



FIAN

Trail Blazers

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1. Why is an action-oriented grassroots organization essential for realizing the right to food

1.1 FIANS vision

FIANs vision is the sustainable full realisation of the human right to adequate food. This implies a world without hunger – but it means more: It means that people can feed themselves and that such access to resources and food is guaranteed by law. In other words: The vision of FIAN is a vision of justiciability: Justiciability means that cases of violation cannot only be brought to court and adjudicated correctly, but court orders will also be enforced.

This is a vision - not a dream. It is a vision inspiring militant action, persistent lobbying, case work and organisation building. It is a crucial mission on the agenda for human rights action.

This vision is at odds with the vision of market globalization. Mammonism can live with food security – if it happens to be a result of market-led business activity – but not with people's control over resources, with legal regulations and limitations of markets, the strengthening (rather than weakening) of social systems and a global sharing of incomes. All this, however, is required under the human right to adequate food, which entails both the right to feed oneself and the right to get food.

Realization is not an automatic fall-out of laws and regulations nor of any other state activity: Realization is an activity of the people using states guarantees (implements) to secure their right.

Even the implementing legislation, rules and programmes will not come about without persistent and increasing action by civil society and its organisation such as FIAN. But even once the laws and programmes are in place covering fully the situations of threat or deprivation, this does not mean that the marginalised individuals and groups can make successful use of them. Realization will be necessary in each and every single case - sometimes against the vested interests of third parties or the lethargy or even corruption of parts of the states bureaucracy. With every case won for the right to food (not necessarily before the court) the right emerges with added strength.

1.2 FIANS mission

FIANs mission is to fight violations of the human right to food until its vision has turned into reality. Interventions (by way of case-work, hotlines, urgent actions, fact finding missions should therefore be a core activity of FIANS active members). Struggling against violations of the right to food has many facets:

- **First of all, people must get clarity about what constitutes a violations, and in particular a violation in the FIAN mandate.**

Violations of the human right to food are by definition breaches of the states obligations to respect, protect

or fulfil access to adequate food. For this matter FIAN members must know (in theory and practice) typical examples of such breaches:

Obligation to respect access: States must not destroy a person's or community's access to food, for example by forcibly evicting them from their lands, forests, fishing grounds, by destroying their livelihoods or by blocking food transports.

Obligation to protect access: If third parties (corporations, landlords, neighbours) destroy a person's or community's access to food, they commit a crime (against the right to food). States must take the measures (to the maximum of available resources) that can be reasonably expected from them to prevent such crimes.

Obligation to fulfil access: States must introduce resource and income sharing programmes (fulfilment system) to the maximum of available resources so that every hungry and malnourished person gets access to food and food producing resources as quickly as possible. The main programmes here are agrarian reform and minimum income programmes.

These obligations under the right to food have been recognized and implemented in international law in the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (ICESCR). Every FIAN member therefore contributes throughout the world to the implementation of the provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights. By referring to the International Bill of Human Rights – consisting of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) and the two covenants the ICESCR, and **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (ICCPR) – FIAN underlines that **Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (ESCR) are an integral part of human rights. FIAN shall therefore fight every interpretation of the ICESCR which undermines the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. ESCR shall be the cornerstones for a future world order. It is not exaggerated to say that FIAN's total work is based on the International Bill of Human Rights, in particular the ICESCR. For many practical purposes, however, reference to international law is superfluous – and could even be counter-productive: People, by the light of reason, have a natural understanding of the right to food – or can develop such an understanding by exposing themselves to the experience of violations. Some of the difficult and protracted formulations in international law is not very motivating indeed. What is highly motivating, however, is being in touch with people struggling against violations of the right to food - their own right and the rights of others.

The violations of the right to food that FIAN deals with in its mandate are those which victimize persons or groups threatened by or suffering from hunger and malnutrition. This means that FIAN does not take up every violation of the right to adequate food, but only those which could result in (or prolong) hunger and malnutrition.

THE AIM OF FIAN shall be to contribute throughout the world to the implementation of the provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights by working for the protection of the human right to food and, above all, the right to feed oneself of persons or groups threatened by or suffering from hunger and malnutrition, especially peasants, agricultural workers, landless labourers, squatters, sharecroppers, and others whose land rights or agricultural labour rights have been or are being violated. (From art. 2 of FIAN's statutes)

- **Among the great number of violations within its mandate, FIAN sets priorities.**

Priorities are set in terms of the right to feed oneself as a crucial aspect of the right to food and in terms of the social background of the victims groups:

Focus on the right to feed oneself: In the context of the right to food FIAN works, above all, for the right to feed oneself. The right to feed oneself is a part of the human right to adequate food. By stressing the right to feed oneself, FIAN indicates that access to food is not enough. What is necessary in addition is access to resources, work and control over their own lives so that people can feed themselves in dignity.

Focus within the victim groups: FIAN works in particular for people whose land rights and agricultural labour rights are violated, especially peasants, agricultural workers, landless labourers, sharecroppers, and others.

This means that among the hungry and malnourished there is a certain focus on the group listed without, however, excluding other parts of the victim groups like the urban poor. This focus is not arbitrary but based on the fact that the majority of hungry and malnourished belong to these groups and that the malnutrition in the cities of the South is closely linked to (and partially caused by) rural malnutrition and people moving to the city. In spite of a certain emphasis on victims in the rural context FIAN retains a holistic view addressing all kinds of groups vulnerable to (or suffering from) hunger and malnutrition.

- **FIAN must contribute to the creation of new legal and programme tools to implement the right to food.**

Victims find it hard to get states keep their obligations. Laws, rules and procedures to defend one's access to food and resources against the state and powerful third parties are sometimes missing. The lack of proper programmes to fulfil poor people's access to food is stark. Even in the context of international law important tools like a right to complain about violations of the right to food – let alone an international court to address such complaints and provide remedy for the victims – are still missing. It is part of FIAN's mission to address this situation in order to establish new tools for the victims to right the wrong.

- **FIAN must contribute to a „culture of human rights“ (including ESCR).**

One of FIAN's task is to educate and mobilize around the right to food as an ESCR, and around ESCR

as human rights of the same calibre as all other human rights. These are much more than just technical or political issues. Human rights can only live in a culture of conducive ethical values. In particular in the field of economic and social life these values are sometimes in conflict with values propagated by political leaders. These values, however, express the deep aspirations of almost everybody:

When people recognize this culture as the culture they would like to live in (and they would want their children to benefit from) enough political momentum can be generated to realize the human right to food.

