GLOBAL ADVOCACY LEARNING PROGRAMME
ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT 2018

27 October - 3 November / Nakhon Nayok / Thailand
REPORT OUTLINE

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International, Regional, and National Human Rights Mechanisms
Pressing Issues and Site Visit
Human Rights Based Approach to Development
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INTRODUCTION TO THE GALP

The political and economic context of the world is changing in a very significant manner across national and international spheres. The emergence of illiberal democracies pave way for shrinking civic and democratic spaces and present new complications for human rights, democratic governance, and sustainable development. As nations are drawn to different spheres of influence, the multipolar world is witnessing hybrid forms of human rights abuses amid conflict, violence, and deep-seated socio-economic inequalities. The burgeoning nexus of political and economic elites and corporate-owned media has led to a mounting level of intolerance towards basic freedoms, and more importantly, a lack of urgency for effective planning and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 1.2: Participants’ various answers on the root causes of human rights violations
In this context, many earlier advocacy methods and approaches are no longer as effective to make a difference, therefore, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) took the initiative to rethink and reimagine new strategies and ways to promote and protect human rights for all by spearheading the Global Advocacy Learning Programme on Human Rights and Development (GALP). Conceptualised as a space for shared learning and collective reflection, the learning programme aims to help participants conceive the most appropriate and strategic options in their respective national, international, and institutional context.

Figure 1.3: Group exercise
The 2018 Global Advocacy Learning Programme on Human Rights and Development (GALP) begins by laying the context of human rights and development in the Asian region. Jerald Joseph, Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) Commissioner and the main facilitator of the 7-day programme, asks participants to identify crises and hopes in their own countries, and then share their insights and realisations in retrospect of ongoing human rights violations in their respective regions.

To situate participants’ ideas and thoughts into the larger human rights and development discourse, the second day focuses on fundamental human rights principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Chulalongkorn University Professor Emeritus Vitit Muntarbhorn is invited to provide a brief overview of the human rights framework for the SDGs in Southeast Asia and beyond. He stresses that SDGs provide a link to peace, human rights, good governance, and human development.
Abstract concepts discussed in the second day were made clear on the third day of the learning programme by discussing human rights mechanisms in the national, regional, and international levels. Jennifer Jokstad, human rights officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is invited to share her working experience in the field. The presentation of Advisor to INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre, Ruki Fernando and Jerald Joseph, enables participants to fully comprehend the nexus between international and national advocacies.
The fourth day goes back to discussing pressing human rights and development issues outlined in the first day. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) Secretary-General and Coordinator at ALTSEAN-Burma, Debbie Stothard, former ActionAid Chief Executive Officer Ramesh Singh, and Ruki Fernando, share their expertise to participants. Ms. Stothard underscores human rights violations perpetrated by business corporations based in Asia, while Mr. Fernando shares his experience as a human rights defender (HRD), emphasising the importance of security plans and self-care. Mr. Singh reflects on his years in the development field, stressing that development should be a multi-disciplinary endeavour in which basic rights are recognised. This day, participants also had the opportunity to get out of the meeting room to conduct a site visit at Khun Dan Prakan Chon Dam, the largest roller compacted concrete dam in the world.
To fully integrate the development angle into the ongoing programme discussion, the fifth day delves into cases related to SDGs and development. Sor Rattanamanee Polkla, lawyer and coordinator at Community Resource Centre (CRC), and Hannie Meesters, United Nations Development Programme Policy Specialist, were invited to share their experience in advocating for holistic development under the SDGs regime. Ms. Polkla shares two cases CRC is working on: a limestone mining concession in Nong Bua Lam Phu Province in Thailand, and communities negatively affected by the controversial Xayaburi dam. Ms. Polkla shares strategies and approaches to make sure marginalised voices are heard. Ms. Meesters builds on the discussion, sharing that governments can further be held accountable for SDGs inaction through the Voluntary National Reviews.
In order to completely grasp the concept and practise of ideas presented in the last five days, the sixth day focuses on the idea of people-centred advocacy. John Samuel, Executive Director at FORUM-ASIA, discusses basic principles and foundations of a people-centred advocacy campaign. Participants were then divided into groups to craft their own campaigns and present to the group.

Throughout GALP, participants presented their own case studies, with topics ranging from human rights to development.

