

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN NON-FORMAL SETTINGS

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAMME

WHAT IS THE RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAMME?

The Rights Education Action Programme (REAP) is a 10 year-long international human rights education initiative led by Amnesty International Norway. REAP is implemented by Amnesty International in Israel, Malaysia, Moldova, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey. After assessing local needs, REAP project partners select specific human rights topics relevant to their target groups and to the human rights context of the country. At the core of REAP is the training of human rights education “multipliers” – individuals who, through their roles or positions in society, are able to influence a larger audience or groups of people. Through REAP, project partners create positive human rights impacts and contribute to Amnesty International’s aim to build a human rights culture worldwide.

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Amnesty International’s human rights education initiatives aim to empower individuals and communities through



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Human rights advocates gather in support of Amnesty International’s 16 Days of Activism in Cape Town, South Africa, to promote the Stop Violence Against Women campaign.

fostering knowledge and skills consistent with internationally recognized human rights principles. These goals are often facilitated through human rights education outside the classroom. In these non-formal settings such as community groups, youth groups and local forums, REAP informs people about their rights and the rights of others, and works to empower individuals to stand up for those rights. These seeds of

social change are made possible through invaluable partnerships with national and local organizations, and by harnessing activism through the mobilization of youth. Through human rights education, REAP participants acquire the tools to become human rights advocates for themselves and their communities.





‘In most communities people are now aware of their rights and responsibilities and they are reporting cases and breaking the silence.’

REAP project partner, South Africa

INCREASING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Local partners are key to the success of REAP. As part of REAP initiatives at the national level, Amnesty International has established strong partnerships with NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). These collaborations increase the capacity of all partners to deliver human rights education and advocacy. In-country partners identify REAP as a positive influence on their human rights education and awareness-raising activities. In turn, these partnerships have strengthened Amnesty International’s human rights impact at the grassroots level.

Through working with NGOs and CBOs, REAP empowers individuals to stand up for their rights and to work towards protecting the rights of others. Amnesty International South Africa has achieved considerable success through collaborations with CBOs in particular, running training workshops, human rights education-related campaigns, and health talks in rural clinics. REAP

multipliers work to protect women’s rights and provide education on HIV and AIDS issues by reaching out to victims of domestic violence, pregnant women and teenagers. For example, REAP partner Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) in Limpopo works towards creating an attitude of zero tolerance to abuse and gender discrimination.

Amnesty International Malaysia has also achieved successes by partnering with NGOs and CBOs to develop training and methodologies for human rights education. All collaborating partners hold an annual meeting to review their national human rights education initiatives to learn from each others’ best practices. REAP partners in Malaysia run training sessions on specific human rights themes, such as the Centre of Independent Journalism’s freedom of information workshop, and Suara Rakyat Malaysia’s (SUARAM, Voice of the Malaysian People) “know your rights when you are arrested” training. REAP’s presence in Malaysia has created lasting partnerships that allow multipliers to disseminate their work accurately and effectively.

'I've observed that some of the participants have organized their community for collective action... some participants have been able to vocalize their concerns.'

REAP project partner, Malaysia



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Above: Demonstrators in Malaysia call for the right to a fair trial and the release of people detained under the Internal Security Act.

Left opposite: Young activists in Thailand hold a candle-lit vigil.

MOBILIZING YOUTH THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Amnesty International is fostering a new generation of individuals who stand up for human rights by supporting and collaborating with youth groups. REAP partners use education in support of human rights initiatives by organizing events and training with youth clubs. Amnesty International Thailand holds field trips for young people to learn about human rights, organizes activism camps which teach the fundamentals of human rights, as well as running sessions that feature the personal stories of people who face human rights violations. Amnesty International Thailand also runs courses for young human rights activists to promote creative thinking and development of fundraising skills. REAP work in Thailand has helped develop leadership skills for youth in Amnesty International and represents a major step forward in empowering young people in Thailand to support their rights and work towards change in their communities.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT LEAD TO SOCIAL CHANGE

Human rights education is key to achieving social change. REAP improves human rights conditions by empowering individuals to stand up for their rights. In South Africa, REAP has enabled people to understand and to become active participants in the realization of their human rights, specifically in relation to women's rights, the rights of the child, and rights of people living with HIV and AIDS. As a result, individuals are more frequently reporting incidences of abuse in their communities.

In Malaysia, women's rights issues has been a particular focus of REAP's work. Since becoming involved in REAP programmes, women are standing up to abuse from their partners, and parents are making the decision to send their daughters to school. Communities have also become empowered to voice concerns collectively. In Malaysia, communities now recognize that they have a right to file a complaint with local councils about the lack of basic

amenities and housing issues. REAP has helped turn silence into action.

'Where I live, I know something's wrong when I see it, but Amnesty International's workshops give me the knowledge I need to know to act on that.'

REAP project partner, Thailand

'Amnesty International changed my life completely. I discovered that there were skills I could acquire, material I could use, but more importantly how I could help vulnerable groups more effectively. I found that there was a lot more I could do for others and a lot I could share.'

REAP project partner, Malaysia

'Now I am working with children of the community and making them aware of HIV/AIDS, doing education and home visits.'

REAP project partner, South Africa



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REAP participants attend a rally outside the Zimbabwean embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, in support of human rights defenders in Zimbabwe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REAP

- Remember that human rights education is a long-term approach.

Human rights education aims to foster a change in attitudes as well as in knowledge and skills. Don't expect results overnight; as a process it takes time, but yields lasting results.

- Find local organizations with similar goals and objectives, and collaborate to reach out to broad-based communities.

Where civil society organizations with diverse practices collaborate for human rights education, increased numbers of people have access to, and take action for, the promotion and protection of human rights. Together, Amnesty International and its local partners can develop the content of their work to reach wider audiences.

- Engage young people in meaningful ways. Young people can add enthusiasm and effort to campaigns and can be powerful human rights activists for change.

Young people have an important role to play in creating social change. Youth is a key target group for growing leadership skills, increasing activism and developing a human rights culture.

- Adapt Amnesty International global strategies to local needs and contexts to ensure relevance and achieve sustainable results.

In non-formal settings, human rights education methodologies can be effectively adapted to address local human rights concerns and to reflect the priorities of people and their communities.

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Amnesty International is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion – funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

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