1.3 FIAN's tasks: The need for „omnipresence“ and capacity.

FIANs task is to fight oppression – oppression which results in hunger or which maintains malnutrition. Violations of the right to food – like other human rights violations - are states actions (or omissions) victimizing an individual or a community, sometimes even masses of people – but for each and every individual victim the suffering inflicted is his or her own.

For FIAN, fighting oppression means fighting violations of the human right to food. There are many of them, and there is much to do. FIAN needs formidable human resources to do its job. There is a need for a national FIAN section in every country, and for a local group in every village and allies in every institution. Violations have to be fought one by one – and once this is done, FIANs vision will be ready to become a reality.

There is a need for a human rights culture. The most convincing educator or mobilizer is not a book or a TV or video, but a committed human being. A person who sticks her neck out and stands up against oppression – no matter where, can be crucial. There are lots of people within FIAN who at one point decided to stick their neck out and get involved. It is not so much their number that counts, but their determination. Many FIAN people who once joined and continued as voluntaries, besides their professional and family life have contributed largely to this culture.

The spirit of the organisation is vested in its voluntaries - the individuals and groups who let themselves be counted for the right to food and who stand up against its violations in all parts of the world.

2. What is a local FIAN-group?

Groups are medium- or long term institutions which either render a permanent service to FIAN or one of its sections (service groups) or secure the presence of FIAN in a certain area (local groups). Moreover, in the statutes of FIAN as well as in a number of sectional statutes, groups are mentioned as part of the organisational structure and have specific rights – such as a right to vote in annual assemblies. Groups consist entirely of FIAN members.

It is important to be clear that a FIAN group is not an NGO-member of FIAN, but a new entity of its own, built up by individual FIAN members. Unfortunately, FIANs name as “Foodfirst Information & Action

Network” sometimes gives rise to the misunderstanding that FIAN is a coalition of NGOs. FIANs name is quite misleading in this respect – and clarification is important. It is true that networking is an important FIAN activity – both in the fields of information and action. The FIAN statutes, however, give a rather tight organisational framework completely built on individual members forming new FIAN-groups and sections. NGOs can be institutional members of FIAN, but this special membership status is not linked to any political rights within the organisation.

a) Service groups

FIAN groups are usually local groups as described below. Service groups, however, need not be local nor do they cover the responsibilities of representation. Instead service groups render a permanent and very specific service to the section or to FIAN. International examples are the International Standing Committees. Such groups can consist of people from different countries.

Groups within a territory can also (on request by their section) provide a permanent service to assist the board and reduce the workload of the secretariat: Mailings, production of material, development of strategies, expertise on specific countries etc.

b) Local groups

Local groups are the backbone of the section: The sustainability, dynamics and action capacity of a section hinges considerably on the question of local groups:

Sections should be constantly growing in its membership - both in quantity and quality.

Sections should have a democratic life with new people coming to the forefront and taking up responsibilities. Sections should be present in all parts of their territories. Groups are schools for leadership building. Individual members and members of groups should be given the chance to qualify themselves and grow in competency and responsibility: From individual members to local groups, to service groups and perhaps membership in the board, as an international delegate or member of the International Executive Committee.

"Local" here means "in a specific area, where members of the group can meet easily every two weeks and/or at any time in between". It is also possible to assign to local groups certain parts of the section's territory, like districts, villages, cities.

The local groups of a section may distribute the work in a reasonable way, even with several groups working in the same neighbourhood (for example concentrating on different aspects of monitoring.)

3. What do local groups do?

The formation of local groups should be based on a clear vision of FIAN. This vision has to be present in every local group as much as it is in the International Council:

FIANs nature is to be **an international organisation to struggle against violations of the human right to feed oneself** in order to help victimised individuals and/or communities by making states meet their human rights obligations.

FIAN does not intervene on the basis of solidarity, or with the aim of organising the victims. Its activities always stay within the limits of what its human rights analysis tells FIAN. FIAN does not follow any other criteria but its own judgement based on such analysis. Even if it carries out advocacy for the victims of violations, FIAN is aware that it is an outside party, that it cannot speak for the victims, that it can only speak for itself.

The work of local groups can be seen in four categories:

- Research&Intervention
- Lobby&Campaign
- Human Rights Education
- Organizational matters

Research&Intervention deal with the immediate struggle against violations of the human right to food. The success of interventions against violations often depends on existing mind frames and/or policy frameworks (legislature, programmes). Policy frameworks implementing the human right to food are usually dealt with under the category of Lobby&Campaign. The existing mind frames have to be challenged by Human Rights Education. The success of work in these three categories also depends on the organizational strength of FIAN. Organizational matters building FIAN is therefore a fourth category of work.

Local FIAN groups act as a bridge between the local and the global:

A. Globalization of Local Action

Research, monitoring and case-work are ways of globalizing local action by the victims and their support group.

B. Localization of Global Action

Participation in hotlines, lobby and campaigns by FIAN groups take global action into the local environment.

The activities of local groups include the following topics. Their order is not an order of priorities. It should be clear that no group can carry out all of these activities:

3.1 Case-work

Local groups carry out case-work on cases internationally adopted by. In this case-work they act as some sort of campaign secretariat for this case in the international or national sectors. In this work groups need to be assisted by the international and national secretariats.

Case-work can give a specific identity to a group: Much will depend on the group as there may be no other campaign secretariat working on this case. Case-work refers to immediate matters of (economic, social or even physical) life and death for the affected communities/individuals. Case-work includes much more than letter writing - namely press work, stands, demonstrations, personal advocacy, fact finding, documentation etc.

Case-work is international - adopted by FIAN and entrusted with a group in a country different from the victims'. In exceptional cases it could also be territorial (adopted by a section and in the name of this section only, with actual interventions limited to the board of the section). FIAN International must be kept informed prior to sectional interventions (cf. Rome decision).

In case-work the local group carries a great responsibility: If the local FIAN group does not fortify this struggle, others will probably not do it - and if they do, they won't do it on the basis of the human right to feed oneself. FIANS job here is advocacy, not politically organizing the victims.

More details on case-work can be found in "The Art of Persistence, FIAN case-work" (orga-fact-sheet 4).

