

WITHOUT CIVIL SOCIETY THERE IS NO DEMOCRACY

2017 Annual Report

2017 - WHEN CIVIL SOCIETY REFUSED TO BE SILENCED

2017 was an eventful year, for good and bad. Global commitments to reduce poverty, improve health and wellbeing have given results and absolute poverty rates have decreased. The improvement, though, is of little comfort to the 766 million people still trapped in poverty, people who are likely to live through another global trend,

“ Many of the positive developments of 2017 happened because civil society resisted and defended justice, equality and dignity.

that of growing domestic and regional income inequalities.

On a global scale, the balance of power has been tested and, in some cases, has shifted, from regional breakaways like Brexit, to foreign country involvement in elections, to the #MeToo movement, which grew international and confronted men's violence against women.

While a conflict with possible use of nuclear arms came to the fore, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons received the Nobel Peace Prize – within the Campaign coalition several of our members are found. As a platform for Sweden's civil society, with a window

towards civil society collaboration around the world, we feel confident to say that many of the positive developments of 2017 happened because civil society resisted and defended justice, equality and dignity.

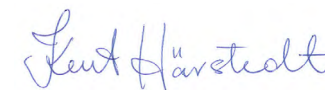
The resistance didn't come without a price. The clamp down on civil society's ability to organise has intensified and today only three per cent of the world's population live in a place considered free from state, parastatal or extremist groups interference.

Legislation designed to restrict civil society organisations' registration, access to funding, freedom of speech and press is in place in many countries, and specifically aims at halting and suppressing civil society engagement with those in power.

As we salute the people who dared to stand up, who refused to be silenced in 2017, we are also strengthened in our belief that to reach a just and sustainable world, we need to increase our efforts, energy, and resources to civil society going in to 2018.



