the fight against ISIS moreover. It is true that diplomats must get in touch with the Syrian regime. The tyrant, however, has shed so much blood that there can be no peace in Syria with him staying on in a position of leadership. Turkey's government considers him a greater problem than ISIS. In the meantime, Paris and London are beginning to support US air raids against ISIS in Syria. We know, however, that boots on the ground are needed to bring about stability. Where will such troops come from?

Europe needs a coherent policy. Germany's new welcoming culture is a good start, but a lot more needs to happen. ➔



Citizens of Frankfurt welcome refugees at the central train station, handing out bags of food.



Argentina's cattle industry has a good, but misleading international reputation. **Seite 32**

