



World Alliance for Citizen Participation

A Free Weekly Electronic Newsletter Promoting Civic Existence, Expression & Engagement

Please send contributions, comments and questions to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org)

# e-CIVICUS

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CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

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**ABOUT e-CIVICUS**  
The CIVICUS weekly electronic publication is keeping tens of thousands of people informed of the developments taking place in civil society, the factors that are affecting them and the impact they are having on creating an informed and knowledgeable civil society.

**e-CIVICUS WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS**  
e-CIVICUS offers a useful channel through which you and your organisation can share your news, publicise your events and articulate the issues you face. Please send us your contributions by Monday for publication in the coming week to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org). All contributions must focus on civil society issues or have a civil society angle. To read the contribution guidelines, [click](#)

## South Asia special issue!

This is a special issue of e-CIVICUS focussed on South Asia. About once a month, e-CIVICUS will focus on one region of the world so that it can be covered in detail. We will announce the next special issue soon. Your suggestions may be sent to [editor@civicus.org](mailto:editor@civicus.org)

## FROM THE DESK OF CIVICUS' SECRETARY GENERAL



### It takes 851,688 villages

By Ingrid Srinath, Civicus Secretary General

Much has been made of the economic growth of South Asia, and India in particular, this past decade. We have been repeatedly told of the millions being lifted out of poverty by GDP growth rates between 5 per cent and 8 per cent per year. Phrases like 'begging bowl' and 'Hindu rate of growth' gave way to 'IT superpower' and 'nuclear arms race'. A monarchy was overthrown, as were military dictatorships. The news headlines listed growing numbers of billionaires, malls, mobile phones and supermodels. Proof positive, it might seem, of the liberating impact of open markets and untrammelled capitalist models.

[Read more...](#)

### Letter to the president of Kazakhstan

By Ingrid Srinath, Civicus Secretary General

I write as the Secretary General of CIVICUS: World Alliance For Citizen Participation, an international alliance of civil society with members and partners in over a hundred countries. We are greatly encouraged by the recent easing of restrictions in the media law and the changes in the election law to guarantee of representation of at least two political parties in the Parliament. It is heartening to note that civil society has been able to engage positively with government on issues of democratisation. In light of these and other positive developments, we look forward to constructive engagement with the Government of Kazakhstan on safeguarding the space for civil society and the exercise of constitutional freedoms to the ultimate benefit of the Kazakh people. *For details, [click here](#)*

### The Politics of policing in India

Maja Daruwala, Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

The police in India are a political tool of a highly politicised state. The present policing structure in India - after some 60 years of independence - remains much the same as the British left it. The colonialists created a police system that would best serve their vested interests by subjugating dissent and perpetuating their rule. *For details, [click here](#).*

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#### Civil Society Watch Monthly Bulletin

The CIVICUS e-newsletter Civil Society Watch Monthly Bulletin is an action-oriented newsletter distributed to over 7,400 people, featuring insightful interviews, updates on threats to civil society, and analyses of current situations. Read more at [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org).

### South Asia: poverty eradication paradigms

By Irfan Mufti, GCAP Campaign Manager

The police in India are a political tool of a highly politicised state. The present policing structure in India - after some 60 years of independence - remains much the same as the British left it. The colonialists created a police system that would best serve their vested interests by subjugating dissent and perpetuating their rule. *For details, [click here.](#)*

### Countering terrorism and insurgency: India needs to focus on justice and good governance

By Mandeep S. Tiwana, Civil Society Watch Programme, CIVICUS

After the audacious and horrific attacks on innocent people in Mumbai, India introduced a raft of anti-terror legislation. Amendments to existing laws were passed hurriedly by Parliament to assuage popular opinion that the government was not doing enough to curb the growing incidents of terrorism in the country. The impetus for this was driven by pressure from right wing elements of India's religious majority and the middle class - both of whom are relatively immune from police misdemeanour (torture and other brutal investigation methods). *For details, [click here.](#)*

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### CIVICUS Poll Question

#### This week's question:

Civil society can make South Asia a safer region.

