



forus

**ANNUAL  
REPORT** 2023

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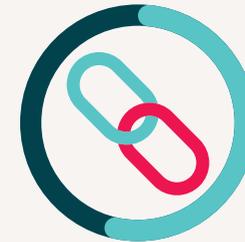


## INTRODUCTION

- Foreword by Mavalow Christelle Kalhoule, Forus Chair and Sarah Strack, Forus Director
- Forus impact in 2023

## CONNECT

- Exchanging knowledge and amplifying collective impact to drive meaningful change.
- Forus campaigns



## SUPPORT

- Capacity-development & peer-learning to enhance civil society impact in creating positive social change at national, regional and global levels



# ACCOUNTABILITY & LEARNING

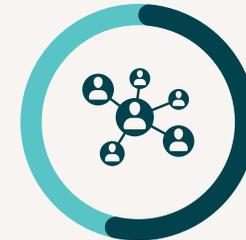
- Practicing accountability and transparency through the Forus "member voice" systems and processes



## INFLUENCE

- Agenda 2030: advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Civic space, an enabling environment and digital rights
- Financing for sustainable development: for people and planet

## FORUS GOVERNANCE



## FINANCIALS

## FORUS MEMBERS



## FORUS ANNUAL REPORT 2023 GLOBAL SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

**BY MAVALOW CRISTELLE KALHOULE,  
FORUS CHAIR AND SARAH STRACK, FORUS  
DIRECTOR.**

**As we present Forus' annual report for the year 2023, we are also reflecting on what has defined our collective efforts in the past months in a context where the polycrisis can be felt more and more acutely.**

In a world marred by conflicts, Human Rights abuses, attacks on civil society and all the "silent" crises and reprisals, the vast majority of which do not make it into the headlines; Forus intensified our efforts to demand that civil society, and in particular local civil society, is fully included in addressing these challenges, preventing looming ones, in building resilience and mending societal divisions.

Forus called attention to the fact that this can only be done if civil society is recognized as a development actor in its own right and is truly listened to (for instance through organized civil society structures) and if it can operate in an environment that will allow it to deploy its full potential.

Forus' work is rooted in its commitment to act for a world where civil society organisations meaningfully participate in decision-making processes, where sustainable development is people-centred and where the planet and commons are respected and cared for. Thus, throughout the year, Forus nurtured its culture of collaboration - which is so precious to the network - encouraging civil society platforms to "think together" and share experiences, challenges, and practical solutions. Connecting across civil society and with many other allies is at the core of Forus' DNA, and thus we strengthened existing partnerships and developed new ones. We firmly believe that the pathway to transformative change must be rooted in the diversity and agency of local civil society.

To help develop the capacity of Forus' member networks to operate to their full potential, we supported responsive, member-led initiatives grounded in local needs and realities. National and regional platforms have a unique vantage point and provide an inclusive space to reflect on common challenges and solutions, to develop capacities and to spur joint initiatives. Strengthening NGO platforms at national and regional level can multiply the impact of local actors and is paramount to sustain a vibrant local civil society. Through various initiatives, Forus helps strengthen its members' structures, but it is clear that much more support and resources are needed to truly sustain these crucial cooperation spaces.

Our influencing work also has expanded. Forus challenged systems and pushed for rights to be upheld and strengthened. We have called for more equitable and sustainable policies in financing for development, increased ambition to achieve the SDGs, more civil society participation in global governance with #UNMute, and more accountability of those in power. With initiatives such as the #MarchWithUs campaign for gender justice and # Shifting the Power – Global Voices Rising, we relayed messages which are too often unheard.

None of what is chronicled within these pages would have been possible without the dedication of our members and partners, as Forus worked to defend fundamental rights, mobilising communities and advocating for the freedom of civil society to operate safely and to lead by example. When you build bridges of solidarity, you drive change.

Looking ahead to 2024, we anticipate a special year for the Forus network, marked by the convening of its global General Assembly in Botswana, with support from the country's national NGO platform Bocongo and regional coalition SAF-CNGO. The much-awaited event will offer members a platform to share insights, strategise collectively, and chart a common path forward for the next years. We also look forward to the renewed partnerships with our main donors and partners, with whom we will continue to strengthen the network and embark on new projects on digital governance, enabling environment and leadership development.

We invite you to join us on our journey of reflection, action, learning, and preparation for what lies ahead. May the year 2024 be one of activism, optimism, kindness, and solidarity, as we continue to learn from and listen to one another, united by our shared values of moving forward together towards a more just and sustainable world.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND TRUST IN OUR NETWORK.**

**Mavalow Christelle Kalhoule, Forus Chair and Sarah Strack, Forus Director.**



**MAVALOW CHRISTELLE  
KALHOULE**  
Forus Chair



**SARAH STRACK**  
Forus Director



Restore  
Kathmandu's  
Lungs-Tundikher

आफ्नै विषयमा आफ्नै  
झन्डा उडोस्केला।

खुल्ला ठाउँलाई  
खुल्लै राखौं

PROTEST IN KATHMANDU FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

**THE FORUS NETWORK  
SERVES AS A FORCE  
FOR COLLECTIVE  
THINKING AND ACTION  
AND HAS  
STRENGTHENED ITS  
EMERGING POSITION AS  
A SIGNIFICANT ACTOR  
IN GLOBAL  
GOVERNANCE.**



**TRAINING ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

©NNNGO, FORUS MEMBER IN NIGERIA

# FORUS' CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE: 2023 IN NUMBERS



## 22.000

69 national platforms and 7 regional coalitions representing over 22,000 NGOs around the world connected and took action collectively through Forus



## 1.200+

1.200+ people attended Forus online events



## 26

26 workshops, webinars and working group meetings with simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish to ensure greater inclusiveness



## 70+

14 publications and resources in multiple languages (English, French, Spanish). Over 60 articles published in international and national media platforms in 11 countries



## 50+

A Space For Us podcast & video series: 52 people from over 30 countries shared their stories and insights



## 200+

More than 200 collaborations with over 150 allies and partners

# FORUS NETWORK: 2023 MAIN THEMES

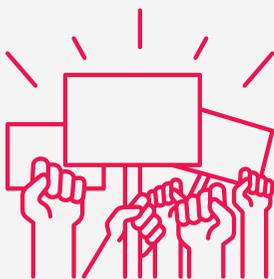
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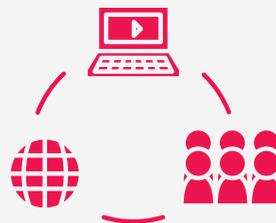
**CIVIC SPACE & PROMOTING AN  
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL  
SOCIETY**



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
(SDGS) / AGENDA 2030**



**HUMAN RIGHTS  
GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**



**CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR CIVIL  
SOCIETY**



**FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**



**CSO ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD  
GOVERNANCE**



**DIGITAL RIGHTS AND ACCESS**



**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**



**POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT (PCSD)**

# OUR GLOBAL REACH

Forus is a global civil society network uniting 69 national and 7 regional NGO networks, predominantly representing the global majority. Forus creates connections that bring together over 22,000 civil society organizations across 124 countries.

Forus brings together:

- 25 national platforms from North and Sub-Saharan Africa
- 11 national platforms from Asia
- 15 national platforms from Europe
- 12 national platforms from Latin America
- 2 national platforms from North America
- 4 national platforms from the Pacific
- 7 regional coalitions from Asia, the Pacific Islands, Western, Central & South Africa, Latin America & Europe are also part of the network.

**83% of Forus members report that their members provide services and support to their local communities. 84% of Forus members also report that their members are regularly involved in awareness-raising and public information activities, as well as advocacy activities and campaigns.**



© FORUS



69



**NATIONAL NGO PLATFORMS**

7



**REGIONAL COALITIONS**



**BEYOND ITS GLOBAL IMPACT,  
FORUS MEMBERS ALSO PLAY  
PIVOTAL ROLES AT THE NATIONAL  
AND LOCAL LEVELS, SHAPING  
INITIATIVES THAT RESONATE  
WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE  
COMMUNITIES.**

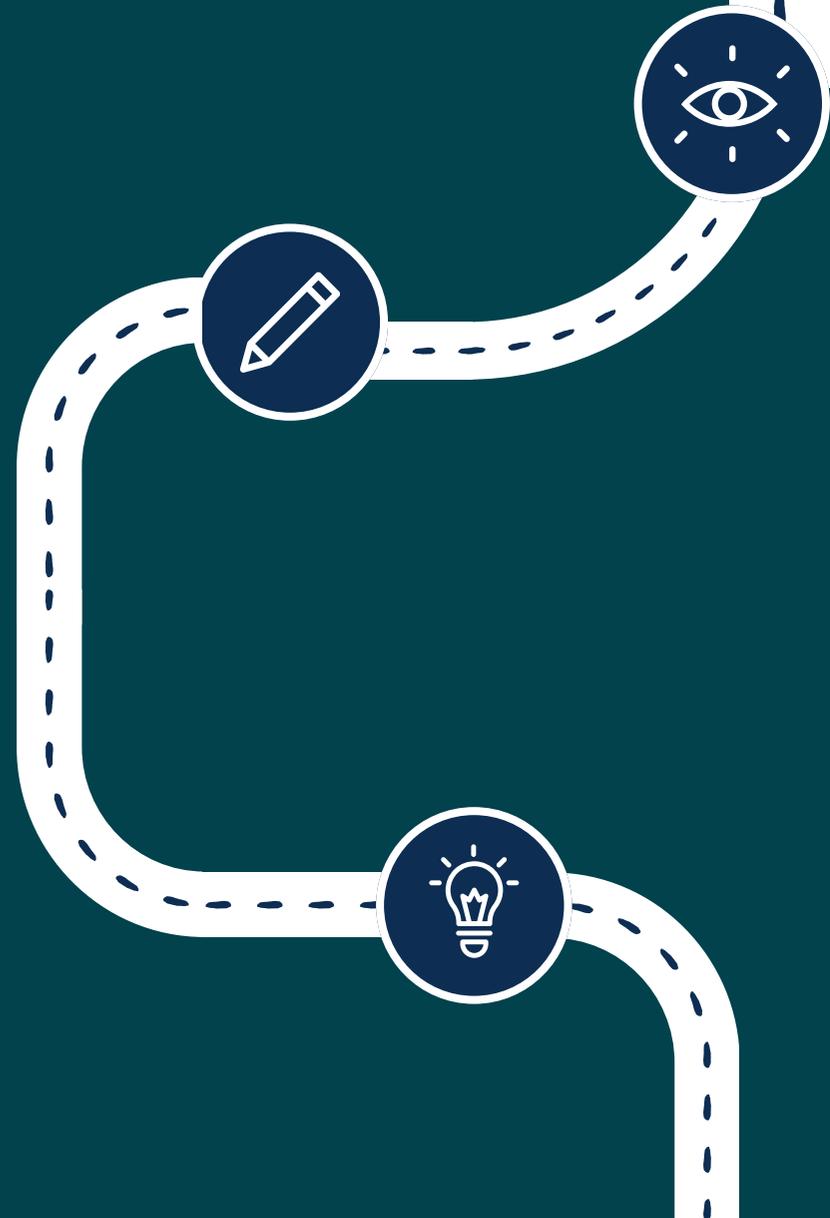


# OUR STORY AND MISSION:

2023 MARKED **THE 15TH YEAR** ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORUS NETWORK, WHICH SINCE ITS INCEPTION IS GUIDED BY ITS MEMBERS IN A HORIZONTAL AND INCLUSIVE WAY.

