

FOCUS ON GLOBAL SOUTH

ANNUAL REPORT

2014

Achievements in 2014	3
Situational Context	3
Defending the Commons (Land, Water and Forests)	5
International and Regional	5
National	8
India	8
Philippines	10
Cambodia	11
Climate and Environmental Justice	13
International	13
National	15
Philippines	15
Thailand	16
India	16
Trade and Investment	17
International and Regional	17
National	19
India	19
Philippines	19
Thailand	20
Cambodia	20
Alternatives	20
Buen Vivir	20
Systemic Alternatives	21
Media spotlight	22
Social Media	23
Financial Summary	25
Publications	26
Staff	31
Board of Directors	31

Focus on the Global South

ANNUAL REPORT

2014

Achievements in 2014

- Co-convened the largest congress on Agrarian Reform in the Philippines since 1987 with almost 1,000 farmers and agrarian reform advocates (approx 70% female), to push for the continuation of reform
- Organized legal training workshops on Economic Land Concession laws in Cambodia despite a challenging political situation.
- Gathered land and natural resource rights activists from around the Mekong region to share ideas and strategies to build a regional land platform.
- Co-organized the Asia-Pacific regional conference, “Rights-based governance beyond borders: The role of extraterritorial human rights obligations” in Bangkok
- Released a joint report with the EU-ASEAN FTA Campaign Network, highlighting the impact of free-trade agreements on healthcare.
- Directly engaged with the Philippines’ Department of Trade and Industry, providing inputs on conducting social impact assessments in relation to the EU-Philippines FTA and on investment and investor protection policies.
- Researched and wrote instructional booklets on agroecology for small farmers in India
- Increased our numbers of followers on social media many times over
- Published and quoted in mainstream and alternative news sources over 125 times

Situational Context

Overview

In Thailand, the military seized power in May after months of political upheaval and protests. A junta immediately imposed several orders and declared martial law, which gave it absolute power to arrest and jail any citizens deemed to be disobeying or disturbing public order. This seriously inhibited the public space for social movements and non-state actors, including the ability of community-based organizations to continue their activities for social justice. The junta also placed strict limits on the right to assembly and banned many civil society events. A significant number of activists, students and academics were summoned and arrested, with some still in custody. Divisions amongst activists and social movements due to their political stance have become more visible and have worsened the situation. This political situation had direct impacts on Focus on the Global South’s work from Thailand, and more importantly our local work with FTA Watch and Thai Climate Justice.

In India, the political landscape also shifted in May, with the coming to power of the right-wing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The new government brought significant changes by modifying key policies related to land, water and forests as well as trade, further benefiting corporations. These changes demanded special attention from organizations like Focus on the Global South that work on these issues. Focus had to step up its work with like-minded groups to initiate discussion and debate on the new government policies, especially trade policy, and to analyze the other challenges for this government in economic and financial spheres.

In the Philippines, although the current government is reform-oriented, it has still been impossible to sustain a social reform agenda, specifically programs

and laws that could really cut the roots of inequalities and free natural and economic resources from the hands of the political and economic elites. For this reason, Focus on the Global South has acted as a key driver of movements concerned with agrarian justice, helping to convene the People's Agrarian Reform Congress to urge the completion of land reform. Meanwhile, despite the wake-up call issuing from the devastation brought about by Super Typhoon Yolanda (aka Haiyan), government has not embedded climate change and climate justice perspectives in its development paradigm. In the aftermath of Yolanda, it has instead chosen to tap private sector to lead recovery efforts through business development projects in the affected areas, leading Focus to examine the implications of such disaster capitalism within affected communities.



Photo Credit: Egay Cabalitan, Jr.

Corporate selfish campaign in the Philippines pushed for a binding treaty on business and human rights

Defending the Commons (Land, Water and Forests)

International and Regional

Focus on the Global South has continued to act as a leading civil society group in the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**, especially in the development and implementation of guidelines that enable communities to defend their resources. Our engagement with this body was directed by our work with social movements and grassroots communities who actively participated in regular workshops and strategy meetings throughout the year.

Since helping to draft the **Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)** in 2012, Focus has remained involved in the monitoring and implementation of the VGGT through the preparation of popular materials, technical guides and creating awareness about the VGGT through seminars and workshops. Focus' senior program officer Shalmali Guttal is on the advisory team for the preparation of a technical guide on how the VGGTs can be used in relation to the commons. Focus has also coordinated inputs from social movements in Asia for a popular manual on how social movements and grassroots networks can use the VGGTs to defend their resources. In November, Focus staff ran a seminar with the Lao Land Issues Working Group in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on how to utilize the VGGT.

Focus has also been deeply engaged in the CFS' international consultative process on **Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments (RAI)** to push for improved outcomes for communities



Photo Credit: Parul Thapa

Food secure & sovereign Odisha

affected by investments in agriculture. Ms. Guttal also represented Focus in the negotiations in Rome throughout the year as a Coordinating member of the CFS Civil Society Mechanism and played a central role in preparing the civil society positions as part of the negotiations. The RAI principles were finally endorsed in October at the 41st session of the CFS.

As well as our international policy work, we also continued our close engagement with social movements, communities, universities and other institutions across Asia to develop strategies to resist increased resource grabbing in the region. In February, we co-organized a three-day meeting of representatives from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand in Bangkok to discuss **land and forest tenure and agricultural investment** in the region. Multiple presentations were made by participants to explore the differences and similarities in the region as small farmers continue to fight against state-backed large-scale agriculture and resource grabbing. These discussions were used

as input in the CFS consultative process for the first draft of RAI, including at a consultation of Asian stakeholders in Thailand in March.

Focus continued its role in the Regional Organizing Committee of the ASEAN People's Forum (APF). Our senior program officer Dorothy Guerrero worked in the Program Committee and cooperated with the National Organizing Committee in Myanmar in organizing the biggest APF so far, with about 1,400 participants from the region and observers from outside. In collaboration with Equitable Cambodia, the NGO Forum on Cambodia, TERRA and the Land Core Group in Myanmar, Focus organized four workshops on issues linked with investments in Myanmar and the region, hydro-power projects, human rights impacts of economic growth and land grabbing.

Focus was also invited to join the ETO Consortium, an international network of human rights and civil society organizations, academics, researchers and lawyers that are collaborating to push governments to honor **extra-territorial obligations (ETOs)** in the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights as outlined in the Maastricht Principles (www.etoconsortium.org). Together with the ETO Consortium and the network's members (Stockholm Environmental Institute, Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development) based in Thailand and the Philippines (Saligan Alternative Law Group), Focus co-organized an Asia-Pacific regional conference called "Rights-based governance beyond borders: The role of extraterritorial human rights obligations" from August 31 to September 3 at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Over 100 participants attended. Closed strategy sessions were held on key issues, while a special public event featured impressive panels with a broad array of experts in the field, progressive officials and well-known activists from Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe.

From September 29 to October 1, we were represented by Shalmali Guttal in a strategy meeting held in Bangkok to challenge the **World Bank Group's new safeguard mechanism strategy**. She provided inputs on climate change, land governance and economic policies, and contributed to the writing of a collective critique of the World Bank's safeguard mechanism, which was submitted to the World Bank and made public during the World Bank annual meetings in October.

Focus also co-organized, with the NGO Forum on ADB in Asia-Pacific, a regional strategy meeting to develop strong and **legally binding safeguards** against the lending programs and policies of international financial institutions. The four-day meeting, "Asian Peoples Safeguards: Platform for Action," was held in Bangkok in November. Participants developed a draft peoples' safeguards framework at the meeting, which will be revised and refined through consultations with social movements, communities affected by destructive development projects and civil society organizations. Focus is on the steering committee leading this process.

