

# Linking People-to-People Exchange:

Weaving between Alternative  
Development Practitioners from  
Southeast Asia and India

11 January 2023

Hybrid Mode  
(Online and Face-to-Face Hubs)



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES  
CENTER FOR  
INTEGRATIVE AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES

GLOBAL TAPESTRY of  
ALTERNATIVES





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PROCEEDINGS

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# **Linking People-to-People Exchange: Weaving between Alternative Development Practitioners from Southeast Asia and India**

11 January 2023

*Hybrid Mode (Online and Face-to-Face Hubs)*

## **About the Proceedings**

These are the proceedings of the People-to-People (P2P) Exchange 2023, entitled “Linking People-to-People Exchange: Weaving between Alternative Development Practitioners from Southeast Asia and India.” It was held last January 11, 2023 online and in the hubs of Philippines, Indonesia, and Timor Leste. The event was spearheaded by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies Program on Alternative Development (UP CIDS AltDev), co-hosted by the Movement for Alternatives and Solidarity in Southeast Asia (MASSA).

The event had the objectives of fostering the exchange of alternative practices across various themes and organizations in Southeast Asia and South Asia. To accomplish this, participants engaged in (1) the sharing of their organization’s struggles and campaigns; (2) the comprehensive overview of their programs, strategies, and activities; and (3) the deliberation of challenges encountered in advancing their campaigns. Through this collaborative exchange, participants sought to identify common themes and challenges, in hopes of learning from each other and fostering the potential for future collaboration.

## Opening

**Asst. Prof. Jose Monfred C. Sy**

*Project Leader, Program on Alternative Development  
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies*

Asst. Prof. Jose Monfred C. Sy (Mon) formally commenced the People-to-People (P2P) Exchange event by welcoming participants and conveying excitement about the gathering of Alternative Development Practitioners from Southeast Asia and India. The event, titled “Linking People-to-People Exchange: Weaving between Alternative Development Practitioners from Southeast Asia and India,” aimed to foster the exchange of alternative practices across various themes and organizations. This event also marked the first P2P exchange between the Southeast Asia region, with the participation of India’s Vikalp Sangam (VS). The University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies Program on Alternative Development (UP CIDS AltDev) facilitated the program.

Below is the list of the organizations or programs that participated and made their appearance during the P2P Exchange. This includes organizations from Southeast Asia and South Asia:

1. UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies - Program on Alternative Development (UP CIDS AltDev | Philippines)
2. HomeNet Philippines (Philippines – Hub | Philippines)
3. ASEAN Sogje Caucus (ASC | Philippines)
4. Asian Music for Peoples’ Peace and Progress (AMP3 | Philippines)
5. Binangonan Ondoy Solidarity Association (BOSA - Hub | Philippines)
6. Vikalp Sangam (VS | India)
7. MAKAM (Women Farmers Rights Forum | India)
8. Kalpavriksh (India)
9. Jan Sarokar (People’s Agenda | India)

10. Nirangal Charitable Trust (India)
11. Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP | Indonesia)
12. Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI Indonesia - Hub)
13. Literacy People Forum (KPP | Indonesia)
14. Federasi Serikat Buruh Karya Utama (FSBKU | Indonesia)
15. Uniaun Agrikultores Munisipiu Ermera (UNAER | Timor Leste)
16. Bobonaro Peasant Union (Timor Leste)
17. Komite Esperansa (Timor Leste)
18. Forum NGO Timor Leste (FONGTIL | Timor Leste)
19. Uniaun Agricultores Munisipiu Manufahi (UAMM | Timor Leste)
20. Gender and Development Cambodia (GADC | Cambodia)

## **Recapping the previous People-to-People Exchange in Indonesia (Serikat Petani Pasundan)**

Agustiana

*Serikat Petani Pasundan (Indonesia)*

To provide a brief background on the current P2P exchange, the previous P2P event in Indonesia—which was held F2F and co-hosted by the Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP) in collaboration with indigenous groups from the Philippines—served as a precursor to the present P2P. It continues to provide a space for sharing knowledge and building connections.

Elaborating on SPP's background, Agustiana provided insights into the historical significance of SPP in Indonesia's peasant land occupation movements, drawing from his personal experience as an activist and as a founder of the Pasundan Farmer's Union in West

Java. He elucidated that the SPP's struggle dates back to the 1980s, when student movements in Garut, Indonesia were at the forefront of promoting the rights of farmers on agrarian reform and environmental conservation, and of standing against the dictatorship of the Suharto regime.

Given this context, Agustiana took the initiative to build a union that is people-centered, despite constraints imposed by Indonesia's democratic system run by the elites. Eventually, this initiative led to the formation of SPP, whose membership spread to Tasikmalaya and Ciamis in West Java, Indonesia. The union's expansion enabled it to address other issues, such as democratization and the promotion of people's well-being in the community.

SPP drew inspiration and learned a lot from the experiences of the Philippines, where activists, especially the youth activists, stood up against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. From this, Agustiana expressed the importance of events like P2P as a platform for mutual learning among activists, community members, and organizations to exchange information and experiences beyond traditional learning methods.

## **The Current People-to-People Exchange (2023): Linking Alternatives between Alternative Development Practitioners from Southeast Asia and India**

The current P2P, co-hosted by the Movement for Alternatives and Solidarity in Southeast Asia (MASSA), aspired to go beyond being a one-time event. It was established to facilitate resource sharing and mutual learning, forward the advancement of alternatives, build stronger movements across countries and regions, foster networks of solidarity, and create opportunities for collaboration. As the co-host, MASSA embodied a convergence of people and grassroots organizations united in challenging the profit-centered paradigm of ASEAN and advocating for an alternative regional model for the people. For MASSA,

alternatives represent resistance to non-mainstream development practices, guided by principles such as cooperation, solidarity, mutual benefit, the commons, and joint development.

The acronym “MASSA” drew inspiration from the term masa in Tagalog, Bahasa, and Tetun, connoting the people or masses coming together—an apt reflection of the essence of the P2P gathering.

The current P2P exchange also marked a historic moment, facilitating the sharing of alternatives not only within Southeast Asia but also with alternative development practitioners in India. Mon then introduced the representatives from Vikalp Sangam (VS), including Kalpavriksh, Jan Sarokar, MAKAAAM, and Nirangal. Before opening the breakout sessions or conversations amongst practitioners of alternatives, Shrishtee and Ashish Kothari of VS shared insights on the process of linking alternatives which they have undertaken in India.

## **Sharing the Process of Linking Alternatives (Weaving) from the perspective of Vikalp Sangam (VS)**

Shrishtee Bajpai and Ashish Kothari

*Vikalp Sangam*

Shrishtee introduced the Vikalp Sangam process as a strategic initiative designed to bring together systemic alternatives. This initiative acknowledged the multitude of resistances, ranging from state domination and patriarchy to anthropocentrism. To achieve this, the process involved organizing physical gatherings and conferences centered on various themes and regions, with an emphasis on documenting narratives and establishing a repository of alternative perspectives.

