

Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, 6:00 – 7:30pm

### ***Civil Society in Belarus (Olga Karatch)***

Olga Karatch: She is a human rights defender from Belarus and lives in exile in Lithuania.

Olga co-founded the human and civil rights organisation Nash Dom ("Our House") many years ago and is one of the best-known Belarusian activists. Despite all the political persecution, violence and dictatorial structures in Belarus, she pursues a strictly non-violent approach. Nash Dom has repeatedly achieved success with this approach and was also at the forefront of the (failed) non-violent revolution of 2020-2021.

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2024 (6 -7:30 pm)

### ***Farming instead of arms (Rommel Arnado, Philippinen) - angefragt***

**Participation:** All Talks will be realized as videoconference.

**Certificats:** Available on request.

Involved organizations:

Arbeitskreis Globales  
Lernen an Evangelischen  
Hochschulen / AGLEH

**Brot  
für die Welt**

# International Talks

***„The role of civil society in  
social transformation.  
Possibilities and limits.“***

SoSe 2024



OSTBAYERISCHE  
TECHNISCHE HOCHSCHULE  
REGENSBURG



## Programme

Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

### ***Strong civil society as a sign of development and democracy in Kyrgyzstan (Maria Kolesnikova)***

Kyrgyzstan used to be the most democratic country in Central Asia. It has gone through 3 revolutions since its independence from the Soviet Union (Russia) in 1991. Civil society has always been a vibrant part of the country's development and guarantor of human rights and freedom of speech. However, in recent years Kyrgyzstan stopped being a Parliament country and went back to the Presidential ruling. In 2023 Parliament imposed a copy of Russian so called "Foreign Agents Law " in order to control civil society organisations. NGOs in Kyrgyzstan play a crucial role in the development of such spheres like environmental protection, medicine, education, social services, etc. Unfortunately, the new law will affect many public organisations and they would have to stop their operation according to the experts who have seen such a change in Belarus and Russia.

Maria Kolesnikova is the first eco activist in Central Asia who has received the highest UN Award - Earth Champion - for her Clean Air campaign in Kyrgyzstan. She is a chairwoman of environmental NGO MoveGreen that raises awareness about air pollution, climate change and green solutions among youth and the general population in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. MoveGreen works closely with authorities on local and national levels to advocate for a greener future. She will speak about MoveGreen's activities and actions that made the government prioritize actions to clean the air in the country.

Zoom-Link: <https://eu01web.zoom.us/j/69743289613>

Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 2024, 6:00 – 7:30pm

### ***Shrinking and Closing Civil Society Space – a Serious Threat to Democracy, Peace and Development (Christine Meissler, Brot für die Welt)***

Shrinking and closing civil society is a symptom of the current global crisis of democracy. Worldwide fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association are under threat. Not only democracy and human rights are affected: Without independent and critical civil society actors, who can fulfill a watchdog role, claim rights of marginalized, criticise public decisions and hold the government accountable, social injustices and poverty, but also violent conflict are likely to increase.

Brot für die Welt observes for years with great concern how working conditions of partners and other civil society actors are declining or even made impossible. Foreign donations are restricted, civil society organisations lose their registration or are dissolved. Activists, human rights defenders and journalists are persecuted, threatened or even killed. To document and raise awareness, Brot für die Welt has been publishing the Atlas der Zivilgesellschaft since 2018.

Christine Meissler is Policy Advisor for the Protection of Civil Society at Brot für die Welt. From 2007 to 2013 she worked as advisor and project manager at FriEnt and InWEnt mainly on peace building issues. As staff member and delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, she worked in Geneva, Manila and Addis Ababa. She holds a diploma in Political Science of the Free University Berlin and a Master in International Human Rights Law of Oxford University.

Zoom-Link: <https://eu01web.zoom.us/j/68274638258>