In December, Focus organized a two-day **regional strategy meeting on Land and Natural Resource Rights**. The main purpose of the meeting was to share information about how small scale farmers, fishers and workers and local communities are mobilizing to protect their rights against investors and middlemen, and come up with strategies to support each other's struggles. Over 30 participants attended from the Mekong region countries, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Netherlands. This was the fourth in a series of regional meetings on land, water, forest and natural resource rights and governance that Focus has organized over the past two years. Participants resolved that Focus should set up a regional platform on land-water-forest-natural resource rights that will continue to bring activists,



Photo Credit: John Bonnar

Focus Philippines expressing solidarity to people of El Salvador in fighting mining giant Oceana Gold

social movements and their organizations together on a regular basis.

Focus also continued its work on **alternatives to water commercialization and privatization**. In February, we co-organized a webinar on water in Asia. Mary Ann Manahan from our Philippines office presented and facilitated the webinar, which gathered more than 30 participants and water activists from around the world. In April, during the Spring meetings of the World Bank Group in Washington DC, an international coalition of water rights groups from India and United States, including Focus on the Global South, issued a **press release highlighting**

the failures of the World Bank and its partner institutions to address the negative impacts of their water projects in India and other parts of the global south. It also urged the World Bank to end its destructive promotion of water privatization under the guise of development.

In April, Focus was also a co-organizer and facilitator of a major international conference on municipal services in Cape Town, South Africa. The conference was launched by the Municipal Services Project, a global alliance of progressive researchers and civil society groups exploring alternatives and progressive models of **municipal services in health, power**

and water. More than 130 people attended the conference, called “Putting Public in Public Services: Research, Action and Equity in the Global South.”

In September, Ms. Manahan travelled to Canada and addressed audiences on the issue of the commons and water in Asia. Focus was the co-organizer of a 3-day **Strategy Meeting of Water Justice Campaigners** in Toronto, hosted and led by the Blue Planet Project and Council of Canadians. In Ottawa, Ms. Manahan gave presentations on the control over natural resources in Asia, while at the University of Montreal, she gave a presentation on resource grabbing to around 50-80 students. She also gave two presentations at an event hosted by the Asia Pacific Working Group of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court: one on alternatives to water privatization and commercialization in Asia, and another on resource grabbing in Asia. The two sessions gathered 10-15 participants from government, civil society and donor community in Canada.

Focus India also engaged in many activities related to **water in the South Asia region**. On World Water Day in March, Focus participated in a symposium on *South Asian Water Commons: People’s Visions on Transboundary River Sharing*, at which participants pledged to form national working groups on water commons in the eight South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to discuss and propose the concepts, principles and framework on which a South Asian Water Commons Convention could be drafted. These national working groups on water commons decided to organize a regional meeting in Kathmandu during the People’s SAARC Convention in November to discuss and build consensus on the framework of the South Asian Water Commons Convention, form a drafting committee and constitute a South Asian Working Group on Water Commons to take the work forward.

National

India

In India, we have been working with farmers and allies in building capacity in **agroecology** among small farmers. We published an initial booklet in English and Hindi called “Where Have All the Small Farmers Gone?” which examines the course of agriculture in India and the role of small farmers. As a follow up, Focus conducted field surveys and in September and November, visiting villages Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal. During these visits, Focus met with farmers, farmer organizations and other rights based groups working on sustainable farming. We collected rich primary data through extensive interviews and focused group discussions for the next booklet, “Making Agroecology Viable for Small Farmers: Experiences from the Field.” Focus also explored and built knowledge on farming practices, food security, food sovereignty, market linkages, preservation and practice of traditional farming and climate adaptive practices and challenges, bringing out the “Handbook on Agroecology: Farming Manual on Sustainable Practices” later on in the year.

As part of the **Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)**, Focus helped organize a two-day Indigenous Seeds Festival in March in New Delhi. At this festival, more than 2,500 seed varieties were on display, celebrating India’s incredibly rich diversity of agricultural seeds and bio-cultural heritage while highlighting community conservation traditions of participatory selection, innovation and shared rights over diversity of crop seeds and related knowledge. In June, Focus attended an ASHA meeting to discuss the current state of agriculture and what should be done to save farmers and the farming in India. They also discussed their proposal for a guaranteed minimum income support to the Indian farmers, which the Indian

government must introduce to help the small and marginal farmers in crisis. They also planned a strategy to counter the promotion of Green Revolution by the state governments in East India, especially in Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal as well as in the seven Northeastern states in the name of “Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India.”

Focus India was **actively engaged in national policy on agriculture** in the run-up to the national election in May and after the coming to power of the right-wing BJP. Focus was invited to give inputs on agriculture and trade issues for the BJP manifesto prior to the election, but the BJP backtracked on its manifesto statement that genetically modified foods would not be allowed without full scientific evaluation. In June, e participated in a meeting on GMOs called by Swadeshi Jagran

Manch (SJM). Despite being an affiliate of the right-wing nationalist organization RSS, the parent body of the ruling party BJP, the SJM took a very opposite position on the GMO issue, calling the BJP’s decision to allow GMO field trials as a “betrayal of people’s trust.” The meeting reviewed the government position on GMOs, demanded an immediate withdrawal of all permissions granted for the field trials and issued a resolution reiterating that BJP government must stick to the promise it made in its manifesto.

Focus India also joined **campaigns and mass mobilizations** during the year. In March, we participated in the National Convention of the Right to Food Campaign in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. In May, Focus joined the March against Monsanto to demand that agrochemical companies quit India



Chemical free groundnuts Andhra Pradesh (Parul Thapa)

Photo Credit: Parul Thapa

and that the Government to terminate harmful agreements with the USA and implement policies to promote sustainable and safe agriculture to benefit Indian citizens and farmers. In June, Focus also joined a protest in New Delhi with hundreds of villagers displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Dam to challenge the illegal and undemocratic decision of the BJP to raise the height of the dam within a few days of coming into power.

In October, Focus India co-hosted a meeting on **Transnational Corporations and Human Rights** in Delhi to discuss what Indian groups need to do to mobilize support for the international process on containing corporate impunity. For example, what kind of regulatory and accountability mechanisms need to be in place to prevent Indian companies

from violating human rights? What should the Indian groups' contribution to the international treaty process be on corporate impunity? During this meeting, participants decided to organize workshops on TNCs and human rights at the People's SAARC convention in Kathmandu to mobilize South Asian civil society groups to join this process and build a campaign at the regional level.

Philippines

Focus made major headway in organizing a new, broader platform of movements in the Philippines for advocacy on **agrarian reform and rural development**. As part of the Save Agrarian Reform Alliance (SARA), we were very active in linking agrarian reform to land grabbing. Mary Ann



Filipino farmers demanding agrarian reform

Manahan from Focus acted as a resource person on agrarian reform and farmers' issues at various Congressional hearings and wrote several press releases for the alliance to build public support. This culminated in organizing almost 1,000 farmers and agrarian reform advocates in the largest congress on agrarian reform in the Philippines since 1987 (with approximately 70% of the participants women), to push for the continuation of the reform even after part the Agrarian Reform law expired in June 2014. In May, we conducted the first in what will be a series of trainings for farm workers on land grabbing, partnering with Katarungan in Mindanao where corporations are poised to take over huge plantations that should be up for agrarian reform. Focus Philippines also produced videos of interviews conducted with indigenous leaders from Mindanao on indigenous rights in the Bangsamoro and indigenous visions of development, in partnership with Lilak, an advocacy group on rights of indigenous women.