3.2 Hotline participation, local network

Local groups participate in the Special Hotline Network. Some run their own local network for the distribution of interventions.

In the context of its Special Hotline Network, the International Secretariat sends 12 hotlines per year (in English or Spanish) to each local group. It is good practice by the head of the group (who usually receives the mail) to bring these hotlines to the next group meeting – along with some copies of the proposed letter, to discuss the issue with the group and invite the members to send the letter. Even though English and Spanish might not be the language of the section – most groups have at least one person who can read one of these languages and can help the others to understand.

Besides participating themselves in hotlines and urgent actions, some groups use hotlines to build up and maintain their own local network. This will, of course, be facilitated if there is a translation of the hotlines into the local language. Even without, however, there is always a small group of people willing to read one English or Spanish letter per month and send it.

Hotlines provide an important means to build up and maintain the local network of the local group, some ten or hundred people, who offer help to victims of violations by writing a letter. Hotlines can be something like the glue of such a multipurpose network. The network (and the mailing of hotlines in the network)

serves various purposes:

1. Generating more protest letters.

It is good when several group members send a hotline. It is better when you also have a local network of addresses who promise to participate as well.

2. Getting the message of FIAN across to an increasing number of people.

Every hotline when channelled through your local network concerns a violation of the right to feed oneself threatening people with hunger and malnutrition. The demands in its sample letter and the analysis in the background exemplify the message FIAN.

3. Getting new addresses for events of your group.

People who participate in your hotline network can be invited to your information evenings, your parties, your fund raising concerts.

4. Recruiting new FIAN members.

People who participate for a while in the hotlines of your network develop a knowledge about FIAN and some commitment to our cause. After some time you can ask them to become FIAN members.

5. Getting people interested in cooperating with your group.

Once they are members and want to do some work with a local group it should be natural that they will cooperate with your group and/or perhaps later on found their own group which will make your local presence even stronger.

6. Using addresses for local fund raising.

Participants in your local network are more inclined to support FIAN financially, as they know what it is all about. That should at least cover possible expenses for the local hotline network, but will raise much more.

7. Keeping people in touch with your group as they get approached regularly with a hotline.

Hotlines in your local network need not be mailed but can be handed over in person. Hotlines can be pinned at different bill boards with lists of addresses to be filled in by people interested in future participation. Your local group (or its members) can carry a hotline to different events to get people involved. Groups can put up stands at suitable events to provide the opportunity to sign prepared hotline letters. At this occasion some groups have the envelop already prepared, and sell the stamps and (at that occasion) normally get some donations as well.

3.3 Local research and monitoring

Local groups carry out local research and monitoring in cooperation with their section and/or FIAN international. If there is a violation of the right to feed oneself in the local environment of the group into

which FIAN should intervene, local groups can be crucial in collecting information, in alarming the section and perhaps the IS and in monitoring the situation.

Research means investigating individual cases where

(a) the access to food resources gets destroyed and malnutrition is therefore imminent or
(b) persons are kept in a situation of vulnerability for malnutrition. If these acts are violations of the right to feed oneself, then the section/group could suggest this to FIAN International for intervention/adoption.

Monitoring means to accompany local cases where FIAN international had intervened, including in particular situations that were adopted by FIAN as case-work.

Intervention requires sound information produced by research: Research is one of the most subtle areas of FIAN work. Intervention can be counterproductive both for the victims in the case at hand, as much as for FIAN, if there are severe errors in the information base, leading to a wrong assessment.

Most research ends up in one way or the other on the respective regional desk in the IS. The sources of information vary. It is rarely the victims themselves, more often it is their support groups, the organisations of peasants, indigenous people etc. Sometimes it is journalists, church people, volunteers in development cooperation, other NGOs. It is often through these intermediaries that information on violations reaches a FIAN-group, a section or the IS.

FIAN sections and FIAN groups are important actors when it comes to identifying, researching and monitoring violations in their territory. Groups which are interested in research and the identification of violations would benefit from a "Violations Analysis Training (VAT)" offered by the IS or the sections. It is part of FIAN's human rights training and puts groups in a position to investigate a situation at hand and see whether this case involves a violation and could fall into the mandate of FIAN.

The processing of information for intervention is done on the basis of a clearance sheet available from your section or the IS. There is growing awareness about FIAN and there are growing demands made on FIAN for intervention. So there are always several interventions in the pipeline. The better you have prepared your information for intervention, the bigger will be the chances that it can be readily taken up. You should consider sending the completed clearance sheet. Even more could be gained, if you processed your information already as something like a draft hotline. As part of its human rights education programme the IS offers training how to do just that. Such skills are valuable for you and your group indeed, as it will allow FIAN to act quickly on the case that you have researched.

What needs to be checked before the IS can submit a case to the IEC for clearance? This depends on the type of intervention envisaged for this case. In any event, the IS will see, whether the victims themselves want some international intervention. Moreover it will double-check the information presented on the basis of information accumulated at the regional desks of the IS and of other research contacts in the region.

More details on FIAN research and interventions can be found in “The Art of Persistence, FIAN case-work” (orga-fact-sheet 4).

3.4 Participation in campaign and lobby work

Groups are a local stronghold of the international and national campaign and lobby work: They make the issue known, provide local press work, lobby for the campaign demands with local or national politicians. They also generate capacity for demonstrations or other public events, by mobilizing their local social environment.

The policy frameworks and programmes as well as the legal implementation of the human right to food are important conditions for interventions against violations of the right to feed oneself. To understand their importance, however, requires some experience with violations and interventions, and hence it needs considerable input. Lobbying on topics like Optional Protocol, Code of Conduct, parallel reporting, is not necessarily very attractive for a wider public. It is mainly dealt with by the “professional” lobbyists of FIAN. On the other hand, these topics do offer opportunities for groups to participate – for example by approaching their local parliamentarians or candidates for election. Groups would normally be requested by the national or international secretariats to participate in such specific activities.

There is currently only one international campaign: “Food, Land and Freedom”, the global campaign for agrarian reform, carried out jointly with La Via Campesina, the global peasant coalition. A campaign combines different working methods such as lobby, case-work and hotlines, media-work etc. around a certain topic affecting the implementation of the right to food. The topic can be used to draw attention to related violations of the human right to food and/or to try to get implementing legislation in place.

Nationally, some sections have been carrying out campaigns that highlighted the situation in the flower industry (minimum wages) and in cyanide gold mining (land evictions and eco-destruction).