- a. Yes. Civil society is already making an impact here
- b. No way! The region requires divine intervention
- c. We just can't predict what's going to happen here!

To answer the question, [click here.](#)

#### Previous question:

How are you or your organisation advocating for equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes?

- a. Working with marginalised women by developing and/or supporting local empowerment programmes
- b. Petitioning or cooperating with government officials to influence legislation and electoral law
- c. Analysing development policies to include gender perspectives
- d. No, we don't work on gender equality issues

**Results:** a. - 56.3%, b. - 25%, c. - 12.5%, d. - 6.3%

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### e-CIVICUS DIALOGUES

#### Better late than never: UK Civil society gets organised to win back civil liberties

By: Kumi Naidoo, Honorary President of CIVICUS and Co-Chair, GCAP.

Ever since the so-called "war on terror" was launched in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, there has been a rollback of democratic rights, especially civil liberties throughout the world. Sadly, this global decline has been led by countries that claim to be protectors and promoters of democracy. *For details, [click here.](#)*

CIVICUS channel on YouTube:  
'Time 2 Act' Go to YouTube, [click here](#).



CIVICUS launches its 1 for 1 membership campaign

Are you on of the missing 86?

One CIVICUS member for every UN member state, that's the goal of CIVICUS' 1 for 1 Membership campaign, [click here](#).

### **Wanted: more Danny Boyles!**

By Devendra Tak, Communications and Media Manager, CIVICUS

Until a few months ago, I worked for the international Red Cross Red Crescent movement in one of the world's most disadvantaged regions: South Asia, replete with both slums and millionaires, and yes dogs too! This firsthand glimpse emphasised for me the deepening vulnerability of the region; and the reports from South Asia I've seen lately – newly ensconced in Johannesburg – have been even more frightening than anything I saw or imagined while I was in Colombo, Dhaka, Kabul, Kathmandu, Male or New Delhi. *For details, [click here](#).*

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### **JOIN e-CIVICUS - BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR**

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### **CIVIL SOCIETY NEWS**

#### **What women want - from their political leaders**

Source: Wada Na Todo Campaign, India

For the political leaders of India, Women's Day will be marked by a call to prioritise the women's agenda in their election manifestos, as outlined in the Women's Manifesto developed in consultation with 231,984 people – both men and women - across 100 parliamentary constituencies. "Education for Girls enforced by law, enactment of the Women's Reservation Bill and the stronger implementation of the Domestic Violence Act are three key demands that have emerged recurrently at the local level," says Lysa John of Wada Na Todo Abhiyan – a network for governance accountability which is coordinating for the development of an All India People's Manifesto based from local demands identified across parliamentary constituencies in 27 states of the country. *For details, [click here](#).*

#### **India people's manifesto**

Source: Lead India (of the Times of India)

Lead India (of the Times of India) is joining hands to promote the outcomes of the All India People's Manifesto process that has been organised across states, and also mobilise their readers to take part in an online campaign calling for young people to contribute their expectations from the new government - Voice Your Manifesto ([www.youtube.com/wadanatodo](http://www.youtube.com/wadanatodo)). *For details, [click here](#).*

#### **IRC provides emergency aid to fire victims at refugee camp in Nepal**

Source: International Rescue Committee (IRC)

The International Rescue Committee joined with other aid and government agencies to provide emergency aid to some 7,000 Bhutanese refugees who were left without homes, clothing and food after an accidental fire roared through their camp in eastern Nepal on March 1. The camp is one of seven that have been housing some 107,000 Bhutanese refugees for the past 17 years. The refugees are Bhutanese of Nepalese origin who were expelled from Bhutan after the government stripped them of citizenship due to their ancestry. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Bangladesh imposes YouTube block**