In regard to water, Focus' work zeroed in on monitoring of **privatization trends, policies and reclaiming public water and alternatives** in the Philippines. It continued to share its work—analysis and research to partners and allies, regionally and globally. In April, Focus presented at the general assembly of employees in the water sector and continued to monitor privatization trends and defending public water in the water district sector. A roundtable discussion was also organized in partnership with the Visayas State University in Leyte on barangay planning on the use of water resources as commons. In May, Focus co-organized a roundtable discussion called Reclaiming and Re-imagining the Public: *Roundtable on New Ways to Organize Work, Services, and Resource Management in the Water Sector* and in September, Focus participated in the ESCR-Asia Workshop on Right to Adequate Standards of Living (Water and Housing).

Focus Philippines also joined several protests during the year. In October, Focus joined the picket-line in front of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System to bring attention to the arbitration case and demand the immediate implementation the decision to slash water rates last year. In November, Focus joined a rally in front of the Second International River Summit in Marikina City to protest the corporate takeover of the agenda.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, Focus continued support and strengthening of the **action research teams** in the western provinces of Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, Oddar Meanchey, Pailin and Banteay Meanchey. Despite a challenging political situation in Cambodia, with tensions building between resisting communities with corporations and their government allies who are attempting to grab their land, the action research teams were able to continue numerous activities. With assistance from Equitable Cambodia, we conducted two legal trainings on Economic Land Concession laws, and we held meetings throughout the year with team members to plan and review ongoing research on irrigation infrastructure, illegality in fisheries and military occupation of community forests.

The action research teams have been particularly busy with **escalations of land conflicts** in the Lor Peang area in Kampong Chhnang province and in Pailin province. In Oddar Meanchey, conflicts among local communities and sugar cane companies seem to be easing with the informal withdrawal of the companies from their concession areas. It is unclear, however, whether the companies will fully cease production in the province, or return some of the disputed lands to local communities and continue production in smaller concession areas.



Activists in Cambodia demand the release of activists

The action research teams are also **preparing case studies** on fisheries in the Tonle Sap, community forestry, irrigation projects in Pursat, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat, the Lor Peang conflict, and on the Pheapimex concession. The team now has about 100 members, and coordinating the activities of all the members is proving to be a challenge.

An additional set of activities that are proving to have strong potential are **livelihood activities**, which include raising chickens and growing vegetables, and are intended to help the land activists and their families to have stable incomes

during periods of intensified conflicts. A few families in the action research team have already started these activities and Focus plans to expand these activities to other members as well.

Focus also started a simple action research process with **garment workers** who are members of the Workers Information Centre in the United Sisterhood Collective. The purpose of the research is for workers to be able to track and monitor working conditions in the factories of particular clothing brands, which they can then use for advocacy and negotiations. So far, 22 workers from 11 factories have joined the process.

Climate and Environmental Justice

International

With only a few years left to get global emission levels in line with our actual carbon budget, the **UNFCCC process** has so far failed to deliver a binding agreement that would sufficiently curb emissions rises and limit the devastating effects of climate change. While we continued to monitor developments at the UNFCCC, we concentrated our efforts on debunking the “green economy” approach, building a larger movement and helping national alliances win concrete policy changes where possible. We continued to regularly coordinate

activities with other members of the Climate Space we co-organized at the 2013 World Social Forum.

In June, Dorothy Guerrero gave a presentation on climate justice and system change at a conference on Structural Redistribution for Global Democracy held in the University of Pretoria, South Africa. The conference gathered public intellectuals, researchers from the fields of economics, gender studies, international relations, philosophy, politics, and sociology and activists from around the world.

In September during the UN Climate Summit in New York, Mary Ann Manahan joined the **Peoples' Climate March**—the largest mass mobilization against climate change in history—as well as the Peoples' Climate Justice Assembly organized by the Climate Justice Alliance.



Pablo Solon interviewed by Democracy Now in Lima December 2014

Photo Credit: Joseph Purugganan



Peoples' March in Lima December 2014

Photo Credit: Joseph Purugganan

In October, Dorothy Guerrero addressed 160 youth leaders from 49 member countries of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) in an international workshop organized by the Asia Europe Foundation in Milan. She discussed the links between social inequality and climate change and the importance of just solutions to the climate crisis, and raised the issue of the enforced disappearance of Lao civil society member Sombath Somphone after he helped organize the last Asia Europe People's Forum.

At the 20th Session of the **UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP20) in Lima, Peru** in December, Focus took part in a number of meetings and side events inside and outside of the official climate talks. Focus and other conveners of the **Climate Space** took

the opportunity to organize two meetings in Lima to share updates on continuing work and collaborative efforts, institutional matters, and to share and discuss developments in the UN climate talks and ideas for consolidating the political agenda in the lead up to COP21 in Paris 2015. A number of key proposals for work ahead emerged from these meetings in Lima to develop actions and strategies to prepare for COP21. There was also unity around the need to work closely with other groups on the climate negotiations front particularly on the issues of mitigation, finance, carbon markets and geo-engineering, and the need to reach out to broader audience.

Focus also joined other activists in a "die-in" action inside the COP20 and produced a short

video of the action. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dc8sCUmtRAg>

Pablo Solon, Executive Director of Focus and former chief climate negotiator of Bolivia, was interviewed by Democracy Now and spoke out against the commodification of nature. Mr. Solon also participated in the International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature on December 9th at which he presented a case of how climate change violates the Rights of Mother Earth and raised the concern over the direction of the climate negotiations where the pledges are becoming less ambitious. After the final, last-minute agreement emerged from the talks in Lima, Mr. Solon criticized the agreement from COP20 as a “roadmap for global burning.”

National

Philippines

Focus began a project with the **Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ)** to build a critique of REDD+ demonstration sites in the country, and played an active role within PMCJ to engage local governments in discussions and presentations on climate justice and disaster planning. This included making presentations and having discussions with local governments on developing people-centered disaster plans and using a climate justice approach in disaster rebuilding.

Focus Philippines also closely monitored the **changing strategy of the Filipino government delegation** at the climate talks in Lima and its decision to amend its position regarding the responsibility of developed countries to take the lead in cutting emissions. Following the close of the COP20, Focus organized a forum in Manila

with civil society representatives who attended the climate talks, as well as Yeb Sano of the Climate Change Commission, to clarify the Philippines position and how to move forward in preparation for COP21 in Paris.

Following **Super-Typhoon Haiyan** in November 2013, Focus Philippines made several visits to affected communities to help in and monitor the relief effort, but also to better understand the effect of climate change and disaster capitalism on women and indigenous groups in particular. In November, Focus co-organized a conference with Development and Peace Canada, Freedom from Debt Coalition, and the National Secretariat for Social Action of the Catholic Church in the Philippines in Tacloban on the anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan. Focus produced a paper and presented a paper at the conference titled, *Preventing Disaster Capitalism: Why Climate Justice, Human Rights, and People’s Participation are Key in Recovery Efforts*.