Usually, success in these fields is harder to obtain than in the field of interventions (and hence the level of frustration is higher) - but once obtained, such success can be beneficial to a large number of people - by advancing new tools for the right to food which can be used in future in very different contexts.

3.5 Human Rights Education

Local Human Rights Education activities.

Groups can bring the message of food as a human right to others in their local environment and train themselves and others on economic and social human rights. The most important thing that people have to learn about violations of the human right to food is to recognize a violation when they see it: First of all people have to regain (or defend) their emotional sensitivity to oppressive situations in the economic and social fields. In this sense getting across FIAN's message of the human right to feed oneself is the top priority in all of FIANs work: Participation in Hotlines and Case-work depends on the question whether this message has been understood - and is by itself a means to understand FIANs message and get it across.

Human rights education deepens this message: People should also be able to tell which state obligation was breached and (as the case may be) which crime against human rights was committed by a third party. This is best done on the basis of experience at least from interventions (if not also from campaigns).

Human rights and human rights education are an instrument for FIAN to better help deprived and suffering people. Participation in their struggles in turn is a crucial ingredient for any human rights education worth its name.

Get the message of FIAN across: The right to feed oneself is a human right, and that states (individually and as an international community) are obliged to implement it for each and every person. They have the states obligations to respect, protect and fulfil appropriate access to adequate food. A breach of such an obligation constitutes a violation of the human right to food.

In human rights education and training it is helpful to deal with examples of local violations of the human right to feed oneself. In this context the local group may be seen as something like a "grievance group". It may be expected to provide counselling for the victims and their supporters, but it does not organize them. Its function as a grievance group may however trigger local research and monitoring and in this way support a possible intervention of FIAN as an international organization.

Local activities in this field could include course work in the class-room style. A local FIAN group can also be promotional in getting right to food education into the class-rooms of formal education in local high-schools or colleges.

Finally there are a lot of local educational and promotional activities to get FIANs message across outside the class-room situation:

The local group should have FIAN-members in local CBOs, NGOs and other organizations of civil society. These members should be able to make human rights and in particular the human rights to feed oneself a point of reference in their organizations. Moreover concerts, literature events, religious services - all offer possibilities to advance the culture of human rights. The culture of human rights is a deeply spirited and joyful culture. This should also show in the life of a local FIAN group. FIAN people and local FIAN groups are attractive.

3.6 Media work

Media work is a specific means of getting the message of FIAN across.

Important in media work is a long term personal relationship with journalists and/or people on the editorial board. This is something that groups can do with their local media – if they have the capacity, for example

a “press officer”. The local media will find it difficult to transport international news unless it is linked to local news. Activities of a local FIAN group are of course local news and the local group can create a local event (for example around a campaign, a case-work or a hotline) which is then covered by the press. Groups should be careful to prepare a little article themselves, which journalists can draw from if they like. Articles which appeared in the media can in turn be used in advocacy work with respective national embassies or others involved.

A different type of media work is “letters to the editors” by a local group: A section may choose to target a few major national newspapers or magazines with such letters in situations where a FIAN comment would be useful or even necessary. The section would distribute the addresses of such newspapers among a number of groups (one newspaper per group) together with the request to have a close look at the newspaper for opportunities to comment news items in order to promote the human right to feed oneself. This tool, however, should be used with care and sparingly.

3.7. Expanding FIAN

FIAN has a great vision and mission. It offers a wonderful opportunity to right what is wrong. FIAN’s vision needs hands, hearts and minds to become a reality. Part of the mission of local groups is therefore to look out for new FIAN members. Local groups are perhaps more suitable than others to encourage new people to become members. New members are best recruited on a personal base. It is your own example, your commitment and your experience with FIAN that can best convince others that FIAN is their organization. Together with your friends in your local group – and with the help of your section – your group can carry out local membership drives on a very individual and straightforward way. New FIAN members in your area need not become members of your local group. They can participate in different ways, for example through the special hotline network. And even if they just let themselves be counted for FIAN and talk about the human right to food and FIAN – and pay their membership fee – this will already be a valuable contribution.

Your group should always have sufficient FIAN material (including FIAN leaflets) available from your section or the IS in order to provide people with information on FIAN. In all your events pass around lists to collect addresses – for your local network, participation in hotlines or for ordering the FIAN magazine HUNGRY for what is right. And, of course, you should have membership forms available so that people can easily become members.

3.8 Local fundraising

Local groups sometimes hesitate to go out on a fund raising drive. Without funds, however, FIAN cannot operate. Even if your section can get some funds from funding agencies, these funds are tied to specific projects, and therefore they limit FIANs freedom to operate. Your section needs reserves to operate with financial security. Such reserves can only come from membership fees and donations.

In terms of its activities as well – FIAN must not depend on project funds, and hence the policies of funding agencies. For the sake of political independence FIAN must be owned by its members: The volume of funds generated by a section's members and by a wide and diverse basis of smaller individual donors are important indicators for the strength of your section. It shows how well you got the FIAN message across.

FIAN cannot compete with the glossy brochures of professional fund raisers and with the marketing experts hired by the big organizations. Instead FIAN must rely on its local groups and members and how they can convince prospective donors by their personal example that FIAN is a worthy case to give for. It should not be too difficult to convince people that FIAN work needs funds, as the old Chinese proverb is obviously insufficient: It neither enough to give a hungry person a fish, nor to teach her how to catch fish: as it says: people also need their part of the fishing grounds to catch fish. And this means standing up against vested interests trying to make profits from the fishing grounds and excluding others. Many people whom you talk to will understand this, and will support our mission – and they will also understand that such work needs to be funded.

Fund raising can be fun. It can become a natural part of many of your group's activities. Fund raising and events of the human rights culture go together well (such as charity concerts) and can also provide a good opportunity to address the local public and make the issues of FIAN known to people. For this matter, groups need good material to present FIAN - and groups need to build a good local name and local trustworthiness.