Source: BBC News

The video-sharing web site YouTube has been blocked by the Bangladeshi government after a recording of a meeting between the PM and army officers was posted. The meeting took place two days after a mutiny by border guards in Dhaka that left more than 70 people dead. The recordings cover about 40 minutes of a three-hour meeting and reveal how angry many in the military were at the government's handling of the crisis. YouTube had been blocked in the "national interest", officials said. Hundreds of guardsmen have been arrested in connection with the mutiny but hundreds more are still being sought. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Study finds high incidence of child marriage in India**

Source: Reuters

A study found women in India often are married before the age of 18, raising the risks of unwanted pregnancies and serious health complications despite laws against child marriages, according to a study published in The Lancet. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)**

### **Bangladeshi lawmakers urged to make MDGs a national agenda**

Source: One World South Asia

At a recent consultation in Bangladesh, the UN Millennium Campaign urged participants to demand MDGs as a fundamental right. The meeting called on parliamentarians to unite and act to ensure the speedy implementation of the development targets in local policies. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Downturn will 'set back Millennium Goals by three years'**

Source: The Guardian

The world's progress towards the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals could be pushed back by at least three years by the "financial tsunami" sweeping across the world. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS UPDATE**

### **Developing countries and the global economic and financial crisis**

Source: EU

Developing countries are being adversely affected by the global economic and financial crisis through a combination of falling export revenues, foreign direct investments and remittances as well as difficulties in credit markets and growing fiscal deficits. The poorest developing countries and states in fragile situations remain the most vulnerable, while middle income countries are also being severely hit. Coordinated actions with and towards developing countries must be part of the solution to the crisis as they will contribute to poverty reduction and global economic and political stability. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Poor countries to need Up to 700 billion dollars**

Source: Other Net

In the latest in a series of increasingly dire predictions, the World Bank Sunday warned that developing countries may need up to 700 billion dollars in external financing this year due to the squeeze in global credit markets which has seen a dramatic plunge in private investment. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Plead for wealthy governments to create a "vulnerability fund"**

Source: New York Times

Robert B. Zoellick, president of the World Bank, pleaded for wealthy governments to create a "vulnerability fund" and to set aside a fraction of what they spend on stimulating their own economies to help others. "This global crisis needs a global solution and preventing an economic catastrophe in developing countries is important for global efforts to overcome this crisis," Mr. Zoellick said in a statement. "We need investments in safety nets, infrastructure, and small and medium-size companies to create jobs and to avoid social and political unrest." *For details, [click here](#).*

### **US downturn dragging world into recession**

Source: Truthout

The world is falling into the first global recession since World War II as the crisis that started in the United States engulfs once-booming developing nations, confronting them with massive financial shortfalls that could turn back the clock on poverty reduction by years. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **CLIMATE JUSTICE**

### **Green for all founder Van Jones to join Obama administration as special advisor for green jobs**

Source: Green For All

On March 16, Van Jones will leave to become Special Advisor for Green Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). His duties will include: helping to shape and implement job-generating climate policy; working to ensure equal protection and equal opportunity in the administration's climate and energy proposals; and publicly advocating the administration's environmental and energy agenda. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Obama will intensify climate cooperation with United Nations**

Source: ENS Newswire

President Barack Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today agreed on the potential for stepped up cooperation between the United Nations and the United States on climate change. During their talks, the two leaders underscored the importance of reaching an international agreement on climate change to both save the Earth and promote sustainable economic recovery. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Sea level rise spells increased likelihood of disaster for the world's poorest people**

Source: Oxfam

New forecasts, announced at an international meeting of climate scientists in Copenhagen predict a rise in sea levels of one metre or more by the end of the century, which would spell disaster for the some of the world's poorest people. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **Better capabilities for small Bangladeshi NGOs**

