



# Human Rights Friendly Schools

**NEWS** December 2012- January 2013

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first 2013 edition of Human Rights Friendly Schools News! This newsletter aims to share information, ideas and experiences across the International Human Rights Friendly Schools Network.

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2013!

**Launch of the My Body, My Rights Campaign on 14 February 2013!**



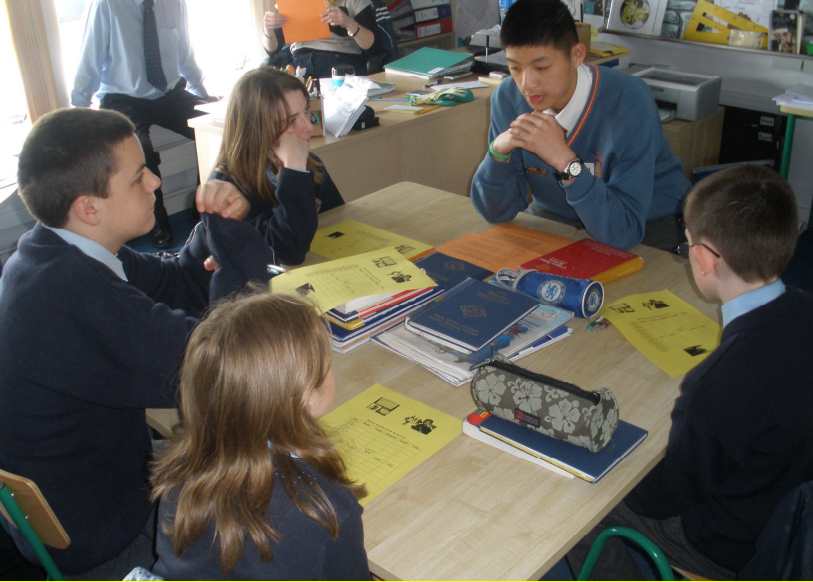
[amnesty.org/mybodymyrights](http://amnesty.org/mybodymyrights)  
[#mybodymyrights](https://twitter.com/mybodymyrights)

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



**See what Human Rights Friendly Schools can do page 7!**

## INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH WITH... Michael Flynn, teacher at Colaiste Pobail Setanta in Ireland



In Colaiste Pobail Setanta, students discuss how to integrate human rights values in every aspect of school life, Ireland, 2009 © Amnesty International

“Human Rights are a very important issue for me and as part of teaching, I feel it is our moral duty as teachers to ensure that the children in our care learn and play in a safe secure environment. So when I became a teacher it was natural for me to get involved in raising the awareness of human rights in the school I was working in. When I came to this school I wanted to embed human rights in the fabric of the college.”

“For us the biggest challenge [with the Human Rights Friendly Schools project] is getting enough time to fit everything in, as well as motivating and getting all students involved in the Amnesty Committee. However, human rights are firmly on the agenda in Colaiste Pobail Setanta and it is not seen as the remit of a few but a whole school approach involving as many people as possible.”

“[The project] allowed me to work on a different level with the children and to share some of my personal ideas round human rights with them. It has called on me to look at the subjects I teach and to investigate methodologies that would facilitate teaching Human Rights through those subjects. Sometimes issues can touch a personal note for me and need to manage how I deal with these issues in our Amnesty meeting.”

“I think it is part of our moral responsibility as educators to encourage students to step outside their own context/world and take a wider view of the world around them. This project challenges them to do just that. It helps them to make small but meaningful changes in their world that can send signals around the globe about the importance of Human Rights. In my opinion, Human Rights should remain an integral part of education for the future.”

“My advice is to start small and build on it. You know what they say ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.’ I firmly believe this and as long as you can set achievable goals in which the children can see the changes... it works!”

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”

### What has changed in your school since the project started?

I believe that the whole college has an **awareness of issues** surrounding human rights and would be able to identify Amnesty International as an organisation working for Human Rights.

The **cooperation** from students, parents and staff was phenomenal with **openness** to making mistakes and learning from mistakes at the core.

Students’ public speaking skills have developed and their **confidence is increasing** because of involvement in public speaking within and outside the school, and the quality of artwork has increased.

7-16 December 2012

Write for Rights  
Make a difference

## Human Rights Friendly Schools take action for the Letter Writing Marathon

### Czech Republic

The Human Rights Friendly School Vyšší odborná škola a Střední škola s. r. o. in Czech Republic successfully collected 60 handwritten letters for Amnesty International's 2013 Letter Writing Marathon!



The school and its Project Working Group decided to focus on four cases out of the 12 proposed by Amnesty International to ensure that everyone was well informed about each case.