The last day was assigned for collective reflection and evaluation.
OPENING AND OVERVIEW

The first day aims to picture the context of human rights and development in the Asian region. Participants are asked to share their insights and reflect on common trends and pressing issues.
The Global Advocacy Learning Programme on Human Rights and Development (GALP) begins with words of welcome from FORUM-ASIA Director, Betty Yolanda. Ms. Yolanda introduces the work of FORUM-ASIA and the relevance of GALP. It is highlighted that GALP is designed for human rights advocates to collectively learn, share, and reflect on pressing human rights and development issues. Through this collective approach, participants are encouraged to conceive the most appropriate strategies at the national, regional, and international levels in order to respond to pressing issues. Afterwards, Jerald conducts a series of getting to know each-other exercises. The session closes upon agreement of house rules.
Jerald divides the participants into several groups and asks them to write down two elements or events in their own country that they think fall into the categories of “good”, “crisis” and “hope”.

**SHARING AND REFLECTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**
TIMOR-LESTE
Good: Democracy/Development
Crisis: Corruption/Eviction
Hope: Clear laws and policy/ Anti-Corruption Law

BANGLADESH
Good: Internet/Human rights awareness
Crisis: Lack of democracy, freedom of expression and assembly
Hope: Declining enforced disappearances/Restoration of democratic principles

TAIWAN
Good: Freedom of expression/Democratic system
Crisis: Lack of media literacy/interference from People’s Republic of China
Hope: Legalised Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) marriage/Judicial reform

THAILAND
Good: Creativity/ More involvement with politics and democracy in all levels
Crisis: Human rights defenders (HRDs) facing judicial harassment/No freedom of speech and no fair elections
Hope: Feminist movement/Young HRDs

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Hope: Feminist movement/Young HRDs
INDONESIA
Good: Constitution/ Independent state institutions (NHRIs, Corruption Eradication Commission, National Commission on Violence Against Women)
Crisis: Intolerant groups/ Military impunity
Hope: 2019 General elections/Young HRDs

PAKISTAN
Good: Cybercrime law/ Pro-women laws
Crisis: No implementation/Cyber laws curb curb digital expression
Hope: Minorities and transgenders are treated the same way/cyber case law takes human rights approach

MYANMAR
Good: International attention and pressure
Crisis: Oppressive legal system/Internal armed conflict
Hope: International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)/ 2020 Elections

SOUTH KOREA
Good: Democracy/ No war
Crisis: No decent work, hate towards women, refugees, and LGBT communities
Hope: Peace regime/Equality
THE PHILIPPINES
Good: Participation of civil society organisations/ Commission on Human Rights (CHR) independence
Crisis: Constitutional change/ War on drugs
Hope: Bangsamoro Organic Law*/Draft law on the protection of HRDs

NEPAL
Good: Stable government/new constitution
Crisis: Non-implementation of laws/ Soaring gender-based violence
Hope: Transitional period will end soon/ New law will protect and promote rights

INDIA
Good: Decriminalisation of Section 377** of Indian Penal Code
Crisis: Hindu supremacy and ultra-nationalism/ Attack on civil society and free speech
Hope: Judiciary/Constitutional rights

SRI LANKA
Good: 19 A-Constitution*** /Independent commissions
Crisis: Sinhala Buddhist ethnic nationalism
Hope: Improved and strengthened rule of law/Strong civil society

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*The Bangsamoro Organic law provides for the establishment of the autonomous political entity known as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It aims to bring peace by addressing the grievances that characterised the decades-long conflict in Mindanao.

**With a historic verdict, the Supreme Court of India on 6 September 2018 decriminalised Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, ruling that consensual adult gay sex is not a crime. Section 377, introduced in 1861, criminalised homosexuality.

***The 19th Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka dilutes powers of the Executive, including reducing presidential term from 6 to 5 years; restoring the two-term limit for the President; the power of President to dissolve Parliament only after four and a half years; the revival of Constitutional Council and the establishment of independent commissions.
THE MALDIVES
Good: Investment opportunities/Universal health coverage
Crisis: Independent institutions/Judiciary
Hope: National human rights action plan /New government

CAMBODIA
Good: Historical heritage and geographic position
Crisis: Bad political environment and policy/
No real development
Hope: Better democracy
After this exercise, the participants are divided into sub-regional groups to discuss commonalities in their sub-regions. The following are the conclusions that each team has come up with:

**Northeast Asia**
(South Korea, Taiwan)
- No decent work
- Hate towards women, refugees, and LGBT communities
- Rule of law
- Mining industry
- Attacks on HRDs
- Patriarchy
- Lack of respect for minority rights
- Data protection
- Natural disasters

**South Asia**
(India, Bangladesh, The Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
- Enforced disappearances
- Fake news/disinformation
- Crackdown on CSOs
- Extrajudicial killings
- Soaring gender-based violence
- Governments in crisis
- Pollution
- Poverty
- Weak judiciary
- Weak democratic institutions
- Majority politics leading to extremism
- Armed conflict

**Mekong Region**
(Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar)
- Land mining
- Communist insurgencies
- Lack of respect for indigenous peoples rights
- Drug production
- Conflict
- Authoritarian governments
- Capitalism