Lisa Sjöblom,
Secretary General

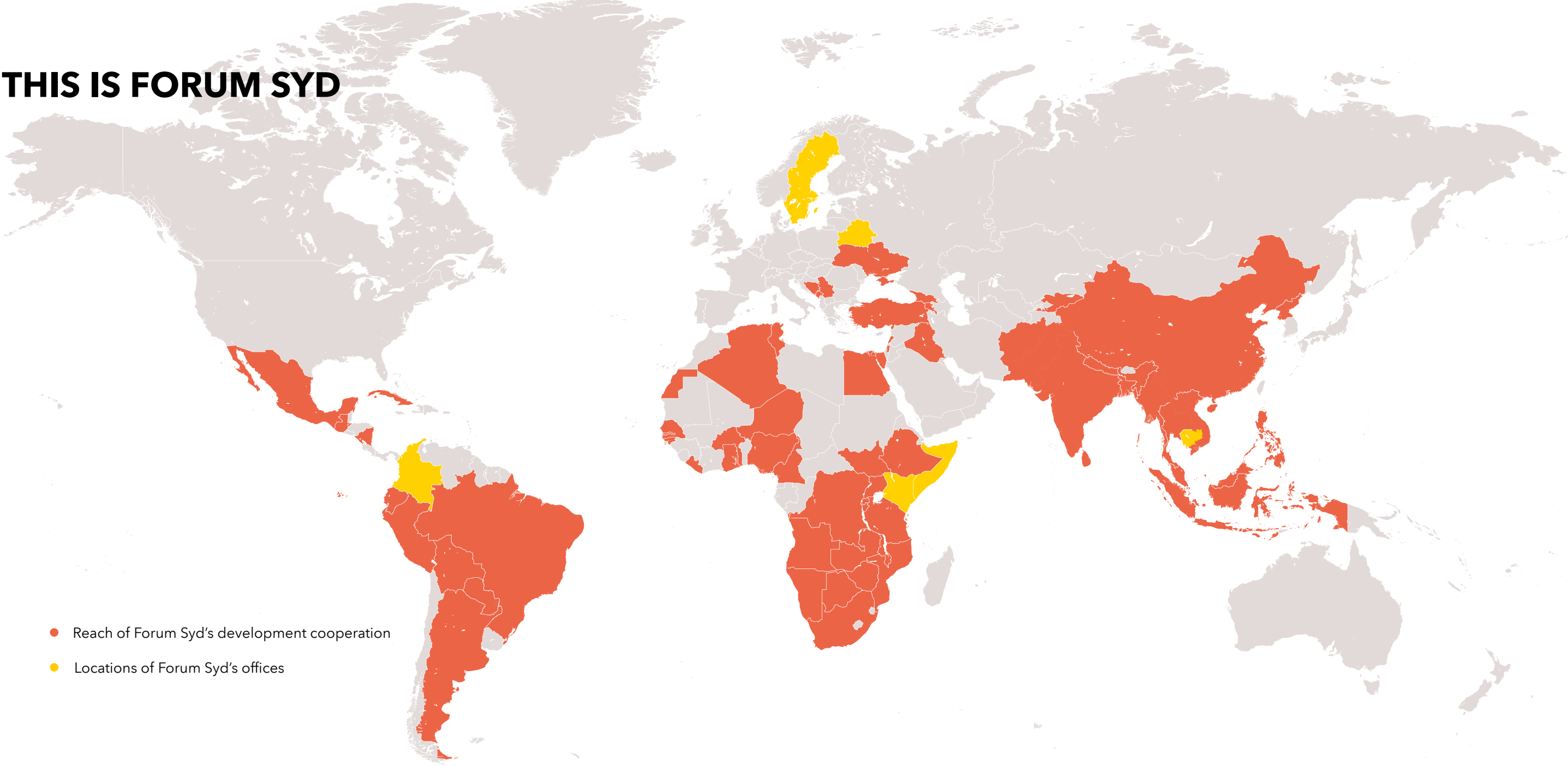


Kent Härtstedt,
Chairperson

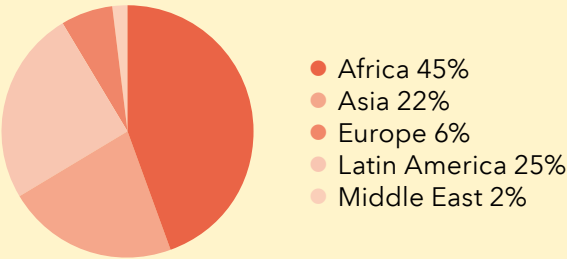


Photo: Claes Halvarsson

THIS IS FORUM SYD



Regional distribution of development funds, sub-granting and Forum Syd's partner organisations



We distributed
270
SEK million to
220
organisations in
76
countries



All of Forum Syd's work aim to strengthen civil society, in Sweden and around the world. A diverse and strong civil society is the foundation of democracy and a prerequisite when building a world where everyone can affect change.

- With **Development Cooperation** through financial support, education and joint campaigns we strengthen local partner organisations to achieve change from an individual to an international level.
- With **Sub-Granting** we channel funding to Swedish civil society organisations with local partner organisations in developing countries. The sub-granting ensures an internationally wide reaching support to a diverse civil society.
- With **Capacity Building** Forum Syd aim to strengthen civil society actors capacity to empower rights holders and bring democratic change.
- With **Advocacy** Forum Syd promotes and defends equitable and sustainable policies in Sweden and the EU.

OUR CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

EASTERN EUROPE

The transition from the Soviet Union towards democracy and market economy has been a challenging experience to countries in the Eastern Europe. The welfare system and labour market collapsed, poverty and income gaps increased while life expectancy decreased. Many states in the region are of an authoritarian, nationalist and conservative nature and the region has several frozen conflicts. Civil society's ability to act is limited but there is a rise of informal and social movements although these often lack organisational structures and political direction.