The Vikalp Sangam processes also encompassed various modes, such as the Alternative Economy Sangam, Youth Vikalp Sangam, and Worldviews Sangam. The Alternative Economy plays a crucial

role in conceptualizing an economic paradigm reflective of people's aspirations. It serves as an alternative to the dominant economic system. Subsequently, the role of Youth Vikalp Sangam involves creating a dedicated space for the mutual engagement and learning for young people, which is co-created by the youth themselves. Finally, activities conducted by the Worldviews Sangam is aimed at convening indigenous communities from diverse regions of India to deliberate on worldviews pertinent to emancipatory learning, direct democracy, ecological crises, and ways to move forward.

Vikalp Sangam highlighted the significance of connecting these different spheres and advocacies, forming a holistic vision of transformative alternatives. This accentuates the importance of having values or worldviews that celebrate life, grounding their struggles and conceptualizing alternatives, as reflected in Vikalp Sangam's document titled "The Search for Radical Alternatives (Key Elements and Principles)." The presentation concluded with a discussion on values and principles of transformative alternatives that emerged through the Vikalp Sangam process.

Ashish Kothari further elaborated on the Vikalp Sangam process with a specific focus on the advocacy area. Through the collaboration of the 85 organizations in the process, they were able to engage in campaigning and produce collective statements on policy and legal shifts. This initiative encompassed collaboration with prominent networks such as Jan Sarokar (People's Agenda) and the National Alliance of People's Movement, directing attention towards pertinent issues pertaining to gender and health. The presentation also highlighted the importance of collective action and fostering partnerships, which aligns with the goals of the P2P Exchange platform.

## Exploring Alternatives: Conversations among Practitioners in Southeast Asia and India

To facilitate and streamline the P2P Exchange, representatives of the participating organizations from Southeast Asia and South Asia were subdivided into five breakout groups. These sessions were moderated by UP CIDS AltDev Co-Convenor Asst. Prof. Benjamin Velasco, Asst. Prof. Jose Monfred C. Sy, alongside Project Staff members Hans Tabiola, Angging Aban, Ryan Martinez, and Arvin Dimalanta. The focus of these breakout groups encompassed three primary discussion points: (1) the organization's objectives; (2) an overview of their programs and activities; and (3) identification and deliberation of challenges encountered with their campaigns.

### BREAKOUT GROUP 1

*Siva, Nirangal Charitable Trust*

**Naveen Kumar Dandothkar**, *Nirangal Charitable Trust*

**Soma Parthasarathy**, *Women's Farmers Rights Forum (MAKAAM)*

**Yuli Ruswati**, *Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI)*

**Anwar "Sastro" Maruf**, *Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI)*

**Bong Ramilo**, *Asian Music for Peoples' Peace and Progress (AMP3)*

**Shrishtee Bajpai**, *Kalpavriksh (Vikalp Sangam)*

**Dahlan Khatami**, *Literacy People Forum (KPP)*

**Facilitator:**

**Hans Tabiola**, *UP CIDS AltDev*

## **Siva and Naveen Kumar Dandothkar**

*Nirangal Charitable Trust*

Nirangal Charitable Trust's main cause is dedicated to working with marginalized communities, particularly those within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, in addressing issues related to caste, religion, and other forms of marginalization of genders.

The focus of Nirangal Charitable Trust lies in conducting gender and sexuality awareness programs for various groups. The organization actively engages in sensitivity programs for different demographics, including college students from various disciplines such as medicine, arts, science, and social work. Nirangal Charitable Trust also extends its efforts to school teachers, aiming to eradicate harassment and bullying against LGBTQIA+ students. The organization also runs art-based gender programs for students, through using creative methods to convey concepts like transgender identities.

Furthermore, Nirangal Charitable Trust conducts gender and sensitivity programs and conferences that focus on corporate spaces where harassment against LGBTQIA+ individuals persists, particularly regarding restroom facilities. The aim is to place them in queer-friendly workplaces. The organization collaborates with corporations to sensitize employees and advocate for gender-neutral facilities.

Additionally, Nirangal Charitable Trust emphasizes gender sensitization in mental health concerns, collaborating with psychologists and psychiatrists to provide affirmative counseling for LGBTQIA+ individuals facing depression and anxiety. Siva also detailed sensitization programs for legal professionals to ensure queer-friendly representation in legal matters.

In terms of livelihood programs, Nirangal Charitable Trust offers English and computer basics courses, along with life skills training, for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their partners.



Advocacy programs are also an integral part of Nirangal Charitable Trust's work, involving regular meetings with the LGBTQIA+ community to identify their needs and address immediate and long standing issues. The organization actively participates in pride walks to raise awareness and visibility for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Nevertheless, despite the triumphs and achievements of Nirangal's gender awareness programs, there are numerous challenges confronting the organization and its members. First, Naveen and Siva emphasized the physical and mental harassment faced by community members when coming out of their homes. For instance, there is a specific incident involving a lesbian couple seeking support from their organization, where police intervention escalated into an illegal custody situation with harassment and abuse. LGBTQIA+ counselors faced threats and harassment from the legal and police departments.

In addition, the Indian government has implemented measures to counter practices like "conversion" therapy, wherein assisting LGBTQIA+ individuals is viewed as such. From here, Siva highlighted challenges related to the lack of understanding not only from the legal profession and the families of LGBTQIA+ members but also from the Indian government.

Overall, the key challenges highlighted from Nirangal's experience were (1) harassment from family members of LGBTQIA+ individuals extending to Nirangal's counselors, (2) police harassment and intimidation, and (3) a lack of understanding from the government. To overcome these, Nirangal reiterated its dedication to consistently conduct gender sensitivity and awareness programs across different sectors and continue their activities to combat the stigma against the LGBTQIA+ community.

After Nirangal's presentation, Soma from MAKAAAM extended her appreciation for their ongoing work and underscored the importance of education, awareness, and solidarity building, particularly with entities tasked with ensuring justice and equality for LGBTQIA+ communities. She noted that these entities often tend to perpetuate heteronormativity.

Thus, she expressed curiosity about the training materials utilized by Nirangal, as their organization is also addressing intersectionality in training related to land rights, forest rights, and natural resource issues. Nirangal is open to sharing their basic “Gender and Sexuality” materials, however, adjustments need to be made based on MAKAAAM’s target audience.

## **Anwar “Sastro” Maruf**

*Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI)*

Sastro from Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI) shared that their organization’s vision is centered on the creation of a just, equal, and prosperous society. KPRI has three core program pillars: political struggle, economic struggle, and social protection struggle. The organization is also an umbrella union comprising numerous associations including labor unions, peasant unions, women’s unions, urban poor unions, and youth groups.

Its primary struggles and campaigns is based on their program pillars. First, their focus on building an economic solidarity movement is based on KPRI’s manifesto which encompasses four economic pillars: consumption arrangement, distribution, production arrangement, and the establishment of economic institutions such as cooperatives. The second pillar of struggle involves a political program aimed at strengthening grassroots organizations and unions through organizing education, training, and advocacy. The third pillar focuses on transformative social protection campaigns, serving as a response to the political-economic challenges faced by oppressed individuals.

The challenges and difficulties faced by KPRI in undertaking societal transformation in Indonesia stem from the prevailing and lingering influence of the hegemonic new order, which is exemplified by restrictions on the study of Marxism due to existing regulations. This limitation poses a challenge to educational initiatives in this domain.