Over the years, the network has expanded its scope while continuing to be a safe space for CSO networks to strategize with peers on shared challenges, connect projects and messages and amplify civil society voices at a global level.

**Forus' objective is three-fold: to connect like-minded organisations and foster peer learning; to support civil society through capacity strengthening, and to show solidarity in action when national or regional contexts become increasingly difficult for civil society while influencing the policies and decision-making bodies** that shape our every day life, from the SDGs and the Agenda 2030, to financing for sustainable development, digital rights and more. We call for power shifts, gender justice and the inclusion of perspectives of those most marginalized. We do this by convening spaces for thought-leadership, sharing knowledge, creating collaborative reports, position papers, toolkits, storytelling initiatives and more.



“We benefit from Forus because the network represents civic engagement, the desire to see justice, transparency and good governance achieved, and to be the voice of the voiceless.”

2018-2023

## OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, WE

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SUPPORTED 70+ NATIONAL CAPACITY  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



STRENGTHENED THE WORK OF 6  
REGIONAL COALITIONS



CONVENED OVER 200 PEER-LEARNING  
ONLINE EVENTS



WROTE MORE THAN 25 REPORTS,  
POLICY BRIEFS AND POSITION PAPERS



PUBLISHED MORE THAN 300 ARTICLES



INFLUENCED MORE THAN 50  
VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS



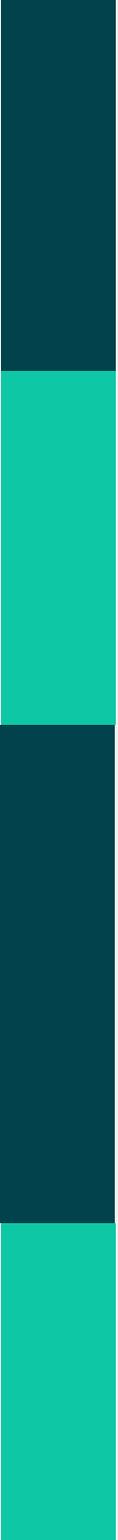
PROVIDED SEED-FUNDING TO 42  
MEMBERS TO ADAPT TO WORKING  
ONLINE AND TO OTHER IMPACTS OF THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC



12 TOOLKITS



COOPERATED WITH MORE THAN 250  
MEMBERS AND ALLIES ENGAGED IN  
FORUS CAMPAIGNS



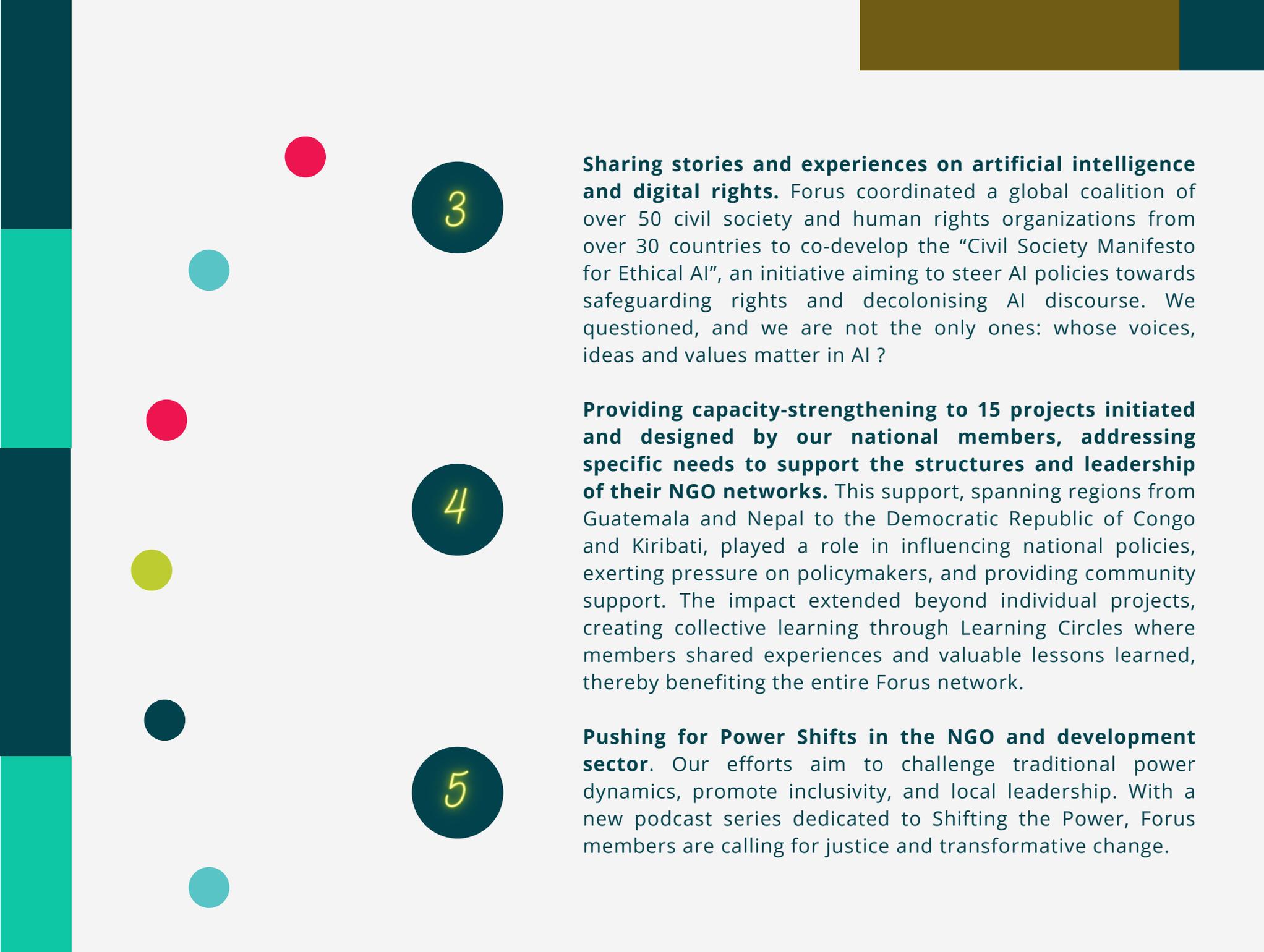
## DISCOVER **5** HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK IN 2023

1

**#UNMute civil society.** The UN seems more and more difficult to access for NGOs, despite declarations on the fundamental importance of including people in shaping the world's future. The participative campaign #UNmute which started during the High-Level Political Forum in 2020 continues to raise awareness of the need of expanding - rather than shrinking - the space for civil society especially at the UN. Through joint statements, and coordinated advocacy, Forus plays a big part in raising awareness and pushing Member States and institutions to really listen to the people they are meant to serve.

2

**Calling for change in development models.** As the world's public development banks gathered for the Finance in Common Summit in Colombia, Forus together with over 100 civil society organizations, communities and human rights defenders from more than 50 countries, called on public development banks to move from words of good intent to concrete actions that centre and protect communities in their projects and financing decisions. Justice, equality, human rights, sustainability, transparency, accountability and dignity for all must be more than just slogans.



3

**Sharing stories and experiences on artificial intelligence and digital rights.** Forus coordinated a global coalition of over 50 civil society and human rights organizations from over 30 countries to co-develop the “Civil Society Manifesto for Ethical AI”, an initiative aiming to steer AI policies towards safeguarding rights and decolonising AI discourse. We questioned, and we are not the only ones: whose voices, ideas and values matter in AI ?

4

**Providing capacity-strengthening to 15 projects initiated and designed by our national members, addressing specific needs to support the structures and leadership of their NGO networks.** This support, spanning regions from Guatemala and Nepal to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kiribati, played a role in influencing national policies, exerting pressure on policymakers, and providing community support. The impact extended beyond individual projects, creating collective learning through Learning Circles where members shared experiences and valuable lessons learned, thereby benefiting the entire Forus network.

5

**Pushing for Power Shifts in the NGO and development sector.** Our efforts aim to challenge traditional power dynamics, promote inclusivity, and local leadership. With a new podcast series dedicated to Shifting the Power, Forus members are calling for justice and transformative change.

# 2023 PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES FROM THE FORUS NETWORK TO INSPIRE YOUR ACTIONS



**CAPACITY STRENGTHENING SESSION**

© REPONGAC

## **Sustainable Development by Shifting the Power: Capacity Strengthening of Civil Society as a Key Tool for the Implementation of SDG 17**

Developed collaboratively with 14 national and regional CSO platforms, this report provides an analysis of the transformative potential of capacity-strengthening initiatives for civil society and a review of its representation in the 2022 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). With a focus on changing power dynamics, ensuring localization, and decolonizing practices, the report underscores the pivotal role that civil society organizations can play in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when appropriately supported.

### **"She Leads the Way" podcast series**

#### **VANI, India**

Discover the narratives of women leaders in India's civil society through VANI's initiative, the "She Leads the Way" podcast series. This engaging series looks at the remarkable journeys and challenges faced by exceptional women in the civil society sector, showcasing their impact on both local and global fronts. The primary goal of the podcast is to inspire future generations by honoring their resilience and dedication.

## **Civil Society Manifesto for ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Forus coordinated the development of the Civil Society Manifesto for ethical AI which features the stories and perspectives of over 50 civil society organisations and activists. The Manifesto represents a collaborative effort to advise policymakers on the risks and opportunities of AI specifically for civil society organizations and its impact on their work.