Focus also conducted activities throughout the year related to **climate change and its impact on women**. We conducted a focus group discussion with women survivors of the 2011 Typhoon Sendong (Washi) about their condition in the resettlement areas. The research focused on food insecurity and the lack of livelihoods. In partnership with Sarilaya (a women’s group advocating for sustainable agriculture and health/nutrition), Focus also conducted research on an organic farm run by women and their community in Tarlac, which produced insights and information on the challenges posed by climate change on their livelihoods. We also co-organized a two-day Asian Women’s Forum on Climate Justice, held in June at the University of the Philippines, where we presented a paper on climate change and its impact on food security and women. In August, Focus presented at the Women and Climate



Joseph Purugganan performing during the conference in Tacloban November 2014

Photo Credit: Judy Pasimio

Summit organized by the Global Greengrants Fund and the International Network of Women’s Fund.

Thailand

The political crisis in Thailand and ongoing military dictatorship weakened the ability of the Thai Working Group on Climate Justice (TCJ) to influence government policies, especially as our tactic in recent years has been to push for a more participatory process to create national climate and energy plans. Given this situation, our work with TCJ has now focused more on public awareness campaigning to address issues such as business/commercial district air conditioning and consumer culture, and we helped TCJ organize an all day

festival focused on raising consumer awareness. We continue to work with other members of TCJ to find how we can strengthen the political impact of the coalition in the current conditions, and are in discussions to organize another regional meeting of national climate justice groups. Following the close of the COP20 in Lima, we organized a briefing session with civil society members to inform them about the discussions and our analysis of the outcome.

India

Focus India continued to collaborate with Indian groups, to participate in state consultations on climate change as well as co-host public events to discuss the climate crisis in relation to sustainable

development and the limits of capitalism. Within India Climate Justice, we strategized to get climate issues included in political parties' manifestos prior to the general elections, plan events in the run-up to COP20 and discuss deeper collaborations. Focus also participated in several events with Beyond Copenhagen, a coalition of over 50 Indian organizations and networks working towards environmental and climate justice.

Trade and Investment

International and Regional

Focus and the **EU-ASEAN FTA Campaign Network** continue to provide a critical voice articulating issues around the EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) talks in Southeast Asia in both national and regional spaces. We examined the impact of FTAs on health and access to medicines across Asia, bringing out a report titled *Access Delayed=Access Denied: Trade, IPR and Peoples Struggle for Access to Medicines*. International spaces such as the European Summer University of Social Movements in Paris and the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF) in Milan provided the space for the network members to present their views on key issues and share about campaign actions to European counterparts.

Focus continued to serve on the International Organizing Committee of the AEPF, which held its 10th session in October in Milan, Italy. Focus co-organised three plenaries in the AEPF: Socially Just Trade and Investments; Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Land and Natural Resource Management; Climate Justice, Sustainable Energy Production and Zero Waste. We facilitated the first two plenaries and workshop sessions. Under

the Socially Just Trade and Investments, we gave presentations on challenging power and FTAs between the EU and Asia. We co-drafted the final declaration, urging a replacement of the current trade and investment scheme with an **Alternative Trade Mandate**. For the first time since the forum began, the AEPF was formally invited to present the declaration to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

In May, our senior program officer Mr. Joseph Purugganan participated in an international meeting of organizations campaigning on investment held in Istanbul, consolidating the Southeast Asia regional report on activities and strategies being used to address FTAs, Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) and related policies, and planning stronger coordination of investment campaign work regionally and globally. We also began a project with Transnational Institute and REDES-Friends of the Earth Uruguay to strengthen civil society capacity to pressure policy makers to *re-think the international investment regime* and support governments that are already in the process of doing so, such as the Ecuador initiative to audit the country's BITs and arbitration cases.

Focus also continued to work on the issue of *dismantling corporate power*, working with allies and advocating national policy makers to build a campaign during the 26th Human Rights Council Session in Geneva in June, to encourage adoption of a resolution to develop a legally binding international instrument on business and human rights for inclusion within the UN system. The council passed the resolution submitted by Ecuador and South Africa, paving the way for a process towards binding treaty on TNCs, with the Philippines and India voting in favour. Focus will continue to monitor the developments of the binding treaty, which will address corporate violations of human rights. In parallel to this process, Focus is also on



AEPF in Milan October 2014

Photo Credit: Joseph Purugganan

the working group of the *People's Treaty*, which is drafting a document with the aim of defending the rights of, and empowering the people affected by the abuses of transnational corporations. During the AEPF special meeting of the network, Focus was appointed to facilitate the formation of the Asia Working Group of the Dismantle Corporate Power and End Impunity network, which initiated the People's Treaty initiative.

Focus' work on China and BRICS is well regarded by allies from social movements and progressive academic circles. Dorothy Guerrero's piece on China and BRICS was used as part of the preparatory materials for the BRICS Civil Society Seminar in Brazil in April. She presented her work at the

international conference of the International Student Association (ISA) held in Argentina last July. We also continue to do pioneering work about China. Last June we launched the database "Understanding China's Energy Landscape: Achievements, Challenges and Conflicts, Past, Present and Future ([please see www.UnderstandChinaEnergy.org](http://www.UnderstandChinaEnergy.org)). The database is a huge new resource that puts more than 1000 articles, research, studies and information about China's energy development - coal, oil, hydro, nuclear, renewables - into one place and provides context on social and environmental issues, especially investments and economic policy.

Focus also continued its regional approach to trade, investment and other matters through its continued

engagement with the **Peoples' South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**.

Focus India is a member of the Steering Committee and played an active role in developing activities for the Peoples' SAARC, which ran in parallel to the 18th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu in November.

National

India

After the formation of a new BJP government in May, Focus met several times as part of the **Forum against FTAs**, to assess the new government policies and its promises on trade and economic front. A public roundtable discussion was organized in late June to discuss the challenges facing the government at which more than 100 participants attended. After an intense discussion on different aspects of the economy, the participants came to the conclusion that social movements, trade unions and civil society organizations face many challenges in holding this new government to account on key trade and economic issues.

In September, Focus along with Third World Network and the Centre for WTO Studies of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) organized a meeting on **"India at the WTO: The Battle between Food and Trade."** The objective was to keep the pressure on the Indian Government to stand firm on its position to not ratify the protocol of amendment for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) reached as part of the 2013 WTO Bali Ministerial, until there is a permanent solution to the G-33's Food Security Proposal. India's stand (which had the support of countries such as Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia) drew appreciation from global civil society, farmers and food rights groups as well as other developing countries that recognized the

urgent need to push for a balanced outcome from the Bali package.

In late November, Focus India joined **protests against the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** 6th round of negotiations in Delhi and at the meeting site in Uttar Pradesh. Around 500 farmers, anti FDI retail activists and civil society groups assembled in a park opposite the convention hall where the meeting was taking place to protest against the RCEP. Afsar Jafri of Focus India also addressed the farmers and informed them about the anti farmers provisions in the RCEP negotiations and how it will impact Indian farmers and small-scale agriculture on India. After the protest, a delegation of farmers gave a memorandum to an official of the Indian Ministry of Commerce, which hosted this meeting and registered their protests against RCEP.

In December, Focus co-hosted a discussion in New Delhi on **Investment Agreements and Development policy: The way forward** at which speakers analyzed the different aspects of the BITs and their impact on the policy space. They also focused on the possibilities and potential strategies to transform or roll back BITs to regain government policy space to fulfill developmental objectives. Participants also discussed the Indian government move to review all its BITs and how the government's draft text of a new model bilateral investment treaty has tried to address the controversial issues of Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS).

Philippines

Focus and our allies in the EU-ASEAN FTA Campaign Network have worked to expand spaces for public participation in trade policymaking at both the Philippines national executive and legislative branches. We have opened a direct line with the

Department of Trade and Industry, providing inputs on two main areas—the conduct of social impact assessments of the proposed EU-Philippines FTA on health and access to medicines, on small-scale fishers, and on labor; and on investment and investor protection policies, including the on-going review of the country’s BITS.

