

Campaign for Human Rights Education

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TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE in the Middle East and North Africa

“But where and how do we begin?” asked a Palestinian student at the Islamic University in Gaza, after listening to a talk about human rights education (HRE) by Kamal Labidi, a journalist and former Director of AI’s Tunisian section. Enthused by what he had heard, he found it hard to believe that HRE projects could be taken forward without significant financial and technical resources. Kamal’s response was reassuring. “It begins in our homes, with how we talk to and treat our children, it carries on in school and university, and continues in our everyday life.”

HRE is a priority for our work in the Middle East and North Africa. It is key to long-term strategies to prevent abuses, and AI members have had considerable success in developing programs appropriate to local needs and the cultural environment.

AI Palestine

For several years AI Palestine has undertaken diverse HRE activities such as staging children’s plays in rural areas, running workshops for Imams and other religious counsellors, and working with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as officials in the Ministries of Education and Higher Education to introduce human rights into educational curricula. In 1998 the oldest Palestinian municipal library, in Nablus, officially opened an AI wing to assist local residents and students in human rights studies and research.

Morocco

AI Morocco identified the rights of women and children as a priority in their HRE strategy. AI members in Morocco worked closely with women’s NGOs, educationalists and officials. Together with the Ministry of Education, they organized two workshops, in September 1998 and April 1999, to prepare 30 trainers to train primary school teachers in human rights education.

In 1998 the groups organized a seminar to examine the rights of working women and children, with particular emphasis on girls working in carpet weaving and as domestic servants. Another seminar was organized by the AI Moroccan women’s network in close cooperation with many women’s NGOs to look at how women could participate more actively in all areas of public life. A follow-up committee was formed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

For the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), AI Morocco set themselves the daunting task of collecting 300,000 signatures to the pledge to “do everything in my power to make the rights of the UDHR a reality”. In addition to obtaining the signatures of the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Justice and Human Rights and the Speaker of Parliament, they organized a human rights film festival, signing up movie stars like the Egyptian actor Nour al-Sharif.

They travelled to the smallest villages in remote areas to discuss the human rights message with local people — housewives, bakers, farmers and policemen.

Hundreds of children and young people took part in the first national human rights Youth Forum — where they discussed children's rights and the origins of the UDHR. They also led a candle-lit procession through the streets, gathering signatures along the route.

The number of signatures exceeded even their ambitious target, with a total of 938,000.

Israel

In Israel HRE is a cornerstone of the Section's long-term work to prevent human rights abuses and in spring 1999 Israeli members celebrated the Education Ministry's formal agreement to include AI's human rights programs in official school curricula. Fourteen seminars took place in Haifa, Nazareth, Sakhnin and Shafa Amr between October 1998 and January 1999, sponsored by AI Israel and Teaching for Freedom (TFF) and implemented with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education.

Tunisia

In some countries the clamp-down on human rights defenders means that even HRE activities cannot be conducted without government interference.

For example, in recent years the activities of AI's Tunisian Section have been severely curtailed. AI members have been threatened or even arrested, the office fax and telephone communications intercepted and even the website has been blocked. A human rights education manual produced by the Section as the basis for their future work was impounded in April 1998 and, despite all AI's efforts, remains at the printing works in Sousse.

The future

For the foreseeable future, HRE will continue to be a priority in the Middle East and North Africa, and an area of work that we plan to develop and expand further together with AI members and other NGO partners from different regions of the world.

AI Nepal: Bringing Human Rights to the People

About Nepal

Nepal is a small landlocked country with a population of around 20 million. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 60 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. Most of the country is inaccessible by roads due to the hilly topography. More than 85 per cent of the population is based in agriculture.

The literacy rate is less than 40 per cent, and in rural areas women's literacy rates are very much lower than men's. Although primary education is free, because of poverty a large number of parents don't send their children to schools as the children are compelled to work for their subsistence. Many children who go to school are unable to continue studying beyond primary level.

AI Nepal and HRE work

AI Nepal became a Section in late 1993 and from the very beginning human rights education (HRE) has been a high priority for the Section. There is a two-pronged strategy in HRE work. The first is to lobby the government for the inclusion of human rights into school curricula. The second is to undertake non-formal education.