### **AidWatch 2023 Bursting the ODA inflation bubble**

#### **CONCORD, Europe**

Since 2005, CONCORD's AidWatch report has monitored and made recommendations on the quantity and quality of aid provided by the EU and its Member States. The AidWatch 2023 report critically analyses the EU's financial support to partner countries. It questions how much of this support can genuinely qualify as ODA. The report then evaluates how ODA supports countries' economic development and welfare, thereby acting as a powerful tool to reduce inequalities between and within countries. Additionally, it provides a detailed country-by-country analysis for EU Member States and the United Kingdom.

## **In defense of CSOs and Brazilian Democracy**

### **Abong, Brazil**

Get to know Abong's agenda of proposals and actions as well as their manifesto calling for the protection of civic space.

## **Financing for Sustainable Development - what is civil society calling for?**

Over 100 civil society organisations signed and contributed to this year's CSO declaration for the Finance in Common Summit. Read the civil society declaration and find perspectives in our video series and campaign page.

## **Anti-racism and decolonising A framework for organisations**

### **Bond, UK**

This framework maps out how racism cuts across all areas of our organisations and shows the necessity of an anti-racist and holistic approach to decolonising our organisations to create a fairer, more equitable and racially just sector.

## **Join the CSO Atlas Movement! - NNNGO, Nigeria**

Civil Society Organizations have become driving forces in national development, advocating for rights, supporting communities, and promoting good governance. With the [CSO Atlas](#), a technology-based platform that houses a directory and a learning platform that gives CSOs visibility and capacity development in Nigeria, NNNGO has designed a platform to strengthen the country's third sector and contribute to sustainable development. The directory allows easy access to CSOs information in Nigeria; including a description of what they do, measure of impact and their ranking status. In addition, users can perform certain functions including applying for grant opportunities, reading/adding industry-related news, communicating with other NGOs, and learning through the resource center.



**Discover Forus Resources**

# ACTIVISM

## SOME ACTIVISTS WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH IN 2023

2023



**ARUNA ROY**  
Social justice activist, India



**ALICE NKOM**  
Activist, Cameroon



**LINA AL HATHLOUL**  
Activist, Saudi Arabia



**SANJOG MANANDHAR**  
Photojournalist, Nepal



**JOHN PAUL JOSE**  
Climate Activist, India



**LINE NIEDEGGEN**  
Fridays For Future, Germany



**DIANNE OLIVAN**  
Digital Activist, The Philippines



**JUN-E-TAN**  
Researcher, Malaysia



**JANE ANYANGO**  
Social justice activist, Kenya



**IRENE MWENDWA**  
Activist, Kenya



**SEBASTIAN BARROS**  
Photojournalist, Colombia



**EUNICE MUSIIME**  
Activist, Uganda

## PARTNERS AND ALLIES

# SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH IN 2023

Connect Humanity, Global Digital Inclusion Partnership, TechSoup, International Institute for Sustainable Development, CSO Partnership for development effectiveness, Together 2030, Cepei Think Tank, Sightsavers, A4SD, Engage Media, Women Engage for a common future, Paradigm Initiative, European Parliament, Danish Institute of human rights, Transparency and Accountability Initiative, TAP network, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Asia Centre, ECNL, APWLD, Digital Grassroots, All Together in Dignity Europe, Focus 2030, Coalition for human rights in development, Women Major's Group, JustUnitedEdge, Balkan Civil Society Development Network, devlab@penn, Oxfam, Feminist Humanitarian Network, Lafede.cat, Creativity Lab for Empowerment and Innovation, Asociación Chilena Pro Naciones Unidas (ACHNU), DanChurchAid (DCA), Kq Hub Afrika, MAKAlA, Accountability Counsel, Arab NGO Network for Development, Réseau Action climat France, Global Forest Coalition, Ibase, CAN International, CIVICUS, Conectas Direitos Humanos, FIDH, Red Latinoamericana por justicia económica y social - LATINDADD Seinoli Legal Centre, Global Swedwatch, WWF, ADN, Akina Mama wa afrika, Global Voices, IPS News...

“What I appreciate the most about the Forus network is its dedication and sincerity for the cause of human rights and rights holders.”

# 10

**OUR CURRENT  
PRIORITIES AND 10  
THINGS FROM 2023  
THAT WE'RE PROUD OF**



**FORUS AT THE FINANCE IN COMMON SUMMIT**

© FORUS

## CONNECT

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**UNDER THE CONNECT PILLAR OF FORUS' WORK IN 2023 CREATED NEW FORMS OF COLLABORATION, AND CREATIVE CAMPAIGNS IN THE NETWORK. WE FOCUSED ON PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND MUTUAL LEARNING, COLLABORATIVE AWARENESS-RAISING, AND AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF ACTIVISTS AND LEADERS IN CIVIL SOCIETY ON A GLOBAL SCALE. HOW DID WE DO THAT?**



**WITH OVER 1200 PARTICIPANTS IN EVENTS AND 200 PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS, FORUS EXPANDED ITS CONVENING EFFORTS, FOSTERING PEER-SHARING AND LEARNING.**

**THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, FORUS CREATED SPACES FOR CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLATFORMS, RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLIDARITY IN ADDRESSING TODAY'S COMPLEX CHALLENGES WITH PARTICIPATIVE CAMPAIGNS SUCH AS MARCH WITH US ON GENDER JUSTICE OR #LET'S TALK DIGITAL ON DIGITAL RIGHTS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.**

In addition to our thematic campaigns, Forus developed new podcast series to delve into various aspects of civil society.

"Bridging Voices" explored language's impact, examining cross-cultural communication nuances, the role of interpreters, and the power of narratives in dismantling language barriers. "UNmute" addressed challenges faced by civil society in decision-making spaces and the repercussions of closing civic spaces globally. "Shifting the Power: Global Voices Rising" delved into development practices, highlighting the need for change in colonial, top-down approaches.

Forus also continued to prioritize its "member voice" systems, gathering, analyzing, and learning from the perspectives and feedback of its members and partners.

As we look ahead, 2024 will be a special year for the Forus network as we will have the opportunity to reconnect in person at our next General Assembly taking place in Botswana, with a chance for members to share experiences and insights and strategize together on key challenges and opportunities for civil society.

**67%**

of Forus members report that being a Forus member has enabled them to establish new partnerships and collaborations with other stakeholders

**86%**

of Forus members report that Forus provides them with useful information, publications, tools, and resources

**67%**

of Forus members report that being a Forus member has enabled them connect to key policy spaces and discussion fora

## 1 Forus welcomed NANGO the national NGO platform from Zimbabwe

NANGO is an umbrella organization registered in Zimbabwe that represents and coordinates NGOs across the country. It acts as a collective voice for the diverse NGO sector, advocating for social justice, human rights, and sustainable development in Zimbabwe. NANGO strengthens the capacities of its member organizations through training and support, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among NGOs. NANGO actively engages in policy advocacy and dialogue, influencing decisions that affect the NGO sector and promoting an enabling environment for NGOs to thrive. Additionally, NANGO provides networking opportunities, facilitating partnerships and resource-sharing among NGOs to enhance their collective impact. NANGO is also a member of SAf-CNGO, Forus Regional Coalition in Southern Africa.

[Listen to A Space for Us episode with NANGO](#) on their work to promote civic space and strengthen civil society in Zimbabwe.

Forus Tech Talks as part of ComsForUs: [Learn more about NANGO's work to counter misinformation and fake news.](#)



**SPONG, FORUS MEMBER BURKINA FASO**

© SPONG

## 2 #A Space for Us podcasts & videos series

Launched in 2020, the “A Space for Us” podcast features activists, civil society organisations and social movements from across the globe. In 2023, 44 audio and video episodes were produced and published. We heard about the Rary Aro Mada project in Madagascar which aims at promoting and reinforcing capacities of young human rights defenders. We talked about the impact of artificial intelligence on human rights and how policy makers can safeguard these rights with Forus members NNNGO , CCOAIB, ADA and REPONGAC. The issue of shrinking civic space in Liberia and the state of human rights and social justice in Zimbabwe was explored with Forus’ new member NANGO. Our video series on the present and future of sustainable development with over 10 activists and Forus members was presented during the Finance in Common Summit sharing the perspectives of civil society with public development banks. Stay tuned for more stories in 2024!

Podcast episodes are available in [[English](#) - [Français](#) - [Español](#) - [Português](#)]

Watch our videos on the future of financing for development here.



**PROTEST AGAIN  
CORRUPTION, NEPAL**

© SANJOG MANANDHAR

### 3 The Shift the Power Movement Reshaping Civil Society

Despite commitments to localize aid and ensure that a greater share of funding goes directly to local actors and frontline communities, progress continues to be painfully slow. Yet, all of us keep pushing for change - one which centres people and communities as actors and decision-makers in their own development processes. Several Forus members champion conversations on locally-led development, advocating for autonomy and local decision-making against the backdrop of what are still too often colonial-like approaches.

**What is our approach?** To contribute to this overall conversation on the #ShiftThePower movement, the Forus network launched in 2023 its new series, part of A Space for Us multimedia & storytelling project. Hear from our members on the diverse interpretations of development shaped by unique contexts. And about how locally-led development grapples with bureaucratic barriers, as well as visions for sustainable development involving changing systems, leveraging equal partnerships and demanding conversations on power dynamics.

### Discover FALE Pasifika for inclusive, and locally-led humanitarian coordination PIANGO, Pacific Islands

FALE Pasifika, or Facility Aiding Locally-Led Engagement, stands as an innovative and transformative initiative in the Pacific region. It serves as a collective force of local, national, and international changemakers united in their pursuit of rapid, efficient, inclusive, and locally-led humanitarian coordination. This ground-breaking initiative empowers local actors to take charge of resources and define responses to crises impacting their communities. FALE Pasifika is underpinned by shared goals and universal standards, supported by the Start Network and facilitated by the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO).



