



Network for Social Democracy in Asia Activity Highlights 2017

2017 has been another fruitful year for the Network of Social Democracy in Asia gathering board representatives of political parties, policy makers, academics and youth and women organizations in the different activities. It has been a year of developing new policies for parties at the national level on health, social inclusion, the peace process, and democratic reforms while at the regional level we facilitated important discussions on alternatives to social and ecological risks of rapid urbanization, and the rise of populism and authoritarianism. We prioritized building capacities for young leaders and youth organizations and aided sister parties as they embark on modernizing party structures and reach out to more people at the grassroots through new forms of campaigning and digital activism. Exchanges and cooperation with counterparts from all over Asia and around the world have been very encouraging and fruitful. Our solidarity comforts us in the struggle amid the growing threats to democracy and continued unfair economic growth that impoverishes our people. The valuable lessons, insights and interaction from the Socdem Asia program and activities of 2017 strengthen our growing Network of Asian social democrats and progressives.



Regional Policy Agenda Development Program



Challenges and Outlook to Asian Social Democracy | 23-24 May 2017 | Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The conference brings together social democratic party representatives, policy makers and activists from across Asia to discuss these common and emerging challenges particularly on authoritarian resurgence, populist backlash and socio-economic challenges; and provided platform to draw lessons and experiences from and shape responses with fellow progressives from Asia and other parts of the world that can reinforce social democratic alternatives in the region.



Social Cities Seminar and Study Visit | 16-21 October 2017 | Seoul, South Korea

Building on earlier endeavors of Socdem Asia, particularly on the Conference “Ecological and Social Sustainability” in Ulaanbataar, the 2015 study visit to Tokyo, the seminar and study visit to Seoul, South Korea is an important continuation for Socdem Asia's policy development on progressive urban transformation. The activity provided key discussions and exposure to ongoing initiatives in Asian countries as well as in Denmark, Germany, and South Korea in prioritizing people-centered and participatory social programs alongside smart infrastructure development in cities that face challenge of rapid urbanization, congestion, pollution among other social problems. The delegation, composed of policy makers, urban planners and local government officials also observed the Third Meeting of OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth and Seoul Mayors Forum on Climate Change 2017.



Conference on Inclusive Policy Formulation | 24-26 September 2017 | Yangon, Myanmar/Burma

As a culmination to the series of round table discussions, seminars, and sectoral consultations at the national level in the project countries: Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, and the Philippines, Socdem Asia members from 12 countries in the region shared experiences on policy formulation that aggregates different interests of sectors through inclusive processes made available by party structures. Discussions also focused on content development of policies directed at responding to present challenges faced in different countries such as social protection, health and education, reform of the bureaucracy and peace process. The parties in Myanmar/Burma – DPNS and SNLD- considered the regional conference as a milestone for their parties to host an international political conference in their country following years in underground movement and in exile.



**Youth in Politics Leadership Conference of International Union of Socialist Youth
15-16 November 2017 | Penang, Malaysia**

The regional conference gathered different youth organizations in the region to share current country situation, discuss social democratic politics – its historical roots in Asian countries and outlook for social democratic forces toward the future, and to plan for activating reaching out to more social democratic-leaning youth and student organizations in the Asia Pacific. The activity also served as an opportunity for the participants to dialogue with seasoned activist-politicians in Malaysia fighting against threats to democracy and corruption in government.

Capacity Building Program



Youth Leadership Training: Organizing for Power |16-17 March 2017 | Manila, Philippines

This youth leadership training is an experience exchange and capacity building activity for members of national and local leadership of progressive youth organizations in the Philippines. The training focused on grassroots organizing skills and new forms of campaigning to reach out to millennials under the shrinking political environment in the Philippines.



Asia Pacific Campaign Forum 31 March – 3 April 2017 | Manila, Philippines

Centered on building capacities for political parties in the region, the Asia Pacific Campaign Forum gathered campaign and communications officers to learn from each other about grassroots outreach, coalition building and volunteer mobilization, digital campaigning, fundraising, polling, data analytics and campaign planning.