Another significant challenge arises from Indonesia’s vast size and archipelagic nature, comprising 17 islands. The geographical

expanse presents difficulties in consolidation and coordination efforts. Looking back on their programs in 2023, the overarching theme is the transformation of knowledge to empower grassroots organizations and communities. Specifically, the implementation of social solidarity, economy practices, and evaluating their impact. Thus, the organization aims to enhance the database of cooperatives and community entrepreneurs. Many community members affiliated with KPRI remain absent from databases or are influenced by varying ideologies.

To address these challenges, KPRI employs various strategies for each pillar. For example, in dealing with challenges related to solidarity economy, they conduct research and mapping, while also organizing the flow in the Western region. They also undertake studies on digitalization and agroecology to strengthen their cooperatives. Secondly, as part of their transformative and social protection campaign, they establish alternative schools for ideology and politics, enhance community libraries, and conduct training on community organizing for prospective organizations, with a focus on generating co-organizations. Notable is the People-to-People Alternative Development Program for villages, grassroots organizations, and communities at the national level. Apart from these, they also research on access to healthcare for people with disabilities and workers, such as those on land, in informal sectors, and in urban poor settings.

## **Soma Parthasarathy**

*Women's Farmers Rights Forum (MAKAAM)*

To provide a brief background about the Women's Farmers Rights Forum (MAKAAM), Soma shared that she is affiliated with one of the seven networks MAKAAM frequently collaborates with—the organization that works with other feminist organizations to advance the economic and livelihood environments of women. The inception of this network platform in 2016 was prompted by the recognition that issues related to women as workers, producers, and farmers had not been adequately addressed. Hence, the pressing need for advocacy and policy shifts to acknowledge women's roles as farmers and producers, and to secure their rights.

Soma then shared insights into her work with MAKAAAM, which focuses on economic justice and environmental restoration. The first area centers on organizing women into farmers' producer organizations with the goal of addressing the specific needs of women farmers. The overarching objective is to strengthen the circular economy rather than expose women to an extractive and destructive economic model. To achieve this, the organization strongly advocates for women's farmers' rights, particularly land rights. This encompasses entitlements such as access to state benefits, social security, fair wages, a safe working environment, and compensation in the event of disasters.

Another area of focus that Soma engages with and convenes involves forest rights initiatives. This emphasizes forest governance and securing resource rights for women through acts and laws in India such as the Forest Rights Act, which is specifically designed for forest dwellers and indigenous communities. Soma also highlighted that MAKAAAM has been working on adopting an intersectional approach to empower communities, particularly women, in leadership roles. MAKAAAM aims to enable women to articulate their priorities in planning and governance processes at local and regional levels. Moreover, MAKAAAM aims to foster a landscape conducive to harmonious living with nature and promote an agroecological, healthy, and abundant planet. In this sense, MAKAAAM's campaign is not limited to the achievement of gender justice, but also expands to enabling ecological protection, restoration, and conservation. In summary, the organization is a feminist entity dedicated to economic justice, empowerment, environmental restoration, and good governance.

The challenges that MAKAAAM currently faces are primarily centered around the structural constraints faced by women farmers. The state fails to acknowledge its roles and work in data systems, policy frameworks, and program implementations across the nation. Within a social framework that adheres to heteronormative patriarchal norms, this implies that women continue to be denied equal rights, justice, and a substantive role in economic decision-making. Thus, MAKAAAM's central focus is on addressing these concerns, by operating at various levels—village, block, district administrative units, as well as national and regional levels—to exert influence on policies. Moreover,

MAKAAM's initiative aims to create a space for marginalized women, including smallholders, non-landholders, landless laborers, and those occupying common lands.

Additionally, Shrishtee of Kalpavriksh notes that many development agendas tend to be destructive for marginalized communities and ecologies that have sustained the latter for centuries. To address this, MAKAAM underscored the importance of making these formidable challenges the primary focus of their organization's collective efforts nationwide. Another vital aspect of addressing these challenges involves pursuing collaborative engagements with networks like VS to forge alliances, promote solidarities, and integrate gender issues into broader network initiatives.

## **Bong Ramilo**

*Asian Music for Peoples' Peace and Progress (AMP3)*

Bong, representing the Asian People's Music Space and Progress (AMP3), shared that AMP3 comprised of activist musicians and members from various Asian countries, including Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Timor Leste, Bangladesh, and India. As AMP3 has friends and networks in other Asian countries, their current focus is on consolidating their network.

AMP3's mission revolves around advancing the music and art of resistance and solidarity. This involves tackling and resisting various issues prevalent in their regions while fostering solidarity within their communities and advancing shared interests. Since members are deeply connected to their communities, their work also aligns with civil society. The principle of people's peace and progress centers on the notion that progress is expressed predominantly through the lens of justice, like social justice, climate justice, gender justice, cultural justice, among other forms. Their activities also include advocating for and promoting the work of their members, co-creating materials, and cross-translations.

With the challenges faced by AMP3, Bong highlighted the diversity of issues confronted by communities in different countries.

The organization grapples with resource gathering, communication, and collaboration with regional and international organizations. Additionally, AMP3's allies seemed to confuse their work as activists in civil society with the music industry. This clarifies that AMP3 are not entertainers but rather contributors to cultural discussions. The organization's main objective is to advance the right of everyone to participate in the cultural life of their communities (as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27) and to write songs for people of the communities concerned.

## **Shrishtee Bajpai**

*Kalpavriksh and Vikalp Sangam*

Shrishtee of Kalpavriksh gave insights into the organization's evolution and its involvement in the Vikalp Sangam process. Established in 1979, Kalpavriksh initially focused on environmental awareness campaigns, litigation research, and advocacy work. Over time, the organization transitioned from street protests to on-ground studies of large-scale, destructive projects that heavily impact people's territories. Kalpavriksh played a pivotal role in reshaping India's environmental jurisprudence as they engaged with mass movements.

The organization also shifted its focus from a Western-centric environmental conservation perspective to a bottom-up, community-centric approach known as community conservation. Rejecting engagements in militarized forms of protection, Kalpavriksh emphasized the role of local communities in safeguarding their territories, forests, and lands. The organization delved into the intersections of destructive development and community conservation, aiming to reinstate environmental protection processes and engage students and community members on environmental education.

Recognizing the significance of the interdependence of campaigns and struggle, Kalpavriksh expanded its focus beyond environmental problems, incorporating political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions. This holistic approach led to the emergence of alternative programs within the organization, emphasizing the interconnections of the issues arising from extractive development and state authoritarianism.

The initiatives undertaken by Kalpavriksh between 2012 and 2013 culminated in the Vikalp Sangam process, a platform aimed at bringing diverse progressive groups together to share, learn, and collaborate. Vikalp Sangam underscored the variety and power of the work conducted by groups like Nirangal and MAKAAAM, emphasizing the need for different organizations to collaborate and exchange experiences. The vision of Vikalp Sangam, therefore, is to foster a space for different progressive groups to collaborate and learn from each other's work, promoting collective efforts toward positive change across India.

## **Dahlan Khatami**

*Literacy People's Forum (KPP)*

For Literacy People's Forum (KPP), the main focus is on promoting literacy in their communities. Since 2019, they have aimed to raise awareness and cultivate a reading habit among Indonesians.

KPP elucidated several key issues in terms of Indonesian literacy. First, the access to libraries—there is a scarcity of libraries and the need for knowledge to reach people, especially in urban areas where the busy lifestyle of the working class hinders parental involvement in children's education. To address this, the KPP committed itself to be a supportive presence to children's education.

