

FORUM CIV.

**POLICY
PLATFORM**

2024 - 2033

ForumCiv Policy Platform 2024-2033

The strengthening and promotion of democracy is a prerequisite for a fairer distribution of common resources and a reduction in poverty. This is happening around the world as people come together to assert their rights and organize to change their lives. *Therefore, ForumCiv works as a platform for people's organization and a strong civil society.*

The ForumCiv Policy Platform 2024–2033 is a governing vision document decided by the annual meeting in 2023. The Policy Platform describes ForumCiv's vision, values, purpose, and roles and how ForumCiv puts these into practice.

Scope of application: ForumCiv's work is guided by its vision and values. As members of ForumCiv, you support the Policy Platform.

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Decided by: Annual Meeting 2023

Period: January 2024 - December 2033

Vision

A just and sustainable world where all people have the power to effect change.

Theory of Change



ForumCiv – organisations collaborating for a just and sustainable world.

Strengthening marginalised people to claim their rights.
Advocating for change.

To promote and defend human rights and democracy through a diverse and independent civil society.

A just and sustainable world where all people have the power to effect change.

ForumCiv's core values

A just and sustainable world...

Global justice means that resources and welfare are distributed so that the most deprived people in the world have dignified living conditions. This is not primarily about growth but is a distribution issue. Therefore, prevailing privileges and power structures must be questioned and changed, so that the world's resources are distributed more fairly between countries, groups, and people.

In order for the change to be both effective and sustainable, ForumCiv and its member organizations work rights-based – which means actively working for popular participation and a rights focus. Those who live with the consequences of local or global injustice (the rights holders) should be the ones who identify the problem, develop the solution, and drive the change. ForumCiv and the member organizations must leave room for the rights holders and work in an equal partnership, with awareness of and efforts against the colonial history that lives on in injustice and prejudice.

ForumCiv believes that it is no longer enough to work for power and resources to be distributed more fairly, we must also include climate justice and a just transition to an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable society. The climate crisis leads to those who have contributed least to environmental degradation – the poorest countries, groups, and people – are the worst affected, increasing already existing social, political, and economic inequalities. Climate justice must therefore be an integral part of context analysis, project development, and various priorities that ForumCiv and the member organizations make.

ForumCiv works for an equal world where all people can freely make their choices and have their rights fulfilled, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or gender expression, class, disability, political ideology, religion or other belief, and age.

... where all people have the power to effect change.

Functioning democratic institutions; free, regular elections; and free media are some of the basic prerequisites for democracy but are not enough to achieve the vision that all people should have the power to effect change. Factors such as education, gender, health, safety, and livelihoods also impact the possibility of influence. ForumCiv works for deepened democracy, which means that all people should have real opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. ForumCiv and its member organizations focus on promoting active popular participation and respect for human rights, as well as counteracting all forms of discrimination.

ForumCiv believes that democracy is an ongoing process that must be kept vibrant at different levels of society. We also believe that democracy leads to increased justice and reduced poverty. When more people can assert their rights and be involved in making decisions that affect their lives, the decisions made are better for more people and lead to resources being distributed more fairly and sustainably.

A pluralistic civil society enables people to effect change.

Civil society plays a key role in the process of change.

Civil society is a broad and complex constellation groups with different focus, size, and interest. The fact that civil society is pluralistic has a value in and of itself, not least in enabling different groups in society to be heard and influence the political agenda. ForumCiv works for a just and sustainable world where all people have the power to effect change. When people come together to demand their rights and participate in developing democracy, possibilities for fairer distribution of resources increase while poverty decreases. We believe that a civil society with great diversity is fundamental to allowing a larger group to be heard and be an active force that contributes to sustainable development.

Equal partnerships strengthen democracy and human rights.

ForumCiv's Swedish member organizations and the local partner organizations together implement rights-based development projects, as well as exchange ideas and experiences, in a joint effort to influence changes towards a more just and sustainable world. ForumCiv, the member organizations and the local partner organizations also strengthen each other through cooperation and exchange of experience. To work rights-based requires an equal partnership that gives space to the local partner organizations and rights holders to plan, make decisions about, and act for change.

Civil society enriches the debate on development, democracy, and human rights.

ForumCiv and its member organizations work for human rights and democracy, in many different parts of the world and with a focus on a variety of issues that include and go beyond the three development perspectives: gender equality, environment & climate justice, and conflict sensitivity & the do-no-harm principle. ForumCiv and its member organizations contribute to a rich and multifaceted discussion in Sweden, on long-term and sustainable development and towards deepened democracy and respect for human rights.