4. Why are local groups important?

- **Local groups give individual members a social fixed point to strengthen** their human rights convictions and activities in an environment of mammonist ideology, cynicism or simple apathy and resignation.
This is the first reason why groups are important. They keep people active with FIAN even if in their social environment (family, job, friends, TV) FIAN is not present and hence people are rather distracted from the issues and organisation of FIAN.
- **Local groups create a (voluntary) capacity** to act. Individual members alone are usually not as strong as in a group. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. In hostile environments an organisation based on voluntary groups cannot be so easily controlled or destroyed than one based on a secretariat.
- **Local groups provide leadership training.** In this capacity they allow members to grow. They bridge the gap between the individual members and the board. Local groups produce new persons for the board: Without local groups the continuous and necessary change of "generations" inside the section will be more difficult as new leaders have no space to develop and gain experience outside the board (in a local environment). (see Annex 2: How to build leadership)

- **Local groups directly and indirectly stimulate local donations.** Fund Raising is one of the tasks of groups: People rather give money to organisations where they know people personally who stand for this organisation and who carry out local activities. Even in fund raising drives that do not directly involve your local group (but are managed by your section's secretariat), experience shows that donations to sections are more likely to come from areas with local groups.
- **Local groups attract new members and donations.** Experience shows that the growth in membership in an area (as the growth in donations from that area) is bigger, if a group exists in this area.
- **FIAN groups are new and independent entities without loyalty to anybody except their section.** Many members of FIAN are also members of other organisations. The local group, however, is not a separate organisation or the local group of another organisation (even if all are individual FIAN members). Local groups must be accepted as such by the respective national boards. These boards must be very careful whom accept as a group.

5. How to run a local group?

5.1 Founding a local group

If you want to found a group you need at least three individual FIAN members and you have to write a letter to the secretariat of your section carrying three (or more) signatures of FIAN members asking to be accepted as a local group. If no such section exists in your country, you can address this letter to the International Executive Committee c/o FIAN International Secretariat, P.O.Box 102243, 69012 Heidelberg, Germany). Local groups in territories with a FIAN section will normally not be accepted as affiliated groups with the IS. FIAN will then get in touch with you. FIAN groups are accepted by decisions of the national (or international) boards. So much about the formalities.

What is more important than these formalities, however, are some practical questions:

Whom should you ask to join you in building the group? It would be good to have some working experience with your group before you apply for registration as a group. This will give you a feeling whether the "chemistry" of the group is correct. In you group you might find people from different backgrounds: You should accept your diversity as a strength for the group. It is important that each member of your group has a task, is happy with this task and is an appropriate person for this task. If the person is not appropriate

or unhappy with this task, the group should not hesitate to review its distribution of tasks. The spirit in your group should be high. Criticism is fine, as long as it is constructive and to the point. The group should try to keep everybody, but should not waste time with persons who try to show their intellectual capacity by constantly criticizing everything, thereby starting to demotivate people in the group. In such situations it is necessary to ask such persons to work constructively or otherwise leave the group.

It is important that your local group has established a working contact with your sectional secretariat or (if you want to be directly associated to FIAN international) with the IS – even before you register your group – and keep a close contact once you and your FIAN colleagues have become a group. As a local group of a section your contact point is your national secretariat in almost all questions – with the exception of specific questions related to case-work. For these questions you should be in close touch with the respective country desk in the IS.

What one person cannot do, two can. (Proverb from Latin America)
A group starts with three.

5.2 Having regular meetings

Regular meetings are a crucial part in the life of a group – even though much of the work will need to be done outside and between meetings. Regular meetings could be weekly, biweekly or monthly as the case may be. If you are a big group and have a number of subgroups operating on the different tasks mentioned above, these subgroups may have extra meetings and a monthly meeting of the whole group might be sufficient.

You should be very careful with your meetings: They are much more than just the members of the group sitting together and having a good time. The quality of your group meetings determines the quality of your group. For this matter you find an annex “How to conduct a good meeting”, which relates some experience with meetings and makes a number of practical suggestions.

Local groups are important to strengthen human rights work in a possibly disinterested or even hostile society. You see yourself sometimes faced with massive misinformation or even propaganda in the media – propagating and consumist or even mammonists culture instead of a human right culture. You see that some governments nowadays just pay lip service to human rights – including the human right to food. Moreover human rights like the right to food, which can directly threaten business interests, are openly challenged by the government of the USA. Even in a seemingly conducive environment human rights concepts are under a constant threat of being watered down, of being taking hostage by legal experts, of becoming alienated from you and me who in fact are their owners. The local group is the stronghold for the full meaning of the human right to food. It is here, where the right to food is with its true owners. It is local groups such as yours, which should insist on new initiatives towards the implementation of the human right to food and which resist any watering down of the right to food.

5.3 Respecting and integrating newcomers

In order to do its work well, your group needs to be highly spirited. It should, however, not fall into the trap of becoming “exclusive”. Being a group implies that you get to know each other well and become knowledge. You should, however, not become “insiders”, developing a feeling of “we” – the group – and the rest of the world. Whether this has already happened can be clearly seen when your group is visited by a new person. This may be an important event for this person – and should be one for your group as

well. It means much more than just putting another chair. It should become a top issue on your agenda – and if this is not possible, because you have urgent business to do, you should invite the person to a different meeting. It might even be a good idea to invite a number of newcomers to a meeting that is specific for addressing their questions and for getting them to know the group: A “newcomers’ meeting”. Exposing newcomers to a normal group meeting will make this person strongly feel as an outsider and will most probably have a demotivating effect. Some group members may even use this opportunity to show how “professional” they are, how much they know. Sure – newcomers in such situations won’t say that they want more attention, that they are demotivated. Usually they are polite: “No, carry on your meeting. You have important things to do. Once I have a question, I will ask.” They will not ask. Or they will give up asking. And they will not come again.

5.4 Keeping your group fairly practical

Some aspects of group work are fairly “theoretical”, and some even require knowledge of foreign languages – such as case-work. Others, however, are fairly practical – even to the effect of using your hand instead of your mind, your mouth or your pen. It will be excellent to have group members who can build a stand from ply-wood, who can provide banners for the local group, or mend an exhibition from photos and texts on a certain case-work, or on FIAN successful FIAN interventions. Artistic talents are very welcome: People can write FIAN songs, organize local events etc.. Please keep in mind that human rights culture not only something for your mind, but primarily something in your heart. Human rights culture is holistic – for hearts and hands.

Keep your group fairly practical. Cut people short who tend to lecture. Look for concrete events and issues. Cut short on information which is not useful for action. Keep members (and your group) from showing off their knowledge and overwhelming people. One secret of every good group is to be experts without showing it. A local group is not a place for people to find “fulfilment” and “acknowledgement”, but to get a certain job done on behalf of people victimized by violations of the human right to food.