'The original intention was to write letters only during the school recesses (they are 30 minutes long in our school), but the event sparked great interest among students, so we decided to allow them to write also during their lessons,' said Martin Kůs, the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project Working Group coordinator.

The whole event was organized by students mainly from the working group. There was one special classroom reserved where the Marathon took place and students could simply come to "write for human rights" whenever they wanted.

Czech Human Rights Friendly Schools students are taking action during the global Letter Writing Marathon in December 2012 © Vyšší odborná škola a Střední škola s. r. o. in Czech Republic

### Ghana

In Ghana, the Letter Writing Marathon took place in five Human Rights Friendly Schools focusing on four cases, namely: Ales Bialiatski, Belarus; Residents of Bodo, Nigeria; Gao Zhisheng, China; and, Coastei Street Families, Romania.

Al Ghana collected **4500 letters** from the schools!

Accra High School students taking part to the Letter Writing Marathon, December 2012.  
© Amnesty International Ghana



## Bermuda

To celebrate Human Rights Day in 2012, Warwick Academy, Human Rights Friendly Schools in Bermuda, organized several activities aiming at raising-awareness about human rights with the whole school community. Students participated in human rights education activities, an information evening for parents and the Letter Writing Marathon.



On an Information Evening on the Human Rights Friendly Schools project, the school working group presented the project to parents. Each participant posed with panels stating a human right, January 2013. © Amnesty International Bermuda

On 10 December 2012, Amnesty International youth group and the headmistress presented a role-play to the school community and representative of the Bermuda Human Rights Commission. The headmistress pretended to change the rules of the school, violating human rights. In response students stood up and fought for their rights.

A video introducing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was shown to the students, opening further discussion on global human rights issues and linking them to the Bermuda context. At the end of the evening, the school community presented the Human Rights Friendly Schools project and what it meant to ensure the school's rules comply with human rights.

As part of the Letter Writing Marathon, students from the primary school of Warwick Academy wrote **50 letters** to Malala Yousufzai. Since the age of 11 Malala has been an outspoken advocate of education for girls in Pakistan. She was driven to fight for this right when the Taliban took over her town and banned female education. Read Malala's blog from that time: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/7834402.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/7834402.stm)

## Morocco

In order to grow youth participation in the Letter Writing Marathon 2012, Amnesty International Morocco organized a Youth Forum inviting students from Abi Dar El Ghifari and Ibn Youssef High Schools with other youth activists.



Students of Abi Dar El Ghifari High School, taking action for the Letter Writing Marathon, December 2012 © Amnesty International Morocco

This forum was an opportunity to present the Letter Writing Marathon and provide young people with activities they could perform with their peers. As a result of this forum, students organized various activities in schools across the country, collecting **2902 signatures and 637 letters**.

In Abi Dar El Ghifari High School, Adam volunteered to collect signatures and to sign letters of support on six cases, supported by Amnesty Morocco with his entire school community. As Amnesty International's Ambassador in his school, Adam mobilized his peers to take action on several cases during school breaks, raising-awareness amongst students as well as professors and administrative staff. Adam collected **594 signatures and 94 letters!**

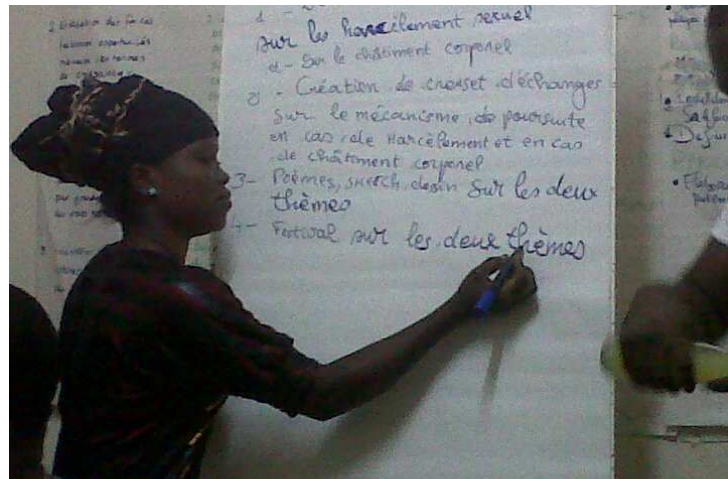
## BENIN – Tackling sexual and corporal abuses in schools

In 2013, Human Rights Friendly Schools in Benin and Amnesty International have reframed their action plan to more realistic and achievable objectives. Together they decided to work on two main issues commonly taking place in all three schools:

- Sexual harassment in schools
- Corporal punishment in schools

Schools decided to implement the following activities:

- Raising awareness about the law against sexual harassment and protection of victims in Benin through public readings and displaying the law on the school walls.
- Promoting deeper discussion amongst the schools' community through a conference.
- Integrating these topics into the school curriculum, through poems, sketches and drawings on sexual harassment.
- Ensuring the visibility in the school environment through three engravings representing essential points of the law.
- Engaging the wider community through free public events.