Secondly, the problem of individualization—in modern society, there is a growing trend of self-centeredness due to the impact of technology. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, everything shifted online. This induced further isolation and reduced emotional connections. As a response, KPP has been leading to collate resources (e.g. people, books, etc.) in hopes of lessening people's isolation.

Upon sharing their efforts to gather resources during the pandemic, KPP identified another challenge: the tendency of children to prioritize online video consumption over traditional reading practices. Acknowledging this trend, Dahlan of KPP underscored the necessity to balance between promoting literary engagement and the growing preference for consuming digital visual content within their communities and neighborhoods.

## Synthesis

To conclude the discussion for Break-out Session 1, the group identified five common themes based on everyone's contributions:

1. Address visibility. Awareness, sensitization, and education are important parts of the work (NIRANGAL and women's contribution, KPRI, and communities)
2. Intersectionality is important in everyone's work. (economic, social, political, ecological, gender, youth – KPRI and Women Farmers Right Forum)
3. Cultural democracy is a crucial part of each organization's transformation.
4. Break the silos among different organizations (e.g. economy vs. ecology – to fight together)
5. Democratic and collective self-governance is fundamental to everyone's struggle.



## BREAKOUT GROUP 2

Asmi Sharma, *Jan Sarokar (People's Agenda)*

Basilio Madeira, *Ermera Peasant Union (UNAER)*

Erni Kartini, *Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP)*

Delfia Pinto, *Maufahi Peasant Union Timor Leste*

Rio Putra, *Serikat Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia (SPRI)*

Bingangonan Ondoy Solidarity Association (*BOSA - HomeNet Philippines Hub*)

Facilitator:

Benjamin B. Velasco, *Partido Manggagawa and UP CIDS AltDev*

### Asmi Sharma

*Jan Sarokar (People's Agenda)*

Asmi, representing Jan Sarokar (People's Agenda), highlighted that their organization is a platform that serves as a collaborative space for mass organizations engaged in people-centric policy advocacy and participatory governance. It believes that ordinary people of India do not only possess the capability to identify and recognize issues, but are also capable of articulating these shortcomings through clear policy demands and recommendations. Given this, Jan Sarokar advocates for giving ordinary citizens a central decision-making role in their own governance.

The organization is also committed to bringing the narratives of communities and alternative ideas of development and democracy to the forefront of parliamentary and policy debates as well as decision-making processes. As a part of their approach, Jan Sarokar actively gathers inputs from the grassroots on a range of issues related to social security, the protection of communities, and matters impacting ordinary people. The organization aims to influence national-level policy and parliamentary channels.

## **Basilio Madeira**

*Ermera Peasant Union (UNAER)*

Basilio, representing UNAER, highlighted the organization's primary goals related to agrarian reform and community agroecology. This campaign spans across 28 bases within the municipalities of Timor Leste.

To achieve these two objectives, UNAER offers and provides training across its bases on land care practices such as planting, weeding, and cultivating trees which are beneficial to the land. The organization also conducts exchange studies, collaborating with other peasant unions to share ideas and establish new unions. The overarching goal is to connect with peasants throughout Timor Leste and expand these connections to other municipalities in the coming years. Basilio also emphasized that UNAER strongly advocates for peasants' land rights through legal means.

In summary, UNAER's main campaign is agrarian reform and community agroecology. To achieve this, the organization engages in organizing, reaches out to peasant organizations in Timor Leste, and facilitates capacity-building workshops and trainings.

## **Erni Kartini**

*Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP)*

Representing Serikar Petani Pasundan (SSP), Erni shares that SPP's primary focus revolves around agrarian reform. Diverging from UNAER's approach, SPP champions land reform through direct land occupation. Given that the majority of their members are landless, SPP actively engages in efforts to facilitate land acquisition, lobbying for land redistribution programs and providing livelihood opportunities for their members. Like UNAER, the organization gives significance to building unions and collaborating with other peasant groups to advocate for agrarian reform policies. Furthermore, SPP extends educational initiatives to the families of peasants, including imparting knowledge about the legal intricacies associated with land rights.

## **Delfia Pinto**

*Manufahi Peasant Union Timor Leste (UAMM)*

Delfia, representing the Manufahi Peasant Union Timor Leste (UAMM), emphasized their commonality with the Ermera Peasant Union (UNAER). Both unions share a unified vision and mission, striving to advocate for the rights of all farmers in Timor Leste. Their goal is to ensure that all people and families in Timor Leste have the right to access land and water, sufficient for local production.

They also note the similarity between their organization, the UNAER, and SPP. The core campaign is consistent among these groups—a shared commitment to the fight for agrarian reform. They also advocate for the diversification of agriculture through the practice of cultivation of various products in the backyards and fields of communities.

## **Rio Putra**

*Serikat Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia (SPRI)*

For Serikat Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia (SPRI), Rio briefly shared about their current main campaign on social protection—not only for Jakarta but also on a national level. This campaign is a response to the impact of the pandemic on Indonesia’s economy and access to social protection.

## **Binangonan Ondoy Solidarity Association (BOSA)**

*HomeNet Philippines Hub*

Presenting from the Homenet Philippines Hub, representatives from BOSA shared that their organization is affiliated with Homenet Philippines. The members of BOSA are survivors of a massive flooding in the Philippines caused by Typhoon Ondoy in 2011. This disaster resulted in a significant loss of livelihood and housing issues in various sectors, such as fisherfolks, women, elderly, etc.

To address the challenges confronting the community, they formed an organization composed of informal workers from their town, Binangonan Rizal, in collaboration with Homenet Philippines. Their work revolves around the principles of solidarity, mutual aid, and social solidarity economy.

BOSA's key advocacies focus on housing and livelihood for victims and survivors of disasters like Typhoon Ondoy. Similar to SPP and UNAER, BOSA engages in internal consolidation, capacity-building, and leadership training for their members and officers with the support of HomeNet Philippines. They assert that through solidarity and mutual aid, they were able to uplift each other and cope with posts-disaster trauma despite the constraints of poverty and societal inequalities.

## Synthesis

To summarize the discussion, five key points based on common themes from the conversation among alternative practitioners were identified:

1. All are engaged in rights claiming.
2. Creating and connecting mass organizations and building solidarities are significant in everyone's work (e.g. MASSA organizations, platforms).
3. A lot of organizations engage in internal consolidation to strengthen the mass base by educating their own members, expanding to other areas, and affiliating to bigger networks.
4. A lot of work centers on the issues of agrarian reform and agroecology while others touch on social protection, livelihood, and housing.
5. There is diversity in terms of sectoral representation—peasants, informal workers, informal settlers, mass organizations, research institutes, and platforms (e.g. Jan Sarokar).

## BREAKOUT GROUP 3

Khanza Dermawan, *Serikat Petani Pasundan*

Abha Bhaiya, *Jagori Rural/Vikalp Sangam*

Fernando Ximenes, *Komite Esperansa*

Facilitator:

Angging Aban, *UP CIDS AltDev*

### **Khanza Dermawan**

*Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP)*

Khanza of Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP) shares that their main campaign revolves around land “domination” for the people. The organization has successfully reclaimed over 43,000 hectares of peasant land in West Java, with ongoing efforts aimed at further expansion.