Despite decades of poverty reduction and the heavy presence of NGOs in Bangladesh, 80% of civil society development funding still goes to approximately 10% of the NGOs who work in the country. The rest – 90% - are small, locally-based grassroots NGOs who often run microfinance and service

delivery projects. Although small NGOs have the advantage of understanding the realities faced by the most disadvantaged section of the population, they face difficulties in translating their ideas into action. Within the existing funding mechanisms, small NGOs have very limited access to the resources of major donors. In addition they often lack institutional capacities – a major stumbling block for them to manage and implement development initiatives effectively. This is especially vital for people in disaster-prone river basin areas. The SMILING Project, run by PRIP Trust with support from INTRAC, is creating organisational development opportunities to improve the capacities of these small innovative NGOs. Over five years (2007-2011) PRIP Trust will work with small NGOs in five areas of the country on gender, governance, and disaster risk reduction. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Gender budgeting analysis for the advancement of women's rights: a training manual**

Source: Eldis

This training manual has been developed as part of the Gender Budget Transparency and Accountability Project. The Project, which was implemented in Lagos State by DIN with financial assistance from the European Union over a 2-year period, 2006-2008, had as its principal objective, the advancement of women's rights through the use of gender budget analysis (GBA). The training manual aims to facilitate the training of individuals and groups who have limited or no knowledge of government budget processes. It also presents concise information on the key elements of GBA and practical advice on how local communities and civil society can ensure the gendering of government budgets at all levels. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## **PROFILES**



**The Asia Foundation**

### **DONOR: The Asia Foundation**

The Asia Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women's empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations. Drawing on more than 50 years of experience in Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research. With offices throughout Asia, an office in Washington, D.C., and its headquarters in San Francisco, the Foundation addresses these issues on both a country and regional level. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **MEMBER: Disha Social Organization**

Disha Social Organization is a civil society organisation working in three districts of two states of India - Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. Its field operations cover almost 0.6 million people in over 600 villages through multi-sectoral strategic interventions. Disha Social Organization was founded in 1984 in Sultanpur Chilkana area of Saharanpur district. The roots of the organisation lie in the initial hard work put in by the two young people from the adjoining Dehradun district. They arrived in the region in the early 1980s at the invitation of Cendit (Centre for Development of Instructional Technology), trying to bring about social change through media like plays, films and video. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **PARTNER: The Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO)**

The Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) is the Philippines' largest network of social development NGOs, consisting of 6 national networks and 6 regional (sub-national) networks with a total membership base of over 1,800 NGOs, people's organisations and cooperatives. The network takes advantage of its scale and synergy to influence public policy, provide leadership in Philippine civil society and increase the effectiveness of social development work in the country. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## BOOKS, REPORTS & RESOURCES

### **ASIA: Human right to peace versus racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance**

Source: Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)

A joint written statement submitted by the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC) and 163 NGOs (134 with ECOSOC status and 30 without this status) on human right to peace versus racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Countering online radicalisation: a strategy for action**

Source: The International Centre For The Study Of Radicalisation And Political Violence (ICSR)

Political extremists and terrorists are increasingly using the internet as an instrument for radicalisation and recruitment. What can be done to counter their activities? Countering Online Radicalisation examines the different technical options for making 'radical' internet content unavailable, concluding that they all are either crude, expensive or counter-productive. It sets out a new, innovative strategy which goes beyond 'pulling the plug', developing concrete proposals aimed at: Deterring the producers of extremist materials, empowering users to self-regulate their online communities, and reducing the appeal of extremist messages through education and Promoting positive messages. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Aspects of violence against women in Bangladesh**

Source: Odhikar.org. Bangladesh

Violence against women is a serious issue in Bangladesh and unfortunately, one that is neglected by various agencies of the government. Despite special criminal laws for protecting women, instances of violence against women- especially domestic violence, rape and acid attacks and dowry related violence have not decreased in any significant manner. The major reasons why women do not get justice are: access to justice, police corruption, and mismanagement of vital evidence and ignorance of the law. The number of women who experience violence – including rape, beatings, torture and murder – is high in impoverished sections of society and particularly women who live in rural areas of Bangladesh, both in domestic situations and outside the home. In addition, many women who are subjected to violence die by suicide, real or apparent. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### **Global conclave on microfinance**

