



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2024**



Photo: Samburu Women Trust, 2016

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# The Turning Point of a New Era

**W**ho would have imagined such a world just a year ago? Major donors are racing to cut their aid budgets, narrow election victories are seen as mandates for radical and one-sided policies, and minorities are being urged to conform to the terms dictated by those in power. For many power-driven politicians in developing countries, the United States has now provided an accepted model in which the rights of marginalised groups are deemed irrelevant. The silence of Western countries regarding the genocide in Gaza is almost tangible.

Over the past year, the world has taken a troubling turn from the perspective of human rights. Major powers seek to replace the rules-based system with bilateral agreements in which they have better chances to dictate outcomes without regard for the views of smaller nations. This trend is strong in domestic politics as well, signalling grim times ahead for minorities. Trade unions are no longer favoured; instead, the direction is set by markets and power.

An added challenge is the widespread defunding of human rights work and development cooperation by many countries countered by the rise of hate speech from anti-gender movements that receive significant

funding from radical conservative groups. Civil societies and NGOs face increased scrutiny and regulations to ensure that only agendas approved by ruling parties are advanced. Persecution of individual human rights activists has become more common in many countries.

Our grantees and all of us working in human rights must now adapt to a new era and fight for human rights without the support that was previously available. The UN is also facing major changes, as its funding has been cut, and public opinion in Europe has shifted more toward acquiring weapons and strengthening military power.

The human rights movement is now in a difficult position. However, the situation is also forcing minorities to support one another and engage in strong collaboration to preserve the freedoms of civil society. Cooperation between organisations has at times been challenging, but the new circumstances have brought NGOs closer and strengthened their ties.

In some countries, new actors have also emerged: For example in Kenya young people took the initiative into their own hands and demanded change.

Now we need to consider which issues are essential and focus our efforts by supporting each other's work.



Photo KIOS

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**Together we are stronger and can achieve more!**

**Kim Remitz**  
Executive Director, KIOS



Photo: KIOS

# What Is KIOS Foundation

**K**IOS is an independent, non-political, non-religious, and non-governmental foundation. We fund the work of human rights defenders in East Africa and South Asia. Together with local civil society organisations, we are building a world where human rights belong to everyone.

At the heart of our work is the realisation of the rights of marginalised and excluded groups and persons in vulnerable positions.

KIOS was founded in 1998 by 11 Finnish NGOs working for human rights, peace, and development. KIOS receives financial support for its activities from the development cooperation funds of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

and the European Union Delegation to Kenya.

Our grantees work in Kenya, Uganda, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. We also support regional initiatives in East Africa and South Asia.

We identify our grantees through open calls for proposals and field trips. Local needs and expertise are always the starting point for our funding. Our support is channelled to human rights work planned and implemented by local civil society organisations.

During our 27 years of existence, we have provided over 560 grants to CSOs in almost 60 countries. Most of the work KIOS supports happens at the grassroots level in local communities, but some of our grantees also play

a role at the pinnacle of human rights politics, such as at the UN Human Rights Council. Our grantees gather information about severe human rights violations and bring them to the attention of the international community. They help marginalised groups to actively participate in society and defend their rights and provide legal aid to thousands of people whose rights have been trampled upon. Some of our grantees have succeeded in changing legislation in their countries to take better account of human rights.

**Together with our grantees, we work for a world where dignity and human rights are recognised for all human beings, and states are committed to ensuring them.**



# How We Work

**We Identify:** We search and identify reliable and relevant human rights organisations and movements in South Asia and East Africa.

**We Fund:** We provide direct financial support to human rights activist groups at local, national and regional level.

**We Strengthen:** We strengthen our grantees and their networks, e.g. by financing their capacity-building, networking and improving their safety.

**We Guide and Mentor:** We provide guidance and mentoring to our grantees on project planning, management and reporting.

**We Communicate:** We share news of our grantees' work and the human rights situation in their countries and participate in local campaigns and events.

**We Advocate:** We discuss human rights issues with decision-makers, officials and other relevant actors in Finland and abroad.

*Together we can build a more empowered and resilient civil society.*



## Haki Ni Yetu: Rights, Governance, and Accountability Project in Kenya

The “Haki Ni Yetu” project provides grants as well as capacity-building, and networking opportunities to human rights organisations and grassroots-level groups in Kenya. The four year (2023–2026) project is funded through the EU Delegation to Kenya. The lead organisation of the project is KIOS Foundation from Finland within a Consortium with two Kenyan human rights organisations: CSO-Network and InformAction.