The rise of a national environmental movement in Belarus | To build civic movements in repressive societies is hard but not impossible and our experience from Belarus is a case in point. Together with a variety of organisations working in the areas of democratisation and public influence, Forum Syd was part of an environmental project that grew into a national social movement. The capacity of civil society resistance has increased and Forum Syd supported the movement through its achievements of:

Engaging **70,000** citizens in public ations

Train **450** youth activists

Launch **2,400** cases of environmental detection and protection cases

Train **71** lawyers on environmental law

Hold **120** legal consultations and

Changing **10** national acts



Youth fight use of alcohol in Serbia.
Member: IOGT-NTO | The youth organisation CZOR in Serbia dared to raise what no one else did: the problem of alcohol usage at youth events. Four years of determined advocacy efforts has finally made their efforts visible through multi-stakeholder participatory education. Non-alcoholic events will now be policy at both the National Youth Council and the National Organization for Youth Leaders.

“What does it mean for young people in Serbia? It means safe environment in CSOs. It means that alternatives to alcohol pressure is currently being born and raised here in Serbia. It means a lot. The process can only be considered revolutionary!”
Vanja Kalaba, Executive Director of Centre for Youth Work

OUR CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

The region has been undergoing rapid transformation with destabilising effects: displacement of people, fragmentation and sectarian violence are keeping the region in turmoil and fragility. The enthusiasm that swept the region in 2011 with the Arab spring has cooled down with devastating conflicts in Iraq, Yemen and Syria. Since the attempted uprisings, the human rights agenda has been in downfall and civil society has been monitored more closely, and in some cases been completely limited by new laws.

For the freedom of Western Sahara.
Member: Emmaus Björkå | Emmaus Björkå has for several years supported the liberation struggle of Western Sahara; since 1975 occupied by Morocco. Large parts of the population live in refugee camps in Algeria, completely dependent on international aid. UJSARIO is a youth organisation and partner to Emmaus Björkå active in the refugee camps in Algeria. With support from Forum Syd, UJSARIO works towards self-determination, against occupation and for the rights of young Sahrawi in the camps. Institutional capacity training is combined with solidarity connections, with for example social movements in Palestine and Nicaragua, in order to advance democratic organising towards liberation.

Advocacy against occupation.
Member: Emmaus Stockholm | Sweden may become the first country in the EU to recognise the sovereignty of Western Sahara. Putting Western Sahara on the political agenda is due to the long-term advocacy efforts by Swedish civil society. One actor within the solidarity network is Emmaus Stockholm, who runs extensive education programmes to increase public awareness of the struggle. In their analysis, the continued occupation is driven by access to natural resources on the Moroccan behalf and trade interests on the European behalf. Emmaus Stockholm also investigated the particular Swedish interests in the occupied territory. The study was followed by several meetings with Swedish parliamentarians, business representatives and academics. At these meetings representatives from the Western Sahara liberation movement Polisario were present to shed light on how trade deals affect people living under occupation.

Forum Syd's infocom programme

To analyze and act on power structures is key to a global just development. Many unjust structures has roots in Europe and Forum Syd therefore channel funding to information, communication and

advocacy projects aimed to increase knowledge, change public opinion and demand political change in Sweden, the EU and internationally.



“People need to know about the Sahrawi people. We aren't asking for charity but we demand from the world to respect our right to Western Sahara.”
Laila Fakhouri during the report launch of Sweden and the Plunder of Western Sahara

OUR CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

LATIN AMERICA

The region is home to some of the most well-known social movements in the world which are enriched by its social and cultural diversity. It is a hotspot for geopolitical interests and international investments due to its wealth of natural resources. Land rights are contested and a source of conflict. Extractive interests of governments, business and illegitimate armed groups clash with people's livelihoods and a sustainable use of natural resources. The past few years have seen some of the region's biggest popular protests, demonstrations and national strikes against corruption and austerity in decades.

Forum Syd supports affected women to build a peaceful future in Colombia | Forum Syd is deeply involved in Colombia's peacebuilding, from the local to the international level. Women-designed approaches on how to reach and sustain peace is well researched and proven sustainable. Our development cooperation seeks to secure affected women's right to agenda-setting in relation to the implementation of the Peace Agreement of 2016. Locally, this means working with women-led partner organisations in regions highly affected by the armed conflict. Our role is to facilitate and bridge access to local and political leaders for affected women and their advocacy initiatives.