School members designing their Action Plan for 2013 during a workshop organised by AI Benin, January 2013 © Amnesty International Benin



AI Benin working with schools to design their Action Plan for 2013, January 2013 © Amnesty International Benin

In addition, AI Benin decided to support victims of these human rights violations in schools, by creating an alert system via phone text messages. As soon as a text alert is issued, AI Benin will guide the student to partnering NGOs in Benin, specializing in these particular issues and who will be most competent to support the school members, including the following: Women in Law for Development in Africa Benin, the Association of Women Lawyers of Benin.

Schools will also continue to be involved in Amnesty International's campaigns as they have already actively taken part during the past 3 years.

## TAKE ACTION

### My Body, My Rights Campaign

For those who are interested in involving their Human Rights Friendly Schools in the Amnesty International My Body, My Rights Campaign, please find below a brief on the Campaign and ideas on how to take action in schools. Please refer to the material listed below.

#### What is the My Body, My Rights Campaign about?

More than 358,000 women and girls die each year from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth – one every 90 seconds.

Most of these deaths could have been prevented if women had access to affordable and timely quality medical services, and if they had been empowered to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive rights. Governments have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the sexual and reproductive rights of every individual.

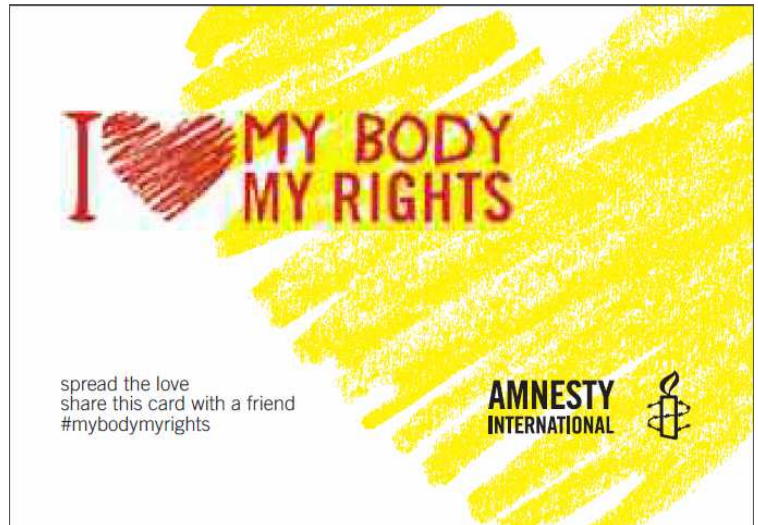
The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action recognizes reproductive rights as human rights and declares that the principles of gender equality, equity and women's empowerment are crucial to effective population and development strategies.

In 2013, regional population conferences will take place as part of the ICPD operational review (ICPD+20), which will feed into key global intergovernmental meetings in 2014.

Leading up to these conferences, we must mobilize to defend the very principle that population and development policies should be based on principles of human rights and gender equality.

For more information visit our page:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/campaigns/demand-dignity/issues/maternal-mortality>



#### What does Amnesty International want?

Our goal is to ensure that the ICPD+20 operational review endorses a comprehensive and integrated approach to sexual and reproductive rights for all in the future, based on the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination.

Measures have to be put in place to guarantee that:

- everyone is able to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights free from discrimination, coercion and violence, with particular attention to women, adolescents and young people.
- everyone is able to make free and informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives and have equal access to sexual and reproductive health information and care.

#### What can sections do with youth?

One of the key focuses of the ICPD+20 operational review are the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and young people, and their participation in the review process is crucial for its success.

Therefore, it will be important for Amnesty International's sections and structures interested to work on the ICPD+20 to involve also youth activists and young people motivated to work on sexual and reproductive rights in lobbying their governments and participating in the country and regional review processes. The IS Youth Global team can provide advice and ideas on the involvement of youth activists and put you in touch with relevant youth activists.