This year we supported a meeting of fisherfolk and allies to consolidate stances in relation to the proposed FTA, and issued a statement to refute the false solution of safety nets for small fishers in the FTA context. Focus and the network also intervened in the international conference on health and medicines organized by International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations/ Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines where Ana Maria Nemenzo of Womanhealth presented the network’s position on trade and access to medicines. The EU-ASEAN Network contributed to a two-day international seminar on tobacco control, discussions on the ASEAN Economic Community with ActionAid and Greenpeace, and submitted a formal memorandum on ISDS and BITS review to the Philippine government.

Thailand

With the continuing political crisis and subsequent military coup in May, the EU officially announced the suspension of its trade negotiations with Thailand. Nonetheless, Focus has continued to work with the FTA-Watch to monitor and document recent developments in trade negotiations of other countries, particularly EU-Singapore and EU-Canada, since the outcome of these negotiations will set future standards for trade negotiations, including those with Thailand once they resume. Focus also continued to share analysis and articles with the FTA Watch network and a broader Thai audience about ISDS, BIT reviews and investment chapters.

Cambodia

One of our close and long term allies in Cambodia has been the Workers’ Information Centre (WIC), a member of the United Sisterhood Alliance. In May, the WIC organized a fashion show titled, “Beautiful Clothes, Ugly Reality,” aimed at highlighting the poor wages paid to garment workers (less than US\$ 100/month) and the abuse of their rights to organize, assemble and collectively negotiate. The fashion show included a re-enactment of the state violence against garment workers during the December 2013-January 2014 strikes, when five workers were killed by the police. Focus staff helped the WIC team to plan, conduct and document the fashion show, which was covered widely in the press.

Alternatives

Buen Vivir

Beyond critiquing the “green economy,” it is imperative to continue developing alternative paradigms such as deglobalization, food sovereignty and *buen vivir* (“living well”) which not only address the climate and environmental problems, but also issues of inequality and marginalization.

Buen vivir, a set of philosophies common throughout indigenous peoples in Latin America, is one possible alternative to the dominant neoliberal paradigm and the environmental destruction and social erosion that follows. Following discussions in Manila, Bangkok and New Delhi in 2013 to discuss the equivalents of Buen Vivir in Asian indigenous societies in Asia, Focus followed up with a series of meetings in the Philippines in April-May. Conducted in coordination with Lilak, a collective of indigenous women’s rights activists in the



Photo Credit: Susan Corpuz

Indigenous women from Thailand, the Philippines and Ecuador joined our dialogue on buen vivir

Philippines, these meetings also brought indigenous people from Thailand, India and Ecuador. While the initial focus of this project was to look at what Asian indigenous concepts similar to Buen Vivir can offer in resolving the climate crisis, it soon expanded to accommodate a larger, multi-sectoral perspective, building a dialogue not just with indigenous groups but also organized labor and other social sectors.

Systemic Alternatives

This year we began a three-year Systemic Alternatives project with ATTAC France and the Solon Foundation (Bolivia) to build a global network of social, political and economic analysts linked to grassroots movements who interact in a deep and creative way and contribute good and encouraging perspectives in relation to **alternatives to the systemic crisis**. In 2014 we conducted the following:

a) set up the websites systemicalternatives.org and alternativasistemicas.org with 137 posts in different languages supported by a Twitter account and a Facebook page, b) produced five booklets on the state of the debate of some systemic alternatives (Buen Vivir, Degrowth, Rights of Mother Earth, Deglobalization and Commons), publishing four in English and Spanish and one in French, c) organized different public events for debate and dissemination on Systemic Alternatives in France, Peru, Italy, India, Philippines and Bolivia d) organized a deep dialogue on Systemic Alternatives and power on 7-8 December with the participation of 20 well known activists and intellectuals from around the world who want to continue their involvement in the Systemic Alternatives working group, and 5) started putting together the book “Visions for Systemic Alternatives” based on the debate of the five booklets/topics discussed, which is being finalized and will be published during the first half of 2015.



Photo Credit: Joseph Purugganan

Systemic Alternatives event on Power in Lima December 2014

Media spotlight

Focus on the Global South staff were **published and quoted in mainstream and alternative media outlets over 125 times in 2014**—more than twice as often as in the previous year. This was due to a concerted effort to engage with the media and get our voices in the news in various countries.

Our staff published **op-eds on climate change policy, trade justice and current events** throughout the region in national newspapers such as the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *Business Mirror*, *Bangkok Post*, *Jakarta Globe*, *Jakarta Post*, and India's *The Citizen*. They were also posted on many online news sites such as the Huffington Post,

Counterpunch, Rappler, Interaksyon, GMA News, Green Left Weekly, Foreign Policy in Focus, Telesur, Prachathai, India Resists, the Malaysian Insider, and Mekong Commons.

In the **Philippines**, our work with the Save Land Reform Alliance and the massive Agrarian Reform Conference in June appeared in dozens of media outlets. These included the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *Philippine Star*, *Manila Standard*, *Business Mirror*, *GMA News*, and *The Guidion*. Clarissa Militante wrote about disaster capitalism for several papers, and Mary Ann Manahan wrote about women's roles in reconstruction efforts after Haiyan for Rappler. Joseph Purugganan was quoted regarding free trade agreements and access to medicine in *Business World Online*.

In April, Clarissa Militante wrote an op-ed in remembrance of the Philippine indigenous leader Macling Dulag that ran in the *Inquirer*, *Interaksyon*, *Rappler*, and *UCA News*. The latter version of this article earned her the **Agong Journalism Award** (*Gawad Agong para sa Pamamahayag*) for best article in the online reporting category.

In **India**, Afsar Jafri was quoted regarding free trade negotiations in *The Hindu*, *Business Standard*, and *Hindu Business Online*. He also spoke to the website *News Wala* about water justice. Director Pablo Solon spoke at a forum in Hyderabad and was quoted in *New Indian Express* and *The Hans India*. Meanwhile, Mansi Sharma wrote about Modi's dubious past for *India Resists* and *The Citizen*.

In **Thailand**, the *Bangkok Post* covered a panel discussion by board members of Focus on the Global South on democracy and social movements. Pablo Solon and Dorothy Guerrero published several scathing op-eds on climate change policy in that newspaper, as well, particularly during the UN Climate Summit in New York and COP20 in Peru.

During COP20 in Peru, Pablo Solon gave an extended interview to *Democracy Now*, in which he spoke about false solutions to the climate crisis and the need for popular pressure to press governments to act on climate. Meanwhile, in his blog on the *Huffington Post*, he analyzed the response of world leaders to the People's Climate March in New York and critiqued the outcome of Peru.

Dorothy Guerrero served as resource person in a training course by InterPress Service for editors and journalists in Myanmar with participants are from 19 media groups in the country. She discussed the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community,

impacts of foreign investments on natural resources and democracy, and climate change. She also addressed the Southeast Asian Press Alliance conference in Thailand in December, which was attended by leading journalists and editors in the region.

We began systematic **media outreach in Cambodia** in 2014, publishing one op-ed on garment worker struggles and sending numerous press releases about land rights struggles to the *Cambodia Daily* and *Phnom Penh Post*. Both these papers covered the issue, as well as our work with the Save the Mekong Campaign.