Mujeres Tejedoras is one indigenous collective supported by Forum Syd. They have managed to include women's productive health rights, prevention, and treatment of

gender-based violence in the Indigenous Mandate of the Huila Indigenous Regional Council.

“Women peasants, indigenous and victims have different ways of conceiving the world and to exchange our experiences is very valuable. We have different experiences but a common goal, that of achieving the recognition and guarantee of our rights.

Luz Nidia Pizcue, member of Mujeres Tejedoras

Political representation of indigenous women in Bolivia. **Member: Latinamerikagrupperna** | Indigenous people in Bolivia have historically suffered many injustices. 60 per cent of the rural population lives in poverty, and women and indigenous people are particularly marginalised. Legally, 50 per cent of seats in the Parliament should be held by women but, for various reasons, resignation levels amongst female politicians are high. Violence and harassment force women off political positions and for indigenous leaders, the historical social status affects confidence while structural injustices affect educational levels. To address the issues, Latinamerikagrupperna and its partner Bartolina Sisa run a unique training programme which includes a university degree and has so far involved 628 indigenous women political leaders. The initiative aims to eradicate gender and ethnic discrimination in politics and soon the programme will run without external support.

“Thanks to this project we have been able to develop methodologies and strategies for the educational program to continue without external funding.

Mireya Pacosillo Quinta, Project Coordinator at Bartolina Sisa



Photo: Jessica Garcia, Latinamerikagrupperna

OUR CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

ASIA

With the world's largest population, Asia has gone through a remarkable economic journey in the last 30 years, where extreme poverty rates have reduced unparalleled to any other region. Because of the economic rise, the region has become an influential actor in world politics. 2017 saw several setbacks; increased censorship, crack-downs on civil society, the persecution of Rohingyas in Myanmar and the removal of a presidential term limit in China.

Methodologies for increasing local ownership of development in Cambodia | In Cambodia, Forum Syd focuses much of its developmental efforts on gender and environmental rights. The methodology called Right(s) Way Forward is our way to increase local community ownership of development programmes, to strengthen advocacy strategies and to build influence from the local to the national level. Our partner organisation Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) has used Right(s) Way Forward when working with 37 community-based organisations. This has enabled collaboration between communities and the provincial government when addressing domestic violence against women.

Fighting poverty by creating 400,000 jobs.

Member: Hand in Hand | Hand in Hand believes that poverty is driven by a lack of jobs and that the solution is found in small-scale family-owned businesses. The organisation focuses particularly on women as it is known that women invest in the family and therefore achieve big societal effects. During 2017 in India alone, 249,732 people

“Right(s) Way Forward has been very effective. It really gives power to communities to initiate, lead and own the process.

Loung Ruroun, gender programme officer of FACT

underwent training which resulted in 238,837 enterprises and close to 400,000 jobs created through the Hand in Hand programme. It is estimated that one entrepreneur provides for another four people, which means that the programme may have benefitted as many as 1.6 million people in India.

“I want my children to have easier lives than I've had.

- Sarasa Bai, owner of a brickyard. With the assistance of Hand in Hand, Sarasa Bai is today producing bricks. With the money she makes she is able to put food on the table, put a roof over her family's heads and send her two children to school.

Photo: Hand in Hand, India

OUR CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Sub-Saharan Africa enjoys cultural diversity and growing economies but faces challenges concerning democratic transition where several governments show a lack of commitment to human rights and civil society engagement. Repression and threats against media and civil society increased in countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Tanzania and Burundi. But 2017 also saw encouraging changes like the Supreme Court overturning the disputed Kenyan presidential election and powerful political leaders forced to resign in Ethiopia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. In all of these events, civil society played a key role.