As a part of its commitment to non-formal education programs, in 1995 the Section established a training unit in the office and started exploring ways to find the resources to strengthen the training component in the Section. In late 1996, our efforts bore fruit in the form of support for a Teaching For Freedom (TFF) project. With help from TFF, AI Nepal has held several training programs for five target groups:

- * teachers
- * women
- * police

- * grassroots level elected representatives, and
- * youth and children.

Every training course is implemented in partnership with local AI groups to bring down the costs. In addition, AI Nepal held its first Human Rights Education National Conference in 1995 and produced a 10-point declaration which serves to regulate the HRE work of the Section.

Teaching For Freedom

The three-year long TFF project is coming to an end this August 1999. But in these three years, the project has substantially helped to develop the training capacity of the Section. The Section has applied various types of operational strategies to strengthen the training unit.

These include:

- * building a pool of skilled trainers: now AI Nepal has 25 skilled trainers, of whom nine are women. All of the trainers are from AI's membership and in these three years, the Section has not paid any remuneration to any trainers used for TFF training.
- * building a pool of experts on training preparation: the Section has also developed its own experts on holding Training Needs Assessment workshops, package development and pilot testing of the packages. The Section has now a wealth of core group members who are skilled in most of those aspects and for this purpose also, the services of the members are voluntary.
- * developing a stock of training materials: the Section has developed separate trainers' manuals and participants' handbooks for training each of the five target groups outlined above. A separate trainers' manual and participants' handbook has been prepared for teachers' training on children's rights. The Section has also developed a three-day Training of Trainers manual, which is used to develop trainers for the Section.
- developing expertise in human rights awareness programs: even before the TFF project, the Section used street theatre to raise human rights awareness. The main target group of street theatre is the people of the countryside. The Section continued to use street dramas during the TFF project. Now the Section has several scripts and materials for four street dramas that were performed in previous years. Through these dramas, AI Nepal has reached most parts of the country. The Section has also held various talk programs, seminars, national essay competitions for school children and other programs to raise human rights awareness.
- * strengthening its lobbying work: since its establishment, AI Nepal has lobbied energetically for the inclusion of HRE into school curricula. Thanks to the Section's persistent efforts, this has become an issue of debate in the country, which is a positive sign. Some topics on HRE have been included in the fourth, fifth and eighth grades of schools.

Continuing the work

Once we were halfway through the TFF project, the Section started making efforts to continue the training even after TFF. These efforts have now started to produce results. In 1998, the Section secured some support for training through Redd Barna Nepal, the Swedish aid agency. Similarly, at the beginning of this year, the Section secured funding from the local British Embassy for a three-day training program for police officers at 10 places in Nepal. The British Embassy is expected to fund the second phase of the police training, to be held later this year.

The Section's regular efforts have produced many results. The Section has gradually developed some capacity in many aspects of training, including resource mobilization. These capacities have to be strengthened over the years so that the Section can run a project like TFF on its own. Let us hope that in three years' time, we will hit this target!

Rameshwar Nepal
 Coordinator TFF Project
 AI Nepal

Reaching the people

Since November 1996, the Section has trained 2,326 teachers, 870 police officers, 812 grassroots level elected representatives and a further 986 women: a total of 4,994. Since 1995, AI Nepal has reached an estimated 200,000 people through street theatre.

‘YOU HAVE RIGHTS: KNOW THEM, PROMOTE THEM, DEFEND THEM’

The Peruvian context

Peru has suffered years of violence by armed groups such as Shining Path, by narco-traffickers, and by the Peruvian military. Over the 14 years from 1980 to 1994, this violence left 25,000 Peruvians dead and thousands of innocent Peruvians imprisoned on suspicion of being members of armed groups. More than 6,000 people “disappeared” and hundreds of thousands of families were displaced. The social fabric in areas where political violence was at its peak was disrupted as community leaders were systematically murdered. Networks of trust were destroyed. Particularly affected were the poor who didn’t know their rights or how to defend them.

The Peruvian Institute for Education in Human Rights and Peace (IPEDEHP) was born in 1985 as one of several attempts on the part of Peruvian civil society to address this violence. IPEDEHP is a non-profit NGO made up of educators who have worked in the Ministry of Education and in popular education. It is strongly influenced by the principles of Paolo Freire, the world renowned educationalist whose populist approach has a strong empowerment focus.