Social Media

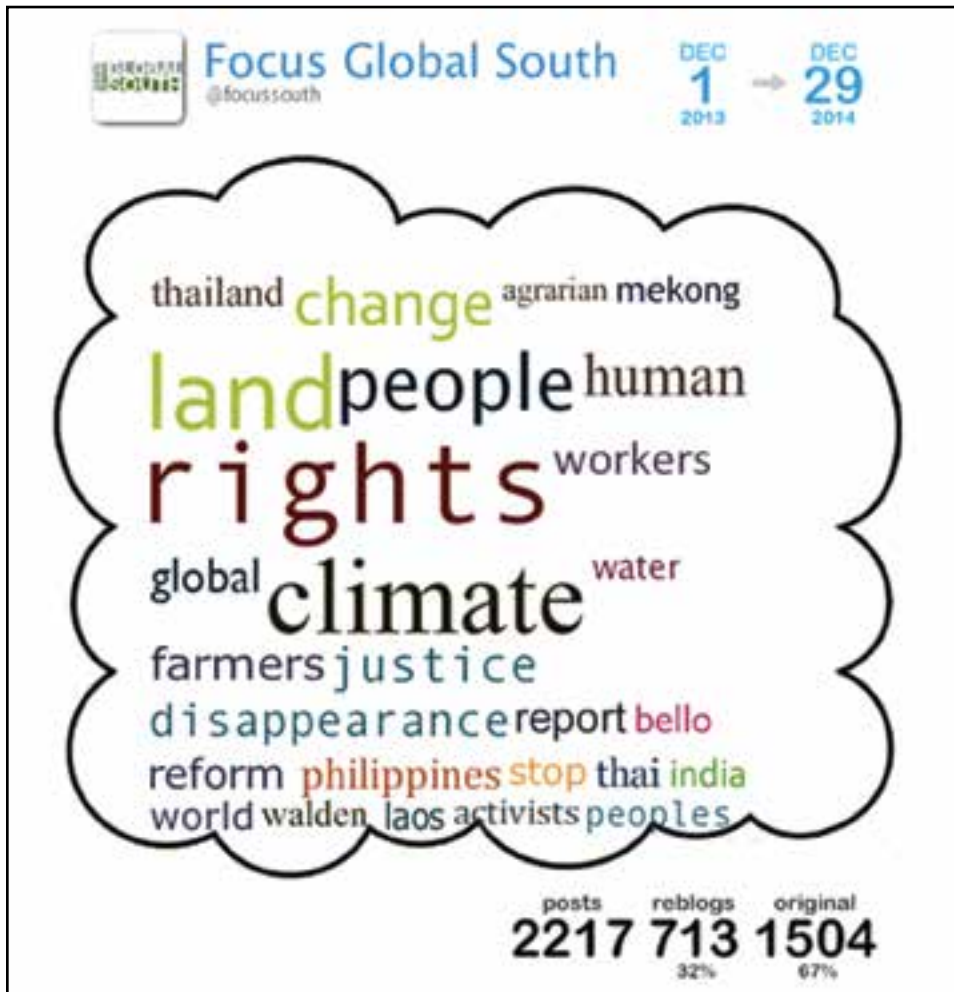
2014 was a banner year for our social media impact at Focus on the Global South. By creating and sharing more content on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Instagram and other platforms, we reinforced and expanded the audience for our work and that of our partners on issues of trade, climate, and the commons.

We quadrupled our following on Twitter, composing an average of a dozen tweets a day and boosting our rate of re-tweets, favorites, and mentions. We interacted with other NGOs and grassroots activists and created a list of over 250 journalists in the region, communicating with several of them through direct messages. We also used twitter to promote key ideas and alternatives such as deglobalization, agroecology, and *vivir bien*. Throughout the year, we raised awareness and engaged in conversations about pressing current events like repression in Thailand during and after the coup d'état, opposition to hydroelectric dams on the lower Mekong River, key

human rights causes like the campaign for justice for Sombath Somphone, and various struggles for justice in Cambodia, the Philippines and India.

On **Facebook**, we nearly doubled our number of “likes,” and our post reach and engagement rates shot up, which meant that our content was viewed much more often. We used Facebook to disseminate our print and online publications as well as many articles by our staff, and shared links to

content on our website to effectively increase traffic from about 8,000 page views per month on average to 12-14,000 page views per month. As with Twitter, we used Facebook to interact with our supporters and allies, replying to many queries and tailoring the content to the interests of various audiences. It was also an important way to show the behind-the-scenes side of our research and activism, highlighting the personalities and the events, and increasing our transparency and accessibility.



Most frequently used words in our Tweets in the past year

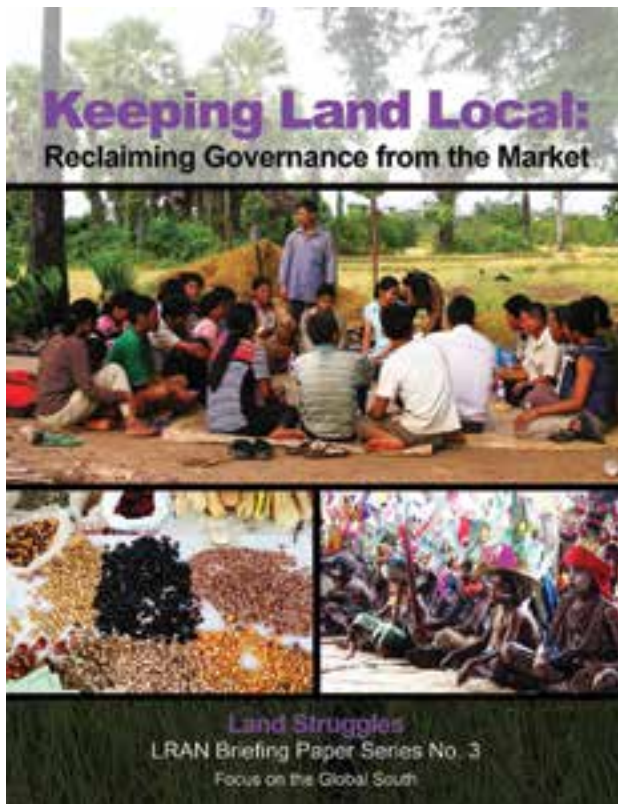
Financial Summary

	General Fund	Program Fund	Coalition Fund	Reserve Fund
Beginning balance 2014	62,978	39,896	13,368	51,482
Income in 2014	210,349	213,319	139,112	-
Expenditure in 2014	-296,808	-214,382	-137,761	-
Ending balance 2014	-23,481	38,833	14,719	51,482

	Bangkok	Phnom Penh	Manila	Delhi	Total
Research	38,880	9,370	10,150	7,730	66,130
Networking	50,360	28,480	14,030	7,370	100,240
Outreach	44,200	650	10,840	3,810	59,500
Grassroots	42,880	21,420	21,150	1,360	86,820
Organizational Development	13,430	280	5,590	1,960	21,260
Personnel Cost	172,520	10,700	59,970	28,670	271,860
Overhead Cost	17,910	3,740	15,590	5,910	43,140
Total	380,180	74,640	137,320	56,810	648,950

2014 Program Donors	2014 Coalition Projects Donors
11.11.11, Belgium	11.11.11, Belgium
CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France	CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France
Dan Church Aid, Denmark	Diakonia, Sweden
Development and Peace, Canada	DKA, Austria
ICCO, Netherlands	Fastenopfer, Switzerland
Inter Pares, Canada	KEPA, Finland
McKnight Foundation, USA	
New Venture Fund, USA (via Grassroots Int.)	
Oxfam Great Britain	
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Germany	
Siemenpuu Foundation, Finland	
Solidago Foundation, USA	