© MIDIA NINJA

## FORUS CAMPAIGNS

### #MarchWithUs on gender justice

For its third edition, the campaign aimed to raise awareness and mobilize civil society organizations, policymakers, and the public to act on gender justice issues, such as gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment, and women's political participation. From Line Niedeggen from the Fridays for Future Movement on the importance of having an intersectional approach to Aruna Roy fighting for social justice in India, [discover over 30 stories on the campaign page](#). We also talked with [Lina Alhathloul](#), a Saudi activist who explained the situation of women and human rights activists in Saudi Arabia, the feminist group of [La Coordinadora](#) who spoke on the urgent need for feminist cooperation, [Kirthi Jayakumar](#), founder of The Gender Security Project who spoke about transitional justice through research, and documentation. Forus member [UNITAS](#) unveiled the gender twist in their projects, [Alice Nkom](#) talked about the obstacles the LGBTQ+ community face in Cameroon, [Ruth Kay Kangwa](#) spoke about women's participation in elections and the Girls Gone Political movement, [Jane Coffin](#) from Connect Humanity and Dianne Olivan on gender patterns in technology, Global Focus on the #UNmute initiative, Red Encuentro on intergenerational feminisms in Argentina, PDA on human rights in Pakistan, and [Marc Morasata](#) from PFNOSCM, Madagascar, on bridging the gender gap in Madagascar. By "marching together", in 2023, we created a common voice for gender justice and hold those in power accountable for their commitments to gender equality.



## #Let's Talk Digital

Launched in 2021, the [#Let's Talk Digital campaign](#) is a collaborative initiative that delves into the profound impact of digital technologies on civil society while providing valuable resources to navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape. In this context, a pressing question arises: How can we unite our efforts to foster an inclusive, human-rights based, and democratic form of digitalization that benefits people worldwide? The campaign aims to explore key global trends concerning digitalization and civil society, contemplating whether digitalization can indeed serve democracy and strengthen civic space. As part of the campaign and its enabling environment work, in 2023, the Forus network co-created a Civil Society Manifesto for ethical AI.

What are the intersections between AI and its implications for human rights, civil society and sustainable development? Developed with over 50 other civil society partners and members, Forus has coordinated the creation of a Civil Society Manifesto for Ethical AI. The multilingual Manifesto, features 17 stories and case studies from tech experts, activists and civil society organisations on the risks and opportunities in the use of AI and machine learning.



**READ OUR MANIFESTO TO EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF FEMINIST AI PERSPECTIVES, LAWS SURROUNDING AI, INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON MACHINE LEARNING, AND THE INFLUENCE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY.**



© FORUS

5

## Bridging Voices – the new Forus podcast series on language and cross-cultural exchanges

As part of our #AlternativeNarratives campaign we're embarking on an exploration of the profound impact of language in the landscape of civil society. With "Bridging Voices," we seek to spotlight the role of interpreters from diverse corners of the globe.

In essence: Throughout this series, we look at the nuances of cross-cultural communication and the powerful influence of simultaneous interpretation in dismantling language barriers and fostering inclusivity. But this is not all, we also talk with linguists and civil society organisations to look into the power of narratives, the colonial legacies of language and how cross-cultural communication can bring us closer, rather than further away, when it comes to civil society networks and other movements. How is the ability to be understood in one's local language shaping the way we do things together?

Listen to the intro episode [here](#).



© PROTEST IN ARGENTINA  
MIDIA NIJA

# FORUS WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN MANY EVENTS AND CONFERENCES.



## BELOW A SNAPSHOT OF SOME EVENTS WHICH WE CO-ORGANIZED OR PARTICIPATED IN:

**Beyond the Buzz: Decoding the Impact of AI, Metaverse, and Emerging Technologies on Civic Space & Civil Society Organizations.** Forus, together with ADA, ECNL, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and the Asia Center, organised a session at the DRAPAC23 - Digital Rights Asia-Pacific 2023 by EngageMedia. With over 150 sessions spread out across five days the Assembly emphasises the representation of increasingly unheard voices in digital rights spaces.





2023

## The Shift the Power Summit

Forus members discussed how to tackle historical imbalances where international aid and development efforts were primarily led by external actors, often sidelining the expertise, perspectives, and agency of local communities.

## International conference on «Human rights and development»

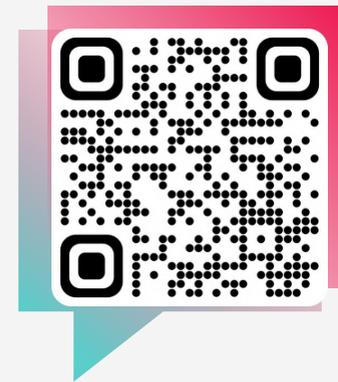
Forus took part in the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) international conference on Human rights and development, coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998). Various Forus members and partners including our Chair Christelle Kalhoule, and Jyotsna Mohan Singh of our regional coalition ADA (Asia Development Alliance) shared the messages of the network during the conference. Read the article on Forus' contribution [here](#).

## Forus at the New Global Financial Pact

Forus members and partners came together at the New Global Financial Pact Summit held in Paris in June to discuss how to build a more responsive, fair and inclusive international financial system to fight inequalities, finance the climate transition, and bring us closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [Read Forus' statement](#) with contributions from Forus members VANI, India, CCONG, Colombia, Coordination Sud, France and REPAOC, West Africa.

## The Forus network at the Global People's Assembly and the UN General Assembly

As part of the Global Week to #Act4SDGs, the Forus network contributed to this year's Global People's Assembly during a pivotal moment when the world's attention is focused on the UN SDG Summit and its assessment of the progress made towards the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2023 Global People's Assembly brought together over 2000 dedicated activists and developed a Declaration shared with policymakers, UN and leaders at national, regional and global level. The assembly was the culmination of community and national People's Assemblies in 35 countries and counting, where representatives of communities and Forus members monitored and discussed the SDG implementation. For more on Forus' engagement at the UN Global Assembly and SDG Summit [click here](#).



**Discover Forus events**

“The greatest learning that we have had by being an active part of Forus is that the foundation of a network is based on how you serve the membership.”

## SUPPORT

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**FORUS ADOPTS AN IMPACT-ORIENTED AND NEEDS-BASED APPROACH TO CONTINUOUS CAPACITY STRENGTHENING, THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER METHODOLOGIES TO ENHANCE LEADERSHIP, EXPERTISE, AND INNOVATION AMONG ITS MEMBERS AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND GLOBAL LEVELS.**

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## SUPPORT

**IN ITS LAST CYCLE OF SUPPORT (2022-2023), FORUS ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS WITH 15 OF ITS NATIONAL MEMBERS SO THAT THEY COULD IMPLEMENT PRACTICAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING PROJECTS ELABORATED BY THEMSELVES AND ALIGNED WITH THEIR AND THEIR MEMBERS' SPECIFIC NEEDS.**

**OVER THE PAST YEARS, FORUS HAS PARTNERED WITH AND SUPPORTED NATIONAL MEMBERS FOR OVER 60 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. FORUS MEMBERS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO SHARE BACK WITH THE NETWORK AND TO DEVELOP JOINT INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN LINKS AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN THEM, AS WELL AS PROMOTING MUTUAL LEARNING.**



## 6 Forus Learning Circles and Capacity Strengthening Projects

These 2023 projects focused on a wide range of areas, often linking structural and thematic activities. Those spun from enhancing civic space, to fostering an enabling environment for civil society and supporting the recovery efforts from the Covid-19 pandemic.

During two virtual Learning Circles, Forus members shared the outcomes, strategies, and insights from their capacity strengthening projects. Participants benefitted from the diverse experiences of our network, fostering collaborative learning, and exchanging knowledge. Both webinars brought together more than 90 participants from 35 countries. Special thanks to BOCONGO (Botswana), CCONG (Colombia), CCOAIB (Rwanda), CODENGO (Philippines), CONGCOOP (Guatemala), CNONGD (DRC), Red Encuentro (Argentina), FONGTO (Togo), NFN (Nepal), SPONG (Burkina Faso), POJOAJU (Paraguay) and VANI (India) for their contributions during the Learning Circles!

🔍 Projects carried out by our members fostered the network's capacity in a way that is grounded in local knowledge, peer-learning and participative project design. Discover a selection next!



© NNGO, FORUS  
MEMBER IN NIGERIA

# AMONG THE DIVERSITY OF TOPICS COVERED BY THE PROJECTS, A FEW COMMON THEMES STAND OUT:

1

CONTRIBUTING TO AN  
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT  
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

2

MONITORING OF AND  
ADVOCATING FOR THE  
NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE SDGS

3

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT  
FOR ADVOCACY

4

STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC  
PLANNING

5

STRENGTHENING INTERNAL  
COMMUNICATION AND  
COLLABORATION WITHIN  
THE NATIONAL PLATFORM



# NATIONAL MEMBERS PROJECTS

## Generating Knowledge on the Agenda 2030 NFN, Nepal

NFN aimed to generate knowledge, guidelines, and tools on the SDGs; connecting and creating value for members; as well as building a positive narrative about CSOs. Besides identifying key success cases, NFN also developed new tools, such as a civil society handbook on SDGs both in Nepali and English and a toolkit on how to carry out a voluntary local review (VLR).

## Monitoring and influencing the implementation of free quality education CNONGD, Democratic Republic of the Congo

CNONGD's target was to support civil society to monitor and influence the implementation of free quality education at the local level in the DRC. This project aimed at connecting all CSOs in Kinshasa working towards the implementation of SDG 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).



## **Monitoring the SDGs in Kiribati** **KANGO, Kiribati**

KANGO members received training aimed at strengthening the governance mechanisms of the national platform and facilitating monitoring of the SDGs. This training helped them conduct community consultations in 6 islands to conduct awareness on the SDGs and to determine how KANGO members are contributing to its implementation. Ultimately, the project will contribute to bridge the data gaps that exist at national level, linking the Agenda 2030 to the Strategic Priorities of the Kiribati 20-year Vision (KV20) plan, as well as amplifying the voices of communities and share their messages with policymakers.

## **Social Innovation Laboratory** **Alianza ONG, Dominican Republic**

Alianza ONG chose to develop a virtual course to equip member CSOs with the knowledge and tools to influence various processes of public policy formulation and monitoring. They also held a face-to-face social innovation laboratory to promote critical thinking and innovative approaches to problems of discrimination and gender equality, by fostering project planning and implementation.



© TALLER OSC FUERTES Y RESILIENTES  
ALIANZA ONG, FORUS MEMBER IN  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## Changing narratives on the work of civil society VANI, India

How can we promote alternative narratives on the work of civil society? VANI's project focuses on documenting the innovation, collaborations and partnerships set up by civil society organizations during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as how communities responded to their work. Their project involved the documentation of success stories with the participation of over 30 CSOs. Read more on how [VANI plans to repurpose, reinvent and reform the role of grassroots organizations.](#)

## Post-earthquake psycho-social support in Morocco Espace Associatif, Morocco

Espace Associatif developed a project aiming at strengthening the involvement of local actors in the implementation of SDGs, by providing appropriate support in the aftermath of the earthquake, while promoting the integration of SDGs into local policies.