Annex 1: How to conduct a good meeting

Meetings seem to be the simplest thing in the world: People get together and talk. Such an attitude, however, will not lead to a good meeting: Good meetings are a crucial element in the life of a FIAN group. Great care should therefore be taken to arrive at good meetings. This is not easy. People have a lot of problems having a good meeting. Many meetings don't lead to a result. People leave such meetings with frustration, having the impression that things are not moving ahead. Meetings are important not only for the message they get across, or for the decision they take, but for the relationship of its members and for the spirit of the group.

Having good meetings is important for each group. This pertains both to their internal meetings and to their external meetings and events. Holding a good meeting is not easy, but can be learnt. Here are a few points to keep in mind. People may find these rules unnecessary and formal. They are not: People will find out that their meetings will greatly improve if they follow these rules.

Each meeting must have a clear and defined objective. It should be known, what the meeting wants to achieve. This would also allow for some preparation by the participants. An agenda should be available ahead of time, if possible.

a) How a meeting develops well

1. Opening by the convener

The person who convened the meeting should say a few words about the objective of the meeting. Short and to the point. She then quickly moves to the next item.

2. Presentation of the participants

Every participant introduces herself. This is superfluous, of course, if everybody knows each other. One new person, however, should already be a sufficient reason for a general round of introduction.

3. Choosing the chairperson and the secretary

Each meeting needs to have a chairperson who presides it. Moreover meetings should have a secretary to write the minutes. Minutes should be short and to the point, carefully capturing the decisions taken.

The chairperson

- controls the topics, so that people's comments don't jump in different directions but stay focussed on the issue at hand;
- gives the word to speakers;
- coordinates the functioning of the meeting.

In a group meeting, for example, it can be good practice to take turns with chairpersons. It is good that each meeting has a different chairperson, so that people get used to this activity. Even if they feel unable to do the job. If such a practice puts a meeting at risk, it should be used with caution.

4. Clearing the agenda

The chairperson then asks for points for the agenda. The points are then ranked according to their importance. The less important points come at the end, as people will get tired in the last period of the meeting. There should be some standard points on each agenda:

In the beginning the minutes of the last meeting should be read. This brings people up-to-date with previous decisions and whether they have been implemented; then there should be a short summary of important events since the last meeting.

5. Discussing the points on the agenda.

Before opening the discussion it should be generally understood how long the meeting should last, and how much time can be devoted to the different issues. For example 10 minutes per point. Or if there are few points or one of the points is very important 30 minutes could be allotted.

In each point the chairperson should make sure that

- the discussion stays within the time limit
- that everybody is heard
- that everybody's opinion is respected.

For each task identified in the meeting the chairperson identify

- the person(s) who will do this job
- until when the job has to be done.

6. Mark a date for the next meeting

Once all topics have been dealt with, the chairperson should discuss and fix a date for the next meeting with the participants.

7. Concluding the meeting

The chairperson should not prolong the meeting at the end, for example by summarizing to do's etc, but should formally close the meeting with a few words. The chairperson should make sure that a meeting has a clear "full-stop" and does not taper out at the end with people starting to leave individually.

b. The chairperson in the meeting

Good moderation can be essential for a good meeting. Here are a few points to keep in mind:

- The chairperson must respect the time frame for each point. Concluding the meeting on time is essential. - The chairperson should see to it that tasks are distributed reasonably - to persons capable of carrying them out and in a realistic time frame.
 - The chairperson must not impose her opinion. She first listens to the opinion of the participants and then adds on her own opinion. When it comes to taking a decision, it is the opinion of the majority which is to prevail not the opinion of the chairperson.
 - The chairperson has to control the meeting. She must clearly assert herself when it comes to the form of the meeting (not the opinions expressed). The chairperson can expect the respect of the participants and can call people to order.
 - The chairperson should know the objectives and the topics of the meeting well. A person who has no idea about the issues to be discussed cannot moderate.
 - The chairperson should be careful in passing the word: She should insist that everybody gives her opinion and avoid that it is always the same people that speak and decide. The chairperson should encourage those who are most inhibited and restrain those who are talkative.
 - The chairperson must inspire the meeting, she should not be boring or take too much time.
 - The chairperson should always address the unaccomplished tasks from the last meeting.
 - The chairperson has to make sure that the discussion does not get off the topic. If this happens, she has to make the group return to the topic currently on the agenda.
 - The chairperson should not admit parallel conversations during the meeting.
- c. The participant in the meeting should
- respect the chair in order to avoid tumultuous situations;
 - assist the chairperson in watching the time and observing the agenda;
 - wait until it is her turn to speak, and never speak while others do;
 - formulate her ideas clearly without being afraid or ashamed;
 - avoid talking off the topic currently dealt with;
 - criticize issues in a constructive way to improve their functioning;
 - avoid negative criticism that will hurt people or the group without serving any purpose other than showing one's anger or intelligence;
 - strengthen the spirit of unity, motivation and commitment of the group.

Annex 2: How to build leadership

Leadership is a quality of personality: It is the quality to serve others, be respected by others, make proposals acceptable to others and be reliable in their implementation. Everybody has some leadership talents. And leadership can be learned, trained and built up. Members feel satisfied with FIAN and with themselves, if they can personally grow with the organisation. Every section, and even groups, should devote some time to the development of their human resources – help their members grow. This growth will translate into an increased impact of FIAN in pursuing its mission.

a) A leader does not boss others around

It should be clear that leadership is not vested only with “the leaders”. Rather than being a symbol of strength, bossing others around is rather a sign of insecure leadership and can precede the fall of a leader. As all FIAN units have to be democratic in nature, any leader can be removed at any time.

b) A leader is not a person who does everything herself

Leaders are often very committed persons, and sometimes they feel they can do a job better than the others. Even if this happens to be true, it is still important for a leader to delegate responsibilities: The reason is not only that more gets done and faster, but that other members of the group can unfold their own qualities and develop leadership. The group of a leader who does everything herself will become inefficient and runs a risk of disintegration – at the latest when the leader leaves the group.

c) A leader does not monopolize information

Some leaders who like to have big responsibilities centralize information. Even if this happens with the best of intentions, it is not a sign of good leadership. Leaders must not be persons who like to feel big. Leaders are inclusive not exclusive.