In 2024, 10 grantees received funding totalling at 206 000 euros, for their grassroots level human rights work. These organisations were carefully selected through open call processes and thorough due diligence. Haki Ni Yetu project also provided capacity-building and networking possibilities for 274 grassroots human rights defenders in 10 counties of Kenya.

The project website was launched in 2024, which presents the Haki Ni Yetu project to a wider audience and captures the main information of the project activities. The Haki Ni Yetu project participated in several social media and in-person campaigns during 2024 such as the **World Environment Day on June 5** for environmental or business and human rights issues, **Katiba Day on August 27** (connected to the International Day of Democracy **on September 15**) for democracy and good governance issues and **16 Days of Activism Against Sexual and Gender Based Violence** between **25 November** and **10 December** for raising awareness on women's rights and gender-based violence.

*This text is funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the KIOS Foundation and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*



**Funded by  
the European Union**

## Funding and Capacity-Building for Human Rights Defenders in Kenya

The Haki Ni Yetu project empowers civil society groups in Kenya to defend human rights.

### Key Thematic Areas:

**Democracy and the Rule of Law:** Enhancing good governance, promoting the rule of law and state accountability, fighting against corruption and strengthening access to justice.

**Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination:** Enhancing women's rights, prevention of gender-based violence, and promotion of inclusion, tolerance and diversity and sexual health and reproductive rights.

**Business and Human Rights:** Enhancing environmental and climate justice and corporate accountability.

### Grant Opportunities:

**Rights, Governance & Accountability Grants (Large Grants)** – Nationwide, for experienced human rights actors

**Civic Action & Community Empowerment Grants (Small Grants)** – For grassroots groups in 15 counties. Grants include mentoring, training, and capacity-building.

Grants are awarded by open calls that are published on KIOS website and social media.

### Target Groups:

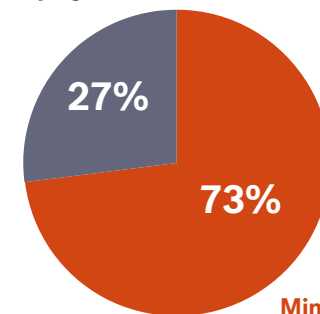
- Community-based organisations, especially those led by women, youth, and marginalised groups
- Focus on underserved and rural areas outside Nairobi

→ [For more information see our website](#)

→ [Animation about the impacts of the project](#)

## Haki Ni Yetu project Share of KIOS Funding Base for Core Operations in 2024

Haki Ni Yetu project



**Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs funded  
programme**

# Year 2024 in Numbers

**52**

grants were ongoing

**30**

in East Africa

**22**

in South Asia

Some results from 19 grants that ended in 2024

**176 280** PEOPLE BENEFITTED DIRECTLY FROM KIOS-FUNDED HUMAN RIGHTS WORK

**108 300**

human rights defenders and rights-holders raised their awareness about human rights through grantee events and participated in awareness raising events

**31 000**

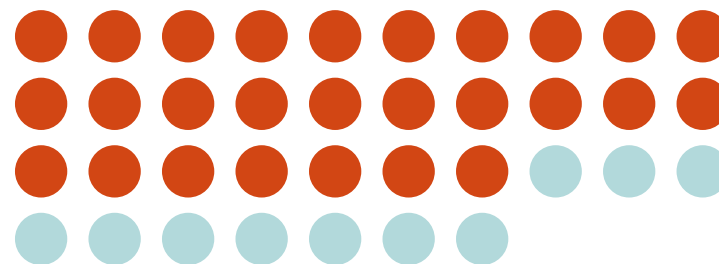
people received legal aid or assistance

**460**

public officials and political decision-makers trained on human rights issues

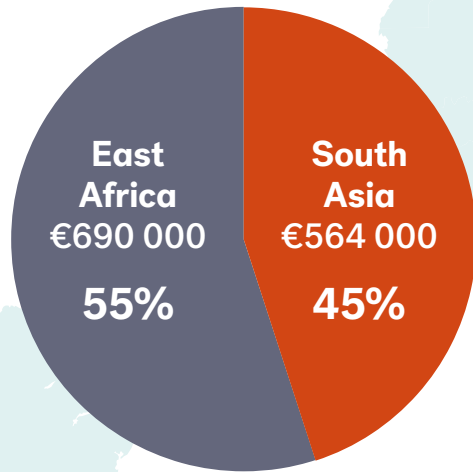
**27** Number of women-led organisations supported by KIOS

Out of 37 different grantees supported during the year 2024, 27 had women in leadership positions



# KIOS Grant Funding in 2024

KIOS Grant Funding  
in total: €1 254 000



Uganda



Kenya

30% of the funds disbursed to East Africa  
come from the Haki Ni Yetu project, funded  
by the EU Delegation to Kenya.

