



S I E M E N P U U
f o u n d a t i o n

SiemenpUU Foundation Long Term Action Plan

Approved by the SiemenpUU board on the 23rd of April 2009

The SiemenpUU Foundation was founded in 1998 by Finnish environmental and development policy NGOs. It supports cooperation among civil society actors. The foundation is a recognised supporter and partner of the civil society movements in developing countries.

The Purpose of SiemenpUU

The objective of the SiemenpUU Foundation is to promote environmental protection, defend human rights and promote democracy, as well as to support cooperation between environmental civil society movements from different continents. The foundation supports concepts and practices to protect and sustain the multifarious forms of sustainable life and cultural forms instead of encouraging overconsumption. The conveying of and learning from the experiences in the South is a central part of the Foundation's work.

The SiemenpUU Foundation works to strengthen civil societies in the South to advocate in favour of their environment as well as to enhance environmental protection both in the South and North.

SiemenpUU is an expert in the central themes of the projects it supports. It promotes cooperation between civil society movements in the South and North through its work.

Work in context

At the turn of this decade the worsening state of the global environment is accelerating despite many good intentions. The most recent information about accelerated climate change and the destruction of ecosystems requires deep and widespread social change.

Environmental degradation is caused mainly by the modern industrial culture with the economy being based on constant growth, increasing inequality, and seeing nature solely as a financial and technical resource. SiemenpUU Foundation aims to highlight and tackle the aforementioned underlying reasons behind these environmental problems.

Project support

SiemenpUU's support to NGOs in developing countries focuses on sustainable use of natural resources and strengthening the democratic decision-making mechanisms serving natural resource management. The projects supported emphasize, alongside the environmental and climate themes, empowering the communities, creating ecologically and socially sustainable practices and supporting civil society.

Siemenpuu has seven ongoing cooperation programmes through which financial support is mainly channelled. The cooperation programmes aim at long-standing cooperation with Siemenpuu's partners from the South, while emphasizing interaction based on equality. The content and practises of the programmes are developed together with each cooperation partner. If resources increase, new cooperation programmes could be considered. However, strengthening current programmes is the priority.

Approximately 10 to 30 per cent of available annual project funds are channelled to projects outside of the cooperation programmes. With these unallocated funds Siemenpuu enables new ideas, meeting unforeseen needs and developing partnerships. Initiatives that are topical are welcomed especially from the southern partners of the Foundation's founding organisations. There are two application deadlines for these initiatives per year. In addition, if funds allow, further project proposals in certain chosen and restricted areas outside the cooperation programmes may be explored.

The administrative aspect of project funding is continually being refined, with fewer resources devoted to it especially within cooperation programmes. Furthermore, Siemenpuu aims at increasing effort towards public awareness and thematic cooperation which can also be enabled through the project support (such as South-South exchange).

Cooperation programmes

In the cooperation programmes the nature and method of cooperation/partnership are based in their own local context and thus the programmes differ distinctly from each other. The common goal of the cooperation programmes is to reconcile the causes of environmental problems, promote environmental protection and deepen the thematic environmental dialogue between the South and North. The objective of the cooperation programmes is also to support the interaction and dialogue between the southern partners themselves.

1. The Indonesia cooperation programme supports the work of individual organisations, people's movements and research institutes for sustainable use and the protection of forest regions, and the networking and strengthening of these actors. The cooperation aims at halting the loss of Indonesian forests, and supporting the marginalized groups in protecting their own environment. The focusing of the project support in Indonesia is assisted by a Finnish-Indonesian expert group (Indonesia Working Group IWG). The groups supported by Siemenpuu in Indonesia gather annually in a partnership meeting.

2. The India Adivasi cooperation programme's cooperation partner is the National Adivasi Alliance (NAA). The objective of the programme is to promote forest communities' environmental rights and to strengthen their possibilities to participate in decision-making on forests and environment. The programme aims at encouraging the Adivasi world view and culture in decision-making regarding the Adivasi. The NAA is a coordination network of the Adivasi NGOs supported by Siemenpuu. Support is channelled to the projects of the member organisations of the network and their joint campaigns to protect the Adivasi way of life and environment.

3. South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy -network (SADED) operating from India aims at promoting ecological democracy dialogues rising from local to global level in various states, complementing them by supporting local activists in their own actions for ecological democracy and self governance (*swaraj*). Project support is channelled to activities of the SADED network.