The strategies employed by SPP in their campaigns encompass lobbying efforts with the government to secure land ownership for the people, fostering supportive networks for peasants, and facilitating educational discussions on agrarian reform targeted at farmers and the youth. SPP has instituted the establishment of schools in each district to impart knowledge to children on farming and agrarian reform.

The challenges that SPP faces center on the government’s bureaucratic processes involved in addressing peasants’ land rights. It necessitates a series of extensive discussions and the engagement of legal professionals to advocate for SPP concerns. Nonetheless, SPP remains steadfast in its pursuit of agrarian reform at the national level.

## **Abha Bhaiya**

*Jagori Rural and Vikalp Sangam*

For Jagori Rural, Abha highlighted that its primary advocacy is on the advancement of climate justice programs in India. It focuses on alternative projects aimed at safeguarding particularly at the Himalayan region. The organization also engages in peace and security initiatives across South Asia, specifically addressing conflict zones from a feminist perspective.

To realize these objectives, Jagori Rural undertakes the following activities; in the pursuit of climate justice, they employ a “greening program,” that provides capacity-building for members of their network, and explore alternative frameworks while developing diverse alternative models and paradigms (e.g. alternative health/medicine programs, alternative tourism, organic agriculture, etc.). In the context of peace and security across South Asia, the organization provides legal support to women migrant workers and refugees. An integral aspect of their activities involves advocacy efforts like pressuring the government to address their environmental and peace-related concerns.

Regarding the challenges that Jagori Rural encounters, engaging with conflict issues in South Asia poses complexities as it necessitates cross-country dialogues. The precarious Himalayan environment further compounds their challenges. This is attributed to the impact of extractive industries, such as mining and hydro projects, disproportionately affecting indigenous peoples’ lands. Finally, Jagori Rural underscored that the dominant framework of development is a masculine model—it perpetuates violence against nature and women. In resolving this, the organization is committed to utilizing a feminist perspective in development and addressing issues.

## Fernando Ximenes

### *Komite Esperansa*

For Komite Esperansa, Fernando shared that their primary campaign as a political organization centers on establishing connections with peasant unions, particularly in rural upland and central areas of Timor Leste. One of the core objectives of this campaign is to advance the rights of peasants confronted with land evictions.

The strategies employed by Komite Esperansa involve educational initiatives targeting youth and mass-based movements, particularly on political education for the grassroots in Timor Leste. They also engage in capacity-building and leadership training within their networks, including women peasants, with the aim of conducting collaborative research. Fernando further highlighted their collaboration with artists from Art Timor—they utilize abandoned spaces to continue artistic expressions and advocate for land rights issues.

The challenges of the Komite Esperansa include class differentiation among peasants that lead to divergent interests, making comprehensive engagement even more challenging. Conservative ideas persist in Timor Leste. This complicates advocacy efforts for women peasants to assert ownership over their land. Additionally, despite the collaboration with artists from Art Timor, there is a lack of systemic resistance from the artistic community.

## Synthesis

To summarize the Breakout Session 3, five main themes were derived from everyone's input:

1. Common struggles across Southeast Asia and South Asia: land reclaiming, dispossession of the people from their land and resources, corporate-controlled and state-supported resource extraction, climate change, etc.
2. Struggles and solidarity cut across different sectors: deep links of the rural and urban, and convergence on diverse themes (ex. environmental protection, organic agriculture, political education in grassroots communities, and art)
3. People in communities have diverse alternatives and work effectively.
4. Women and the women's movement have to be central to the alternatives movement
5. The need to have more exchanges across and between regions and should be face-to-face in the future because we learn much from these exchanges.



## BREAKOUT GROUP 4

Ashish Kothari, *Kalpavriksh and Vikalp Sangam*

Nancy Pathak, *Jan Sarokar*

Primar Jardeleza, *HomeNet Philippines*

Ryan Silverio, *ASEAN SOGIE Caucus*

Eduardo Tadem, *UP CIDS AltDev and MASSA*

Facilitator:

Asst. Prof. Jose Monfred C. Sy and Ryan Martinez, *UP CIDS AltDev*

### Ashish Kothari

*Kalpavriksh*

On behalf of Kalpavriksh, Ashish provided an overview of its organization's campaigns and activities. Founded in 1979, Kalpavriksh initially focused on urban environmental issues before expanding to address broader ecological and environmental concerns across India. Their mission centers on promoting development for well-being, emphasizing a harmonious balance between people's welfare and the environment that must be practiced by the Indian government.

Despite being a relatively small group with around 25-30 members and mainly based in cities, Kalpavriksh actively collaborates with grassroots organizations throughout India. Their activities include supporting local resistance movements that advocate for constructive alternatives in various regions in the country. Additionally, they play a crucial role in coordinating the Vikalp Sangam process.

The personal focus of Ashish has evolved from biodiversity, wildlife policy issues, and livelihoods to radical alternatives emphasizing local direct democracy, autonomy, and related issues over the past 10–15 years. The overarching vision is to contribute to positive change by fostering well-being, environmental harmony, and constructive alternatives in India.

Kalpavriksh is actively involved in addressing environmental and developmental challenges through the support of local resistance, conservation efforts, alternative education (education based on local culture and context), and the promotion of radical alternatives. Their approach involves collaborating with local communities, networking with local groups, and committing to uphold democratic decision-making within the organization.

After Ashish's presentation, Mon expressed a personal connection with Kalpavriksh's work, mentioning AltDev's partnership with an indigenous school in the Philippines. Like Kalpavriksh, the program also conducts research focused on alternative forms of learning, especially among indigenous peoples. Drawing from Kalpavriksh's activities, there is a potential collaboration for nurturing diverse perspectives in research, schooling, and education beyond indigenous communities.

## **Nancy Pathak**

*Jan Sarokar*

Nancy of Jan Sarokar shared that their organization is a national network of civil society organizations and people's campaigns. Their ultimate goal is to produce state-level and national-level reports on the status of democracy, dignity, and development. They build on intersectional solidarities and direct the focus of progressive opposition parties toward people-centric issues during electoral campaigns.

Elaborating on their campaigns and activities, Jan Sarokar focuses on a wide range of sector issue-based organizations, including those working on ration pensions, monuments, agriculture, education, etc. It serves as a platform where several organizations and sectors converge to discuss and address their respective concerns, and lobby them in the parliamentary processes. In addition, Jan Sarokar supports similar organizations through public gatherings, public hearings, and protests. Collaborating with networks like Vikalp Sangam is also significant for the advancement of alternative parliamentary consolidations.

Regarding the challenges confronting Jan Sarokar, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated mobility restrictions is underscored. The pandemic resulted in Indian parliament's inactivity for six months, which led to budget cuts and the omission of monthly sessions. As a response, Jan Sarokar initiated the People's Parliament, a collaborative effort involving 60 national organizations and people's movements, including Kalphavriksh and Vikalp Sangam, albeit being held online. This virtual platform, however, entails limitations in reaching diverse audiences, particularly those without media access, notably within remote local communities. Notwithstanding, current efforts are being made to address the virtual constraints through Melas or public gatherings. Jan Sarokar is currently joined by 80 mass-based organizations dedicated to advancing the campaign for democracy, diversity, dignity, and just development.