Nepal



Sri Lanka



**KIOS Strategy Main  
Themes in 2024**



Non-Discrimination  
and Gender Equality **24**

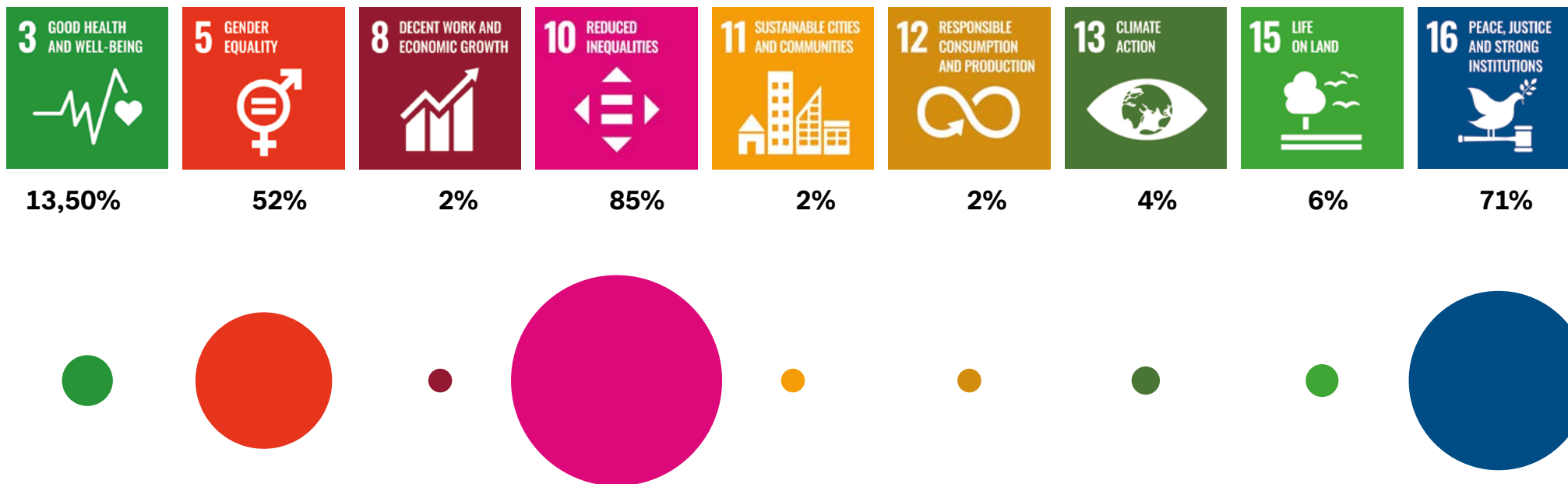


Democracy and  
Rule of Law **19**

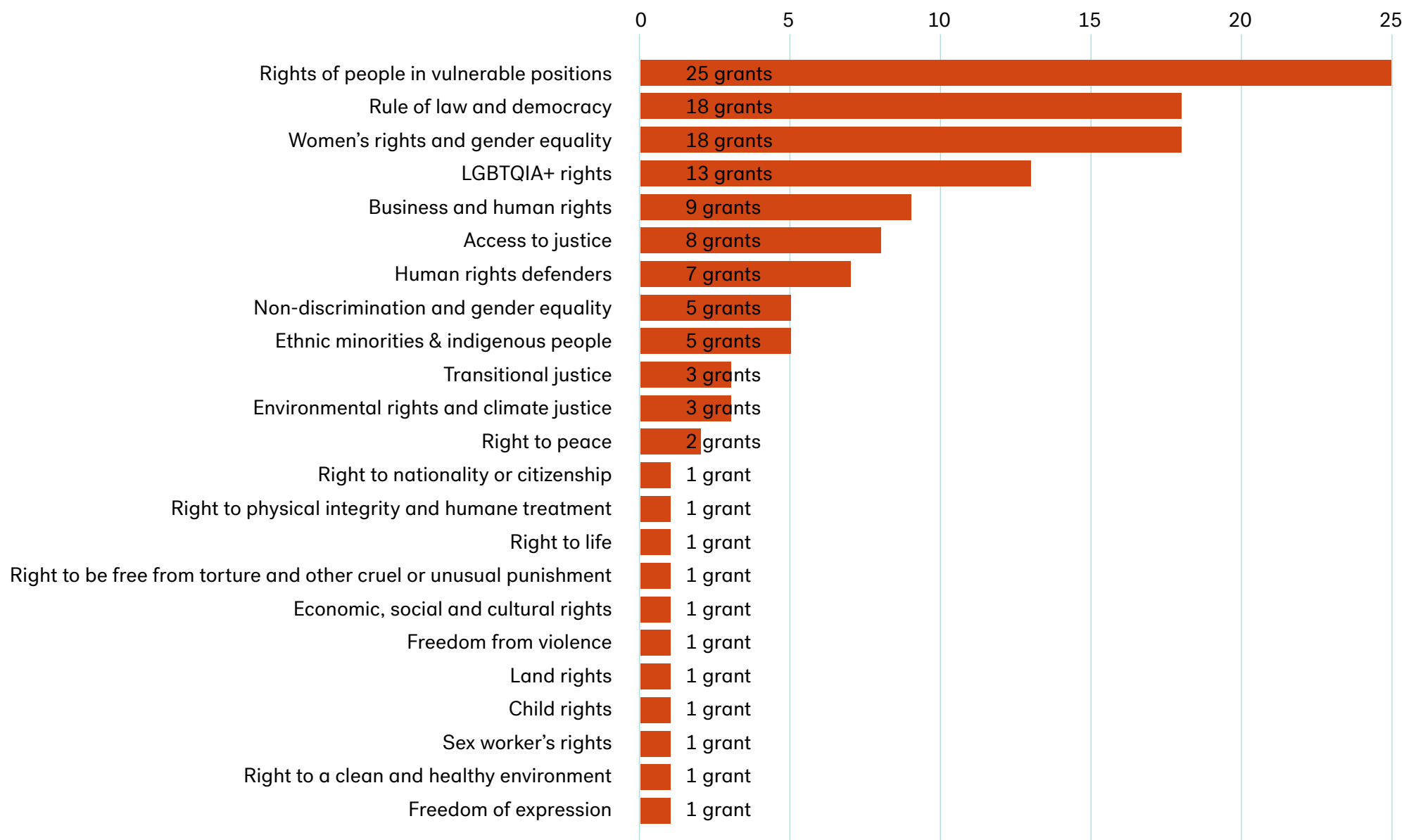


Business and  
Human Rights **9**

# SDG Goals Addressed by All Ongoing KIOS Grants in 2024



# Themes of All Grants in 2024



\*There were 24 new grants in 2024. 19 grants closed during 2024. 9 grants were ongoing over year 2024. Some grants have multiple themes.



# People Over Profit: How KIOS Grantees Are Fighting for Corporate Responsibility



Under the theme of Business and Human Rights, KIOS and its grantees made significant strides in 2024 across East Africa and South Asia. Supported initiatives focused on **land rights, environmental justice, legal support for affected communities, and corporate and state accountability through advocacy, litigation, and dialogue.**

In Nepal, KIOS grantee [LAHURNIP](#) influenced the adoption of a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, ensuring Indigenous rights like **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)** were included. They also helped secure local policy change, such as Tharu people's

recognition as first citizens.

In Uganda, [BIRUDO](#) and [UCCA](#) achieved remedies from the African Development Bank **after rights violations tied to development projects.** These included forced evictions and violence, leading to official compliance reviews and action plans. Ugandan grantees have successfully resolved multiple land rights disputes involving development finance institutions and corporations, achieving legal recognition, compensation, and reductions in community conflict.

In Kenya, [CJGEA](#) **won a landmark Supreme Court case, securing multimillion-dollar compensation for victims of lead poisoning.**

KIOS support has played a significant role in reinforcing the role of civil society in holding businesses and **authorities accountable for human rights impacts in the Global South** and enables KIOS grantees to pursue human rights through legal action and grassroots mobilisation, **reinforcing civil society's critical role in advancing human rights in complex development settings.**

Building on the earlier overview, the following sections explore in greater detail how two KIOS grantees—LAHURNIP and CJGEA—have advanced human rights and accountability through long-term, community-driven strategies.