IPEDEHP has focused on teachers affected by the violence. To date IPEDEHP has trained over 13,000 teachers in human rights and democracy and 250 human rights promoters — teachers who have, in turn, trained thousands more teachers.

Training for community leaders

In 1996 IPEDEHP decided to extend its training to community leaders. With financing from the US government’s foreign aid program, and in collaboration with its two key counterparts — the Peruvian National Human Rights Coordinator and the Human Rights Ombudsman’s Office — IPEDEHP designed a training course in human rights, democracy, and citizen participation entitled: *You Have Rights: Know Them, Defend Them, Promote Them*.

Over a three-day period community leaders including lawyers, teachers, and social workers as well as presidents of mothers’ clubs and other grass roots community leaders with little formal education are introduced to basic concepts of human rights, democracy, citizen participation and interactive training methodologies such as games and role plays.

IPEDEHP’s approach to training community leaders is based on seven fundamental principles rooted in the popular education movement in Latin America inspired by Paolo Freire:

- * All learning must be based on the needs, interests, and problems of the trainees;
- * Learning must be “active” — through a combination of individual and group activity;
- * Learning takes place through dialogue in which people share their thoughts, feelings and emotions in an atmosphere of mutual respect;
- * One must develop the capacity to be critical and to judge ideas, people and acts in a serious fashion;
- * It is only possible to learn values if the training methodologies take into account participants’ feelings;
- * The best way to learn is by participating, being consulted, taking part in making decisions;
- * Learning is most effective when the head, the body and the heart are integrated in the learning process.

Community leaders leave with a kit of materials to use once they return to their communities. This tool kit consists of human rights and democracy games; an easy-to-use guide to the training course they have received; a summary of the principles underlying the methodology used; and a set of guidelines on each of the rights discussed, what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Peruvian Constitution and other Peruvian laws have to say about these rights, and what should be done when they are violated.

IPEDEHP follows up the community leaders after the course, in close coordination with local members of the Peruvian Human Rights Education Network, a grouping of 70 organizations. This consists of a one-day group session three months after the training, annual meetings at the departmental level, an annual national meeting in Lima for representatives from the departmental level, and a bulletin issued every two months. These mechanisms serve as an important networking device. They also provide participants with an opportunity to share their successes and challenges once they return to their communities, and to receive new information on human rights and democracy as well as interactive training methodologies.

Assessing the impact

Between February and November 1998, Marcia Bernbaum — a psychologist, educator, and evaluator with over 20 years' experience — undertook a case study of the IPEDEHP experience, focusing on the community leaders.

She observed IPEDEHP staff during their daily operations and interviewed 45 prominent individuals within and outside Peru about IPEDEHP and its work. She carried out a field study, travelling to both the highlands and the jungles, areas affected by the violence and areas not affected by the violence. She interviewed 20 of the nearly 900 community leaders trained by then, as well as their families, and individuals in their communities. Her objective was to assess what they thought of the training, what they did with it, and the impact on their lives. She also attended one of IPEDEHP's three-day training courses as a participant.

Results

The outcome is a case study entitled *Weaving Ties of Friendship, Trust, and Commitment to Build Human Rights and Democracy in Peru*, which has been published in English and Spanish.

The field study shows that IPEDEHP has had a very strong impact on the community leaders who attended the training course, and that this impact extends to family members as well as individuals within their communities.

The results include:

- * The broad and varied application of what they learned — once back in their communities, including replicating the course they received from IPEDEHP, short presentations on specific topics related to human rights, starting human rights committees in communities where they don't exist, launching radio and television programs with a human rights focus, organizing and participating in human rights campaigns, defending their own rights and providing informal counsel to others.
- * A strong commitment to apply what they learned at the training course, not just once but repeatedly. Participants who had undertaken the training two years earlier were still actively applying what they had learned.
- * Increased tolerance and humility on the part of the community leaders and better relations with members of their families.
- * Especially among women, significant increases in self-esteem. For half the women, the course was a turning point in their lives.
- * Evidence of a reduction in physical violence (husbands beating their wives; parents beating their children) as people become aware of their rights.
- * In several instances, an increased ability on the part of the community to confront the authorities when they experienced human rights abuses.