Moreover, Jan Sarokar is also facing logistical challenges in engaging with political party representatives and leaders, given they are predominantly concentrated in the capital of India, New Delhi. Additionally, given the multiplicity of perspectives and opinions inherent in India's diverse states, there are difficulties in devising solutions for issues affecting different sectors.

Addressing these concerns, Ashish of VS posited that Jan Sarokar endeavors to empower individuals and grassroots organizations, not solely through conventional party politics but also through alternative means. The organization aspires to foster a more direct form of democracy for people at the grassroots level, facilitating the assertion of their power and autonomy.

## Primar Jardeleza

### *HomeNet Philippines*

For HomeNet Philippines, Primar shared that their primary advocacy centers on the social protection of home-based and informal workers nationwide. This advocacy is coupled with the advancement of social solidarity economy, not only within the Philippines but also throughout Southeast Asia. HomeNet Philippines also mentioned that their regional organization, HomeNet Southeast Asia, also caters to the concerns and issues of home-based informal workers in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Philippines, and Cambodia. Presently, HomeNet Philippines comprises 27 mass-based organizations and informal workers in the country.

HomeNet Philippines currently pursues their strategic initiatives in organizing, promotion, research, and lobbying. In their local bases, they are organizing informal home-based workers to affiliate with the organization. Subsequently, they provide comprehensive capacity-building and business management training to affiliated member organizations, thereby promoting and implementing the principles of social solidarity economy. To aid their organizing efforts, HomeNet has been producing research that are integral to lobbying policies, such as the Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy and advocacy efforts. This involves the initiation of signature campaigns and the introduction of bills aimed at addressing the concerns pertinent to informal workers.

Concerning the challenges confronted by HomeNet Philippines, Primar shared that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of their members experienced job losses and significant economic setbacks. Their response was to expanded their village savings and loan association to provide financial service to their members. In addition, despite the lockdowns and closure of markets, Homenet was able to establish their online market, aptly named Purple Market, which provides HomeNet the platform to sell and promote the products of their informal home-based networks. This strategic initiative aimed to assist home-based and informal workers in recovering their livelihoods.

Other challenges encountered by HomeNet Philippines mostly stem from disasters brought about by typhoons and earthquakes prevalent in the Philippines. Consequently, these calamities significantly impact their members who operate from their homes and are part of the informal economy, particularly during instances of flooding.

## **Ryan Silverio**

*Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Caucus*

On behalf of the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC), Ryan shared that the organization was established in 2011 when ASEAN itself was enhancing its human rights mechanism. The primary motivation was to provide a platform for LGBTQIA+ rights activists in Southeast Asia to voice out their concerns and address relevant issues at the ASEAN level. As the organization evolved, it became institutionalized and eventually established a secretariat based in the Philippines. ASC currently implements programs across 11 countries in Southeast Asia.

The activities that ASC undertakes also include connecting their advocacy initiatives to the ongoing efforts of preceding organizations. Emphasizing the culture of solidarity in their network, ASC extended support to their members to engage in income-generating products that can be sold for additional income. This is the experience from one of their member organization, Micro Rainbow, which is based in Cambodia. Micro Rainbow is comprised of queer home-based workers and small-scale entrepreneurs dedicated to economic empowerment within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Furthermore, ASC is committed to research initiatives like “ASEAN Queer Imaginings.” This involves providing a platform for activists in Southeast Asia to contribute theoretical and practice-oriented perspectives, envisioning activism within the region. Additionally, Ryan showcased a publication from the Southeast Asia Queer Cultural Festival in 2021. It landmarked a collaborative venture involving over 50 LGBTQIA+ artists and cultural workers from across Southeast Asia.

Ryan also expressed a keen interest in cross-advocacy work, particularly with regards to the Magna Carta for the Rights of Informal Workers, identifying an opportunity to collaborate with HomeNet Philippines. He underscored the shared engagement of workers and activists within informal sectors across Southeast Asia, encompassing weavers in Cambodia, textile workers in Indonesia, and LGBTQIA+ activists involved in informal work due to discriminatory practices.

Similar to HomeNet Philippines, ASC also actively conducts leadership programs and capacity-building initiatives. These programs are designed to empower various organizations, enabling them to effectively manage and operate their respective local entities. An illustrative example is the “Rainbow Reach Out Project,” undertaken by ASC during the pandemic. This initiative specifically targeted grassroots organizations, aimed to enhance their capacities and assist them in overcoming challenges brought by the pandemic.

Regarding the challenges that confront ASC, campaigning, lobbying, and networking for the LGBTQIA+ sector in the Philippines is not easy. The primary obstacles include religious considerations, security concerns, and financial constraints. These challenges significantly impact the implementation of programs and advocacy efforts.

## **Professor Emeritus Eduardo C. Tadem**

*Convenor, UP CIDS AltDev*

*Movement for Alternatives and Solidarity in Southeast Asia (MASSA)*

Professor Emeritus Eduardo C. Tadem, representing UP CIDS, underscored the unique role of UP CIDS as a unit mandated to conduct policy research on national issues, influencing both government and non-government organizations like civil society. He specifically convened AltDev, which was established in 2017 in response to the dissatisfaction of civil society groups in Southeast Asia, particularly under the umbrella of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ASCS) and ASEAN People’s Forum (APF), for over almost two decades.

Given this, the ACSC and APF adopted a resolution in 2020, urging organizations to embark on a process for alternative regionalism in Southeast Asia. This alternative regionalism is envisioned to emerge from the grassroots, the communities, and their longstanding alternative practices in various domains—politics, economics, social sciences, and cultures. AltDev has embraced this challenge over the past three years, documenting and researching communities, sectors, and groups in Southeast Asia to publish their alternative practices.

The realization of an Alternative People Regionalism’s vision is evolving, and that the P2P exchange method serves as a means for alternative practices across the region and beyond. The method also allows regions to interact, exchange experiences, and learn from each other. This exchange is instrumental in facilitating the exploration of solutions to challenges encountered by diverse communities.

## Synthesis

Concluding the discussion for Breakout Session 4, five overarching themes were derived from the collective contributions:

1. Alternative learning and education strategies (documentation, publications, trainings, alternative schools)
2. People-centered environmental advocacy (e.g. challenging the top-down view about conservation, refreshing relationships with communities and ecologies, informal workers, and home-based workers doing organic gardening)
3. Spaces for exchange, collaborative learning, and movement-building (e.g. *Melas* [people’s parliament], cultural festivals)
4. Engagement with policymakers without relying on the government, but championing people-centered leadership instead
5. COVID-19 as a common challenge: the consequent virtual setup is challenging for advocacy work and organization

## BREAKOUT GROUP 5

Chandra Firmantoko, *Asian Solidarity Economy Council*

Leo Suarez, *Bobonaro Peasant Union*

Phoungvyna Sangva, *Gender and Development for Cambodia*

Zharfan, *Federation of Karya Utama Union*

Vasudha Varadarajan, *Vikalp Sangam*

Facilitator:

Arvin Dimalanta, *UP CIDS AltDev*

### Chandra Firmantoko

*Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)*

For Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC), Chandra underscored that the main cause of human rights violations is economic injustice. Given this context, ASEC promotes an alternative economic system—the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE). It is an economic system that is characterized by social benefit that takes precedence over profit.