**Southeast Asia**
(The Philippines, Indonesia)
- Fundamentalism
- Capitalism
- Oppressive legal system
- Migrant workers
- Evictions
- Torture, enforced disappearances, and extra-judicial killings
- Intolerant groups
- Environmental issues
- Repressive laws
- Children's rights
- Surveillance
- Harassment of HRDs
- Land conflict
- Lack of respect for minority rights
- Military impunity
- Food crisis
- Corruption
- Restrictions to civic space
- Unemployment
In this case study, the status of press freedom in Cambodia since 2017 is addressed. After local elections on June 2017, the Government targeted party opposition members, civil society groups, and independent media to ensure its victory in the national election in 2018. Within a year, the government has closed down the prominent Khmer-English newspaper Cambodia Daily, along with 32 radio stations, and ordered internet service providers and mobile companies to block 17 independent news websites. These series of actions not only infringed on free speech, but also limits access to information in the Kingdom.

Chamrong Pich, Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
This case study highlights the injustice perpetrated by the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA) in Sri Lanka. The MMDA does not set out a minimum age of marriage, prevents females from holding key positions in the court, allows unconditional polygamy and unequal divorce provisions for men and women, and prevents women from consenting to their marriage. Although there has been a committee appointed to reform the law since 2009, eight years later, there is still lacking conclusion on the reformation.
This case study examines the situation in Mindanao, Philippines after the declaration of martial law. To curb threats of terrorism, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law in the islands of Mindanao on 23 May 2017. Reports of human rights violations have intensified after the declaration of martial law. Civil groups recorded at least 46 victims of extra-judicial killings in a year alone. According to reports, in one-year, there are 22 documented cases of torture, 112 victims of frustrated extrajudicial killings, 71 victims of illegal arrest and detention, and 336,123 victims of indiscriminate bombings and gunfire. This shows clearly that the proclamation gives more power for state forces to violate human rights.
This case study gives an account of the history of the Urdu-speaking peoples in Bangladesh through in-depth introduction of the difficulties that this minority is facing in society. Urdu-speaking people and their ancestors arrived in India during the partition in 1947 from different Indian states. While many of them migrated to Pakistan, some stayed in the region which later became Bangladesh. Due to this complicated historical background, Urdu-speaking minorities in Bangladesh are generally viewed as collaborators of Pakistan, while living with a lack of social benefits.
On the second day of GALP, the sessions focus on fundamental human rights principles and international human rights mechanisms. Chulalongkorn University Professor Emeritus Vitit Muntarbhorn is invited to provide an overview of the human rights framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Southeast Asia and beyond.
Jerald starts this session by asking the participants to mention what they think are fundamental rights. Some mention "life" and "food", other reply "mobility", "education". and "expression." Based on this, Jerald further requests participants to think about important events in Asian history where the promotion and protection of human rights are evident, and to arrange them in chronological order.

The session highlighted that human rights does not necessarily belong to the Western culture; instead, it belongs to all as the struggle for human rights is universal and is not confined to a single geographic context.
Following the group discussion, an overview of the UN human rights mechanisms, in particular the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies like the Human Rights Committee, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Committee on the Elimination against Women, as well as the special procedure mandates are explored.
The participants are asked to write down what they think are "good", "middle", and "not so good" about the United Nations (UN):

**GOOD**

Human rights advocacy/ connections/ influence/ international laws/ peace maintenance/ raise local issues to global level/ press to government/ help refugees/ open ways to engage with the world/ protect human rights in all situations

**MIDDLE**

bureaucratic/ purely symbolic/ silent/ focus on peace/ located in rich countries/ bring all countries together/ global development for all/ strong local framework and democracy

**NOT SO GOOD**

fail to react on human issues/ difficult to work with/ decision makers/ lack of transparency/ far from realities at the ground level/ too much politics/ ineffective to address genocides/ too westernized/ disconnected

Figure 4.4.: Talking about the UN
There is no general agreement among the participants on the UN, but following a pragmatic logic, there is a sense that despite its weakness, the UN system can still be engaged strategically to advance human rights.