# Strengthening Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Nepal

The Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP), founded in 1995, works to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Nepal. With support from KIOS, LAHURNIP made significant progress advocating for land rights, customary self-governance, and self-determination, especially in the face of development projects and corporate activities that violate IPs' rights.

**D**uring the grant period, LAHURNIP provided legal aid, trained 93 Indigenous human rights defenders (IPHRDs), and supported local advocacy campaigns. **The organisation played a key role in influencing Nepal's National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights**, endorsed in December 2023, integrating vital protections such as commitments to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and meaningful participation.

LAHURNIP's advocacy led to tangible local-level impacts. Local governments in

western Nepal—especially in Kailali and Bardiya districts—have officially recognised the Tharu Indigenous Peoples' traditional governance systems, such as Barghar and Bhalamasha. Indigenous communities engaged authorities and companies on hydropower and infrastructure projects, **empowering the communities to demand accountability.**

LAHURNIP also strengthened its institutional capacity and reinforced national and international networks through collaboration with human rights institutions, local governments, and UN



Despite challenges, with KIOS support, LAHURNIP has secured key court rulings enforcing the UNGPs, ILO Conventions, and UNDRIP, achieving important progress in defending Indigenous Peoples' and human rights. LAHURNIP remains dedicated to continuing this critical work.

–Durga Mani Rai,  
Programme Coordinator

bodies. Despite challenges, with KIOS support, LAHURNIP secured key court rulings enforcing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), ILO Conventions, and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)—marking important progress in defending Indigenous Peoples' and human rights.



Photo: CJGEA

# Community-Led Resistance for Environmental Rights and Accountability

The Center for Justice, Governance and Environmental Action (CJGEA), based in Kilifi, Kenya, defends the environmental and human rights of marginalised communities affected by extractive industries along the coast. With KIOS support, CJGEA implemented an 18-month project to strengthen community participation in environmental governance and legal processes in Mombasa, Kilifi, and Kwale counties.

**O**ver 7,000 people directly benefited from increased awareness of environmental rights. Communities were trained to identify and resist harmful development projects and to engage with authorities such as NEMA and NUPEA. **Notable progress was made in the ongoing Owino Uhuru case**, with an appeal filed at the Supreme Court and a remediation team established. CJGEA

also supported the formation of environmental defender networks and helped launch the Kenya Anti-Nuclear Alliance (KANA), empowering both the Uyombo community and others to advocate for a Just Energy Transition in Kenya.

The project faced serious challenges, including threats to staff, legal delays, and interference by state agencies. In some areas, trainings were blocked, prompting CJGEA to involve media and



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**Environmental protection is not just a cause — it is a fundamental human right. CJGEA continues to stand firm in the fight for environmental justice.**

– Phyllis Omido,  
Co-Founder and Executive Director

international actors to expose the repression. Security trainings were organised for defenders in high-risk areas.

Despite these obstacles, **CJGEA strengthened grassroots capacity, raised national awareness of environmental justice, and promoted inclusive participation of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.** The experience highlighted the urgent need for state cooperation and continued community empowerment to realise the constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment.

# Voices for Justice: Defending Democracy



Photo: Information Kenya

Across diverse regions and political contexts, grassroots organisations continue to be at the forefront of defending democracy, promoting accountability, and advancing the rights of marginalised communities. In 2024, KIOS supported several remarkable organisations under the strategic focus area of Democracy and Rule of Law. These grantees—working in Kenya, Uganda, Sri Lanka, and Nepal—embody the power of citizen-led organising, legal advocacy, and inclusive governance in contexts where access to rights and justice remains unequal.

Through the grants that ended in 2024, **7,839 individuals (67% women)** took part in public

decision-making processes, and over **30,000 people** accessed justice through legal aid and mediation. In Kenya, [IFA](#)'s civic education and dialogue forums **mobilised rural communities to engage in governance** and demand accountability from duty bearers. BIRUDO in Uganda **resolved land disputes affecting hundreds through legal aid and mediation**, while LAHURNIP in Nepal **supported Indigenous communities** in securing local laws recognising their traditional self-governance systems.