New Delhi, India, 29 April 2009

Microfinance Connect will conduct its first annual global conclave on April 29, 2009 in New Delhi, India. Through its theme: 'Financing the Poor - Moving Beyond Inclusion', the conference will explore the effectiveness of microfinance services in enabling social and economic progress of clients and the community. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **4th Southern African AIDS onference**

Durban, South Africa, 31 March 2009 - 3 April 2009

Previously known as the South African AIDS (SAAIDS) conference, in 2009 the conference organisers decided to extend the reach of the conference to include the Southern African region. According to the organisers, the theme this year, "Scaling up for Success," recognises that there is an urgency to take stock of best practices in treatment and prevention and to scale these up sufficiently to begin to decrease the numbers and the impact that the epidemic is having on Southern Africa. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

### **IWRM 2009 to unite civil society leaders from across the world in India**

Bangalore, India on 25-28 June 2009

The international fundraising capacity-building organisation Resource Alliance (RA) is announcing that the 9th International Workshop on Resource Mobilisation (IWRM) will take place in Bangalore, India on 25-28 June 2009. The IWRM is an annual 4-day international workshop widely recognised as the leading training forum for fundraising capacity building of non-profits in the southern hemisphere. Attracting over 300 civil society leaders from 50 countries, it showcases best practice in resource mobilisation and sustainable fundraising techniques. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **Training on building green homes**

New Delhi, India, from 19 March 2009 to 21 March 2009

Development Alternatives is organising a training course on Building for Future: Sustainable Homes from March 19-21, 2009 in New Delhi. The three-day programme aims to equip the participants with professional expertise in designing and constructing green buildings. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## CALL FOR PAPERS, SUBMISSIONS, SURVEYS & NOMINATIONS

### **Nominate a blog for G20Voice**

G20Voice is part of an ongoing project that gives you the chance to participate, engage and influence leaders from governments, the business world, international institutions and other influential people at important global moments and events via the blogosphere. We are inviting 50 influential and knowledgeable bloggers to attend the G20 Summit on April 2nd in London, UK, where they will get unprecedented access to world leaders and thinkers and the chance to ask questions about the issues important to them. 20 of those bloggers will be nominated by you. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **MobileActive.org - mobile applications**

Application Deadline: 20 March 2009

MobileActive.org are updating their database of mobile applications used for health, social development, agriculture, advocacy, education, civic media, human rights, and other civil society areas. If you have or are developing a mobile application used in any area of social development, please enter it into their database. There is currently no comprehensive database of mobile applications for social development available but MobileActive.org are building it with your help as a reference for anyone interested. MobileActive.org are releasing the Mobile Applications Database in April. *For details, [click here](#).*

### **UN trust fund to end violence against women issues annual call for proposals**

Application Deadline: 17 April 2009

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) launched its global annual call for proposals to support country-level efforts to end violence against women and girls on 6 March 2009. *For details, [click here](#).*

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## APPOINTMENTS

This week, new civil society job openings have been added to the CIVICUS website. Please [click here](#).

Should you wish to publish a **New Vacancy**, please click on [Add job](#). Please add an expiry date for applications.

### **JOBS OF THE WEEK**

#### **Programme Officer**

Application Deadline: 20 March 2009  
CIVICUS Civil Society Index  
Location: Johannesburg, South Africa  
*For details, [click here](#).*

**The world's largest anti poverty alliance, the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), is seeking to recruit three full-time positions at its Global Secretariat.**

#### **GCAP Campaign Director**

*For details, [click here](#).*

#### **GCAP Mobilisation Coordinator**

*For details, [click here](#).*

#### **GCAP Global Secretariat Assistant**

*For details, [click here](#).*

These unique and challenging roles require dynamism and the flexibility to work within a diverse global anti-poverty alliance. The successful candidates can be located anywhere that enables them to work in multiple time zones using Skype, e mail and telephone to stay in touch.

See [www.whiteband.org/about-gcap/jobs](http://www.whiteband.org/about-gcap/jobs) for full job descriptions. Interested candidates should send their CV and a covering note describing their suitability for the position to: [rajiv@whiteband.org](mailto:rajiv@whiteband.org)

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