Legal successes for press freedom and women's rights in Somalia | Forum Syd has wide-reaching developmental impact in Somalia. The drought hit hard in 2017 and Forum Syd's humanitarian aid assisted over 30,000 people. Strengthening civil society advocacy skills is however what we do best, and in 2017, we worked with 28 grassroots organisations. These successfully enabled engagements that led to the passing of the bill that makes female genital mutilation illegal, drafting of an anti-rape legislation and the passing of the Media Act for free media protection. These grassroots initiatives further assisted religious leaders to provide Fatwa on female genital mutilation and promoted female political representation in elections.

Development through the Somali Diaspora | Somalia, a country rich in untapped natural resources and human capital, has been in conflict for the better part of the last three decades. The conflict has impacted all aspects of life and has left the government unable to provide essential services. Things would have been worse had it not been for the resilience of the Somali people - fast and skilled at organising. The Somali diaspora is by the World Bank estimated to contribute 24 per cent of GDP in remittances. In cooperation with Business Sweden, Forum Syd has assisted 40 diaspora entrepreneurs to establish their businesses in Somalia to promote a sustainable private sector. The businesses respect human rights and have gender and environmental considerations.

“Somalia has great potential and space to grow. As a pharmacist and pharmacy manager, I will import medicine to increase the standards of living in Somalia. Health is a prerequisite to build a sustainable society, especially for women and youth.

Rhoda Elmi, residing in Sweden, runs the pharmaceutical company Elmimedic



Photo: Maurits Otterloo

“Due to women participating in civic education and other decision-making processes, it has influenced the rise of women political leaders who are also key advocates against inequity and misappropriation of public resources



Photo: Augustine Karani

advocates against inequity and misappropriation of public resources

Cecilia Nyambura Karanja, elected member of the county assembly at Visoi Ward.

Women in charge of a violence free society.

Member: IKFF | Militarisation, violence against women, electoral violence and marginalisation from the political sphere are some challenges facing women in Nigeria. IKFF's sister section Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is determined to change that, through education, advocacy work and by mobilising women all over the country to engage in peace work. WILPF has further developed early warning systems in order to quickly be able to respond to threats, violence and women's rights violations relating to the upcoming election in 2019. In 2017, WILPF has used the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security as a tool to engage women and increase gender perspectives. With an almost national reach, the organisation has established local presence in 774 municipalities and succeeded in reducing violence substantially in these areas.

An emerging transgender and intersex led movement. Member: RFSL | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTI) persons in Southern and Eastern Africa face many challenges. Transgender and intersex persons are often particularly vulnerable as the lack of recognition or protection by the state and the general public places this group at high risk of discrimination, marginalisation, poverty, and isolation from families and society. Several challenges are also linked to organising, such as lack of funding and burnout among activists. In spite of these challenges, a transgender and intersex led movement is emerging. In 2017, RFSL and Iranti-Org partnered to contribute to the development of a healthier, stronger and more connected transgender and intersex movement through a Leadership and Wellness training.



Photo: Agnes Nygren

Historical advancement of women candidates in Kenyan elections | In Kenya, Forum Syd's development programme, Wajibu Wetu, uses several creative methods such as spoken word, music and art to spread awareness and mobilise for social and economic justice. Our efforts focus on democracy, civic influence, and youth and women public participation. 2017 was an election year and together with seven partner organisations, we worked to increase political representation of women. The work resulted in the election of 47 female candidates spread over 12 counties in Kenya, contributing to a new record of women representation in parliament. Cecilia Nyambura Karanja, elected Member of County Assembly at Visoi Ward, explains how Wajibu Wetu has been crucial in raising gender awareness and voting rights to ensure accountability.

“UNSCR1325 changed me. I used to be a fighter, aggressive. But when I came into contact with 1325, I went home to read it and it changed who I am. It also changed my marriage. If you internalise the document, you will see how useful it is. Today I am a peace mediator working to get people together.



Blessing Ihuaku Duru, WILPF

Photo: IKFF

“It is heartening to receive feedback regarding the impact of the training and to know that the knowledge and strategies are being shared actively across the region. We know that everyone involved will continue to grow, stand together and bring the change we all wish to see on our continent.