© ESPACE ASSOCIATIF, FORUS MEMBER  
IN MOROCCO

## 7 Forus regional coalitions

Forus supported its regional members in various activities and programs. PIANGO in the Pacific Islands emphasized decolonization in development, while REPAOC in West Africa conducted a digital communications training amid COVID-19 constraints. REPONGAC in Central Africa focused on civic space awareness campaigns, and ADA explored International Financial Institutions' impact across Asia.

🔍 Find a selection of articles written by Forus Regional Coalitions below.

- **PIANGO, Pacific Islands:** PIANGO made a commitment to live up to the same standards of accountability as they expect from their governments. PIANGO aims to transform the development paradigm and making it reflect the traditional values which exist between the people of the Pacific and their environment. You can read more on PIANGO's initiative [here](#).
- **REPAOC, West Africa:** A regional training workshop on digital communications was organised by REPAOC to strengthen the capacities of its members and enable them to continue to function properly even with the restrictions brought about by and after the Covid-19 pandemic. You can read more on this initiative by REPAOC [here](#).
- **REPONGAC, Central Africa:** The problem of shrinking civic space remains an issue in Central Africa and CSOs more than ever before need to inform the population about their rights. This is why REPONGAC chose public awareness campaigns which brought together almost 200 people to discuss these fundamental issues. You can read more on REPONGAC's campaign [here](#).



2023

## **STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY & LEARNING**

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**IN 2023, FORUS CONTINUED PRACTICING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY THROUGH ITS "MEMBER VOICE" SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES, CONSISTENTLY GATHERING, ANALYZING AND LEARNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVES AND FEEDBACK OF ITS MEMBERS AND PARTNERS.**

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## THESE PRACTICES EMPOWER FORUS TO EFFECTIVELY PLAN AND ADAPT ITS ACTIVITIES, ENSURING ALIGNMENT WITH THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ITS MEMBERS.

FORUS MAKES DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS, UTILIZING VARIOUS MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEARNING (MEAL) SYSTEMS AND TOOLS.

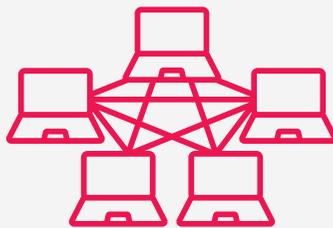
These mechanisms enable the Secretariat to track the progress of Forus' activities and projects, identify member engagement trends, and provide valuable insights to measure and showcase the impact of the Forus network.

The Forus Secretariat also continued to facilitate team-to-team meetings with Forus members, that have provided insights into current priorities, challenges, and needs, enhancing trust and mutual understanding.



**89 %**

89 % think that Forus is a trusted source of information and guidance on SDG (Agenda 2030) implementation and monitoring

**87%**

87% think that being a member of Forus provides them with valuable peer learning opportunities and events

**76%**

76 % think that being a member of Forus has contributed to improving their visibility and recognition by international stakeholders

**74%**

74% state that being a member of Forus encourages them to evaluate their work with external stakeholders (e.g. partners, government, other NGOs)

**73%**

73% think that Forus is recognized as a legitimate voice in influencing decision-makers and policymakers

**60%**

60% of Forus members report that being a Forus member has enabled them to increase their capacity to convene and represent CSOs in their country/region

## INFLUENCE

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**2023 WAS A BUSY YEAR FOR FORUS' ADVOCACY. ON THE HALFWAY POINT TO THE 2030 DEADLINE TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS), FORUS ACTIVELY ADDRESSED THE CONCERNING STATUS REPORT THAT REVEALED THAT ONLY 15% OF THE GOALS WERE ON TRACK.**

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2023



## COMMITTED TO THE 2030 AGENDA, FORUS CALLED FOR BOLDER ACTIONS AND TANGIBLE STRATEGIES FROM DECISION-MAKERS.

**INITIATIVES LIKE #UNMUTE HIGHLIGHTED THE INCREASING MARGINALIZATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES WITHIN THE UN, PROMPTING FORUS TO FURTHER INCREASE ITS ADVOCACY FOR ACTIVE AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION.**

Forus members contributed to alternative "Shadow" reports on SDG progress, providing critical analyses independently from official government assessments. Additionally, Forus concentrated on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, publishing reports on regional contexts, fostering partnerships, and promoting climate justice.

Amid global crises, Forus remained a vocal advocate for a paradigm shift in development financing, engaging in the Finance in Common (FIC) initiative and other financing for development fora.

At the FIC summit, Forus members spoke on crucial issues such as human rights, climate change, and sustainable development, urging Public Development Banks to prioritize rights, justice, and transparency.

Furthermore, Forus expanded its work on civic space and an enabling environment for civil society, contributing to the Right to Defend Rights monitoring framework and coordinating and developing the Civil Society Manifesto for ethical AI, among other initiatives in digital rights and internet governance.



## **SINCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SDG FRAMEWORK, FORUS IS STRONGLY COMMITTED TO THE 2030 AGENDA, AND ADVOCATES FOR BOLDER STEPS AND CONCRETE ACTIONS FROM DECISION-MAKERS.**

**IN 2023, THE WORK OF FORUS MEMBERS FOCUSED BOTH ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL BY INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS AND ON THE REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR TANGIBLE STRATEGIES OVER RHETORIC, WITH CLEAR BENCHMARKS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOALS.**

Forus also urged for comprehensive approaches ensuring human rights protection, robust financing, and meaningful participation of civil society organizations in all spaces.

Through initiatives like #UNmute the drift in the relationship between the UN and civil society was highlighted. NGOs feel more and more confined to corners and corridors, a trend which seems to indicate a further decrease in trust within the multilateral arena.

For several years, civil society voices have found themselves on the periphery, with challenges ranging from limited access at key UN sessions to restricted participation in key UN fora such as the High-Level Political Forum, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Internet Governance Forum. For the fourth year running, as part of the #UNmute initiative, Forus and its partners have voiced collective concerns by sending a joint letter to the UN Secretary General highlighting the need to move from token recognition to active and equitable participation.

From Burkina Faso's Spong to Guatemala's CONGCOOP, Paraguay's Pojoaju, and Chile's Accion, among others, Forus member organizations have been actively involved in developing "Shadow" reports which are alternative reports to the official governmental Voluntary National Reviews (or VNRs) on the progress on SDG implementation. The CSO reports are crafted independently from official government assessments, providing alternative perspectives and critical analysis on the progress made at national level. Forus also held a number of workshops in partnership with Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD) on shaping and influencing VNRs, and monitoring government actions.

Collaborating with various members and partners, Forus has also focused this year on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, pushing to bridge gaps between social, economic, and environmental aspects. This reinforced the work and partnership with key institutions and resulted in the publication of several reports looking at various regional contexts – for instance Europe and Asia-Pacific. This work aimed to create partnerships among civil society, promoting climate justice and a more detailed understanding of policy coherence to achieve the 2030 Agenda – an element that was amplified in and around many fora from the Global People’s Assembly, to the UN General Assembly, the SDG Summit, the High-Level Political Forum, the Finance in Common summit and the international conference on human rights and development.



DISCOVER OUR JOINT PUBLICATION [CLIMATE JUSTICE AND POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - LESSONS FROM THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION](#)



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8

## The Forus network at the UN High-Level Political Forum – main takeaways.

Together with 100+ participants from 56 countries representing 26 Forus member organisations and 70+ CSO partners and governments, the network organised several events as part of this year's UN High-Level Political Forum. During a side event on 10 July, the Forus network launched the Report "[Sustainable Development by Shifting the Power: Capacity Strengthening of civil society as a key tool for the Implementation of SDG 17](#)", co-developed with 14 member platforms. With a focus on changing power dynamics, ensuring localization, and decolonizing practices, the report underscores the vital role that civil society organizations can play in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when appropriately supported.

Co-organized with the [Asia Development Alliance](#) (ADA), [CONCORD Europe](#), and the [Japan NGO Centre for International Cooperation](#) (JANIC), Forus also held a multi-stakeholder event to discuss the role of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

Civil society organizations, the OECD, the European Commission (DG INTPA), and government representatives, provided invaluable inputs towards fostering Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development at multiple levels, both vertically (local, national, regional, and global) and horizontally (across social, economic, and environmental dimensions).

Read our article [Walking the Talk: Advancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#) on the main points highlighted during the event.



© FORUS

## AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY - FORUS MEMBERS FACING HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIC SPACE RESTRICTIONS

**FORUS HAS BEEN FOSTERING ADVOCACY AND PEER-LEARNING SPACES AMONG ITS MEMBERS TO SAFEGUARD CIVIC SPACE AND CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY GLOBALLY.**

From the human rights observatory in Bolivia (Unitas), and the Civic Space Monitor in Pakistan (PDA), to redefining the meaning of an enabling environment in Argentina and Paraguay (Red Encuentro, Pojauju) the network has played a pivotal role in advocating for policies – both online and offline - that protect the rights of civil society in national, regional and global spaces. Whether in the contexts of Mozambique, Chad or Brazil, the Forus network mobilised in support of members dealing with human rights abuses and civic space restrictions across the globe. Forus raised awareness and advocated for policy changes with its members.



## FORUS COLLABORATED WITH OVER 50 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP A CIVIL SOCIETY MANIFESTO FOR ETHICAL AI,

It aims to advise policymakers on the implications of AI as well as the need to decolonise the tech sector and to include different perspectives.

Additionally, in partnership with Connect Humanity, Forus supported the publication of the "State of Digital Inequity" report, based on a survey completed by 7,500+ civil society practitioners in 136 countries. The report provides important new data across a range of issues, including internet access, affordability, digital skills, policy, and funding for digital equity efforts. While 95% of respondents said the internet is vital to their ability to do their work, three in four said that a lack of internet access, tools, or skills limits their ability to serve their communities effectively.



9

## Forus helped develop a new tool addressing human rights violations

Forus supported the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the OHCHR in the development of a monitoring framework, [the Right to Defend Rights](#), which uses human rights-based indicators to systematically assess the enabling environment for human rights defenders.

Forus members [UNITAS](#) in Bolivia, [NNNGO](#) in Nigeria, [Alianza ONG](#) in the Dominican Republic and [NEN](#) in Nepal, together with other civil society actors participated in the development of the tool. Forus was also involved as a member of the Expert Reference Group which advised on the development of this tool.