To give participants a glimpse of how the UN system works, a Model United Nations (MUN) session was conducted towards the end of the session.
PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES

Below are the summaries of the case studies presented on Day 2:

ADVOCACY ON THE INDEPENDENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS (NHRIS): CASE OF MALAYSIA’S NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (SUHAKAM)

This case study showcases how advocacy efforts can be coordinated at both national and international levels. In 2008, SUHAKAM was informed by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) that it was considering downgrading SUHAKAM from an “A” to a “B” status institution due to its lack of compliance with the Paris Principles. At the national level, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) worked closely with the Malaysian Bar Council on proposed amendments of SUHAKAM’s enabling law. At the international level, the Asian NGO Network on NHRIs (ANNI) and two Malaysian NGOs submitted a report to International Coordinating Committee Sub Committee on Accreditation (ICC-SCA). This resulted to ICC-SCA’s decision to defer the accreditation (Malaysia only received the A Status back in 2010) and the Parliament of Malaysia adopted amendments to the enabling law of SUHAKAM in March 2009 due to the international, regional, and national pressure.
This case study analyses a gender equality campaign in The Maldives. In close consultation with different stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender and Family, Election Commission, Human Rights Commission of The Maldives, Broadcast Commission of The Maldives, and representatives of major political parties and civil society organisations (CSOs), International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), these organisations developed a public awareness campaign for gender equality. The campaign focuses on four major areas: women’s representation in decision making, women in non-traditional roles, shared responsibility of the domestic sphere, and men as champions of gender equality and women’s empowerment. However, the campaign has not been able to meet its expectations due to limited budget and difficulty in mobilising groups from schools.
STATELESS PERSONS AT THE THAILAND-MYANMAR (KAREN STATE) BORDER

This case study highlights stateless persons in Karen State. Without an official identity, stateless persons are facing severe living problems, with limited access to health care, education, and housing, among others. To improve the current situation, the author chooses to empower people through forming a working group with experts and officials, and documenting human rights violations. Even with the ongoing armed conflict, the author still tries to find ways to sustain stateless persons’ rights.
This case study introduces how a local NGO advocated for judicial reform in Taiwan. First, they started gathering opinions on judicial reform from the public. After studying various issues surrounding judicial reform, they invited judges, prosecutors, lawyers, academics, and CSO representatives to analyse the root causes of judicial problems in the country. Later, they used these analyses as a reference to call for action in Congress. Their concerns were heard by President Tsai Ling-Wen, who in early 2017 officially formed a working group to focus on these issues. In the end, 87 resolutions were made, which will affect Taiwan’s judicial reform for the next 10 years.
Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor Emeritus from Chulalongkorn University, is the first guest speaker of GALP. In order to fully transfer the idea of SDGs to participants, he provides a thorough explanation of all the 17 Goals.

While most of the goals are predominantly related to development, he points out how Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) is particularly close to human rights, in particular when it comes to rule of law, access to information and NHRIs. Referring to the latest United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) data analysis, he emphasises how there is a strong need to have more effective implementation of Goal 16 in Southeast Asia.

Figure 4.6.: Professor Vitit's session
Looking at the future, there is momentum for CSOs to work on Goal 16, as countries will submit their National Voluntary Reports to the High-Level Political Forum under United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). Overall, Professor Vitit highlights how the SDGs provide a great opportunity for CSOs to interlink peace, human rights, democracy, good governance, environmental protection, and human development.
Day 3 focuses on regional and national human rights mechanisms. Jennifer Jokstad, human rights officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is invited to share her working experience in the field.
Two participants are assigned to recapitulate on the main points of the previous day. Jerald afterwards divides participants into three groups to have a still theatre exercise depicting peace, human rights, democracy, good governance, environmental protection, and human development.

Through the exercise, Jerald demonstrates that there are three aspects of a State’s obligation regarding human rights:

- Duty to protect: Prevent interference of the rights of citizens from all actors, including private, state, and non-state actors.
- Duty to respect: Refrain from interfering with the rights of citizens.
- Duty to fulfill: Actively adopt measures to ensure citizens' rights.
In Asia, there are two regional bodies, namely the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

While participants from the ASEAN region shared their frustration with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), especially when comparing with mechanisms from Europe, America or Africa, they all agree that all mechanisms can have flaws and CSOs can play a role to strengthen them.

As Commissioner of SUHAKAM, Jerald shares his perspective on NHRIs’ work, whose mandate should be to promote and protect human rights within the country through receiving complaints and undertaking inquiries and fact-finding missions. The participants share their experiences in dealing with NHRIs and agree on the importance of engaging with this mechanism.
Jennifer Jokstad, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Human Rights Officer, starts her presentation with a general introduction of OHCHR and the Human Rights Council (HRC).

Addressing the difficulties of having OHCHR country offices, Ms. Jokstad points out that some governments are not comfortable with OHCHR being present inside the country.

