

IN NORTH AFRICA

the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung works with partner organisations in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. The regional office started its work in Tunis in 2013. The current upheavals in Egypt, Tunisia and other countries of the region are not only creating new challenges and opportunities for the people in North Africa but have also changed the way Europeans perceive these societies.

In Egypt, for example, society and politics are characterised by a high degree of polarisation. Influential political figures and groups were forced into illegality; state repression is back to the level it was before 2011. At the same time, diverse political forces have emerged in the few years since the beginning of the “Arab Spring”, having been forced to consolidate under difficult conditions. In Tunisia, on the other hand, political actors showed willingness to compromise. This was the first time in the Arab world that elected representatives introduced a new constitution.

The consequences of the “Arab Spring” are very contradictory; regional governments are using control measures ranging from concessions to repression. However, many North African states are facing one common challenge: Poverty and the lack of economic opportunities are on the rise. With increasing foreign debt, the possibilities of shaping policies in a sovereign manner shrink.

The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung in Tunis works with progressive forces to develop new concepts for independent development. Until a few years ago, many of these actors had been excluded from political life. The North African regional office therefore supports new and young members of social movements, parties and trade unions through organisational consulting and civic education. Furthermore, the office promotes exchange between different regions in order to develop alternatives to the neoliberal model and supports trade relations between North Africa and the European Union that are based on equality.

Promoting academic research and formation as a contribution to democratisation

Education and science, as well as collaboration with universities, are part of the Foundation’s critical and progressive work. In order to support democratic processes that were initiated at universities in the context of the “Arab Spring”, the Foundation launched the project “Independent Universities and the Promotion of Critical Research and Teaching as a Contribution Toward Democratisation in Tunisia” in 2014. In cooperation with several partners, the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung promotes academic freedom and independence of universities, along with alternative and emancipatory methods of teaching and learning.



IN WEST AFRICA

the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung works with partner organisations in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo and Cape Verde. Since 2010 the regional office that coordinates these activities has been located in Dakar.

Although the population structure in this region is young with relatively high growth rates, young adults are often not involved in the political process on a basis of equality. The reasons for this – apart from the deep-rooted traditional veneration for age – lie in poor schooling and widespread functional illiteracy. Health care generally leaves a lot to be desired, while access to clean water and electricity is scarce. In most societies women do not enjoy equal rights, often having less access to educational opportunities and political participation. Large sections of the population, particularly in rural areas where development is lagging behind, live in extremely impoverished conditions with little access to basic public services, such as food, drinking water, health, education and electricity. The partner projects supported by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung in the region are focused on food security, access to information and education, teaching basic skills for a healthy lifestyle, raising awareness about legal rights and duties, alternative economic and social policies and the protection or improved management of natural resources. Together with trade unions, NGOs and community radios the Foundation makes a particularly strong effort to raise the level of information by means of special broadcasts and events as a prerequisite for an effective participation in democratic decision-making.

IN EAST AFRICA

the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung began its activities in 2009. It opened a regional office in Dar es Salaam in 2012 and co-operates with partner organisations in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

East Africa faces many problems that are also common in other African regions: disadvantaged women and youth, rural areas that are classic cases of economic underdevelopment and the exclusion of large sections of the population from access to public goods. The activities of the Foundation’s partners in the region are focused on three overlapping and interacting challenges. The first is the participation of civil society organisations in the process of regional integration as well as in the negotiations regarding trade and economic cooperation between East African states and the European Union. The aim of these activities is to create transparency, facilitate participation, assess potential consequences and propose alternatives. The second challenge is to tackle the issue of human development in rural areas as a combination of improved public services and sustainable resource-management; land rights, the effects of climate change and the exploitation of mineral and fossil resources are important in this regard.

This work supports the Foundation’s aim of ensuring that each and every individual has access to the basic essentials that allow her or him to lead a self-determined life in the sense of sustainable development. Creating and defending democratic participatory processes is a third point of reference. Co-operation involves in particular initiatives which improve the actors’ abilities to shape their destiny independently in a way that favours a holistic, sustainable approach instead of the isolated solution of urgent problems one by one. The promotion of political engagement is an important goal for the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung and its partners.

IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung has been operating a regional office in Johannesburg since 2003. This office is currently cooperating with non-governmental organisations, research institutes, trade unions, (union-affiliated) training institutions and youth and community organisations in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Mauritius, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia.

Since the end of Apartheid, the Republic of South Africa has developed into a democratic country with a market-based economy. Nevertheless, the past still continues to cast its long shadow over the present, particularly with respect to the process of coming to terms with human-rights violations in the past. In South Africa, the socio-political limitations of partially neo-liberal economic policies are becoming obvious. Access to public services is increasingly dependent on income. The neighbouring states, though also relatively stable politically, are still marred by high levels of social inequality. Far too many people who were systematically disadvantaged by colonialism and Apartheid are still waiting for an improvement in their social and economic circumstances.

The work of the Foundation focuses above all on supporting political dialogue, empowering politically marginalised groups and promoting transformation processes in the interests of a socio-economic development based on justice and solidarity. The Foundation also promotes a transparent, inclusive and sustainable use of natural resources in the region, as well as alternative development concepts. Co-operation with union-affiliated research and training institutions is of particular importance for the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung in the region.



THE ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG IN
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Inspired by the ideas of democratic socialism and solidarity-based cooperation, the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung – which is associated to the German political party DIE LINKE – strives together with its partner organisations worldwide for a socio-ecological transformation by building on tangible improvements in the here and now.