d) A leader is a person, who

- is accepted by the group and exercises collective leadership distributing responsibilities
- knows how to quickly integrate newcomers to the group and keep them involved
- distributes tasks according to the capacity of each of the group
- talks to her colleagues and motivates and encourages them
- passes on information received
- organizes the group around an objective
- is clear in her mind
- has sound human rights knowledge and knows how to apply it in reality
- is aware of political debates affecting the right to food
- does not fall into the trap of activism but knows what to do when and why.

e) There are two ways to act

- The approach of the “piecemaker”:
Always doing the same things as quickly as possible, not asking why. Trying to do everything to show how committed she and how hard she can work. Such an approach is not very smart and lacks direction.
- The “intelligent” approach:
A person using this approach reflects everything she does. She does not only think in the service she can render, but asks what is behind. She knows why she is doing things and what she wants to achieve. It is from this approach that the true leaders will come about.

f) There are three basic conditions for a person to be acknowledged as a leader:

- Acceptance
Acceptance derives from the confidence of the group. A leader is a person who can make a group feel confident. She is not a careerist. She understands the people of the group.
- Communication
A leader knows how to communicate, how to make herself understood. This means that she respects and takes into account the different levels of understanding within her group. She does not marginalise anybody, nor does she permit that anybody be marginalised.
- Capacity to coordinate
Coordinating a group or an action union must not mean authoritarianism. It is the seriousness in dealing with the issues at hand which will lead to a good result. A group where everybody talks at the same time will not function.

Annex 3 Elements of a Human Rights Analysis for the Right to Food

The following case by case distinctions are meant for discussion in Violations' Analysis Training (VATs) of FIAN. The target group for such VATs are researchers and activists familiar with human rights concepts. The best preparation for such training and violations' analysis is a thorough study of human rights as developed for example in the human rights textbook "FOOD AND FREEDOM", that is referred to at different points below.

Many violations of human rights are quite simple and straightforward. Other violations are more subtle, but not necessarily less important. On the other hand, states deserve a fair deal, if human rights are to be taken seriously.

What do we have to do in order to discover a violation of an economic, social or cultural right? As human rights violations are defined as breaches of related states' obligations our human rights analysis basically has to be an analysis of states' obligations.

For the human right to food we suggest the following step by step analysis of a case in order to come to a judgement. Other human rights can be dealt with similarly.

A. IS THERE A SITUATION OF DEPRIVATION?

The starting point for a human rights analysis is a SITUATION of threatening or existing deprivation under the human rights standard in question: A person or a group of persons in a certain situation lacks access to food or may lose access to food.

Sometimes, breaches of states obligations involved in this situation may be obvious. Such breaches should then be named and used to come to the judgement that this situation is in fact a CASE OF VIOLATION of the human right to food.

In other situations, it may not be clear if there were any incumbent obligations breached. In this case we would have to go through a more detailed analysis:

1. Check the human rights standard in the given situation:
Is there (a threat of) deprivation? Are people threatened by or suffering from starvation or malnutrition.

The first step is to look at the respective human rights standard. For the right to food that human rights standard is access to food. The absence of (or a severe threat to) this standard may trigger the following investigation of related states obligations. There may be evidence of hunger or malnutrition - the absence of access to adequate food. What we want to find out is whether there has there been a violation of the right to food as well.

For this matter we have to ask a second question:

B. IS THE DEPRIVATION AN IMMEDIATE RESULT OF MAN-MADE DESTRUCTION?

2. Is there a recent (man-made) destruction of the human rights standard that causes the current (threat of) deprivation?
If yes, continue with 3, if no go to 8.

The second step is to ask: Why are these people starving?

Has there been some immediate action that is directly responsible for starvation? Have these people been driven from their land by police? Have they been deprived by landlords of their land or water or harvest. You can consult the list given in 13a of FOOD AND FREEDOM in order to find out such destructive activities.

3. If yes, what was the role of states authorities in this destruction? Did the state itself destroy the human rights standard?
If yes, continue with 4, if no go to 5.
4. If state authorities themselves destroyed people's access to food, this (act of destruction) is **a breach of a respect-bound obligation and therefore a violation of the human right to food.**
5. If the destruction was by a third party, you have to ask:
 Was the State or any particular state authority in a position to meet its protection-bound obligation to prevent this destruction?
If yes, continue with 6, if no go to 7.
6. If this was the case, the failure of the state to protect is **a breach of a protection-bound obligation and hence a violation of the right to food.**
7. If the state was not in a position to prevent this destruction for lack of resources and infrastructure this situation does not involve a violation of the right to food. It is, however, **a crime against the human right to food** committed by the destructive third party: This is obvious, if there is a law implementing the states' obligation to protect access to food by making such destructive acts punishable. Every state implementing the human right to food properly would have such laws. If there are no such laws, the state fails to implement the right to food (hence violating this right). The destructive act of the third party is still a crime - not against human rights law, which the violating state failed to establish but against human rights (as these do exist independent of recognition or implementation by states).

C. ARE STATES KEEPING PEOPLE IN DEPRIVATION?

8. If the situation of deprivation is not the result of a (recent) human act destroying the human rights standard, we have to ask: Are there employment programmes or social transfer programmes in force that address this situation?
If yes, continue you with 9, if no go to 13.
9. Did the deprived persons try to access these programmes?
If not, continue with 10, if yes go to 13
10. Did the deprived persons did not try to access these programmes, because they did not know them, because they considered them unacceptable, or because they felt comfortable with their situation of deprivation.
In the third case continue with 11, in the second case go to 12, in the first case go to 13.
11. If people feel satisfied with their situation and do not make use of existing and acceptable programmes to overcome their situation, this situation does not involve a violation of the human right to food.
12. If people find such a programme unacceptable, there is a need to determine whether the programme is indeed unacceptable, or whether people are not sufficiently motivated to use it.
In the first case continue with 13, in the second case go to 11.
13. There are three types of program failures:
If people don't access such programmes, because these programmes have not been made reasonably known to them, we can talk about a failure of promotion.
If people don't access such programmes because they consider them unacceptable for valid reasons, this is a fundamental failure of the programme.
If the programme was accessed (or tried to access), but failed to fulfill access to food due to grossly inadequate implementation of the programme we can talk about a failure of implementation.
In all these cases we have to ask, whether such failure was due to lack of infrastructure of the state / community of states.
If this was not the case, continue with 14, if yes, go to 15.
14. If the state/community of states was endowed with sufficient resources and infrastructure to properly establish, promote and implement acceptable fulfilment programmes, but failed to do so, this failure is a **breach of a fulfilment-bound obligation and hence a violation of the human right to food.** FOOD AND FREEDOM gives in section 13b a list of such breaches of fulfilment-bound obligations.
15. In a situation of absence or failures of programmes due to lack of resources or infrastructure, although used to the maximum, the situation cannot be considered a case of violation of the human right to food.