Figure 5.3.: Jennifer Jokstad starts her presentation
Ms. Jokstad shares that OHCHR does not only do public advocacy but also confidential meetings with governments. There are also times when OHCHR monitors, but does not act on it because it is too dangerous for the victims, who are usually HRDs. OHCHR also tries to prioritise issues that no other UN agencies work on, such as the death penalty and freedom of expression.
In light of the shrinking space for civil society in Asia, Ms. Jokstad highlights that OHCHR can only try its best to continually scrutinise and challenge governments through different human rights mechanisms.
CASE STUDY FROM SRI LANKA—PRESENTATION AND INTERACTION WITH RUKI FERNANDO

Ruki Fernando, Sri Lankan human rights advocate and Advisor to INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre, shares with the participants about his personal experiences in advocating at the national and international levels for accountability and justice in Sri Lanka. He first gives a brief introduction of Sri Lanka’s internal conflict from 1983 to 2009, then highlights series of achievements such as visits from UN Special Rapporteurs and the Resolution 25/1, which in March 2014 established an investigation mechanism for war crimes atrocities.
Mr. Fernando highlights the importance of combining efforts at the international level, in particular Geneva and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), with linked activities at the national level. If disconnected, the advocacy message can become contradictory and may lose impact.

To close the session, Jerald reminds the participants to carefully choose strategies. While the internal conflict has shed a light on Sri Lanka for a long time, giving international spotlight, for other rather stable countries, CSOs might have to choose different advocacy strategies.
This case study addresses the abuses inflicted to Cambodian migrant workers in other countries. Often, the victims are illegally transferred abroad, where they are subject to low wages and an unhealthy working environment. The brokers also managed to detain travel documents of these Cambodian workers to prevent them from running away. To stop these violations, lawyers in Cambodia tried different advocacy strategies, such as monitoring the work of judges, reporting any unlawful action, and supporting cases in court.

Dalis Sim, Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
This case study discusses the importance of digital rights and its advocacy in Pakistan. The author first gives a brief introduction on the history and status of digital rights in the country. He shares how many activists use social media as space to candidly talk about their worries and plans about human rights conditions for minorities. Until January 2017, after five bloggers’ mysterious disappearance and return, it became clear that online dissent is not welcomed. In order to help mitigate these risks, the digital rights community has been working on different initiatives, and training activists from different regions of Pakistan. As more people use the Internet, it will be easier for a larger community to connect with the digital rights debate and hold their political leaders accountable.
Violations of privacy rights is rampant in Indonesia. The author shares different examples, such as SIM card registration requiring ID number and Family Card Number, or the Ministry of Home Affairs revealing names of human rights activists to media. These practices show the lack of regulation for the protection of personal data in the country. Therefore, civil society begun to conduct researches and campaigns, hoping that there will soon be regulations protecting personal data and the use of big data in Indonesia.
This case study shows how a national CSO managed to urge Facebook to act in Myanmar. According to civil groups, it takes more than four days for Facebook to respond to reported messages which were largely circulating online during the Rohingya crisis. This triggered six local organisations in Myanmar to send Mark Zuckerberg, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Facebook, a letter. In return, Zuckerberg sends back an apology letter and organises a mission to Myanmar to discuss the issues, committing to conduct the first external public Human Rights Impact Assessment in Myanmar. In the end, the author also gives out a few suggestions on advocacy: be clear, be targeted, make it personal, work in network, and do not panic.
Day 4 focuses on pressing human rights and development issues. Together with the presentation and interaction with experts, participants also had the opportunity to get out of the meeting room to conduct a site visit.
This case study provides close observation on the actions of Korean companies and Government after the Xe Pian-Xe Nam Noy dam collapse. After the collapse, Korean civil society formed a Coordinated Response Team of the Korean Civil Societies for the Xe Pian-Xe Nam Nay Dam Collapse (Korean Civil Society TF), which demands government and companies to conduct a fact-finding investigation with a long-term plan for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the damaged areas. However, until today, there are still confidential documents that the government and companies refuse to reveal.
This case study details the campaign strategies of an Australian CSO to counter the Australian Government’s indefinite mandatory detention policy. The policy enables the state to hold all persons entering Australia without a valid visa in detention centres until their claims are processed. After the High Court upheld the legality of offshore detention processing and launched a plan to immediately deport over 200 asylum seekers in 2016, the Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC) launched a #LetThemStay campaign, seeking to achieve its goal through social media. #LetThemStay creates the first successful pushback against offshore detention centres and shows the potential of social media.
PRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:
PRESENTATION AND INTERACTION WITH DEBBIE STOTHARD, RAMESH SINGH, AND RUKI FERNANDO

In this session, three experienced panellists present and discuss with the participants their perspectives on issues relating to business and human rights, development, and HRDs.