Currently the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung collaborates with approximately 300 partner organisations in more than 50 countries. For the implementation of programmes, the Foundation draws on funds from the budgets of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the German Foreign Office.

In North, West, East and Southern Africa the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung cooperates with more than 70 project partners and operates 4 offices in Tunis (Tunisia), Dakar (Senegal), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Johannesburg (South Africa).

ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG

tors in cooperation with intellectuals – whether in the cooperative movement, in non-governmental organisations, in political parties or within the framework of trade-union initiatives and various social campaigns. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung collaborates with many such actors in Africa, such as networks and research institutes, as well as teaching and training institutions.

FACILITATING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AT A GRASSROOTS LEVEL

Africa is a continent with a large variety of social landscapes and systems of governance. In many countries democratic participation rights are enshrined in the constitution. However, the gap between written laws and legal reality is often still very wide. The necessary awareness of democratic participation rights is not yet universal. Many parts of the population lack the basic necessities, such as literacy, for actively exercising their political rights.

In addition, discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and ethnic identity is widespread. Liberal democratic models repeatedly fail because they are not able to provide the necessary space for co-determination and democratic participation in everyday life and to take appropriate political action to address the pressing needs of the majority population. In many countries civil-society organisations have been formed in order to overcome these difficulties. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung works with such organisations in the field of civic education in an effort to incorporate the concerns and interests of marginalised groups in political decision-making. We support actors committed to defending social justice, even if they are not part of the classical secular and left-wing groups. Particularly in view of the current political upheavals everywhere on the African continent, the culture, history and religion of the people are also points of reference for developing their own concept of democracy.

Alternative concepts are resulting from political struggles. They are developed and put into practice by civil-society ac-

DEFENDING ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC GOODS

In Africa, as in Europe and other countries of the Global North, public services are increasingly being privatised or commercialised. The consequences for the poorer sections of the population are generally devastating as the introduction or increase of user charges, fees or levies seriously impedes their access to education, health care, electricity, drinking water, courts and information. They are frequently even excluded from the use of goods and services that are indispensable for a self-determined life under decent conditions.

In Africa the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung cooperates with networks, organisations, community radios and newspapers, free journalists and even individual activists who are fighting against the exclusion of the poor from access to basic public services.

The vital public goods include natural resources, which in many countries are under threat from resource grabbing. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung supports organisations and networks in raising public awareness about these issues, for example by denouncing illegal corporate practices, developing mechanisms for the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and supporting value chains designed to directly benefit the local population.

IDENTITY, PAST AND FUTURE - UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING CONFLICTS

History – or rather its interpretation – is often the subject of intellectual and sometimes even physical disputes all over the world. In Africa, however, it is not uncommon for the interpretation of historical events to serve as justification for actions which can lead to violent conflicts. Ethnicity, tradition and identity are deliberately constructed from history in order to shape the future to serve one's own interests. Thus, historical understanding and awareness not only affect the present, but also have consequences extending far into the future – for example, by laying the foundations for peaceful co-existence or by serving as justification for future conflicts. Above all in states which only recently experienced profound changes in their systems of government and/or constitutional framework, the reassessment of the past and the dissemination of an amended view of history are of vital identity-forming significance. Particularly in Southern Africa, the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung supports initiatives and organisations focused on helping populations come to terms with their recent history. The results of this work are being applied in both school curricula and civic education.

In North Africa and other regions of the continent, the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung supports dialogue between secular and religious groups, which are increasingly becoming politically engaged. In many regions, the separation between “religious” and “secular” is an important source of identity that can also result in violent conflicts. Governments often manipulate and use these conflicts to divert attention from socio-economic injustice and their own failure to overcome it.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

“FREEDOM IS ALWAYS THE FREEDOM OF THE ONE WHO THINKS DIFFERENTLY.” ROSA LUXEMBURG

The Centre for International Dialogue and Cooperation (ZID), together with its partners around the globe, conceptualises the international work of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung.

WE VISUALISE FOR THE FUTURE

a democratic socialist society in which the free development of every individual is the foundation for the free development of all. This society is characterised by emancipation, equal rights and multiple forms of democratic participation as a valued practice; a meaningful and good life is permanently possible. Therefore, our vision aims at overcoming racist, sexist, colonial and imperial relationships of power and exploitation and is aimed at enabling everybody to access those assets of freedom essential to a self-determined life.

IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR PARTNERS

we strive for a socio-ecological restructuring of society which builds on concrete enhancements made here and now. We operate in the spirit of internationalism, based on the experiences and scientific knowledge of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung and its partners worldwide. Exchanges, in solidarity and open for critique, on common challenges and divergent interests are the basis for dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing.

WE ENABLE AND FACILITATE

emancipatory changes towards a transformation of our civilisational values. Democratic participation, education, health and social security are fundamental common goods; decent work is part of a fulfilled life; freedom is more than the absence of war. We advocate a sustainable relationship between human beings and nature.

WE EXPLORE AND TEST

socially and ecologically sustainable alternatives to capitalist society models. Drawing on various experiences and practices of left actors, we critically scrutinise and analyse social processes in their complexity. Along with our partners we utilise our findings to foster a non-violent transformation of society.

WE NETWORK AND OPEN SPACES

together with emancipatory, democratic organisations, institutions and individuals to achieve global changes through local and regional action. As part of internationalist networks we open spaces for dialogue and cooperation to stimulate interaction based on mutual trust. We understand exchange on left politics and strategies – open for a dialogue based on critique in solidarity – as a chance to learn from each other and to jointly shape a prosperous future.

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