

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION ENGAGING NEW TARGET GROUPS

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.

REACHING NEW TARGET GROUPS

Human rights education can be a highly effective way to engage individuals and groups with human rights issues. By reaching audiences that have not had



previous involvement with the organization or exposure to human rights issues, Amnesty International has begun to change how people think about their rights and those of others through human rights education. For example, Amnesty International Slovenia and Amnesty International Israel have both made significant progress in their work with marginalized communities. In Turkey, REAP worked with faith groups and religious authorities; in Morocco, REAP has implemented a programme which engages

Amnesty International Morocco members demonstrate in Rabat on the eve of International Women’s Day in 2008.

law enforcement officials. Common to all of these efforts is the advantage of working with project partners, from local community-based organizations to government authorities. By working together to raise awareness and address human rights concerns through informed action, REAP projects have changed attitudes and lives.





'It is very important when we talk in our workshops that we all have rights, but then on the other side we have obligations as well... what is really important is that young people start to lead these human rights... they show that they care for each other, they start to respect each other, and they started even to understand the Roma situation in Slovenia.'

Simona Kemperle, Amnesty International Slovenia

'I became more aware of the importance of helping people if they are in trouble – that we're all equal and that nobody's human rights are worth less than mine.'

REAP project participant, Slovenia

WORKING WITH MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

REAP projects address local needs and human rights concerns. In Slovenia, REAP work has reached marginalized communities by working with youth on discrimination against Roma people and on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. Every year in Slovenia, more than 100 REAP workshops are run, training more than 2,000 individuals in human rights issues and raising awareness. Workshops take the form of weekend human rights seminars, or one-day training sessions on how to involve youth in campaigning and activism camps. To support the work of these young multipliers, REAP has produced human rights publications aimed at children such as *Jagoda*, a picture book describing the culture and everyday lives of Roma children, a project developed in close co-operation with Roma children and with the Roma organization *Drustvo Zaveznikov Mehkega Pristanka* (Society of Allies for Soft Landing).

Amnesty International youth summer camp participants in Ljubljana, Slovenia, demonstrate against torture in Tunisia.

In Israel, REAP works on women's, children's and refugee rights and also on human rights issues regarding trafficking in human beings. Amnesty International Israel has engaged with local issues, including addressing discrimination against Bedouin people. As a result, a project partner, the New Israel Fund's Empowerment and Training Centre, now runs a new course, "Human Rights for Bedouin Social Activists". REAP's work in Israel has begun to change behaviour, attitudes and beliefs, to reduce discrimination, foster respect and promote a peaceful co-existence.

'It was a very significant moment when the Presidency of Religious Affairs announced that violence against women is against Islam. It was a huge moment for all of us, because we were working with Muslim religious officials for two years, and during those sessions we had the chance to talk about all of those issues... they were so open and motivating, and they want to be a part of the global human rights movement.'

Murat Çekiç, Amnesty International Turkey



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An information and campaigning stall set up as part of Amnesty International Turkey's bus tour action to promote the Stop Violence Against Women campaign.

WORKING WITH FAITH GROUPS AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES

Through REAP initiatives, more than 215 religious group leaders have been successfully trained as human rights multipliers. For example, a long-term project to train imams as multipliers has had a significant impact within religious communities in Turkey. Amnesty International staff and volunteers run two-day basic training courses for religious officials on how to integrate respect for human rights, and specifically women's rights, within faith communities. Trainers use learning modules for human rights education, among them Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women (SVAW) toolkits. This is a big step forward in promoting the idea of universal human rights to the wider community in Turkey. Amnesty International Turkey cites one of its best successes as the condemnation of violence against women by the Presidency of Religious Affairs – a direct result of REAP training.

REAP's methodology encourages exchange visits between Amnesty International sections to compare work and exchange views. For example, Amnesty International Morocco visited Turkey in 2007 to observe REAP work and training sessions. Through witnessing the work REAP was carrying out with imams, Amnesty International Morocco realized the potential of reaching religious authorities as multipliers.

WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

Working together with Penal Reform International, Amnesty International Morocco has had a positive effect on human rights through the training of multipliers in law enforcement. REAP work with this target group focuses on training for law enforcement personnel. The project began by qualifying 40 trainers of the General Delegation of the Penitentiary and Reinsertion Administration of Morocco on the issue of international human rights law

enforcement in the local context. Since then, prison conditions have improved and prisons are more open to family visits and visits by staff of local NGOs. REAP project partners in Morocco also helped authorities to create a programme integrating human rights principles and standards into law enforcement personnel training.

'One of the best successes is the willingness to be active for other people's rights. It is not only the understanding of what are human rights, and the notion that it is important, but also the notion that we can do something about it.'

Danit Shaham, Amnesty International Israel

‘Amnesty International contributed to changing the organization’s image among Moroccan authorities. From a hostile attitude, Moroccan authorities have come to cooperate with Amnesty International as a reliable and credible partner. This was illustrated by the audience H.M. the King had with an Amnesty International delegation where the human rights education manual, edited by the Moroccan section, was presented to the king, who commended efforts and promotion of human rights education in Morocco.’

REAP project partner, Morocco



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Amnesty International and Israeli Scouts hold a day of action for the Beijing Olympics campaign in 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REAP

■ **Working with new target groups contributes to building a culture of human rights for all peoples.**

When working with new target groups, entrenched beliefs or opinions can be difficult to overcome. Commitment to consistent and long-term working relationships will form a basis for establishing trust. This will engage people in becoming active agents for social change in their communities.

■ **Human rights education can be a successful way to engage new target groups for action on human rights issues.**

Working with new target groups can bring

real progress in addressing specific human rights concerns, particularly when training and human rights education activities are tailored to be relevant to local issues. Partnering with local organizations and/or local or central authorities is often crucial to delivering this goal.

■ **Engaging marginalized groups through human rights education can lead to their empowerment.**

Human rights education can give marginalized groups a voice to express concerns, beliefs, and values. Human rights education imparts knowledge and skills to vulnerable groups, which become powerful tools in addressing human rights violations.

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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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