Conclusions

Along these lines you may be able to identify a breach of an obligation under the right to food and identify the responsible authority or person. On the basis of sufficient evidence, this is not difficult, in particular after having studied the states obligations under the human right to food.

Even the question of “availability of resources” in 14 has for many practical purposes a straightforward reply to the affirmative.

You should keep in mind that the burden of proof for lack of funds is on the states. According to international law states with widespread hunger and malnutrition are *prima facie* seen in violation of the right to food: This shows that it can be taken for granted that there are sufficient resources – at least until the state proves the contrary.

States may have good grounds to prove their inability. This is, when matters get tricky, and you should probably get in touch with your section or the IS in order to discuss how to proceed.

Annex 4 Clearance sheet

Clearance Sheet for FIAN interventions in conflicts (cases, ua, IS intervention)

Send by mail to the International Secretariate of FIAN, P.O.Box 10 22 43, 69012 Heidelberg,
Germany or to FAX +49-6221-830545

1. Address of group or person proposing this case:
2. Country and exact location of case: District, Town or Village
3. Description of case (Please give a short description of the events including date of events. If there were several incidents, please indicate this. If there is a conflict, please describe the background e.g. cause and development of the conflict, political, social, economic, ethnical and legal aspects of the situation. Please indicate the urgency of the case, be as concise as possible (Please use a separate sheet for the details.)
4. Is there a direct contact to a support group or victim group? (Please include address if possible?). Give a short description of the level and type of organisation of the local victim and/or support group in this case.
5. If there are sources of information or reference different from 4., please include address if possible.
6. Do the victims, the victim group or the respective support group(s) wish an international intervention of the FIAN type? How did they express their agreement?
7. Are women especially affected in this case? If "yes": How are they affected, and who can be contacted to give further details about their situation?
8. Is access to clean water at risk? Are water resources sufficient for maintaining people's base of existence? Are there any demands to the effect of re-establishing of water resources or compensation for damage or loss?
9. What are the demands of the victim and or support groups? Please indicate three major demands.
10. Indicate the addresses to which to target FIAN action
11. Please send copies of any documents available which may serve as proof for your information e.g. newsletter clippings or orders of courts or any other state authorities involved in the case.

Guidelines for the use of the FIAN Clearance Sheet

(see overleaf)

1. It is crucial for FIAN to know exactly with whom it can communicate in the future on this situation. FIAN must be able to rely on a stable communication net concerning the case. Give the precise address and name of the person/group proposing the situation for FIAN intervention.
2. Once again it proves essential that FIAN benefits from precise information about the location of the case. On the one hand FIAN may have already worked in the area and may have contacts there. On the other hand the credibility and the efficiency of an international intervention also depend on the ability to locate the events as precisely as possible and to give names of villages, of districts, etc.
3. As far as the third question is concerned, it is important to remain concise but precise. FIAN has to know the facts, i.e. which acts of violence have been committed for example, whether it is a matter of eviction, of destruction of resources, etc. Please explain as well to what extent the right to feed oneself is concerned and endangered. Please indicate the legal background if possible - which laws are affected, if there is a court case pending, etc...-Numbers are also important: how many families/persons are approximately affected; how much land (hectares/acres) is involved. Indicate the current nutritional and health status of the persons/community affected. Try to right up the events in chronological order.
4. Please write all information you have about the groups involved in the situation to defend the victims rights; have the victims (peasants, landless or indigenous people ...) founded a group? Do organizations, unions, NGOs support the victims? If you yourself feel unable to provide the permanent link, this is the place to suggest other groups.
5. All useful addresses you can find are welcome. FIAN is eager to get in touch with as many supporters and partners as possible. These addresses can be used to obtain further information or to follow up on the situation. Please also mention the groups with whom you do not cooperate, and indicate why?
6. It is crucial for FIAN to be sure that its intervention is welcome by the victims. Indeed FIAN refuses to act without the consent of the people directly affected by the case. The victims must be able to give their agreement and to decide for themselves if an international intervention would be useful for them or counterproductive. For instance FIAN does not want to endanger the security of the victims who are already in a serious situation. FIAN wants as well to take into consideration the demands of the victims. FIAN refuses to replace the people as actors in the case. In this view, it is essential that FIAN can be sure that the victims agree with the international intervention.

7. Women are a group that is particularly affected by human rights violations. They must be especially protected against these violations. For this reason FIAN wants to stress the situation of women in each case and give them special attention. Please indicate to what extent women rights are concerned and which person/organisation FIAN can get in touch with to act efficiently in favour of this vulnerable group in the specific situation.
8. Water is an increasingly monopolized (and destroyed) resource. Access to water is a human right in itself – and under some circumstances a part of the human right to food. If people are threatened by hunger and malnutrition and their access to water is threatened or destroyed as well, please let us know.
9. Please highlight the demands of the victims. Draw up a list of these demands so that FIAN can have a better understanding of the situation and can take these demands into account in its intervention.
10. Who should be most effectively addressed by an international intervention and lobby work? Give us the names and the complete addresses of the persons to be addressed by FIAN s intervention (President, Ministers, managing directors of a company...). Please include the fax number if possible. Don't give more than three addresses!
11. Please indicate documents that are available with you upon request and could be sent to FIAN. Make a note of those documents that you have already included with the clearance sheet.

The international intervention and its expeditious and effective implementation depend on the answers you will give. Do not forget : the more precise and complete the information, the faster FIAN can react!

Annex 5 The “FIAN Tool Kit”

Every local group should be (at all times) equipped with the some material to facilitate operation:

- Standard FIAN Folder (with membership application forms)
- Current Success Brochures
- Clearance sheet
- Orga-Fact sheet
- FIAN Presentation for Overhead
- FIAN Banner (from your section?)
- FIAN T-shirts, caps etc for sale and wear