Figure 6.2 (L-R): Ruki Fernando, Debbie Stothard, and Ramesh Singh presenting to participants
Debbie Stothard, Secretary-General of International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Coordinator at ALTSEAN-Burma, stresses how most human rights violations are perpetrated by business companies as much as governments. Dams are a critical problem in Asia, and their construction is often linked to corruption and natural disasters. Ms. Stothard encourages all participants to always connect with the people on the ground.
Ramesh Singh, former chief executive officer of ActionAid International, reflects on his years of experience in development field. He makes three main points: First, civil society should go back to the basics. Second, we should be inspired by the feminist movement demonstrating that there are opportunities to change the world. Third, we need to collaborate with different fields. In the end, he also brings up the topic of salary of NGO workers, highlighting the need to address the gap between NGOs and international NGOs.
Ruki Fernando shares his experience as an HRD in Sri Lanka. He highlights the importance of security plans and self-care. Mr. Fernando points out that being an HRD is not easy, and despite how brave he might look, he admits that there are times that he would question himself if it is a worthy choice to keep fighting for human rights. Ultimately the answer is always ‘yes’.
Sor Ratanamanee Polkla, lawyer, founder, and coordinator of Community Resource Centre (CRC), leads participants to visit a family in Nakhon Nayok Province near the Khun Dan Prakan Chon Dam. This family is living beside a factory, struggling with noisy days and nights. Since filing a legal case against the factory, the family has been facing different forms of threats. The owner of the household shared that there were a lot of families joining the protest, however, there is only one family left right now. “It is a long and lonely process, but we will not give up,” he added.

Figure 6.6.: L: Inside the family’s home; R: Participants take a look at the factory
The afternoon gives the participants an opportunity to visit Khun Dan Prakan Chon Dam, the biggest dam in Thailand and the longest roller compacted concrete (RCC) dam in the world. It was initiated by the Late King Bhumipol and was completed in 2005. Participants noted how trees were clearly visible under water since the dam is built over natural resources, as with many other mega development projects.
Day 5 focuses on the topic of human rights-based approach to development. Sor Rattanamanee Polkla and Hannie Meesters, United Nations Development Programme Policy Specialist, were invited to talk about cases from Thailand and civil society engagement on SDGs.

Figure 7.1: Participants perform a group exercise for the morning
PRESENTATION AND INTERACTION WITH SOR RATANAMANEE POLKLA

As a human rights lawyer working with communities affected by business projects, Ms. Polkla shared two cases she has been involved with, one in Nong Bua Lam Phu province, and the other related to the Mekong River. Ms. Polkla shares that CRC supports people from communities to file cases against state and non-state actors. In addition to legal work, CRC often conducts public campaigns to support legal cases and raise awareness.
The first case Ms. Polkla mentions is the legal battle to revoke a limestone mining concession in Nong Bua Lam Phu province. In order to convince the community to fight for their own rights, CRC spent quite some time conducting awareness raising campaigns. Once the case went to court, Ms. Polkla had to extensively work on refining the language of the lawsuit. The villagers managed to win the case, as they were not properly consulted by the developers, showing that it is possible for communities to be heard and compensated.
CRC also works with the cases related to the Mekong River. Ms. Polkla shares with the participants the case of the Xayaburi dam, a hydropower project under construction on the Mekong river in northwest Laos, across the border from Thailand. The project began in 2012, and since then is highly contested by communities living in the downstream area. Many villagers near the construction site were forced out of their homes. Negative impacts on the livelihood of the villagers were exacerbated as well. When CRC first filed the case, the court rejected the case since the dam is not located in Thailand. CRC supported its case by linking the effects of the dam to Thai people, and filed a case to the Supreme Administrative Court. While the legal case is still ongoing, the dam is almost 90% completed and expected to be finalised in 2019.
Following Jerald’s instruction, participants are distributed with one balloon and one pin. They are asked to protect their balloon at all cost.

In the evaluation of the exercise, it was pointed out that to protect one's own rights (exemplified by the balloon), one does not have to infringe on the others' rights (i.e., pop their balloons).