[Read our article with testimonials from Human Rights Defenders here.](#)



### [INDIA, VANI - INDIA: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE, ONE STEP AT A TIME](#)

VANI COLLECTED CASE STUDIES AND DATA FROM VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS, ALL OVER INDIA, FOCUSING ON THEIR JOURNEY IN MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.



©SANJOG MANANDHAR

सर्भाइभरहरुले  
साथ कसरी वि

उनीहरुले भोगेका कुराहरुलाई सु  
उनीहरुले भनेको पत्याउनु

हरुलाई दोष नलगाउनुहोस्  
नीहरुको गल्ती होइन भनेर

## **AMID A COMPLEX WEB OF CRISES, SPANNING CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY DEPLETION, CONSTRAINTS ON CIVIC SPACE AND MOUNTING DEBT BURDENS, FORUS REMAINED A VOCAL ADVOCATE FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT IN DEVELOPMENT FINANCING.**

**FORUS REMAINED A VOCAL ADVOCATE FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT IN DEVELOPMENT FINANCING. ENGAGING IN THE FINANCE IN COMMON INITIATIVE SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2020, FORUS CALLS FOR A PEOPLE AND PLANET-CENTRIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH.**

In this year's Finance in Common (FIC) summit, Forus supported its members and allied civil society organizations in sharing local responses advocating for community ownership in development and the end of extractivist norms.

Civil society's active role in decision-making forums remains a pivotal imperative, as highlighted in the [2023 Civil Society Declaration on FICS](#) signed by over 100 civil society organizations from 50+ countries, expressing concerns on human rights, climate change, accountability and sustainable development. The message was clear: when it comes to financing for development, principles of rights, justice, sustainability, transparency, accountability and dignity for all cannot remain mere slogans. They must form the core of all projects undertaken by all Public Development Banks (PDBs).

Overall, 15 civil society representatives spoke during the FIC summit, and took leadership in 2 important sessions: [“Public Development Banks Collaboration with Civil Society and Inclusion of Human Rights”](#), convened by the FIC Human Rights Working Group (comprised of both CSO and Public Development Bank representatives), and a side event entitled [“Strengthening CSO-PDB Relations”](#), co-hosted by Forus and the FIC Secretariat. During the summit, civil society and community activists showed their strength and solidarity by engaging directly with Public Development Banks, speaking truth to power on issues concerning human rights, civic space, development finance, and climate change, sustainable development, and biodiversity.

## OUR ENGAGEMENT IN FIC IS DONE IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH 5 FORUS MEMBERS.

**ABONG (BRAZIL), ADA (ASIA), CCONG (COLOMBIA), NNNGO (NIGERIA) AND REPAOC (WEST AFRICA), WHO ALL ADVOCATE AT THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS FOR MORE MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF CIVIL SOCIETY RELATED TO PDB POLICIES, OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS.**

As part of the network's activities, an in-person meeting took place in Paris as over 10 Forus members came together at the New Global Financial Pact Summit to discuss issues relating to financing for sustainable development. Forus also joined Global Citizen's roundtable event: Power Our Planet: Act today. Save tomorrow with VANI, Forus member in India, highlighting during the event the crucial role civil society plays in development projects.

Advocating for the respect of human rights and the meaningful inclusion of civil society in shaping financial systems, Forus anticipated the summit's outcomes to contribute to key events in 2023 and 2024, including the G20 summit in New Delhi, COP28 climate talks, and the Finance in Common summit in Cartagena.



## 10 Forus at the Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform

The Global Gateway Initiative is the European Union's ambitious global infrastructure strategy aiming to mobilize €300 billion in investments between 2021 and 2027. Forus has been selected as a civil society representative on the Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform. This position offers a unique opportunity to advocate with, and amplify the voice, concerns, needs, and priorities of members on a global scale.

Through the Dialogue Platform, Forus aims to gather feedback from members on the outcomes, quality, and impact of various initiatives, allowing to provide valuable input on their progress. This effort aligns with the network's overarching mission of supporting the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the Financing for Sustainable Development (FFD) framework. Learn more about Global Gateway [here](#).



DISCOVER OUR JOINT PUBLICATION [CLIMATE JUSTICE AND POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - LESSONS FROM THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION](#)



“It's always very important and humbling to be reminded that the struggle for democracy and inclusion is universal and that there are many amazing activists working towards the same goals all over the globe.”

2024

COMING UP NEXT  
IN 2024



**ABONG, FORUS MEMBER IN BRAZIL.**

© ABONG

## **FORUS IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE ITS SUCCESSFUL BID IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER NGOS FOR A EUROPEAN COMMISSION INITIATIVE, THE EU SYSTEM FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT (EU SEE).**

This program - carried out in a consortium led by Hivos alongside Civicus, Democracy Reporting International, European Partnership of Democracy, Forus and Transparency International seeks to support civil society to monitor civic space in 86 countries and provide analysis of its enabling environment over time. By collecting timely information, civil society will enhance its ability to detect and address challenges, uphold and promote an enabling environment, advocate with evidence base data, and be proactive in detecting earlier signs of shrinking civic space. This approach aims to prevent negative trends from developing and be prepared when attacks come.

## **FORUS HAS ALSO BEEN SUCCESSFUL AS PART OF A CONSORTIUM FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY ALLIANCES FOR DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT (CADE) PROJECT FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION.**

The project aims to enhance the structural engagement of civil society organizations in internet governance and standard-setting, promoting an open and inclusive internet and a sustainable digital future. Forus will mobilise the network to engage Global Majority members in internet governance fora as well as creating moments of horizontal exchange between partners, and collective campaigning.

In 2024, Forus will work closely with members to develop a compendium on “Forus Solidarity Tactics and Practices in Shrinking Civic Spaces.” The document will aim at supporting Forus members facing threats in shrinking civic spaces. It will provide tools for crisis management, including strategies against legal, administrative, bureaucratic and economic pressures, and tactics to combat misinformation and personal attacks. It will include strategic advice and methodologies for situational assessments.

**IT WILL MOREOVER HIGHLIGHT HOW THE FORUS NETWORK CAN LEVERAGE GLOBAL COORDINATION, PEER EXCHANGES, ADVOCACY CONNECTIONS, AND MESSAGE AMPLIFICATION TO PROMOTE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY. IT WILL BE DESIGNED TO SERVE AS A TOOL IN TIMES OF CRISIS, OFFERING CLARITY ON STEPS WHICH MAY BE USEFUL, AND THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE WITHIN THE FORUS NETWORK.**

In 2024, there will be national elections in more than 40 countries. As populist parties are gaining ground in many countries around the world, Forus will make sure we leverage the knowledge and expertise of the network to push back against any threats to civic space, especially through its campaigning work and its Enabling Environment working group.

On financing for sustainable development, Forus, as the lead of the Informal CSO Mechanism on FICS has already begun planning for the 2024 Finance in Common Summit, which will take place in China in October 2024. There are also other initiatives planned: a collaborative documentary project, a toolkit related to this areas of work and finally, a global mapping project focused on PDB-CSO relations.

Furthermore, in 2024, Forus will be launching a more comprehensive, interlinked approach around the 2030 Agenda with the organisation of webinars with partner organizations on how to reinvigorate political commitment for the implementation of the SDGs, the launch of [tipsheets](#) on how to engage around the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) and the 2030 Agenda, as well as support to National Projects advocating for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a special focus on leveraging the engagement opportunity that the 2024 VNR process represents.

**THE FORUS WORKING GROUPS ARE SET TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE, CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND SHARED LESSONS ON THE 2030 AGENDA. 2024 WILL SEE FORUS RALLYING AT KEY GLOBAL SUMMITS, INCLUDING THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM, THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE. THE VOICE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IS CRUCIAL, NOW MORE THAN EVER.**

Forus is also planning a new cycle of its Leadership Development Program. Its objective: to develop entrepreneurial and visionary individuals of the next generation who will ultimately influence the way in which CSO networks achieve change in the future. Many other opportunities for capacity-strengthening, from an advocacy and operational point of view, and linked to both ongoing and new projects, will be shared throughout 2024.



2023

# FORUS GOVERNANCE



# FORUS GOVERNANCE

Forus 'governance structure is designed to have strong leadership by members, and for decision-making to be emerging according to joint needs and priorities that we can tackle as a network.

The Forus Council is made up of 15 members, with a regional distribution of seats. Its role is to ensure the implementation of decisions and of the strategic and political orientation agreed upon in the GA, as well as the proper functioning of the executive team. Some of the Council's functions are delegated to the Executive Committee (ExCom), composed of a Chair, 3 Vice-Chairs and a Treasurer.

Find out more about our governance [here](#).

## AFRICA

- Burkina Faso – SPONG- Christelle Kalhoule (Chair)
  - Mauritius – MACOSS- Suraj Ray
  - The Democratic Republic of the Congo – CNONGD – Rigo Gene Woyie
- 

## ASIA

- Cambodia – CCC – Putheary Sin
- Japan- JANIC – Hideki Wakabayashi
- Nepal - NGO Federation of Nepal – Arjun Battharai

## LATIN AMERICA

- Brazil – ABONG – Athayde Motta (Vice-Chair)
  - Peru– ANC – Josefina Huaman
  - Honduras – ASONOG- José Ramon Avila
- 

## NORTH AMERICA

- United States – InterAction – Samuel A. Worthigton (Vice-Chair)
- 

## EUROPE

- France - Coordination– SUD - Jean-Marc Boivin (Treasurer)
  - Latvia – LAPAS - Inese Vaivare
  - Slovenia – SLOGA - Albin Keuc
- 

## MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

- Morocco - Espace Associatif - Abdelhakim Chafiai
- 

## PACIFIC

- The member countries have chosen to be represented by their Regional Coalition PIANGO - Inia Barry Wickham

# FORUS COUNCIL



**Abdelhakim Chafiai**

Morocco

Espace Associatif



**Albin Keuc**

Slovenia

SLOGA - Slovenian Global Action



**Christelle Kalhoule**

Burkina Faso

SPONG - Secrétariat Permanent des ONG du Burkina Faso



**Hideki Wakabayashi**

Japan

JANIC - Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation



**Inia Barry Whickam**

Fiji

PIANGO - Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations



**Inese Vaivare**

Latvia

LAPAS - Latvijas Platforma attīstības sadarbībai



**Jean-Marc Boivin**

France

Coordination SUD – Rassembler et agir pour la solidarité internationale



**Arjun Bhattarai**

Nepal

NFN - NGO Federation of Nepal



**Putheary Sin**

Cambodia

CCC - Cooperation Committee for Cambodia



**Rigo Gene Woyie**

Democratic Republic of the Congo

CNONGD - Conseil National des ONGD de Développement



**Sam A. Worthington**

United States

InterAction



**Suraj Ray**

Mauritius

MACOSS - Mauritius Council of Social Service



**Athayde Motta**

Brazil

Abong - Associação Brasileira de ONGs

# MEET THE FORUS SECRETARIAT

The decentralized international team of the Forus Secretariat consists of dedicated individuals facilitating activities and working to support members. Find more details on our website [here](#).