Political Management Training (PMT) - Batch 3
12-16 May 2017 and 28 October – 3 November 2017 | Manila, Philippines

Youth activists from Southeast Asia participated in the 3rd batch of the political management training which aimed at developing knowledge and skills of and promote social democratic values to young progressive leaders in the region; providing a platform where the young progressive leaders can network and build relations with like-minded individuals; imparting appreciation of cross-country issues and/or agenda affecting the region today; and incubating collective action or project which the young leaders can share among themselves and to their organizations. The PMT is programmatic training for young activists across the region covering thematic issues such as the ASEAN, climate change, trade; Ideology; and Skills.



Party Development Training with Voters Party
– India | 22-23 September 2017 | New Delhi, India

Building on the two previous trainings on political party development conducted by Socdem Asia in India, the third installment of the party development training was conducted with national and local leaders of the Voters Party of India and the Association for Democratic Socialism.





Message Development and Communications Training | 1-3 December 2017 | Bangkok, Thailand

The Message Development and Communications Training served as a platform to have communications persons from the different member parties and youth organizations share perspectives and experiences about the current media terrain and overall political situation in their respective countries. It also opened reflections and/or analysis on the Asian political landscape in relation to shrinking democratic space, press freedom, proliferation of fake news and growing inequality in access to information. The training discussed channels and strategies, at the national and regional levels, in promoting social democratic principles, practices and alternatives to a broader audience outside traditional political circles especially the young people.

Network Meetings

Steering Committee Meeting 3 April 2017 | Manila, Philippines

Steering Committee Planning 5 November 2017 | Pasig City, Philippines

The regular Socdem Asia Steering Committee meetings serves as a venue for updating among member organizations on emerging issues in each country and in the region, with focus on the status of examining the environment for social democracy. The Meeting was attended by Socdem Asia Steering Committee members and partners for synergized efforts to strengthen the Network.



The 2018 areas of work and activities were identified and organizational matters to be opened to all Network members were discussed including updating the Political Programme, review of the membership and structure of the Network, and enhancing relevant programs to support the Network mission of promoting social democracy.

Socdem Asia - Progressive Alliance Meeting | 25-26 May 2017 | Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

With the theme, "Social Justice and Sustainability for a Fair and Prosperous World", representatives of parties and civil society from Asia, Middle East, Europe and the Americas met in Ulaanbaatar to tackle innovations of and opportunities for social democrats, progressives and socialists to create a living environment that offers all people the potential for development and push for critical reforms and political solutions to poverty and social exclusion. The meeting comprised of different breakout sessions, panel discussions and presentations that highlighted ideas on progressive policy content and developing new strategies and forging alliances. The activity also provided space for discussion on developing situation in the Asian region and the first meeting of the newly established working group of the Progressive Alliance on Gender that followed up on the Gender Action Plan.





Bilateral Meeting with Justice Party of South Korea | 17 October 2017 | Seoul, South Korea

The Socdem Asia Steering Committee members met with the members of the Party Board of the Justice Party of Korea represented by General Secretary Shin Jangsik together with their Vice Presidents and Deputy Secretaries. Key discussions include introduction of the work of Socdem Asia in the region, the platform of the Justice Party, analysis of the economy, update on the Korean political situation after the candlelight movement protests, international work, and areas for future cooperation.