In Sri Lanka, [TSA](#) built youth leadership and supported Social Justice Cooperatives that **successfully influenced local policies**

**and infrastructure development.** [PEaCE](#)'s awareness-raising led to increased reporting of child abuse cases, reflecting improved understanding of children's rights. Meanwhile, [PEMA](#) and [CFF](#) in Kenya **expanded advocacy for gender and sexual minorities** and helped galvanise support for civil society legislation, including high-level commitments from UN and donor agencies.

The following examples highlight the work of KIOS grantees, TSA and IFA, showcasing their **efforts to strengthen the rule of law, foster participation, and challenge exclusion from the local to the national level.**



Photo: The Social Architects (TSA)

## Building Social Justice Cooperatives in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, *The Social Architects (TSA)* is revitalising participatory democracy and local economies through the creation of Social Justice Cooperatives (SJs). Since 2019, TSA has mobilised rural communities across 60 villages to assert their rights and demand transparency from local authorities.

**W**ith support from KIOS, TSA established 19 active SJs in 10 districts, conducting 885 field meetings that engaged over 14,000 people. These cooperatives became platforms for civic education, legal empowerment, and democratic participation. Members received training on the Right to Information Act, SDG goals, and human rights law. Importantly, **SJC representatives took**



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Our communities have started to speak the language of rights. The SJs enable people once silenced by fear and marginalisation to engage with power structures on their own terms.

–Sherine Xavier,  
Executive Director

part in 45 local government meetings, marking a significant shift towards inclusive governance.

Youth participation was a key component of the initiative. TSA set up 20 Children’s Shadow Pradeshiya Sabhas (CSPS), reaching over 7,000 children—many of whom were the sons and daughters of SJC members. These youth bodies explored local governance and justice, ensuring that the next generation develops the confidence and knowledge to influence decision-making.



Photo: InformAction Kenya

# Mobilising Grassroots for Democratic Accountability in Kenya

In Kenya, *InformAction (IFA)*—a women-led human rights organisation—works to transform rural and marginalised communities into active agents of change. Founded in 2010, IFA supports local organising, civic education and rights-based action through its network of over 300 Community Action Teams (CATs) and Community Action Journalists (CAJs), who document human rights violations, organise civic actions and amplify local voices.

**W**ith KIOS support, IFA conducted **20 mobile advocacy forums and 8 dialogue meetings** between communities and duty bearers.

These participatory spaces created opportunities for residents to learn about their rights, speak out against injustice, and directly engage

decision-makers. **The project also catalysed 28 civic actions**—including peaceful protests and petitions—9 of which were directly supported by CATs under the KIOS-funded programme. In addition, legal support was provided to communities facing human rights violations.

IFA's work is grounded in Kenya's progressive

 Kenya



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**Our work proves that when communities speak truth to power, change is inevitable.**

– Winnie Masai,  
Executive Director

2010 Constitution, which promotes citizen participation. However, persistent structural barriers continue to limit access to information and participation. IFA's grassroots strategy—built around film, community discussion, and local journalism—is helping dismantle these barriers.

The project's impact is visible: **increased grassroots participation, improved service delivery, and growing awareness of constitutional rights.** Communities have embraced new advocacy tools and are more confident in demanding justice and transparency.

# From the Margins to the Mainstream: Equality Through Local Action



At the heart of KIOS work is a commitment to advancing equality and protecting the rights of marginalised communities. In 2024, KIOS supported a diverse set of grantee organisations working to dismantle discriminatory structures and practices through grassroots mobilisation, legal advocacy, and inclusive dialogue. From challenging societal stigma in Sri Lanka to confronting gendered citizenship laws and advocating for the rights of sex workers in Nepal, these organisations embody the strength of community-driven human rights work.

Despite these obstacles, grantees achieved significant results. Across the supported projects, **hundreds of rights-holders and civil society actors gained advocacy skills**

**and built sustainable support networks.** In Sri Lanka, Équité trained gender and sexual minorities in all nine provinces, strengthening their ability to advocate for rights in hostile environments. In Nepal, CAPN **empowered stateless people to demand recognition**, while SUS established groundbreaking Dalit queer networks and brought visibility to a community long excluded from both the Dalit and LGBTQIA+ rights movements.

Female sex workers in Nepal gained a stronger voice through FAITH, which trained grassroots organisations to advocate for protection and access to services. In Kenya, PEMA expanded the capacity of gender and sexual minorities to engage in policy dialogue

and public advocacy. Meanwhile, INHURED **strengthened Indigenous rights** work in Nepal by linking grassroots defenders with national and international allies, contributing to a more resilient civil society.

