



Regional Autumn School: Natural Resource Rights in the Arab Middle East and North Africa

23 – 27 November 2014 in Amman, Jordan

Securing human rights, livelihoods, and a decent standard of living through sustainable use of nature and resources can only be achieved if we work on reconnecting ecological sustainability, social justice, and democracy. Resource exploitation, the way it is currently conducted, “ignores ecosystem integrity and basic human rights; people are disempowered and human rights are sacrificed for an economic model that works neither for the majority of people nor for the planet.”¹

An important fact easily overlooked when solely focusing on the *ecological* dimension of global consumption is that there are still millions of people around the world who are using far less than their “fair share” of natural resources. Millions of people around the world have no access to clean drinking water, energy, adequate food and nutrition, public spaces, or basic health services. Gender, age, race, or ethnic belonging and other social factors are important in determining access, distribution, and power. A patriarchal system gives women little power in decision-making. Children's and future generations' rights are under assault while they have no voice in the decisions that will determine their futures and livelihoods.²

Land rights are not typically perceived to be a human rights issue. They are, however, in their core exactly that. Land rights constitute the basis for access to food, housing, and development. Control of rights to land has historically been an instrument of oppression and colonization. In many conflict situations the control over land is a critical element of the conflict. One example for the use of land rights as a means of oppression can be found in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel.³ Growing privatization of public land and capitalization of natural resources are another dimension that diminishes the access to land and natural resources for the benefit of big investors and corporations. A lack of standards and

¹ Heinrich Böll Foundation (2014): Resource Politics for a Fair Future. p.16

² Ibid. pp.20-21

³ Gilbert, Jérémie (2013): Land Rights as Human Rights. The Case for a Specific Right to Land. Sur: International Journal on Human Rights, Issue 18.

http://www.surjournal.org/eng/conteudos/getArtigo18.php?artigo=18,artigo_07.htm

transparency across the region leads to exploitation of natural resources while worker's rights and environmental standards are violated gravely.

Dispossession of traditional lands and territories is one of the major problems faced by indigenous peoples all over the world. Many development policies are either directly or indirectly geared towards weakening or eradicating the modes of production of indigenous peoples. The general trend to favor individual land ownership over collective land rights underlines a push not only towards the privatization of land and resources but also towards the sale of land to non-indigenous individuals and businesses.⁴

Women and girls often provide the bulk of agricultural labor, but an international comparison of agricultural census data shows that less than 20 percent of landholders are female.⁵ Access to land is essential for food production and income generation. It is a key social and economic asset and crucial for cultural identity, political power, and participation in decision-making. The access to land and to its resources not only is restricted by (and in turn often determines) the socio-economic status of individuals and groups, it is also a highly gendered asset. In many communities, traditional customs dictate the access that community members have to land and resources.⁶

Based on these considerations, the Autumn School 2014 – in continuation of previous years' Summer Schools – will focus on land and resource rights, specifically tackling issues of privatization of public spaces and access to water. It will also discuss questions of decentralization, ownership, and participation in natural resources management, as well as the relation between Gender and access to natural resources.

The methodology will be varied, including lectures, working groups, round table discussions, workshops and others. In addition to the content-focused sessions, the Autumn School will offer workshops for practical skill development in areas such as environmental campaigning and social media

Participants:

The Autumn School is designed to build the capacities of the participants and to stir a debate about urgent current policy topics. It will also provide the international lecturers with information about and viewpoints from the region, and offer an excellent platform for exchanging ideas, opinions, arguments and sharing experiences across the region. The program shall promote networking among civil society actors, researchers, and activists in the region working in the fields of resource rights, governance, climate, gender and environment.

⁴ International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs: <http://www.iwgia.org/environment-and-development/land-rights>

⁵ Chronic Poverty Research Center (2010): Stemming Girls' Chronic Poverty. Catalysing Development Change by Building Just Social Institutions. Chapter 3: Limited Resource Rights and Entitlements. Pp.53-66. http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/assets/files/reports/Full_report.pdf

⁶ FAO: A Gender Perspective on Land Rights. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/007/y3495e/y3495e00.pdf>

This Autumn School inter alia addresses junior professionals, postgraduates, activists, and researchers working at NGO's, civil society organizations, think tanks or other institutions from Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The age range is between 23 and 35 years.

Application Process:

To be considered, an application should include the attached application form (available at www.ps.boell.org, www.lb.boell.org, www.tn.boell.org, and ma.boell.org) and a Curriculum Vita as well as a short paper (2 pages maximum). The paper should focus on the topic of the Summer School and show the applicant's knowledge as well as their ability to work independently and creatively. To this end, the applicant should choose a topic from within the subject area and point out its relevance to their local or national context, e.g. by introducing an exemplary project, a current debate etc. This can be written in form of an essay or a short academic paper.

The Autumn School will be conducted in Arabic and English with simultaneous translation. Good command of the English language is highly important since preparation material will be circulated before the Autumn School, a large part of which will consist of English literature. The participants are therefore asked to indicate their English level in the application form.

Travel and accommodation costs of the participants will be covered by the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Please hand in your application documents via email.

Applicants from Morocco are asked to submit their application documents in English, Arabic, or French to:

Heinrich Böll Foundation Rabat, Ms. Zainab Elguerrab (Zainab.Elguerrab@ma.boell.org)

Applicants from other North African countries are asked to submit their application documents in English, Arabic, or French to:

Heinrich Böll Foundation Tunis, Mr. Wissam Gallala (Wissam.Gallala@tn.boell.org)

Applicants from Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria are asked to submit their application documents in either English or Arabic to:

Heinrich Böll Foundation Beirut, Ms. Corinne Deek (Corinne.Deek@lb.boell.org)

Applicants from Palestine and Jordan are asked to submit their application documents in English to:

Heinrich Böll Foundation Ramallah, Ms. Svenja Oberender (Svenja.Oberender@ps.boell.org)

Deadline for application is 10 September 2014.