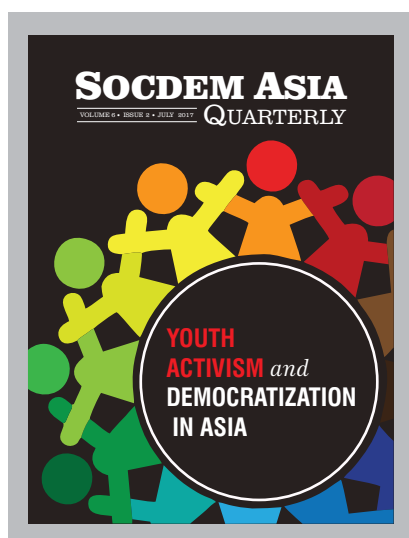
Upcoming Regional Activity



Action for Gender Equality 21-23 January 2018 | Jakarta, Indonesia

This conference is a continuing dialogue process of women empowerment experts and activists in the region to reinvigorate the women empowerment discourse and shared battles along several issues confronted by women in Asian societies. This practical and experience-based sharing aim to contribute to sharpening the women empowerment agenda of social democratic, progressive political actors. Specifically, it seeks to examine levels of engagement where to push the women empowerment agenda for gender equality and women empowerment that can create impact for women and the marginalized; and develop consensus around areas of alliance building, new forms of actions and political outlook in advancing the women empowerment gender equality agenda for and by progressive parties

Key Publications

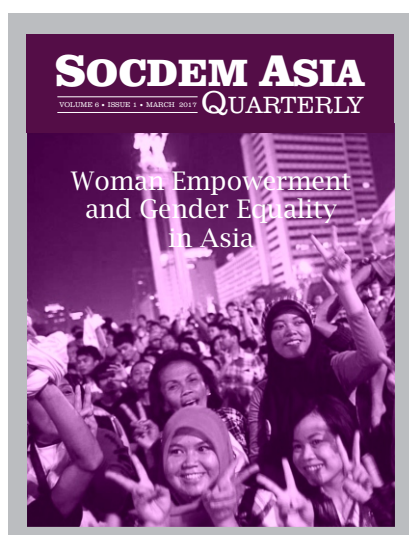


Youth Activism and Democratization in Asia

http://www.socdemasia.com/images/youth_socdem_final.pdf

Numbers alone just tell us how important the youth are: Up to 1.8 billion between the ages of 15 and 29, most of them (87 percent) in the developing world; a third of the population of societies in East Asia and South Asia. Yet, their numbers hasn't necessarily translated into actual political voice or socio-economic empowerment.

This edition of Socdem Asia Quarterly brings together perspectives of young thinkers and activists from across Asia, mapping the trajectory of youth activism in the region and beyond.

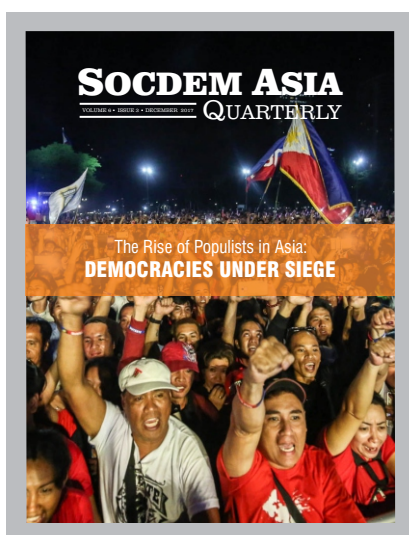


Woman Empowerment and Gender Equality in Asia

http://www.socdemasia.com/images/socdemasia_2017.pdf

Even though various studies show that greater women representation in the public sphere and labor markets contributes heavily to greater national productivity and democratic vigor, obstacles to female empowerment are still entrenched and stubborn.

This Quarterly, bringing together insights from feminist policymakers, activists and academics from across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, with contributions from India, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Timor Leste, and Sweden, aims to assess the achievements of the feminist movement and corollary efforts at advocating gender equity in recent history, particularly in the context of Asia. The aim is to shed light on a series of policy proposals and advocacies to advance gender equality and women rights.



The Rise of Populists in Asia: Democracies Under Siege

<http://www.socdemasia.com/images/populism.pdf>

Populism is in the air. And the specter of popular autocracy is haunting much of the world. In recent years, a growing number of rapidly-growing economies, with long traditional of liberal democratic rule, have gradually succumbed to temptations of populism: charismatic leaders promising overnight solutions to complex problems besetting turbo-charged modernizing nations.

The latest edition of the Quarterly brings together ideas from leading activists, thinkers and scholars across the Asia-Pacific region, shedding light on the phenomenon of populism and the challenges it presents to progressive forces and the gains of democrat.