Together, these organisations have built strong networks, increased community resilience, and advanced the rights of some of the most marginalised groups. Their successes demonstrate **the power of grassroots mobilisation and inclusive advocacy** to break down discrimination and promote equality. In the following sections, we will take a closer look at the impactful work of Équité and CAPN exploring how their innovative approaches are driving lasting change.



# Advancing LGBTQIA+ Rights in Sri Lanka

Photo: Équité

*Équité*, a young and rapidly growing organisation founded in 2017 and registered in 2019, works to eliminate discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people in Sri Lanka through education, community mobilisation, and advocacy. In 2024, *Équité* launched a nationwide Training of Trainers (TOT) programme, initially aiming to train 108 youth leaders. The results far exceeded expectations: 358 local trainers and 128 young LGBTQIA+ leaders were trained across all nine provinces.

**T**he initiative included **12 training sessions, four community engagement events**, and the publication of a **Q&A booklet**. Another key achievement was the launch of a **dedicated helpline**, which provided psychosocial support to **71 individuals** and has since become a permanent service within the organisation's work.

The organisation also strengthened relations with local police by conducting targeted **human rights and sensitivity training sessions** aimed at addressing bias and misinformation about the LGBTQIA+ community.



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**This journey highlighted the critical role of adaptability and robust internal policies in achieving long-term success. Thanks to its bold efforts, *Équité* is now recognised as a visible and trusted voice for LGBTQIA+ rights in Sri Lanka.**

**- H.K.M Thushara Manoj Kumara,  
Chairperson**

This work took place in a highly challenging national context marked by economic crisis, restricted freedoms, and shortages of medication, particularly affecting trans communities. Despite these barriers, *Équité* has remained resilient and adaptive.



# Fighting Statelessness and Gender Discrimination in Nepal

KIOS grantee *The Citizenship Affected People's Network (CAPN)* addresses one of Nepal's most persistent human rights issues: gender-discriminatory nationality laws that leave many stateless—especially women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and minorities. Founded by stateless people, CAPN was registered in 2021 and has grown into a vital advocacy force for a future where no one is stateless in Nepal.

**W**ith KIOS support, CAPN established five local coalitions in six districts, mobilising 85 affected individuals to push for citizenship reforms. Over 125 stateless people were trained in advocacy, and two comprehensive manuals were produced covering nationality law, human rights obligations, and advocacy tools—resources now used nationwide. In recognition of its impact, Executive Director **Deepti Gurung** received the 2024 Nansen

**Refugee Award for Asia Pacific and the Women's Refugee Commission's Voices of Courage Award.**

CAPN engages directly with government authorities, resulting in tangible successes such as individuals receiving citizenship. It also amplifies its message through podcasts, legal fellowships, public events, and participation in international forums.

Nepal remains one of only 25 countries where women cannot pass citizenship to their children,



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By centering the voices of those directly affected by statelessness and discriminatory laws, CAPN was able to make their advocacy efforts more authentic and impactful.

– **Deepti Gurung**,  
Executive Director

reflecting structural gender inequality. CAPN challenges this through community-driven advocacy grounded in lived experience, building networks, and fostering solidarity.

By combining grassroots mobilisation, strategic legal advocacy, and public awareness, CAPN embodies the strategic focus of KIOS of Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality—showing how affected communities can drive meaningful change in the fight for citizenship and human rights.



# Snapshots from KIOS Activities

KIOS  
Kansalaikijärjestöjen  
ihmisasiantuntijakeskus

## Amplifying Voices of Human Rights Defenders

In 2024, KIOS continued to promote global human rights through targeted advocacy and communications, ensuring the voices of human rights defenders were heard in Finland and internationally. KIOS actively engaged in national policy discussions by participating in key Finnish advisory groups such as the Development Policy Committee and the Advisory Board for International Human Rights Affairs. Through Fingo and in collaboration with SETA and Väestöliitto, KIOS trained Finnish CSOs on strengthening their Human Rights Based Approach, in particular regarding marginalised groups that encounter intersectional discrimination, in a training that gathered around 25 NGO workers from Finland.