**Sarah Strack**  
Director



**Rémi Renon**  
Financial and Administrative  
Manager



**Arturo Cortés Barbabosa**  
Network engagement &  
Accountability Coordinator



**David Cisneros**  
Accountability Assistant



**Marie L'Hostis**  
Advocacy Coordinator



**Dr. Jyotsna Mohan Singh**  
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**Marianne Buenaventura  
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Project Coordinator, Finance for  
Development



**Kenneth Harry Msiska**  
Project Coordinator (Digital  
Governance)



**Elisa Lopez Alvarado**  
Project Coordinator (Enabling  
Environment)



**Andrea Hernandez Nazar**  
Advocacy Assistant (Finance for  
Development)



**Isabella Camargo**  
Advocacy Assistant



**Clarisse Sih**  
Digital Communications  
Coordinator



**Bibbi Abruzzini**  
Communication Coordinator



**Jennifer Franco Rodriguez**  
Member Engagement &  
Network Management Officer



**Maria Elisa Novoa**  
Capacity-strengthening  
Coordinator

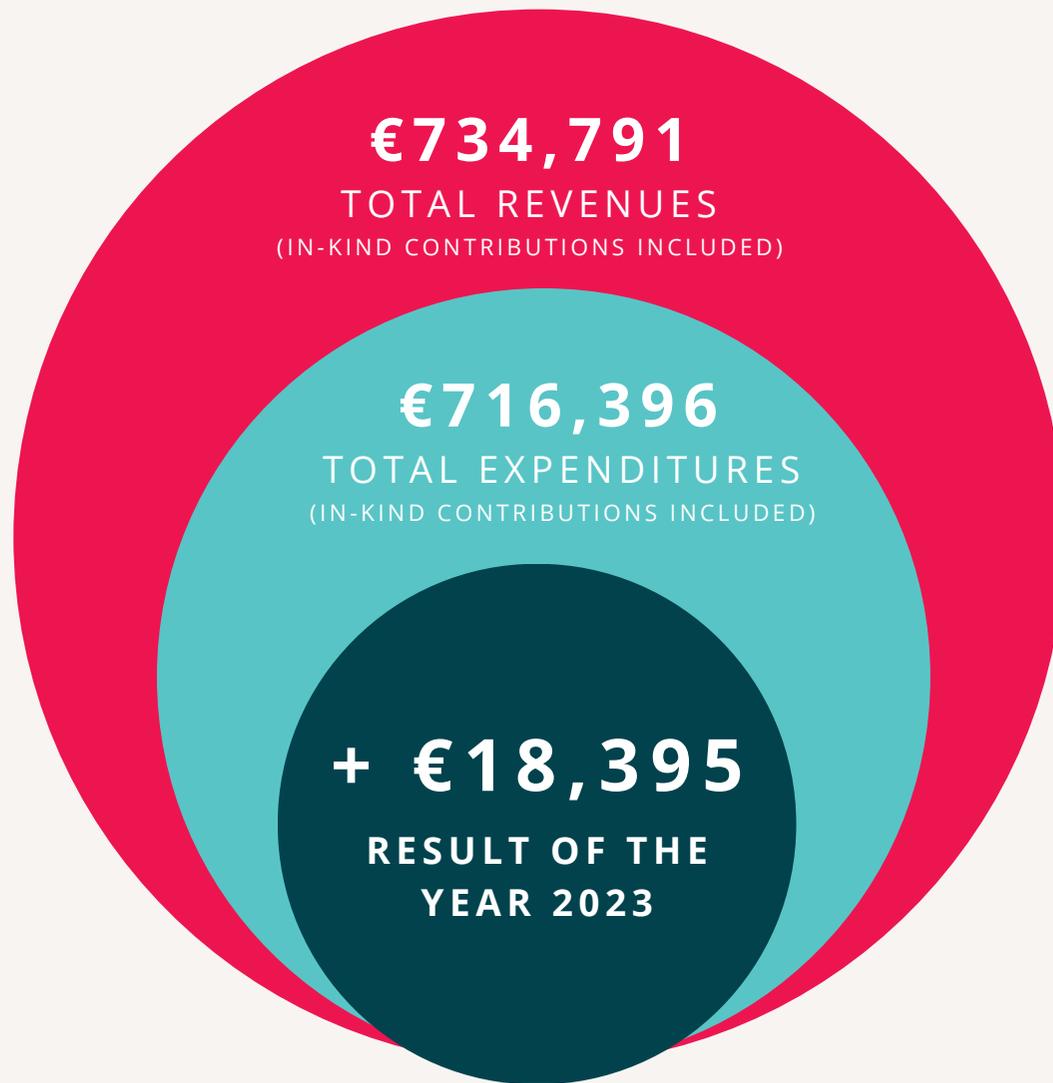
2023

# FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023



CLIMATE MARCH NEW YORK 2023  
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# KEY DATA





## FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED TO

6

REGIONAL COALITIONS

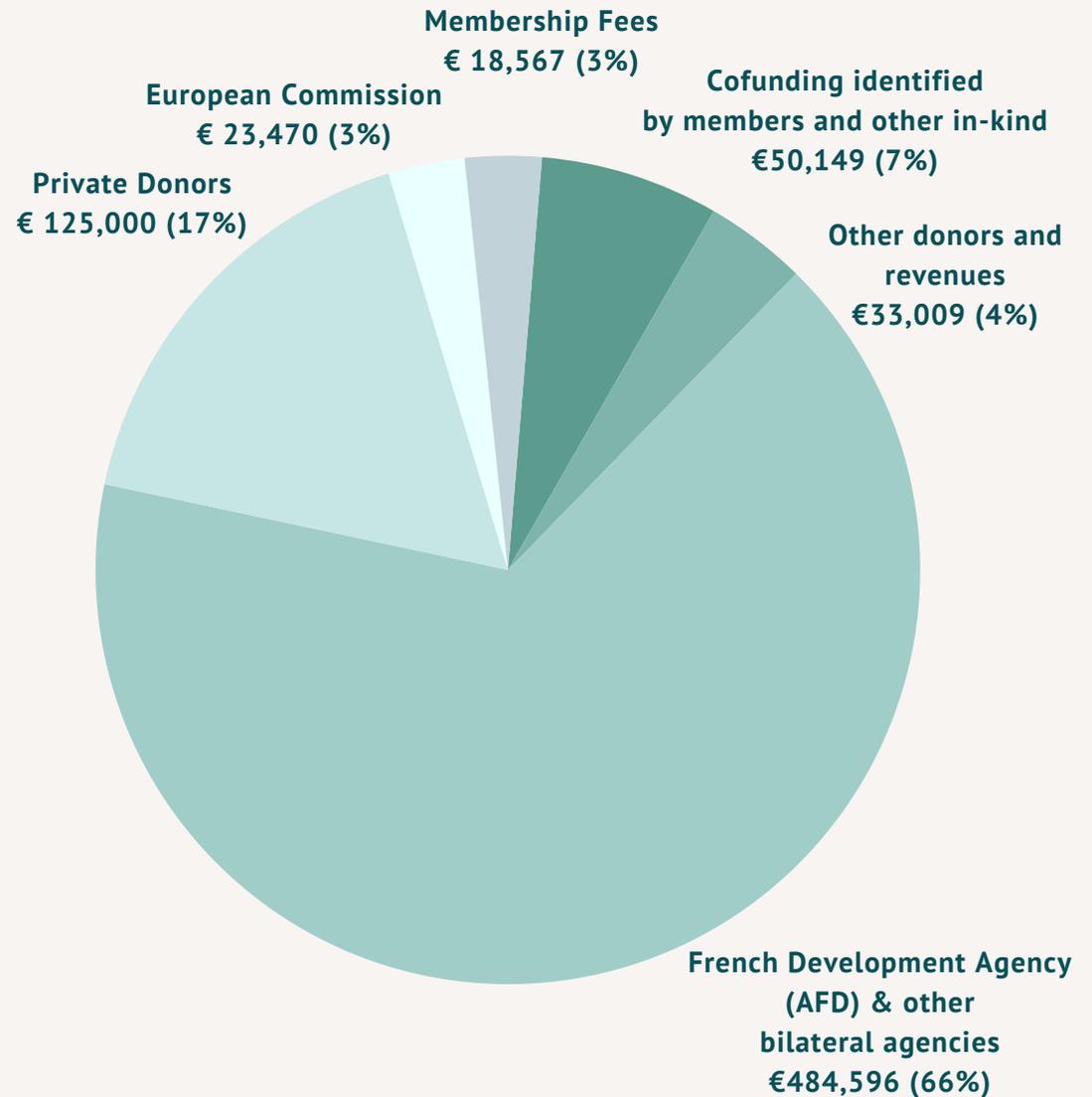
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NATIONAL PLATFORMS

# INCOME IN 2023

In 2023, Forus was able to maintain all the network's main activities at a reduced level thanks to the support of the French Development Agency (€464,596), the main public donor, and Fondation de France (€125,000). A new framework partnership has been signed with the European Commission at the end of 2023, which has had a limited effect in terms of income for the year 2023 (around 23,000). The Monaco cooperation agency has increased its support (€20,000). Membership fees from Forus members amounted to over €18,000 in 2023, a lower level than in previous years. Finally, in the context of projects implemented by members with the financial support of Forus, co-financing (amounting to approximately €50,000) was identified by the platforms that received this support in 2023.

