

Call for Contributions

to promote a critical dialogue on democracy

Global Working Group Beyond Development

Under the auspices of Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Brussels Office, the Global Working Group Beyond Development wants to exchange experiences of and generate knowledge about alternatives to the currently dominant hegemonic ways of life.

Background and Objectives

Contemporary way of life is defined by substantial and rapid transformations of human impact on our social, ecological and political environments: commodification of nature and accelerated ecological destruction of livelihoods put humankind itself at risk; the rise of corporate power domestically and globally undermines existing democratic institutions and dismantles social security systems; the technical and digital “revolutions” reinforce rather than overcome social inequalities.

Moreover, conservative and nationalist backlash mobilises against progressive rights, institutions and movements; neo-colonial and imperial modes of production and consumption perpetuate exploitation of the Global South by the Global North; old and new forms of patriarchy and masculinity, racism, casteism, and other forms of discrimination still marginalise enormous numbers of people; militarisation continues to threaten the planet; all of the above exacerbates the destructive relationship of humans with nature.

As the world is facing these intersecting crises, there is an urgent need for new paradigmatic thinking about opportunities to help social transformation. These can build on already existing alternatives to the exploitative and unequal modes of living, being practiced around the world, some continuing from ancient ways of life and being, some very new.

This year, the Global Working Group Beyond Development calls for contributions to promote a **critical dialogue on democracy** as a crucial issue in the current civilizational crisis. They will be published as online publications and should focus on least one of the following dimensions (though not limited to these):

- A conceptual discussion about what we understand by democracy and what not, in dialogue with different languages of dignity (such as ecofeminism), self-rule (such as swaraj), living well (such as buen vivir / sumak kawsay) and other values which exist in different cultural/socio-historical/civilizational contexts and would translate to collective self-determination or processes of direct, radical democracy.
- A critical analysis of the current state of the world and its relations with democracy. Why are fascist, racist far-right movements and different kinds of authoritarianism coming back through elections, and where are there counter-trends to this? How does the hard separation between domestic and foreign policy sustain imperialism and threaten democracy especially in the Global South?
- A more strategic discussion about how to strengthen processes of collective self-determination and autonomy, taking into account different limits which are common in debates on democracy:
 - The limits of the sphere of currently prevalent 'democratic' institutions (understood as public liberal institutions), including elections and the nation-state, and how to transcend these;
 - The limits of the local/communitarian/territorial dimension (e.g. how to introduce collective self-determination on pressing global issues), and how to transcend these;
 - The limits which usually separate the sphere of "the political" from "the economic" and "the cultural" (e.g. how cultural interventions become crucial for democratization processes), and how to transcend these divisions;
- The limits of political units/frontiers vis-à-vis ecological contiguities and boundaries, and how to transcend these.

Proposed formats of contributions

- A theoretical/conceptual paper which can discuss the state of democracy from a materialist, de-colonial, anti-imperialist, feminist, ecologist, spiritual or from various combined viewpoints. It should provide original contributions to the state of the art.

An initial document of around 5000 words will be shared by the author within the Global Working Group Beyond Development and publicly for publishable comments. The author will then incorporate the comments or reply to them on relevant public forms, and submit a final version that is ready for an online, stand-alone publication. Overall net fee: €2.000 excluding VAT.

- A discussion paper on a current transnational or national event or news item (e.g. children's climate strikes, extinction rebellion, gilets jaunes/yellow vests, etc.) and a reflection on how it relates to the debate on democracy.

Contributions in this format will undergo the same feedback procedure as outlined above. An initial document of around 5.000 words and a final version being ready for an online, stand-alone publication. Overall net fee: €2.000 excluding VAT.

- A brief case study on localised, on-ground initiatives and processes which are crucial for the understanding of democracy, ready to be published online. About 1.500 words. Overall net fee: €500 excluding VAT (€550 excluding VAT if including pictures).
- A video contribution of 3 to 15 minutes length on localised, on-ground initiatives and processes, including a brief text to accompany the online publication. The video can combine interviews with on-site footage and reporting. It will be submitted first as a draft cut and then, after comments, as a final edited version. Overall net fee: up to €1.500 excluding VAT (up to €1.800 excluding VAT if the author provides an additional 30 second-teaser video for social media).
- A downloadable digital audio contribution of 15–30 minutes length on localised processes, including a brief text to accompany the online publication. The audio contribution will be submitted first as a draft cut and then, after comments, as a final edited version. Overall net fee: up to €1.500 excluding VAT (up to €1.800 excluding VAT if the author provides an additional 30 second-teaser for social media and pictures for the online publication)

For each format, several contributions are foreseen.

Application process

A proposal of max. 500 words of the suggested format and content as well as a CV need to be submitted latest by June 15th 2019 to the attention of: Axel Ruppert, Project Manager at Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Brussels Office:

Email: axel.ruppert@rosalux.org

Phone number: +32 (0)2 738 76 63

Deadline to submit proposals is June 25th 2019.

Timeline

All contributions, except the brief case studies, will be due on September 30th 2019. The case studies will be due on 09th September 2019.