Similar results were reported by the people that the community leaders trained upon returning to their communities.

How to order the case study

The case study provides lessons from the IPEDEHP experience — both positive and negative — that may be useful for other groups working in human rights education.

A 15-page summary, as well as the full case study document (70 page text, plus annexes) are available in electronic form through: http://www.human-rights.net/IPEDEHP/study_english (English version); and http://www.human-rights.net/IPEDEHP/study_spanish (Spanish version). For further

questions or to order the report (in English or Spanish), please contact the author, Marcia Bernbaum, at mbern362@aol.com or by fax: 202 362-5771.

Funding guidelines

Over the years AI has issued many guidelines regarding fund-raising. In an effort to simplify matters and make the relevant information readily available in one place, we have now sent the movement a single document containing the guidelines under which we are now operating. (Copies are available from the Organizational Liaison Unit at the International Secretariat in London). The International Council Meeting in Rabat in August will be asked to endorse these guidelines, but at the moment they are operating principles.

The underlying premise is that AI must maintain, and must be seen to maintain, its independence and impartiality. Thus no section should become overly dependent on a single source of revenue, be it government or otherwise. Moreover, no section's or structure's actions should be questioned in any way because of their source of funding.

Because education has traditionally been felt to be a government responsibility, AI's HRE policy includes provision for accepting government funding for this activity. However, HRE should be quite narrowly defined and not include general activities to make the public aware of human rights issues. In addition, funds accepted for HRE should be primarily for the production of materials to be used in the HRE program and not for the support of the section or structure itself. For example, paying rent for the section office or salaries of AI staff is not suitable for government funding.

Even within these strictures, there may be cases in which government funding should not be accepted because of the human rights record of a particular government, the potential for the government to construe AI's acceptance of funds as endorsement of their policies, the effect on the image of AI in the country where the funds are accepted or elsewhere, the size of the funding in relation to the total budget of the section, or other circumstances. Because of the delicacy of this issue, the International Executive Committee has asked that approval be sought for any government funding before proposals are submitted to a government or funds are accepted. In most cases this approval can be secured quickly through an e-mail request to the International Treasurer (mgray@american.edu), by phone (1-202-885-3171), by

fax (1-202-885-3155), or by mail: Mary W. Gray, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, American University, Washington DC 20016-8050 USA. Please also keep the HRE team at the IS informed.

In addition to the exception for HRE, government funding may generally be accepted if it is in the form of a subsidy generally available to certain non-governmental organizations like AI. For example, some governments pay all or part of the salaries of those doing alternative service to military service or who are on a scheme to relieve unemployment. In other cases, exemption or reduction of certain kinds of taxes is available, surplus office equipment may be secured, or schools or other government buildings are made available for meetings at little or no cost. However, unfavorable inferences as to AI's relations with the government may still be an issue, and sections and structures must be careful not to become significantly dependent on funding from this source (or any other single source). If there is any doubt about what is acceptable, please contact me.

Please remember that if government funding is in the form of money, it is assessable and must be reported on the Standard Financial Report filed each year with the International Secretariat. If the contribution is "in kind" the monetary equivalent is not assessable. Examples of "in kind" contributions are the services of subsidized workers (but if you get the cash to pay them, then it is assessable!), the use of space, or postal subsidies. I know this sounds unfair, but it is the way we have always done it!

Corporate funding is another delicate area, not only for HRE. In general, sections and structures should avoid soliciting or accepting funds from known human rights violators; the problem is that the reputations of corporations are not always well known and may vary from country to country. The guidelines now in operation also address the issue of multinationals where the effect on other sections or structures must be taken into consideration.

Finally, the question often arises of what constitutes a “government”. Certainly we mean national governments or entities financed by governments, such as the European Union or the UN. Government foundations are also “governments”.

If you have any doubt about the source of funding and/or independence of a foundation, please consult before soliciting or accepting funds. As to regional, state, provincial, or local governments — if they might become the subject of AI complaints, they are “governments” for the purpose of restricting the acceptance of funds. Embassies of foreign governments are “governments”. Once more — please consult if in doubt.

