

Strengthening civil society to promote social justice and peace – from practical experience in development cooperation

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Where wars, injustice or a weak rule of law prevail, people remained trapped in poverty and lack opportunities. Peace, social justice and sustainable development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Civil society has a key role to play in creating the necessary conditions for this – political participation, gender equality, respect for human rights and fair access to resources.

However, civil society's scope for action is diminishing at both a global and a national level; democratic participation is being curtailed. The official development discourse also focuses increasingly on so-called 'global partnerships' which aim, among other things, to involve the private sector more closely in the international agenda for sustainable development.

It is therefore all the more important to strengthen the role of civil society in the development process – it represents the interests of the population in the political and social dialogue. It voices demands such as equal opportunities, human rights, social justice and participation in politics and the economy.