4. The India Tamil Nadu cooperation programme aims at supporting projects at the community level in the southernmost state of India in order to strengthen sustainable livelihoods with regard to the comprehensive ecosystem formed by mountain forests, farm field plains suffering from drought and coastal areas. The projects mostly concern organic farming and the use of local environmental knowledge for sustaining sustainable lifestyles. The cooperation programme supports both the individual organisations' projects and their networks. The focus of the Tamil Nadu support is assisted by a working group formed by local cooperation partners, the Tamil Nadu Core Team.

5. The Mali cooperation programme partner is the NGO Mali Folkecenter-Nyetaa (MFC-Nyetaa). The aim of MFC is to increase the capacity of local people in protecting their environment. The cooperation programme supports MFC work in the most forested southern province of Mali, Sikasso and its village organisations, and strengthening their Sigida Nyetaa movement. At the national level support is channelled to strengthening the environmental movement by organizing a yearly National Environmental Forum in Bamako. Support is granted also to Sigida Nyetaa committees' village level environmental projects, in which environmental protection is connected to improving livelihoods.

6. The cooperation programme in the Mekong region was started in early 2009. The aim of the cooperation programme is to fight climate change by promoting an energy policy in the Mekong region based on sustainable and decentralized renewable energy sources. The network also aims at preventing environmental and human rights abuses which are connected to current regional energy politics. The cooperation partner, Mekong Energy and Ecology Network (MEE Net) is a network established by two Thai NGOs: Foundation for Ecological Recovery and Palang Thai. The network is being broadened to cover the whole of Mekong region. The programme supports alternative research of activist-researchers and their advocacy work for sustainable energy policy in the Mekong countries: Burma, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam and China.

7. The Latin America cooperation programme was started in early 2009. The aim of the programme is to study the effects of large scale monocultures and to support sustainable alternatives to them. Programme support is channelled both to individual local projects in monoculture regions as well as regional advocacy work. Cooperation partners include Aliança dos povos da floresta ó an alliance operating in Brazilian Amazons, Friends of the Earth Latin America and the Caribbean (ATALC), Acción por la Biodiversidad and the World Rainforest Movement.

All cooperation programmes have their own working groups in Finland consisting members of the Siemenpuu board and other activists. These working groups act together with project coordinators in grading and identifying project proposals, monitoring projects and supporting public relations work in Finland. Once a year a cooperation programme meeting to support information sharing between all of Siemenpuu's cooperation programmes, and to examine the effectiveness and content of the programmes is called by the board and the working groups.

Each cooperation programme is evaluated at least every five years, at which point the necessity of the cooperation programme and its thematic relevance may be reassessed.

Siemenpuu aims to deepen the cooperation so that it becomes a dialogue between the southern and northern activists, which in turn redefines the prevailing concepts of development, cooperation and environment.

Public Relations

Siemenpuu's public relation activities aim to raise awareness in Finland of issues advocated by and the projects that it supports as well as environmental challenges in the South. In addition the aims of public relations work is to share in Finland information, experiences and methodological lessons learned from Siemenpuu's partners in the South.

Information collected in the work supported by Siemenpuu is provided to Finnish development policy discussions and within NGOs and other civic actors. The objective is to bring alternative views to Finnish development policy and to promote common positive thinking on development cooperation. Public relations activities also stress environmental situations and realities faced by the projects and programmes supported. Siemenpuu also aims to communicate to the Finnish public environmental views and alternative lifestyles from the South and to challenge Northern consumerism. Dialogue between South and North is promoted.

Internationally Siemenpuu aims to promote cooperation between its Southern partners, assisting the exchange of information and experiences and enabling the encounter of various realities.

Information is disseminated via Siemenpuu's website as well as through comprehensive theme publications published approximately every second year, other publications, and various art forms and events. Research work is also developed together with the Southern partners.

Personnel resources

The founding organisations of Siemenpuu Foundation form a council that annually elects the Siemenpuu board. The board steers the strategic development of the Foundation with individual board members participating in more detailed planning, particularly, in cooperation programme working groups. Chairmanship of the board is a remunerated position of responsibility, which enables a fuller participation of the board in the development of the work of the foundation.

Core groups of the cooperation programme working groups are nominated by the board, but in the sphere of the activities and information work of the groups there is a larger group of representatives of the founding organisations and other activists and experts.

Siemenpuu office staff increase as the activities of the Foundation increase. An increase in staff allows more focused responsibilities. The content and information work of the foundation is increased, which is taken into account when recruiting more staff. Also possibilities for thematic work of the staff are improved.

Fund-raising

Core funding of the foundation is received from the official development cooperation funds of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (NGO support). Three year funding agreements will be signed with the ministry (next period 2010 ó 2012). Other fund-raising is done as resources allow.