Internationally, KIOS elevated grassroots voices through multilateral forums like the Team Europe Democracy Network and supported advocacy related to major development projects in East Africa. Throughout the year, KIOS stood in solidarity with human rights organisations working in difficult contexts, highlighting how their local insights shape global discourse on justice, equality, and accountability.

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**Internationally, KIOS elevated grassroots voices through multilateral forums.**



## Raising Awareness of Human Rights in Finland

Through events, campaigns, and partnerships, KIOS contributed to broader awareness of human rights challenges around the world. During Pride Month, KIOS marched in Helsinki Pride and published blog stories highlighting the experiences of LGBTQIA+ activists. At the World Village Festival, KIOS hosted a discussion with grantee Reena Lama from Nepal, drawing 170 attendees to a conversation on sex workers' rights.

KIOS also collaborated on campaigns such as **“Toimi, koska voit”**, advocating for the protection of civil society. In addition, KIOS took part in joint advocacy efforts by organisations, for example in support of the corporate responsibility directive, by participating in joint petitions and a demonstration. The joint campaign by development organisations **“Suomi ei käännä selkäänsä”** continued its advocacy work in 2024, and as part of the campaign, KIOS emphasised the importance of supporting human rights and

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**KIOS work in 2024 helped increase awareness of marginalised communities' rights.**

the work of human rights defenders, for example during the European Parliament elections and the government's framework and budget sessions.

The campaigns highlighted the work of human rights defenders, and emphasised the importance of an open civic space, corporate responsibility of private businesses, upholding human rights also at times of conflict, ending racial discrimination, and ensuring the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance. These public efforts reinforced the organisation's role as a bridge between Finnish audiences and global human rights movements.

## Strong Digital Presence and Media Engagement

KIOS reached over 140,000 people through digital communications in 2024. Its active presence on platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook enabled consistent engagement with a broad audience, while ethical considerations led to reduced use of X (formerly Twitter). Blogs, updates on the annual report, and stories from grantees provided in-depth perspectives on the state of human rights in East Africa and South Asia.

KIOS also secured visibility in Finnish media. Grantee voices were featured in Maailma.net and Fingo's channels, while KIOS staff contributed expert commentary in publications like Kehitys magazine and Helsingin Sanomat, Finland's leading newspaper.



Photo: KIOS

## Advancing the Rights-Based Development

Across all advocacy and communications work, KIOS remained committed to a rights-based and intersectional approach. KIOS work in 2024 helped increase awareness of marginalised communities' rights, supported inclusive policy processes, and expanded civil society's role in democratic development.

By fostering partnerships, sharing knowledge, and keeping human rights defenders at the center, KIOS strengthened both its impact and its public voice nationally and globally.

# Finance and Administration 2024

## Enhanced Financial Oversight and Resource Management

In 2024, KIOS effectively managed €1.75 million in funding from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of its four-year €7 million grant, alongside a €2.86 million EU-funded project in Kenya, of which 47% remained unspent by year-end. Financial relationships with related parties remained minimal and transparent, with standard compensation practices for staff and no payments to board members. To further strengthen financial governance, KIOS developed a comprehensive internal financial management guide and introduced new procurement guidelines applicable both internally and to grantees, contributing to improved consistency and accountability in financial operations.

## Strengthened Institutional Governance and Risk Management

KIOS advanced its administrative systems significantly in 2024, guided by a programmatic review conducted by KPMG. In response to the

review's recommendations, KIOS implemented several key reforms: an organisational-level risk matrix was introduced, and the Risk Management Manual was updated, expanded, and translated into English to improve usability. Updates to key internal policies, including Human Resources and the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), aligned operations with international standards. The launch of an anonymous online whistleblowing channel enhanced internal accountability mechanisms and encouraged safer reporting.

## Improved Grantmaking Practices and Programme Resilience

To ensure more transparent and equitable grant decisions, KIOS introduced a collaborative early-stage grant review process involving multiple teams, improving quality assurance and mitigating bias. The grant management process was also streamlined and formally documented, while grantees received updated policies and clearer procedural guidance.

## Financial Year Breakdown

**Awarded grants**  
**1 253 617 €**

**Planning, monitoring, evaluation**  
**685 769 €**

**Administration** 203 031 €

**Communications** 142 609 €

# DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS



With support from  
Finland's development  
cooperation



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Lintulahdenkatu 10  
00500, Helsinki, Finland  
kios@kios.fi  
kios.fi



@kiosfoundation