In the end, Jerald leads the participants to sing the song “Get Up, Stand Up.”
This case study speaks about the process of EIA in Thailand and its importance. To have a mega business project, such as power plants, coal mining, dam, and ports, an EIA is essential. To obtain an EIA document, all companies should go through the process of public hearing and public participation to ensure local peoples’ voices are heard. Unfortunately, nowadays, many companies prefer taking the short cut while ignoring the people’s demands. With the lack of proper implementation of EIA, there are higher chances creating conflicts in local community and hinder sustainable development.
Despite growing recognition on the roles of HRDs, little recognition is given to their psychosocial and psychological well-being. After Typhoon Haiyan in The Philippines, Medical Action Group (MAG), stressed the importance of having self-care practices in NGOs, and started to conduct debriefings in the islands. Months later, MAG returned to provide training on stress management to local Municipal Health Officers (MHO), who, in turn, were the ones who conducted the training when MAG exited. MAG now includes self-care practices in its HRD protection project.
This case study analyses the unfairness of land rights for women in Nepal. According to gathered data, only 17% of women hold land ownership in Nepal. This causes women to live under fear and instability. Seeing this situation, Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC), a pioneer NGO in Nepal which has been working for the land rights movement since 1996, decides to pursue justice. They not only lobbied with the government but also mobilised locals to educate them about this concern. After a long protest, in May 2017, the government of Nepal finally implemented a guideline on Joint Land Ownership. To date, 7,427 couples have acquired Joint Land Ownership.
Hannie Meesters, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Policy Specialist, shares about how SDGs provide a new avenue between governments and civil society. She further introduces Voluntary National Reviews, one of the main mechanisms to keep track on SDGs, in which governments are asked to submit a report about their SDG progresses to the UN headquarters in New York. Ms. Meesters notes that many countries with little political freedom are willing to give SDGs a try.
To conclude her presentation, Ms. Meesters emphasises that there should be a paradigm shift where implementing SDGs is the principal foundation. This can only be achieved through genuine partnership with civil society.
This case study discusses the extractive industry in Myanmar and proposes recommendations. One of the largest tin and tinstone mining operations located in Myitta Township bring numerous problems to the local community. The following are the strategies that the author uses: raising awareness on the issues, encouraging people to speak up, recording violations and movements, gathering stories for media, sharing lessons learnt with other communities, writing complaint letters to NHRIIs, and creating monitor groups for mining and litigation. After all these efforts, now the community knows what their rights are and how to fight for it.
This case study presents development approaches from faith-based organisations in the Philippines. A study conducted by Baylor University reveals that faith-based organisations (FBO) lead the way in addressing key causes of homeless people and are pioneering in creativity and long-term solutions. Like most secular organisations, FBOs use the same strategies when it comes to proposing development projects, such as lobbying, community organising, and strategic planning. However, what makes FBOs distinct from others is because of two strategies: consultations at the community and individual level and genuine holistic development framework.
On Day 6, to fully grasp the concept and practise of people-centred advocacy, participants were divided into groups and asked to come up with their own campaign.
HOW TO PLAN A PEOPLE-CENTRED ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN—PRESENTATION AND INTERACTION WITH JOHN SAMUEL

To help participants build the concept of people centred advocacy, John Samuel, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA, introduces his paper on People-Centred Advocacy, and then proceeds to a collective discussion. During the discussion, points raised included:

Different people have different ideas about people-centred advocacy. Some think that there is a need to keep people-centred advocacy as simple as possible.

Others believe that people-centred advocacy should come from the community so that there will be enough networking and alliance.

The others answer people-centred advocacy is a knowledge-based movement because there is always a system behind it.
Mr. Samuel stresses that people-centred advocacy is by the people, of the people, and for the people, hence, it is the spirit of democracy that drives the very idea of people-centred advocacy.
Mr. Samuel highlights that advocacy is like an orchestra. It is essential to have different people with different abilities.
Participants are then separated into different groups to prepare for their campaign presentations. Before dismissing the course, Mr. Samuel reminds all participants that opponents are doing strategy while you are doing strategy. He says, “One campaign can lose in different context. Therefore, it is important to think about the specific objectives and targets.”
The objective of the campaign is to provide free sanitary napkins, cups, and promote reproductive health rights. To make the audience understand this issue, the group takes Thailand as an example. There are many girls in the country who miss classes because they cannot afford to buy sanitary products. To achieve the campaign’s goals, the group plans to conduct research, disseminate information, and consultation. The group also mentions challenges that they might encounter. One of the most obvious challenges will be the competition with corporations that produce sanitary products.
The group decides to focus on Indonesia since general elections are coming. The main objective of this campaign is to ensure a free election. The group targets Indonesian rural areas, where there is an evident lack in information accessibility. While there are challenges, such as lack of funding and backlash from religious groups, strategies are proposed: first, to link with the election commission, grassroots, student unions, NHRIs, media, and social media; second, to conduct community meetings, debates, and events with politicians; third, to share posters, templates, pamphlets, and memos; and fourth, to conduct mock elections before the actual voting day.
This group directs their advocacy campaign to repeal clause 377 in Myanmar to achieve equal rights for the LGBTIQ+ community. The group separates short term and long term goals: in short term, they aim to raise awareness and implement human rights education events; in the long term, they would like to challenge the law in court. The group also identifies a few targets, including LGBTIQ+ group, international communities, parliaments, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), religious groups, and the military.

Finally, the group points out the importance of reframing the issue at hand. Instead of giving lectures, they think it will be easier to promote the right to love to the general public.