Publications



Keeping Land Local: Reclaiming Governance from the Market

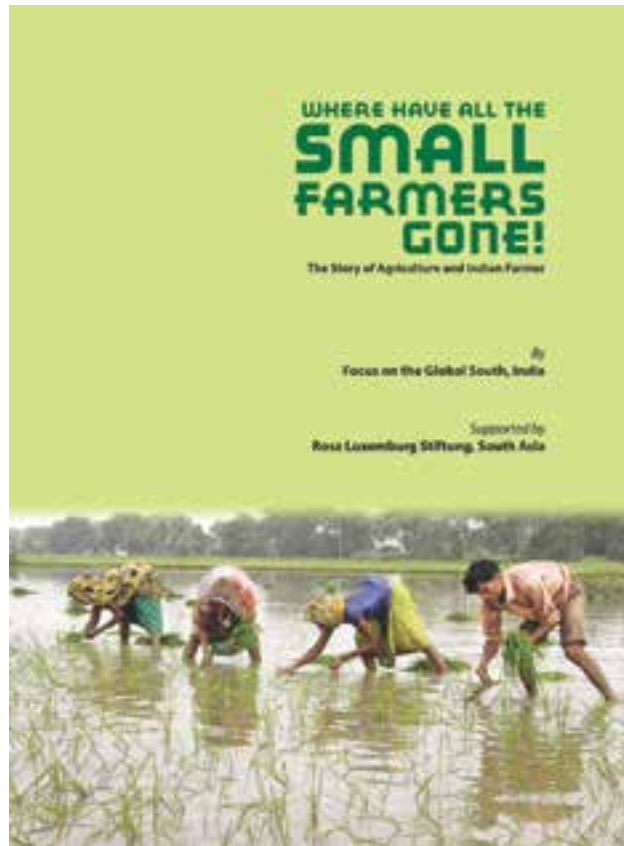
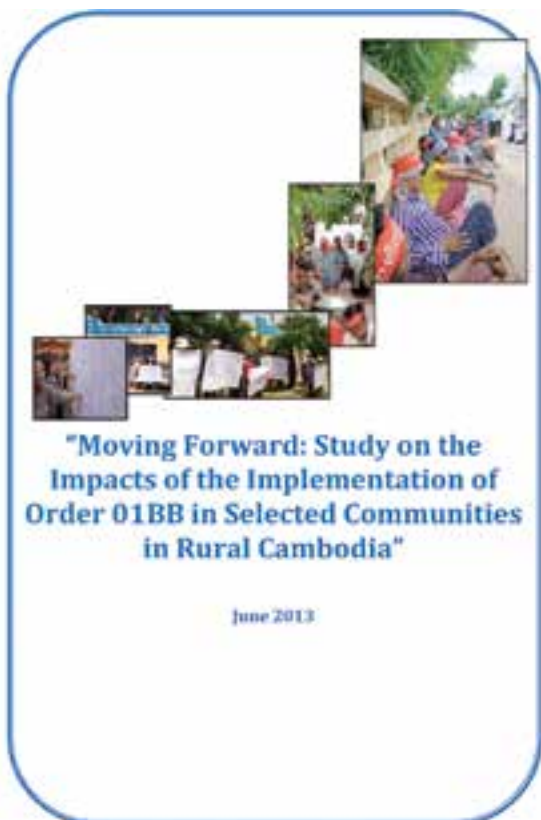
This is the third issue of the Briefing Paper Series on Land Struggles by Focus on the Global South, the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform, and Land Research Action Network. This collection of articles explores some of the challenges facing peasants, farmers, forest dwellers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and other local communities in their efforts to build systems for the governance of land, water, forests and natural resources that are just, participatory, ecologically sound and foster genuinely sustainable forms of living.

<http://focusweb.org/landstruggles>

Moving Forward: Study on the Impacts of the Implementation of Order 01BB in Selected Communities in Rural Cambodia

In late June and early July 2012, more than 1,000 student volunteers were dispatched to targeted provinces across the country, accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC), to implement Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen's Order 01BB. The student volunteers were trained in basic measurement techniques, kitted out with military uniforms bearing the MLMUPC's logo, transported by army trucks, and directed to measure land and grant land certificates to rural residents. Published in Khmer and English.

<http://focusweb.org/content/moving-forward-study-impacts-implementation-order-01bb-selected-communities-rural-cambodia>



Where Have All the Small Farmers Gone? The Story of Agriculture and Indian Farmers

This booklet, the first in a planned three-part series, traces the broad history of the rich agriculture system in India which was ruined by the British colonial policies. The series aims to initiate conscious dialogue and interaction with and about small farmers, helping them realize their strengths, retrieve their sense of dignity, and overcome the obstacles through their own initiatives, by enabling them to take decisions regarding agriculture. Published in Hindi and English.

<http://focusweb.org/content/where-have-all-small-farmers-gone-story-agriculture-and-indian-farmers>

Tubig Natin!—Our Water! An Illustrated Publication in Filipino

This illustrated publication in Filipino, released in April, is based on research by Focus on the Global South on the privatization of water, water justice, and alternative public-public partnerships in water delivery. It aims to popularize these issues and raise awareness about them among the general public in the Philippines. It can also be used as an educational tool by community leaders, local government staff, and civil society organizations in their education campaigns on water.

<http://focusweb.org/content/tubig-natin-our-water-illustrated-publication-filipino>



Agricultural Investments in Southeast Asia: Legal tools for public accountability— Lessons from a workshop

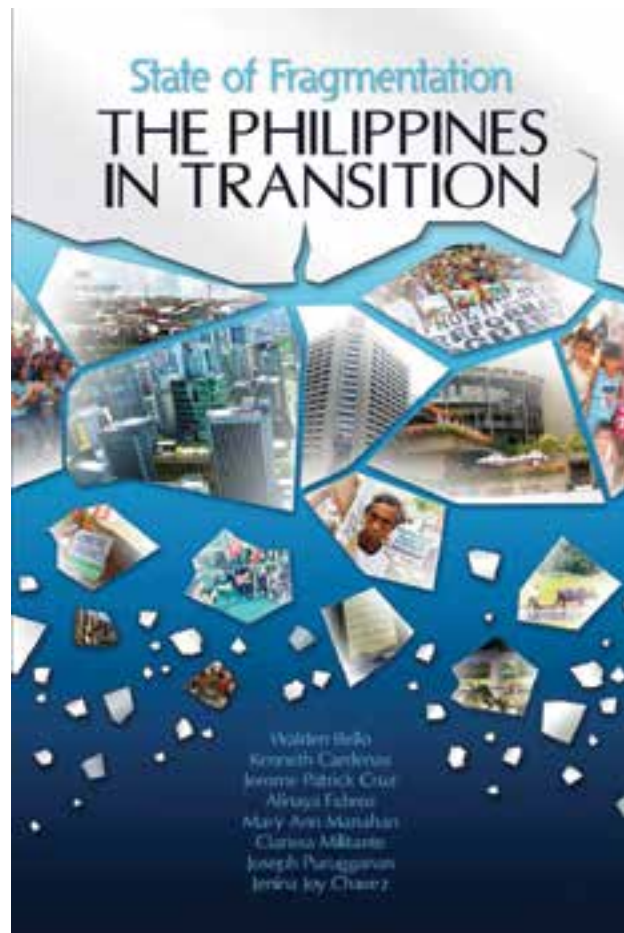
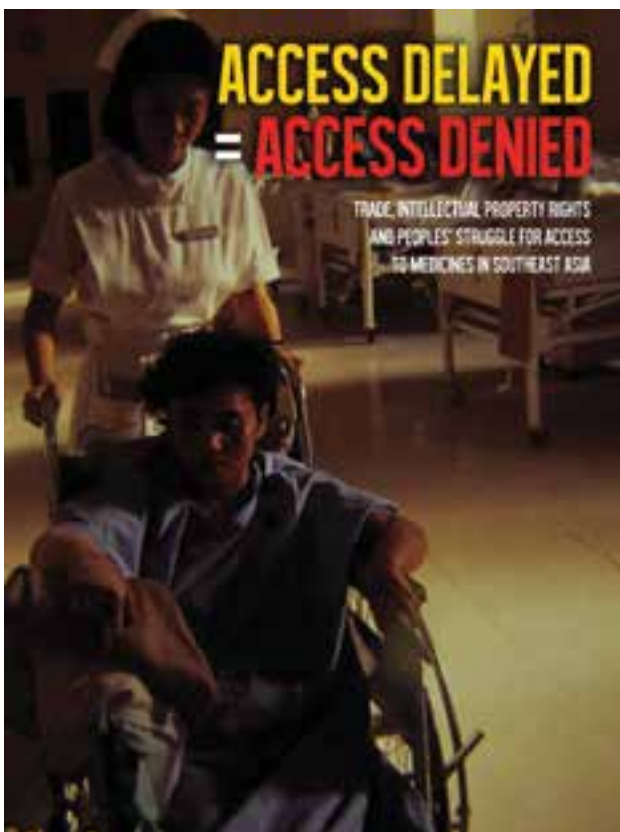
Report from a meeting of civil society organizations on the use of legal tools to address problems with the rapid increase in trade and investment flows across Southeast Asia, and accompanying large land deals for plantation agriculture. Co-published with meeting co-organizer IIED.