At the International Council Meeting the fund-raising guidelines will be up for discussion. Government funding in any form is a controversial issue so if you want your voice to be heard, come prepared to make your views known.

Mary Gray

International Treasurer

Update from Spain

The Human Rights Education Team of the Spanish Section of AI supports the work of local AI groups on human rights education. We prepare strategies for the different campaigns, adapting them to the education system and environment, and we develop the materials needed. In addition to this daily support work, we are currently involved in two big projects.

Educators’ Workshop project

This project was born three years ago with the intention of stimulating cooperation with other organizations and raising awareness of human rights values among educators. Organizations involved in the project are : España con ACNUR (refugees), S.O.S. Racismo (racism), Ecologistas en Acción (ecology), INTERMON (economic and social rights), and UNICEF (children’s rights). A 30-hour workshop for educators has been developed, and we are preparing a catalogue of educational materials with guidance for use.

“One postcard, one life” campaign

This campaign aims to sensitize people working in the field of education about violations of human rights, and to encourage them to promote human rights. A series of cases, mainly of children, have been documented and appeal postcards prepared.

Get in touch

Further information and materials are available on our web site or by post. We would like to receive information about other sections’ work and comments on our projects. We could exchange materials even if we do not share the same language. We could, for instance, get some language teachers involved...

Carmen Mínguez Márquez

Equipo de Educación en Derechos Humanos

Fernando VI, 8, 1 iz.

28004 Madrid - España

e-mail: educacion.ddhh@a-i.es

website: www.a-i.es/educa/eq_educa.htm

Update from Israel

We have very good news regarding the Israeli Section HRE program.

Following a meeting between our Chair, our HRE coordinator and representatives from the Ministry of Education, it was agreed that AI programs will be part of the curriculum in Israeli schools. They will publish our programs in the Ministry catalogue and publicize them in a letter to school teachers. We are still overwhelmed by these developments!

Yael Weisz-Rind

Israeli Section

What you can do

We hope that the Tunisian Section will be permitted to fulfil its true potential in HRE work in the near future. Please help to make this a reality by writing to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the Tunisian Embassy in your country, urging the Tunisian authorities to lift all restrictions imposed on AI Tunisia's work to promote and protect human rights. You may also like to send a message of support and solidarity to the Tunisian Section.

Président M. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
Palais Présidentiel
Carthage
Tunis
Tunisie
Fax: + 216 1 744 721

Amnesty International
Section Tunisienne
67 Rue Oum Kalthoum
3 ème Etage, Escalier B
1000 Tunis
Tunisie
Fax: +216-1-35-2671

For more information please contact: Claire or Cristina in the HRE team at the International Secretariat: cthomas@amnesty.org

captions

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Palestinian children play in the Borj al Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut , Lebanon

© Reuters, 1999/Jamal Saidi

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Women participate in group work during a human rights education course in Nepal. Nearly 1,000 women have been introduced to the values and methods of human rights education by AI Nepal in the past three years. © AI

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Nepalese police officers take part in a role playing exercise as they learn about human rights in a project run by AI Nepal. © AI

Discussion among police officers during a human rights training course in Nepal.

© AI

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The Human Rights Education Pack : You Have Rights, Know them, Promote them, Defend them

© Instituto Peruano de Educación en Derechos Humanos y la Paz, Illustration by Edgar Rueda

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Nearly 450 people attended a Congress on Human Rights Education organized by the Portuguese Section of AI and the National Commission for the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. Held in March, in Ponte de Lima (northern Portugal), the Congress attracted school teachers, college teachers and students, lawyers, journalists, non-governmental organizations and educational authorities. The national Minister of Education, Prof. Marçal Grilo, made a verbal commitment at the Congress to introduce human rights across the curricula in schools. © AI

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Demonstrators call for the extradition of former Chilean President Augusto Pinochet to Spain. Teachers in Chile and other countries in the Americas have been discussing the Pinochet case with their students as a means of breaking the silence on the tens of thousands of people who have been tortured, killed or have “disappeared” in the region in recent decades.© Reuters

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A summer camp in Morocco © AI