Joshua Seehole, Advocacy Manager, Iranti-org. Iranti-Org is a media and advocacy organization defending the rights of lesbian, transgender and intersex persons in Africa.

ADVOCACY

Forum Syd is an important voice in the debate on global justice. We influence decision makers to ensure that political frameworks contribute to a just and sustainable global development. We advocate for an active role of civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, an effective development cooperation targeting people living in poverty, respect for human rights and measures addressing shrinking civic space. Our close cooperation with partners in countries where Forum Syd has a presence is the key for success in the advocacy work.

Photo: Forum Syd



Holding Vattenfall accountable on Colombian coal

In Colombia, a country that suffered five decades of internal conflict, the extraction of natural resources is associated with high risks for human rights violations. Forum Syd has had a dialogue with the state-owned energy company Vattenfall for the last few years on its imports of coal from Colombia. During 2017, following advocacy efforts by Forum Syd, Vattenfall made an impact assessment trip to Colombia, where they met people affected by coal mining. Forum Syd facilitated meetings with Vattenfall, local communities and national civil society organisations. Based on the findings, Vattenfall presented a report with concrete and strong demands on the mining companies.

Broad based cooperation for peace



There is opportunity for change in Colombia after the signing of a peace agreement between the FARC guerilla and the government. The implementation of the agreement has however so far not been as effective as expected. Other illegal armed groups are still active and growing stronger and human rights defenders are being threatened and murdered. In 2017, Forum Syd initiated an advocacy strategy to support the peacebuilding process. This resulted in the Colombia Peace and Life Campaign, where Forum Syd together with more than 20 international civil society organisations work for justice and peace and has managed to increase support for UN presence.

The 2030 Agenda

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Goals is followed-up and reviewed at the UN High-level Political Forum each year. In 2017, the Government of Sweden presented its voluntary national report at the Forum for the first time. Forum Syd participated in the UN Forum and has taken active part in shaping the action plan on the Swedish implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Securing the voice of civil society in the Eastern European democratisation processes

Forum Syd has in 2017 developed and intensified its work for civil society support and democratisation in Eastern Europe. Over the year we arranged for civil society from six Eastern European countries to have their say on needed reforms in the region. International agreements such as Agenda 2030 and the Paris Climate Agreement constituted an integral part of the discussions. The reform recommendations were compiled into a paper and will be used in various advocacy efforts, targeting Eastern Partnership (EaP) governments and EU officials. Further, in a unique meeting organised by our chair Kent Härstedt, Belarusian government representatives met with human right defenders in Belarus to discuss the state of democracy and ways forward.



Photo: OSCE PA

Exposed corruption saves the Kenyan government millions

Forum Syd supports independent media house Africa Uncensored in Nairobi, Kenya. In a bid to disclose corruption perpetuated by inspectorate officers; police in charge of controlling small trader's trading licenses, Africa Uncensored produced a series of investigative documentaries. The series exposed officials engaging in extortion, harassment and use of violence against low income informal traders. The airing of the hidden camera documentaries sparked public outcry and Nairobi Governor Dr. Evans Kidero condemned the revealed corruption and encouraged citizens and media

to continue reporting the abuse of power. Five officials were arrested and their affiliated cartel was estimated to earn SEK 109 million annually in extorted bribes. 109 million is equivalent to more than 800,000 school fees or yearly food consumption for 10,000 families. The county government has since proposed measurements to fight corruption by for example an alternative electronic payment system to avoid the use of cash.

EU opens public registers to fight tax flight

As secrecy makes tax evasion possible, transparency is one of the most efficient measures to fight it. Forum Syd together with the European network Eurodad has advocated for public registers of the beneficial owners of companies and trusts, which reveals the real owners behind shell companies used to hide money. By the end of 2017, the EU agreed to establish public registers of companies' beneficial owners. This enables citizens to hold companies and governments accountable.