Chandra also shared that SSE is not a new concept, and has already been practiced in many traditional societies. ASEC has already documented over 70 stories of SSE practices in different parts of Asia, carried out by grassroots organizations in various forms.

ASEC aims to disseminate these SSE practices and educate the public, different institutions, governments, and international bodies on its significance and application. ASEC does this through various platforms. Recently, through their membership in the Réseau intercontinental de promotion de l'économie Sociale Solidaire (RIPESS), ASEC was able to engage with the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy.

In conclusion, SSE can provide a model for creating benefits for the people and community, instead of focusing solely on making money.



## Leo Suarez

### *Bobonaro Peasant Union*

Leo Suarez of Bobonaro Peasant Union in Timor Leste shared about the challenges that they are facing in the agricultural sector. Timor Leste government budget for agriculture is inadequate. Importation of produce is rampant, and corporations have control over the distribution and prices of local produce. Though farmers are producing adequately, they are neither earning enough nor are receiving enough compensation. As a result, widespread poverty persists.

To overcome these problems, Bobonaro Peasant Union explores various alternative approaches such as (1) cooperativization of farmers and solidarity economy; (2) agroecology; (3) government support to agriculture; and (4) land reform.

Bobonaro Peasant Union underscored that working together through a cooperative and practicing solidarity economy allows farmers to earn a little more. With the climate crisis heightened by capitalist development and accumulation, the Bobonaro Peasant Union adopts agroecology. It protects the environment and allows farmers and consumers to assert food sovereignty. Leo also emphasized that agroecology is a “way to keep the soil fertile, waters clean, and protect our people and the planet”.

The Bobonaro Peasant Union calls on the Timor Leste government to increase its budgets for agriculture. Moreover, the Union also demands the enactment and implementation of policies that would strengthen local production and eliminate gaps for farmers and consumers in markets. Land reform thus becomes crucial to their mission; farmers lack legal rights to the land they till, causing uncertainty and precarity.

In conclusion, the organization aims to minimize capitalist intervention in food production. They aspire to attain a more sustainable and equitable agricultural sector in Timor Leste.

## Phoungvyna Sangva

*Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)*

As the representative of Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), Phoungvyna Sangva discussed the challenges and struggles that women and the LGBTQIA+ community face in Cambodia. For GADC, advocating for women and LGBTQIA+ rights has been extremely difficult due to the limited freedom of expression in the country.

The Cambodian government poses a constraint on civil society organizations (CSOs) to secure permits for public activities. When they do, activities are usually watered down and spread thinly. CSOs are forced to always adopt an alternative in every campaign because of heavy government policing. This was especially felt during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government weaponized the pandemic to restrict public activities that advocated for women and LGBTQIA+ rights. Despite this, GADC remained vigilant. The organization was able to help establish the Gender And Development (GAD) network—a network that serves as a safe space to discuss emerging issues related to women and LGBTQIA+ rights, and where freedom of expression is honored. GADC functions as the secretariat of the GAD network.

Despite being primarily focused on gender issues, GADC also works with other organizations to address the challenges faced by different marginalized sectors, recognizing intersectionality in their work. GADC also engages in regional platforms such as the ASEAN Civil Society Conference and the ASEAN Peoples' Forum to bring “common voices” together.

Phoungvyna also highlighted the efforts of GADC in monitoring and following up on the government's promises related to gender equality through its Gender Watch program and engagement in the United Nations Universal Periodic Review. The budget allocation for the Ministry of Women's Affairs is only 0.02 percent of the government's total revenue. This makes it difficult for implementers to fulfill their commitments.

Like previous organizations, GADC also provides capacity building activities, particularly in the empowerment of economic capacities of women, financial literacy, family management relations. Through these efforts, they aim to help women understand their agency and abilities.

## Zharfan

*Federation of Karya Utama Union*

Federation of Karya Utama Union is a federation of 25 labor unions based in Tangerang, Rampung, and Sumatra in Indonesia. It was established because one of the major problems of workers in Indonesia is labor market flexibilization. This entails changing work practices wherein employers may no longer use internal labor markets or guarantee long-term job security, and instead they may incentivize, re-assign and redeploy employees more easily. This is done in the form of contractualization, temporary work, precarious employment, labor outsourcing, freelance work, among others.

Given this, the Federation organizes workers both in their workplaces and communities, so they can build collective power and assert their rights together. Organizing workers is crucial for them as it ensures that workers' voices are heard. It pushes for change that benefits them. He noted that, *"if we go individually, we will [only] be ignored"*.

One of the programs of the Federation is their alternative school, where they educate workers on politics and labor issues so they can protect their rights. This is essential as it empowers workers to take a more active role in their workplace and communities. The Federation also provides legal assistance to workers who encounter labor issues or disputes with the management.

To fund their campaigns and activities, the organization also engages in fundraising projects. Additionally, they provide lessons on financial management and fundraising to capacitate workers to undertake these tasks.

## Vasudha Varadarajan

*Vikalp Sangam (VS)*

Vasudha Varadarajan of VS discussed the group's role as a platform for organizations in India to share, build knowledge, and collaborate towards a just and ecologically sustainable society. VS aims to provide an alternative to the current societal model built on destruction and inequality.

Vasudha explained that VS is a network of over 80 organizations from various sectors, including agriculture, alternative energy, gender, children and youth, climate, and indigenous peoples, among others. One of the major areas that VS focuses on is the documentation of the work of these organizations and providing co-learning and co-envisioning spaces for them. VS aims to link these different organizations, foster solidarity amongst them, enhance their efforts, and provide a venue from which collaboration can emerge.

The organization's initiatives also include Vikalp Sutra—the concept of livelihood with dignity. VS uses it as part of its basic tenets. Through this, VS promotes the idea of dignified livelihood and its importance to workers.

## Synthesis

Concluding the discussion, three themes were identified from the breakout discussion:

1. Networking and bringing solidarity to the efforts of varied groups
2. Many resonating struggles in Southeast Asia and South Asia
3. Social Solidarity Economy existing in varied forms across different marginalized sectors

# Sharing of Takeaways and Learnings

*Yuli, Benjie, Khanza, Mon, Vasudha*

After the Breakout Sessions, each group was asked to briefly share their exchanges in the plenary session. A representative of each group presented their key points for 5 minutes. The table below provides an overview of the essential insights derived from the respective breakout sessions.