Figure 8.8.: Participant from Myanmar explains the campaign
The group first delivers a brief introduction of the case. In December 2017, there were eight indigenous people killed in South Cotabato, Philippines. To mitigate these kinds of tragedies, the objective of this campaign is to raise awareness on land rights. The group acknowledges that the biggest challenge of this campaign is receiving backlash from companies and some government officials. However, there are still opportunities. For example, the Commission on Human Rights (CHRP) has started their investigation on this case. It is also possible to seek help from the Special Rapporteur and reach out to international society.
The last day is dedicated to the last four case studies and collective reflection.

Figure 9.1.: Participants sing “A ram sam sam”
PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES

Below are the summaries of each case study presented on Day 7:

A CASE STUDY ON ADVOCATING FOR COMMUNITY POLICING IN TIMOR-LESTE

This case study proposes an advocacy plan for community policing in Timor-Leste. Despite perceiving the police as not community-oriented, community policing has been successfully in preventing crimes and conflicts, and has sustained peace and stability across the country. To advocate for community policing, the Asia Foundation Timor-Leste and its partners adopts a few strategies: working with national departments, organising seminars involving police officers, forming networks with other CSOs, holding national surveys, and holding national seminars involving all decision makers.

Celestino Ximenes, The Asia Foundation
UNLAWFUL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL DETENTION OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH FROM YOUHANBAD, KARACHI

This case study documents the advocacy for religious minorities in Pakistan. In 2018, law enforcement agencies unlawfully raided forty houses in Christian colony Youhanabad, Karachi in three phases and resulted in the abduction 24 Christian men. A local NGO, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), launched a report about this case. Soon after, this became a public issue. People started sensitising it as a human rights violation. During the advocacy period, HRCP and other CSOs faced many challenges. The author highlights that through this experience, she has truly learned—“Action speaks louder than words.”
On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India decided to remove section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1861 during British colonisation, usually used to criminalise sexual activities between men since it “against the order of nature.” The author gives recognition to this big step in decriminalising a portion of the LGBTIQ+ community, however, the author also points out that there are still pressing provisions needing reform.
This case study points out the inclusiveness for persons with disabilities pursuing higher education in Thailand. According to the Report of Disabilities Situation on Thailand (2016), 43.47% of the population of people with disabilities never received any form of education, 46.21% have received primary education, and only 0.84% have completed higher education. This is due to many factors such as political instability and the lack of disability-friendly facilities on campuses. To address the issue, the author initiated a project in her own university. During the project, she interviewed eight stakeholders, promoted positive perceptions and awareness, organised a forum, and launched a report.
In the last session, participants are invited to express their thoughts on the GALP and their action plans after the 7-day learning programme. Many say that they greatly appreciate this learning programme for providing both theoretical knowledge and practical experience on human rights and development.

One participant shares “human rights are something bigger than what we think. Since it is not an isolated island, we should look it from a wider perspective.” The other also shares, “Only through solidarity, we can overcome our sufferings.”
ANNEX A: LIST OF RESOURCE PERSONS

- Debbie Stothard, Secretary General, International Federation for Human Rights; Coordinator, ALTSEAN-Burma
- Hannie Meesters, Policy Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Jennifer Jokstad, Human Rights Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Jerald Joseph, Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
- John Samuel, Executive Director, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Sor Rattanamanee Polkla, Coordinator of Community Resource Center (CRC)
- Ramesh Singh Malla, Former CEO, ActionAid International
- Ruki Fernando, Advisor, INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre
- Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor Emeritus, Chulalongkorn University
ANNEX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- Aye Mon Thu, Dawei Probono Lawyer Network, Myanmar
- Binod Gautam, Community Self Reliance Centre, Nepal
- Celestino Ximenes, The Asia Foundation, Timor-Leste
- Chamrong Pich, Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), Cambodia
- Dalis Sim, Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association, Cambodia
- Dominique Calañas, FORUM-ASIA
- Edel Parducho, Medical Action Group, Philippines
- Joolia Demigillo, Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, Philippines
- Josef Teo, Judicial Reform Foundation Taiwan, Taiwan
- Juan Miguel Sanchez Marin, Equality Myanmar (EQMM), Myanmar
- Kan Tamee, Community Resource Center, Thailand
- Lintang Setianti, Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM), Indonesia
- Matcha Phorn-in, Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project, Thailand
- Michelle Soe Moe, FORUM-ASIA
- Nida Tanweer, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
- Parvez Alam, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, Bangladesh
- Sabra Zahid, Afriel Youth Network, Sri Lanka
- Shanna Priangka Ramadhanti, FORUM-ASIA
- Sreejith Krishnankutty, Plan International India
- Syme de Leon, FORUM-ASIA
- Talal Raza, Media Matters for Democracy, Pakistan
- Youngah Lee, People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), South Korea
- Zayan Mohamed, The Maldives
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