

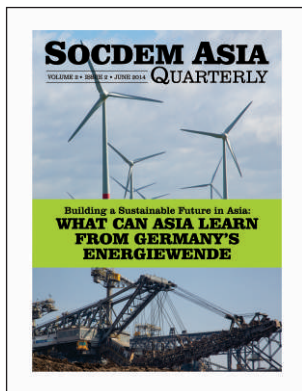


## Key Activities in 2014

The year 2014 was an especially busy year for Socdem Asia, which published four quarterlies, covering issues such as green economy, sustainable energy production, education reform, and decent work, featuring interviews with leading policy-makers, activists, and politicians in Asia and Europe as well as cutting-edge analysis by leading experts from across Asia and beyond. The *Socdem Asia Quarterly* is the flagship publication of progressive forces, movements, and thinkers in Asia, providing an up-to-date, relevant, and lively platform for exchange of ideas and perspectives on how to bring about genuine socio-political and economic transformation in Asia. Throughout the year, Socdem Asia also organized varying events, featuring huge conferences, which brought together leading progressive thinkers and activists from across the world, with a special focus on issues such as education, decent work and participatory governance.

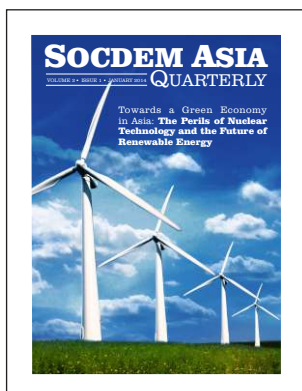
### Major Publications

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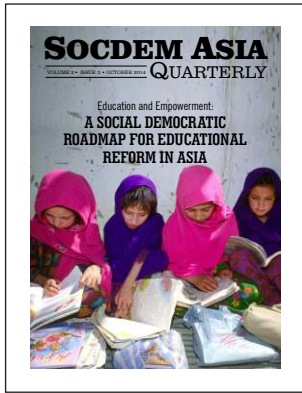
#### I. Building a Sustainable Future for Asia: What can Asia Learn from Germany's Energiewende

The *Quarterly* features views from the participants of the an FES-organized trip to Germany, analysis from leading energy experts vis-à-vis the existing energy paradigm in Asia and Renewable Energy (RE) potential in the region, as well as exclusive interviews with leading RE advocates in Japan's legislature. The aim of the *Quarterly* was to shed light on the unsustainability of the existing energy policies in Asia, and the viability and urgent necessity of pushing for an RE-based energy paradigm in the coming years and decades.



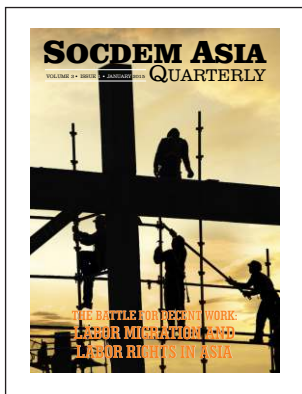
#### II. Towards a Green Economy in Asia: The Perils of Nuclear Technology and the Future of Renewable Energy

The *Quarterly* brought together insights from leading energy experts and activists across Asia, examining the precarious nature of the status quo, the need for a green economy revolution in Asia, and the challenges of making a transition to a more sustainable mode of economic development based on RE. The essays sought to explore how the strength and resilience of the nuclear lobby, rather than the rationality of the nuclear technology per se, explains the regrettable under investment in the RE sector. And why we need to overcome the nuclear lobby -- prospering in the bureaucratic shadows, and constituting large multinational and state-owned companies -- by explaining the rational superiority of alternative energy resources -- democratic accountability and transparency in energy governance will be a crucial step forward.



### III. Education and Empowerment: A Social Democratic Roadmap for Educational Reform in Asia

This edition of the *Quarterly* was conceptualized on the heels of a SOCDEM Asia-organized Conference on “Education for the Future, the Future of Education: Developing a Progressive Education Agenda” in Singapore (13-14 April 2014), where the participants discussed, among other things, Asia's youthful population and the demand for better quality and accessible education, Europe's experience with education reform, education as a tool of empowerment, promotion of social cohesion, and an essential component of human dignity, the socio-economic externalities of educational policies, critical areas for policy intervention on both national and local government levels based on lessons from Europe and most successful Asian countries, areas for collaboration and dialogue between educational reformers and institutions in Europe and Asia, structural and emerging challenges in the realm of education, and the persistence of economic, cultural, and gender divide in terms of access to quality education, especially in the developing regions of Asia. It features interviews and essays by leading policy-makers and activists in Asia, who have dedicated their careers to education reform and empowerment of the youth in the region and beyond.



### IV. The Battle for Decent Work: Labor Migration and Labor Rights in Asia

This edition of the *Quarterly* brought together views from leading experts and advocates from across Asia and beyond, picking up on the discussions in the SOCDEM Asia & GPF-PES-S&D Politicians Meeting on the topic of “Developing Progressive Agenda and Forging Partnerships toward the ASEM Summit”, and Progressive Alliance and SOCDEM Asia Meeting on the topic of “Decent Work and Migration”, on 29-30 September 2014 in Makati, Holiday Inn and Suites Makati, Philippines. This edition features essays and speeches by activists, intellectuals, and policy-makers, who have focused on the issue of decent employment, sustainable economic development, protection of migrant workers' rights, and the need for a new New Deal on the global level -- to ensure the fruits of economic prosperity are equitably shared, rights of workers is protected, and economic growth isn't based on labor exploitation and abuse.