## 2023 Revenues



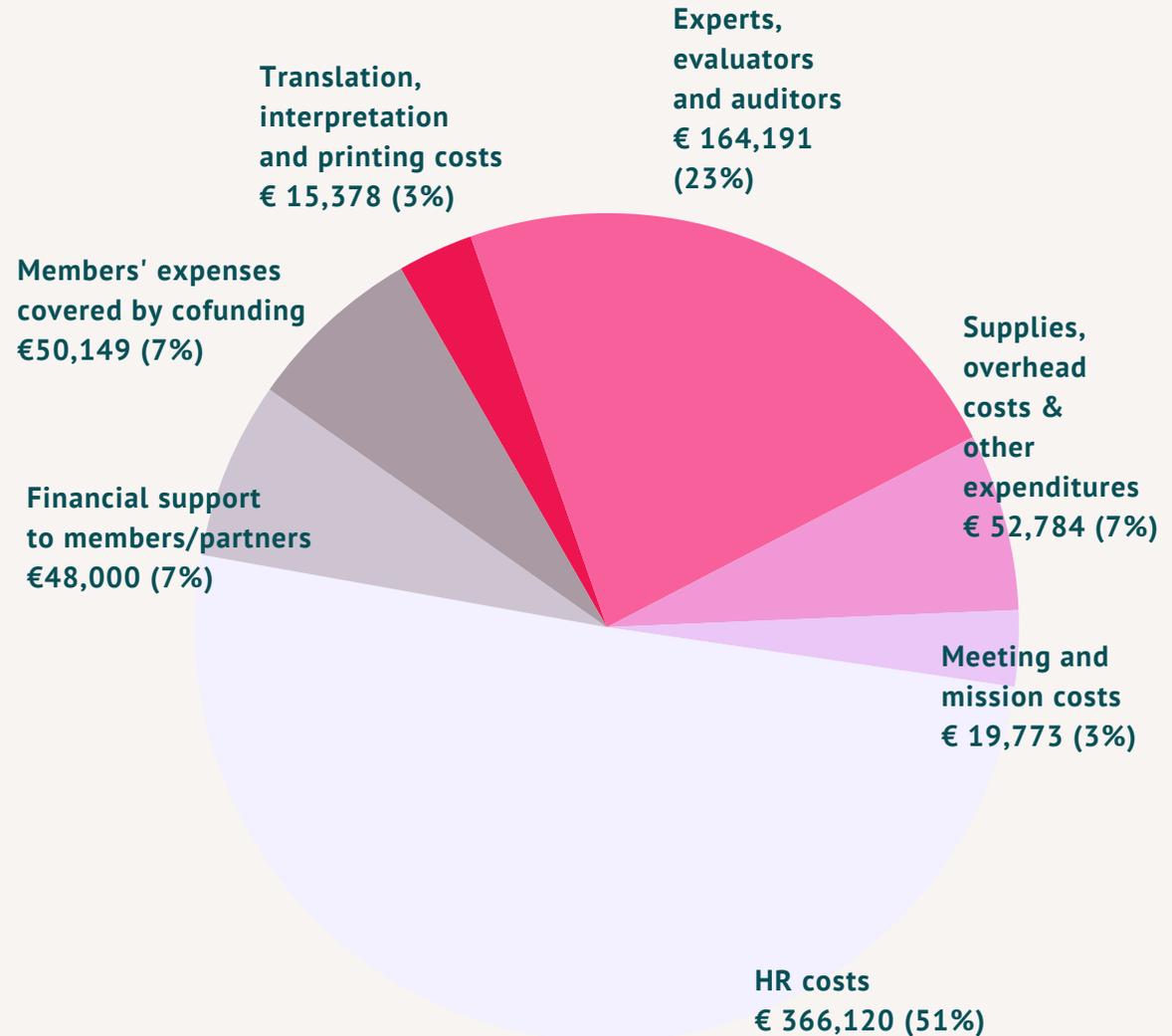
# EXPENSES IN 2023

In 2023, staff costs (€366,000) represented the largest item of expenditure, as other Forus activity costs were constrained by limited resources. Some team members were recruited as internal consultants, resulting in a high level of contractor/expert fees (€164,000). The use of interpreters and translators (€15,000) was limited; overheads were also carefully incurred (€53,000). In 2023, Forus finalised support for national and regional projects initiated in 2022 based on activities proposed by members, and also pursued projects focused on dialogue with public development banks; there were very few new sub-grant contracts signed in 2023, hence the limited level of sub-grant costs (€48,000).

## RESULT

The positive result (+ €18,395) for the financial year 2023 is linked to non-earmarked income (such as membership fees) and savings in secretariat overheads.

## 2023 Expenditures



2023

# FORUS' DONORS IN 2023



# FORUS' DONORS IN 2023

We would like to thank our donors for their continuous support to the work of the Forus network. In 2023 more than ever, the support of our historical partners such as the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Fondation de France and the Monegasque Cooperation for Development were vital to the network's sustainability. We are also grateful for the support of the European Union and of Oxfam which allows Forus to implement its work, as well as new projects in 2024 and beyond.



Fondation  
de  
France



樂施會  
OXFAM  
Hong Kong



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# FORUS MEMBERS

# 2023



FORUS MEMBERS AT THE AFRICAN-EUROPEAN  
CIVIL SOCIETY DAYS IN 2022

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## REGIONAL COALITIONS

**ADA** - Asia Development Alliance, Asia

**CONCORD** - European NGO

Confederation

for Relief and Development, Europe

**MESA** - Mesa de Articulación de

Asociaciones Nacionales y Redes de

ONGs de América Latina y el Caribe

**PIANGO** - Pacific Islands Association

of Non-Governmental Organisations,

Pacific

**REPAOC** - Réseau des Plate-formes

nationales d'ONG d'Afrique de l'Ouest

et du centre, West Africa

**REPOGAC** - Réseau des Plate-formes

des ONG de l'Afrique Centrale, Central

Africa

**SADC-CNGO** - Southern Africa

Development Community Council of

Non-Governmental Organizations,

Southern Africa

## NATIONAL NGO PLATFORMS

**ABONG** - Associação Brasileira de ONGs,  
Brazil

**ACCIÓN** - Asociación Chilena de ONG,  
Chile

**Alianza ONG** - Alianza de Organizaciones  
No Gubernamentales, Dominican  
Republic

**ANC** - Asociación Nacional de Centros  
de Investigación, Promoción Social y  
Desarrollo, Peru

**ANONG** - Asociación Nacional de ONG,  
Uruguay

**ASONOG** - Asociación de organismos no  
gubernamentales, Honduras

**BOCONGO** - Botswana Council of  
Non-Governmental Organisations,  
Botswana

**Bond** - British Overseas NGOs for  
Development, the UK

**CANGO** - China Association for NGO  
Cooperation, China

**CCC** - Cooperation Committee for  
Cambodia, Cambodia

**CCIC** - Canadian Council for International  
Co-operation, Canada

**CCOAI** - Conseil de Concertation des  
Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de  
Base, Rwanda

**CCOD** - Conseil de Concertation des ONG  
de développement, Congo

**CCONG** - Confederación Colombiana de  
ONG, Colombia

**CEPS** - Citizens Engagement Platform  
Seychelles/Seychelles

**CID** - Council for International  
Development, New Zealand

**CILONG** - Centre d'information et de  
Liaison des ONG, TCHAD, Chad

**CIONGCA** - Conseil Inter ONG de  
Centrafrique, Central African Republic

**CNONGD** - Conseil National des ONG  
de Développement, The Democratic  
Republic of the Congo

**CODE-NGO** - Caucus of Development  
NGO

Networks, Philippines

**CICSO** - Cook Islands Association of  
NGOs, Cook Islands

**Coordination Sud** - Solidarité Urgence  
Développement, France

**Coordinadora** - Coordinadora de ONG de  
cooperación para el Desarrollo, Spain

**CONGAC** - Collectif des ONG Agréées du  
Cameroun, Cameroon

**CONGAD** - Conseil des ONG d'Appui au  
Développement, Sénégal

**CONGCOOP** - Coordination de ONG y  
Cooperativas, Guatemala

**CSCI** - Convention de la Société Civile  
Ivoirienne, Ivory Coast

**Dóchas** - The Irish Association of  
Non-Governmental Development  
Organisations, Ireland

**EENGD** - Encuentro de Entidades No  
Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo,  
Argentina

**Espace Associatif**, Morocco

**FCOSS** - Fiji Council of Social Service, Fiji

**FECONG** - Fédération des Collectif d'ONG  
du Mali, Mali

**FINGO** - Finnish NGO Platform, Finland

**FOND** - Romanian NGDO Platform,  
Romania

**FONGDD** - Forum des ONG pour le  
Développement Durable, Guinea

**FONG-STP** - Federação das ONGs de Sao  
Tomé e Príncipe, Sao Tome & Principe

**FONGTO** - Fédération des ONG au Togo,  
Togo

**FONGA** - Foro das ONGs Angolanas,  
Angola

**FORS** - Czech Forum for Development Cooperation, Czech Republic

**Global Focus**, Denmark

**HAND** - Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Hungary

**INFID** - International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development, Indonesia

**InterAction**, USA

**JANIC** - Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, Japan

**JOINT** - League For NGOs in Mozambique, Mozambique

**KANGO** - Kiribati Association of NGOs, Kiribati

**KCOC** - Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation, Korea

**LAPAS** - Latvijas Platforma attīstības sadarbībai, Latvia

**Lithuanian NGDO Platform** - Lithuanian National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation

Organisations' Platform, Lithuania

**MACOSS** - Mauritius Council of Social Service, Mauritius

**NANGO** - The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), Zimbabwe

**NFN - NGO** - Federation of Nepal, Nepal

**NNNGO** - Nigeria Network of NGO, Nigeria

**PDA** - Pakistan Development Alliance, Pakistan

**PFNOSCM** - Plateforme Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile de Madagascar, Madagascar

**Plataforma ONGD** - Plataforma Portuguesa das Organizações

Não-Governamentais para o

Desenvolvimento Portuguese Platform NGOD, Portugal

**Plateforme belge des ONG de développement et d'urgence**, Belgium

**PLATONG** - Plataforma das ONGs de Cabo Verde, Cape Verde

**POJOAJU** - Asociación de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales del Paraguay, Paraguay

**SKOP** - National Platform of Maltese NGOs, Malta

**SLOGA** - Slovenian Global Action, Slovenia

**SPONG** - Secrétariat Permanent des ONG du Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso

**Taiwan-Aid** - Taiwan Alliance in International Development, Taiwan

**TANGO** - The Association of NonGovernmental Organizations, Gambia

Uganda NGO Forum, Uganda

**UNIDOSC**, Mexico

**UNITAS** - Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social, Red Unitas, Bolivia

**UNNGOF** - Uganda National NGO Forum Uganda

**VANI** - Voluntary Action Network India, India

**ZCSD** - Zambia Council for Social Development, Zambia

Forus is a member-led network of **69 National NGO Platforms and 7 Regional Coalitions from all continents representing over 22,000 NGOs** active locally and internationally on development, human rights, social justice, environmental issues, and more.

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