<b>Composition of Breakout Session</b>	<b>Key Points or Common Themes</b>
<p><b>Group 1</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Yuli, <i>KPRI</i>  <b>Facilitator:</b> Hans, <i>AltDev</i></p> <p><b>Participants:</b>            Siva, <i>Nirangal</i>            Naveen, <i>Nirangal</i>            Soma, <i>MAKAAM</i>            Yuli, <i>KPRI</i>            Sastro, <i>KPRI</i>            Bong Ramilo, <i>AMP3</i>            Shrishtee, <i>Kalpavriksh (VS)</i>            Dahlan, <i>KPP</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address visibility. awareness, sensitization, and education are important parts of the work (NIRANGAL and women's contribution, KPRI, and communities)</li> <li>• Intersectionality is important in everyone's work (economic, social, political, ecological, gender, youth—KPRI &amp; Women Farmers Right Forum)</li> <li>• Cultural democracy is a crucial part of each organization's transformation.</li> <li>• The need to break the silos among different organizations (e.g. economy vs. ecology—to fight together)</li> <li>• Democratic and collective self-governance is fundamental to everyone's struggle</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 2</b></p> <p><b>Facilitator and Presenter:</b>            Benjie, <i>PM/AltDev</i></p> <p><b>Participants:</b>            Asmi, <i>Jan Sarokar (VS)</i>            Basilio, <i>UNAER</i>            Erni, <i>SPP</i>            Delfia, <i>UAMM</i>            Rio, <i>SPRI</i>            BOSA (<i>HomeNet Philippines Hub</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All are engaged in rights claiming.</li> <li>• Creating and connecting mass organizations and building solidarities are significant in everyone's work (e.g. MASSA organizations, platforms).</li> <li>• A lot of organizations engage in internal consolidation to strengthen their mass base by educating their own members, expanding to other areas, and affiliating with bigger networks.</li> <li>• A lot of work centers on the issues of agrarian reform and agroecology while others touch on social protection, livelihood, and housing.</li> <li>• There is diversity in terms of sectoral representation—peasants, informal workers, informal settlers, mass organizations, research institutes, platforms (e.g. Jan Sarokar)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Group 3</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Khanza, <i>SPP</i>  <b>Facilitator:</b> Angging, <i>AltDev</i></p> <p><b>Participants:</b>          Khanza, <i>SPP</i>          Abha, <i>Jagori Rural (VS)</i>          Fernando, <i>Komite Esperansa</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common struggles across Southeast Asia and South Asia: land reclaiming, dispossession of the people from their land and resources, corporate-controlled and state-supported resource extraction, climate change, etc.</li> <li>• Struggles and solidarity cut across different sectors, deep links of the rural and urban, and convergence on diverse themes (ex. environmental protection, organic agriculture, political education in grassroots communities, and art)</li> <li>• People in communities have diverse alternatives and work effectively.</li> <li>• Women and the women’s movement have to be central to the alternatives movement.</li> <li>• The need to have more exchanges across and between regions and should be face-to-face in the future because we learn much from these exchanges.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 4</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Mon, <i>AltDev</i>  <b>Facilitator:</b> Mon and Ryan, <i>AltDev</i></p> <p><b>Participants:</b>          Ashish, <i>Kalpavriksh (VS)</i>          Nancy, <i>Jan Sarokar (VS)</i>          Primar, <i>HomeNet Philippines</i>          Ryan, <i>ASC</i>          Ed, <i>UP CIDS - AltDev</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative learning and education strategies (documentation, publications, trainings, alternative schools)</li> <li>• People-centered environmental advocacy (e.g. challenging the top-down view about conservation, refreshing relationships with communities and ecologies, informal workers, and home-based workers doing organic gardening)</li> <li>• Spaces for exchange, collaborative learning, and movement-building (e.g. Melas [people’s parliament], cultural festivals)</li> <li>• Engagement with policymakers without relying on the government and championing people-centered leadership instead</li> <li>• COVID-19 as a common challenge: the consequent virtual setup is challenging for advocacy work and organization</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 5</b></p> <p><b>Presenter:</b> Vasudha, <i>VS</i>  <b>Facilitator:</b> Arvin, <i>AltDev</i></p> <p><b>Participants:</b>          Chandra, <i>ASEC</i>          Leo, <i>Bobonaro Peasant Union</i>          Phoungvyna, <i>GADC</i>          Zharfan, <i>Federation of Karya Utama Union</i>          Vasudha, <i>VS</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking and bringing solidarity to the efforts of varied groups</li> <li>• Many resonating struggles in Southeast Asia and South Asia</li> <li>• Social Solidarity Economy existing in varied forms across different marginalized sectors</li> </ul>

# Sustaining Hope Among Alternatives Practitioners and Prospects for Future People-to-People Exchanges

## *Summation and Closing*

Concluding the event, two speakers—Professor Emeritus Eduardo C. Tadem representing MASSA and UP CIDS AltDev for Southeast Asia, and Ashish Kothari from VS and Kalpavriksh for South Asia—provided a brief summary of the successful and historic People-to-People Exchange.

## **Professor Emeritus Eduardo C. Tadem**

*Convenor, UP CIDS AltDev  
MASSA*

To start the summation, Prof. Tadem remarked on the significance and impact of the experience. He highlighted the invaluable insights derived from listening to a multitude of inspiring and compelling narratives that elucidate alternative development practices at the grassroots level, both in Southeast Asia and South Asia. These accounts, emanating from varied communities and class sectors, not only provided valuable insights but also served as motivational sources for participants. It fostered a collective commitment among them to engage in similar developmental alternatives.

Prof. Tadem also recognized the challenges arising from technical difficulties encountered throughout the event. These challenges, emblematic of the prevailing global digital divide, accentuate the disparities in accessing technologies designed to usher in a new era of information and technology that impacts global societies and economies. He emphasized the ongoing struggle to overcome these challenges, extending beyond technological barriers to encompass national divides and territorial boundaries. From here, he articulated a vision of alternative regionalism and grassroots-driven globalization as a means for collectively addressing global issues, highlighting the interrelated nature of national and global concerns.

In the concluding remarks, Prof. Tadem expressed optimism about the prospect of organizing future P2P Exchanges in person once the pandemic subsides. The anticipated face-to-face interaction is perceived as an opportunity to foster closer connections, enabling a more direct exchange of experiences and strategies among participants.

## Ashish Kothari

*Vikalp Sangam and Kalpavriksh*

Commencing Ashish's synthesis, Ashish had a realization that within various people's movements, both in India and globally, organizing and affecting societal transformation are most effectively achieved through local communities, peer-to-peer exchanges, or what has been referred to as *Sangams*. He underscored the pivotal role of dialogues and stressed the need for collaborative efforts to bring about meaningful exchanges. Ashish emphasized the limitation of relying solely on nation-states and governments, advocating for the construction of grassroots power and direct forms of democracy.

Eyeing the future, Ashish outlined potential future actions, including collaboration between VS and MASSA to connect groups across Southeast Asia working on similar themes, facilitating exchanges, sharing stories and materials, and creating a glossary of terms used in discussions. He proposed extending platforms like Global Tapestry of Alternatives (GTA) to organizations in Southeast Asia and South Asia through various mediums such as webinars, periodicals, and newsletters.

In closing the discussion, Ashish acknowledged the necessity for sustaining hope and inspiration in a world often marked by distressing news. He articulated,

**"I think the most important part of this exchange is to sustain hope and inspiration because we live in a world that is extremely depressing. This kind of thing sustains us in anything that we do, knowing that there are other people out there who are also struggling, resisting, and creating wonderful alternatives and initiatives."**



## Closing

After Ashish’s summation, Mon underscored that these exchanges and platforms serve as valuable means to comprehend these varied perspectives and foster mutual learning. Following this introductory P2P Exchange, there remains considerable work to be done. Thus, a commitment to sustaining hope for the prospect of future P2P Exchanges.

*The historic P2P Exchange was notably inspiring. The event ended with enthusiastic chants from participants:*

“Viva!”

“Aluta Continua!”

“Laban!”

“Namaste!”



P2P ends with photo-taking. All smiles with raised fists.

Source: UP CIDS AltDev

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