Photo: Eurodad

OUR ORGANISATIONS REACH ACROSS THE WORLD

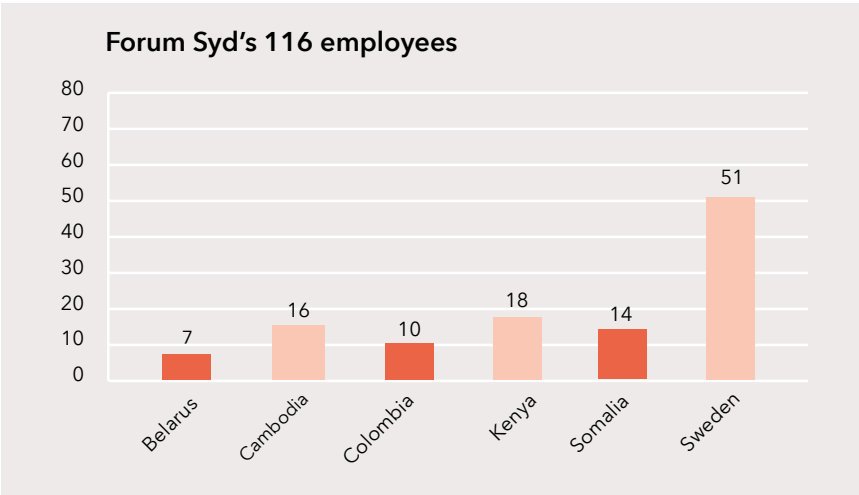
Forum Syd is a membership based organisation. Our members are Swedish organisations and together we are Sweden's biggest platform for civil society. We are united in the objective to reach global sustainable development. Forum Syd facilitates forums for sharing experience and developing capacity: we can act as a voice carrier and represent members in relevant national and international forums.

Number of members active per region

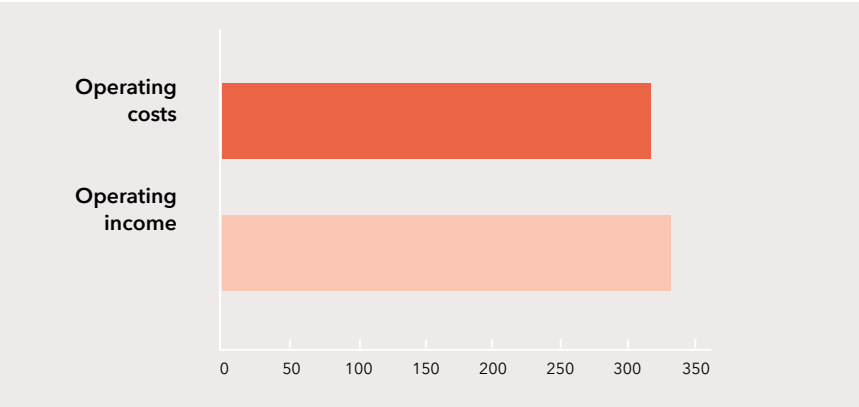


FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

In 2017 Forum Syd launched its global and decentralised organisational structure. The restructuring aim to improve the results of and coordination between Forum Syd's development work, external communication and membership value.



Administration | The new organisation is administered from four hubs with regional responsibility with offices in Belarus (located in Lithuania), Cambodia, Colombia, Kenya, Somalia and Sweden. Six global teams are now coordinating the work of management, finance, communication, sub-granting, capacity development and e-learning. Of Forum Syd's 116 employees in 2017, 42 per cent were women and 58 per cent were men.



Finances 2017 | Forum Syd's total income before financial items amounted to SEK 329.9 million. This is an increase of SEK 6.7 million compared to 2016 (323.2 million). Administrative costs amounted to SEK 20.9 million which constitutes 6.4 per cent of total operating cost. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is Forum Syd's main donor. Other donors in 2017 were: the Swedish Council for Higher Education, the EU, MAC Foundation and Folke Bernadotte Academy.

Internal improvements | Improvements have been made within security and risk assessment as well as guidelines for sub-granting. Website updates and improvements of the online sub-granting submission system were processes that started. The work to develop a whistleblower system was finalised. During the year we worked with and implemented an internal organisational culture and values.

Icon by Flaticon.com