#### The Campaign will be launched the 14 February 2013.

All Youth Network will mobilise around the peak of activism- 'International Women's Rights Day' (8 March 2013)

For more information please refer to the AI My Body My Rights Campaign Action Circular ACT 35/007/2012:

<https://intranet.amnesty.org/isearch/secure/Index.do>

## What can Human Rights Friendly Schools do?



Young people in Nicaragua take action on the Day for the Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean, September, 2011 © Amnesty International

### The objectives for young people can be as follows:

- 1/ Learn about their Sexual and Reproductive Rights;
- 2/ Sign Amnesty International's petition addressing governments who are gathering at the Human Rights Forum in Den Haag in April and share it with their friends;
- 3/ Engage in awareness raising activities about Sexual and Reproductive Rights as human rights among their friends and peers.
- 4/ Create a space for young people to express their opinions, share ideas on ways to promote and defend their rights.



With the My Body, My Rights Campaign, schools can...

... **Talk about Sexual and Reproductive Rights in classrooms.** Sexual and Reproductive Rights can be a difficult topic to approach in certain contexts; however the debate is crucial and can be integrated in different subjects, for example:

- **Geography:** Discuss demography and access to health and medical services in different regions of the world.
- **Life sciences biology:** Understanding HIV transmission, pregnancy and reproductive health for example.
- **Citizenship:** Discuss the role of the State in informing about and providing sexual and reproductive health services to individuals.

... **Organise an event** to raise awareness in your school and involve the whole school community. The school can ask someone from AI to talk about Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and explain why this affects everybody in the community. The school community can also organise workshops to break taboos around Sexual and Reproductive Rights.



**On 14 February, add your voice with other young people around the world!**

Explore challenges and engage on Sexual and Reproductive Rights on Amnesty International's interactive platform for young people, a new challenge will be launched on 14 February 2013.

Visit [www.respectmyrights.org](http://www.respectmyrights.org)

**RESPECT**  
**MY RIGHTS**

### AI USEFUL CAMPAIGNS MATERIALS

Women's lives, women's rights <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT35/001/2012/en>

Realizing sexual and reproductive rights: A human rights framework

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT35/006/2012/en>

Maternal mortality – Suitcases of evidence from around the world

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/campaigns/demand-dignity/issues/maternal-mortality/rights-journey/evidence/maternal-mortality>

# Breaking News!

The Human Rights Friendly Schools project is presented in Amnesty International Human Rights Magazine, *the Wire*, issue January-February 2013.

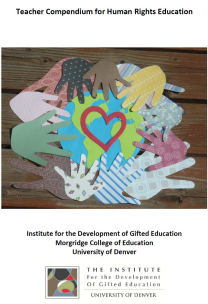
Read Ayoub's interview about his experience with the Human Rights Friendly Schools project implemented by Ibn Youssef High School since 2009 in Morocco.

The article is available here in English, pages 12-13 of the Wire: [http://www.amnesty.org/sites/impact.amnesty.org/files/Wire\\_JanFeb13\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/sites/impact.amnesty.org/files/Wire_JanFeb13_web_final.pdf)



# Materials of the Month

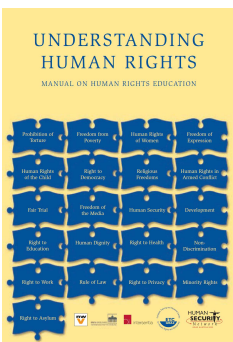
## Institute for the Development of Gifted Education \_ Teacher Compendium for Human Rights Education \_ English



The purpose of the Teacher Compendium for Human Rights Education is to develop a heightened awareness and understanding of a range of human rights issues.

To access the Compendium, click on the link [http://www.du.edu/idge/media/documents/Teacher\\_Compendium.pdf](http://www.du.edu/idge/media/documents/Teacher_Compendium.pdf)

## European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy \_ Understanding Human Rights- Manual of Human Rights Education, 2012 third edition \_ English



Revised and updated in 2012 the manual was also extended by three new modules on the right to asylum, minority rights and the right to privacy.

To access the manual, click on the link [http://www.manual.etc-graz.at/typo3/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ETC-Hauptseite/manual/versionen/english\\_3rd\\_edition/Manual\\_2012\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.manual.etc-graz.at/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/ETC-Hauptseite/manual/versionen/english_3rd_edition/Manual_2012_FINAL.pdf)

Previous versions available in 15 languages here: <http://www.manual.etc-graz.at/typo3/index.php?id=704#c1489>

If you would like to **share your experiences** of the Human Rights Friendly Schools project or **news from your section** related to the project, please contact the IS HRE team ([HumanRightsFriendlySchools@amnesty.org](mailto:HumanRightsFriendlySchools@amnesty.org)) no later than **20 March 2013**, if you wish your entry to be published in the next edition of the Human Rights Friendly Schools News.