<http://focusweb.org/content/agricultural-investments-southeast-asia-legal-tools-public-accountability-lessons-workshop>

Access Delayed=Access Denied: Trade, IPR and Peoples Struggle for Access to Medicines

This publication, released in August, highlights experiences of different southeast Asian countries through photography. This publication project was in partnership with EU-ASEAN FTA Network.

<http://focusweb.org/content/access-delayed-access-denied-trade-and-struggles-access-medicines>



State of Fragmentation: The Philippines in Transition

Published jointly by Focus on the Global South and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in September, this book presents an overview of the political economy of the Philippines and key issues like the financial crisis and economic growth, neoliberal restructuring, debt service, agriculture, industry and de-industrialization, government services, exports, labor, capital, and development. Introduction available at:

<http://focusweb.org/content/state-fragmentation-philippines-transition>

Notes for the Debate: Vivir Bien/Deglobalisation/ Rights of Mother Earth/Degrowth

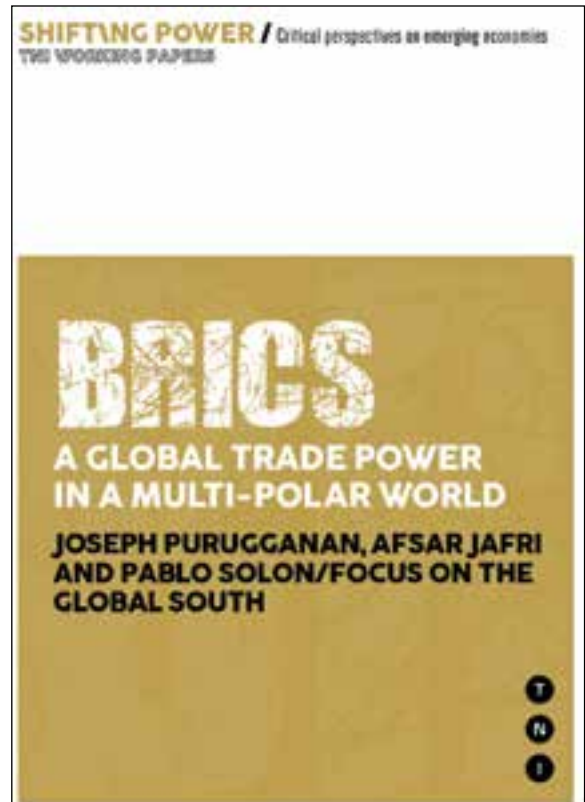
As part of the Systemic Alternatives project, we published four booklets presenting discussions and debate of alternative visions to never-ending economic growth and ecological destruction. These introductory notes will be later worked into a book about Systemic Alternatives.

<http://systemicalternatives.org/>



Photo Credit: Joseph Purugganan

Walden Bello speaking at the book launch in Manila Oct 2014



Transnational Institute's "Shifting Power: Critical Perspectives on Emerging Economies"

Focus on the Global South co-founder Walden Bello and staff members Pablo Solon, Afsar Jafri, Joseph Purugganan, and Dorothy Guerrero contributed to this reader by Transnational Institute (TNI). Their working papers examine BRICS and global trade, BRICS and global capitalism, and the changing role of China in the world economy.

<http://focusweb.org/content/focus-global-south-contributes-tnis-shifting-power-reader>

Focus on Poverty Website

The primer on poverty and marginalization was updated in March 2014 and new poverty maps were uploaded.

<http://www.focusonpoverty.org/>

Staff

Bangkok

Pablo Solon (Executive Director)

Andrew Teixeira de Sousa (Operations Manager)
– left in 2014

Dorothy Grace Guerrero (Program Officer)

Megan Morrissey (Communications Officer)

Nathaporn Meesuay (Finance and Accounts)

Niabdulghafar Tohming (Program Officer)

Shalmali Guttal (Program Officer)

Soontaree Nakaviroj (Administrator)

Yasmin Ahammad (Program Development Officer)
– joined in 2014

Manila

Clarissa V. Militante (Head of Office)

Joseph Purugganan (Program Officer)

Lyn Cacho-dela Cruz (Finance and Administration)

Mary Ann Manahan (Program Officer)

New Delhi

Afsar Jafri (Head of Office)

Mansi Sharma (Finance and Administration)

Parul Thapa (Program Officer) – joined in 2014

Trisha Agarwala (Program Officer) – left in 2014

Phnom Penh

Ros Sokunthy (Program Officer) – joined in 2014

Board of Directors

Alejandro Bendaña

Centro de Estudios Internacionales
Managua City, Nicaragua

Christophe Aguiton

Attac France
Paris, France

Indra Lubis

La Via Campesina
Jakarta, Indonesia

Peter Rosset

Chiapas, Mexico

Seema Mustafa

Director at Centre for Policy Analysis,
Editor at The Sunday Guardian
New Delhi, India

Surichai Wun'Gaeo

The Rotary Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies
Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok, Thailand

Walden Bello

Focus on the Global South
Quezon City, Philippines

Vithaya Kulsomboon

Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute
Bangkok, Thailand

Focus on the Global South is an activist think tank based in Asia providing analysis and building alternatives for just social, economic and political change

email: info@focusweb.org
www.focusweb.org

Regional Headquarters

4th Floor Wisit Prachuabmoh Building
Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road
Bangkok 10330
Thailand
+66 2 218 7363
+66 2 255 9976 (fax)

India Office

c/o Intercultural Resources
33-D, 3rd Floor, Vijay Mandal enclave
DDSA SFS Flats, New Delhi 110016
India
+91 11 2 656 3588

Philippines Office

19 Maginhawa St., UP Village
Diliman, Quezon City 1104
Philippines
+63 2 433 1676
+63 2 433 0899 (fax)