## Key Conferences

### Conference on “Education for the Future, the Future of Education: Developing a Progressive Education Agenda” in Singapore



Gathering in the PARKROYAL Hotel, Singapore (13-14 April 2014), the participants discussed, among other things, Asia's youthful population and the demand for better quality and accessible education, Europe's experience with education reform, education as a tool of empowerment, promotion of social cohesion, and an essential component of human dignity, the socio-economic externalities of educational policies, critical areas for policy intervention on both national and local government levels based on lessons from Europe and most successful Asian countries, areas for collaboration and

dialogue between educational reformers and institutions in Europe and Asia, structural and emerging challenges in the realm of education, and the persistence of economic, cultural, and gender divide in terms of access to quality education, especially in the developing regions of Asia.

### *Objectives*

- 1) Analyse the current status of education across the Asia-Pacific region, specifically in terms of access, quality, and the latest trends and challenges in the 21st century;
- 2) Provide a platform to discuss, asses, and analyse issues relevant to education in order to facilitate an agreement, or at least a common stance, on unique social democratic point of view, specifically in terms of clarifying policy bottom lines, outlining fundamental principles, and adopting optimal strategies to respond and adopt to existent and emerging challenges;
- 3) Share reflections, and develop comparative assessments on possible models and best practices, within the region and beyond, among education practitioners, policy makers, and intellectuals as to contribute to a progressive education agenda for now and the future.

## **Conference on "Decent Work and Migration" in Metro Manila, September 30, 2014, Makati, Philippines.**

On September 30, 2014, activists, legislators, and academics from across the world, from Europe and Africa to the the Middle East and Asia, attended a forum on "Decent Work and Migration" to tackle the most pressing issues facing migrant workers, labour rights, and global and trans-regional migration trends. The forum was co-organized by the Progressive Alliance, SocDem Asia, and Akbayan Citizens' Action Party, with the overriding purpose of identifying key issues, analyzing emerging and longstanding opportunities and challenges in advocating migrant labor rights, and sketching out a common agenda by and for progressives on those issues. The forum provided a unique and extensive opportunity for social democratic and progressive minds to share their views, collaborate in solidarity, and jointly advocate for reforms in the realm of decent work and migrant labor rights across the globe.



**SOCDEM Asia Conference on “Lessons and Best Practices on  
Local Democracy and Governance in the 21st Century”  
(2-3 December 2014, Eastern & Oriental Hotel, Penang, Malaysia).**



The conference brought about various stakeholders and progressive thinkers from across the region to discuss best practices in local democracy and participatory governance in the 21st century, taking inspiration from various grassroots movements, which have transformed the political landscape of countries such as Indonesia, the new president of which, “Jokowi”, has risen to the pinnacle of power thanks to his effective brand of participatory local governance during his earlier stint as a mayor. The pattern of these political dynamics is clear: regimes across the region are being confronted by the large-scale popular demand for greater democracy, facilitated by an increased political awareness as well as the usage of social media technology.

The activity in Penang opened up the opportunity for like-minded, progressive politicians to discuss among each other valuable inputs and strategies to deliver good, effective governance to their constituencies, especially in areas where social democratic forces are (or are poised to be) in position of power. The event served as a crucial platform for sharing of social democratic alternatives, with the aim of consolidating these experiences and discussions into a broader roadmap for bottom-up reforms, which will be of utmost importance to progressives in and beyond the region.

*Objectives*

- 1) Examine the merits and achievements under ongoing good governance initiatives and progressive legislations;
- 2) Assess the nature of struggles and challenges faced by progressive forces in implementing such initiatives;
- 3) Highlight key principles and components of best governance practices, which can be shared to social democrats in the region;
- 4) Define a uniquely social democratic brand of good governance based on existing experiences, proposed initiatives, and special characteristics of the context at hand (i.e., Southeast Asia).

## SOCDEM Asia Conducts Training for Young Politicians in Southeast Asia



SOCDEM Asia gathered 20 young politicians from Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor Leste and the Philippines for Political Management Training. The program, in pilot run, was a 5-day training for young progressive leaders that aimed (1) to provide capacity-building training on political management for young progressives; (2) to provide a platform for sharing and shared-learning of young progressives in the region; (3) to provide a common venue to foster strategic connections among young progressives.

The training included key areas of political management: deepening understanding of different political ideologies; party organizing and development; leadership; political communications and negotiations. The interactive training involved analyses, group work and simulation to be able to hone and practice skills in decision-making, strategizing, argumentation, and communication. The training tapped experts and practitioners from different fields to serve as resource persons/mentor-coaches. These include Professor Nathan Quimpo of Tsukuba University, Mr. Alexander Grandt Petersen, President of the Social Democratic Youth of Denmark and Mr. Percival Cendana, Former Chairperson of Akbayan Party and current Assistant Secretary at the Philippine National Youth Commission, Mr. Vincent Pozon, President of advertising company Estima, Member of Philippine Congress Arlene “Kaka” Bag-ao and Mr. Josel Gonzales, and Mr. Augustus Cerdana, Program Coordinator of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Manila.

The young leaders are members of parliament, local government unit officials, young professionals in government service, and youth leaders in political parties or unions from 18-35 years old, who see politics as their mission and appreciate politics as a means to change society. Through this first political management training, participants acquired knowledge and skills to be able to train fellow young progressives in their respective countries using new content and methods. The participants also recognized the partnership and cooperation built among them during the training which could yield cross-country sharing and solidarity work.