Group discussions during ForumCiv Liberia's women's land rights conference.



ForumCiv's Purpose and Roles

ForumCiv is a politically and religiously unaffiliated Swedish member-based civil society organization that works globally. Our purpose is to empower people living in marginalization, who organize to claim their rights and advocate for change that contributes to a just and sustainable world. ForumCiv and the member organizations cooperate whenever possible and our respective activities complement and reinforce each other.

ForumCiv is a platform for exchange of experiences and joint advocacy. We are an influential voice on development issues and promote the role of civil society in fostering democracy and human rights. We know that, through civil society, people can change both their own lives and society at local, regional, national, and global levels.

The Roles of ForumCiv are:

- (1) **To empower people who organize to demand their human rights, all over the world.** This is done primarily through financial support to member organizations and their partner organizations, as well as through access to capacity development for everyone who works within the member and partner organizations, and ForumCiv.
- (2) **To spread knowledge and encourage commitment to changes that contribute to a just and sustainable world.** This is done in collaboration between ForumCiv and the member organizations and focuses on both decision-makers and the general public, primarily in Sweden and the EU.

ForumCiv and its member organizations know that broad support is needed to achieve a just and sustainable world. ForumCiv and the member organizations therefore share information and experiences with strategic actors, such as other civil society groups, donors, academics, the private sector, and Swedish decision-makers who drive Swedish policy in relevant bodies.

This is how ForumCiv puts its values into practice

We work for lasting change

In order to put ForumCiv's values into practice and achieve lasting change, we mainly focus on **rights-based work**, with a **holistic perspective**, and by organizing and **strengthening civil society capacity**. We also want to be a **learning organization** that preserves and expands its knowledge and can adapt the work to changes in the context, and thus become better at empowering people around the world to demand their human rights, and to spread knowledge and encourage commitment to changes that contribute to a just and sustainable world.

Rights-based work entails actively working with the fulfilment of human rights, active participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency. Active participation means that rights holders, organized within the framework of civil society, are the ones who lead the processes of change. Working for non-discrimination means challenging unfair power structures and for all individuals to have full access to their rights. To understand how and when people's rights and freedoms are restricted, one must

make visible how power and privileges are systematically distributed unequally in different contexts. Finally, transparency is an important democratic component needed in governance and partnerships between rights holders, civil society organizations, duty bearers and other relevant actors.

In order to obtain a **holistic perspective** (where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts), analyses of the context must consider factors that are of particular importance for development. ForumCiv includes the three development perspectives: gender equality, environment & climate justice, and conflict sensitivity & do-no-harm principles. These perspectives allow us to view our projects and programs (with their respective areas of focus) from multiple angles, to thoroughly understand different contexts, and fairly analyse power relations that affect rights holders, ensuring that no one is left out. By analysing our projects/programs from these three perspectives, we can better understand how they interact and relate to each other. Should it prove necessary or appropriate, ForumCiv may add additional development perspectives in the future.

Women that are part of the Aremos Paz project learn about the coffee growing process in Huila, Colombia.



ForumCiv believes that civil society organizations have a central role to play in the work for a just and sustainable world, therefore we work to **strengthen civil society's capacity**. Here too, it is important to have an equal partnership between ForumCiv, the member organizations, and the partner organizations, and an understanding that all partners can learn a lot from each other. For ForumCiv, it is particularly important to promote opportunities for organizing and to strengthen democratic forces within civil society. We see three functions as particularly important for civil society to contribute to democratization and development:

1. To influence and monitor that the state takes its responsibility to fulfil the rights of individuals.
2. To support organizing and provide space for popular participation, including to add issues to the political agenda.
3. To be a place where people practice how to make democratic decisions and demand accountability.

ForumCiv strives to improve its roles within development cooperation. We ensure that we follow our vision and values, that we achieve the desired positive results together with our member organizations and their partner organizations, and that we do not impede the work of those with whom we collaborate. We are therefore a **learning organization** that documents its knowledge and has established mechanisms that can capture new lessons learned through the work. This includes not only exchanges with member organizations and their partner organizations, but also evaluations of policies, systems, and methods to improve and ensure that the work remains effective. Finally, we also develop strategic plans and adjust these plans to relevant changes in the context identified through regular context analyses.