

HRE

Campaign for Human Rights Education

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AI Index: POL 32/003/2003

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Police human rights training in Nepal

In 1990 Nepal adopted a Constitution which outlaws torture and ratified the main international human rights treaties. However, torture continues to be reported almost daily in the country. This is due to a number of factors, including the lack of effective investigative mechanisms and a general climate of impunity in relation to human rights violations. Nepal has a tradition of torture and humiliation of criminal suspects by police and local authorities, and torture as a punishment is still widely perceived as acceptable.

During the last six years, reports of torture by police have increased in the context of police actions against alleged members and sympathizers of the communist party of Nepal (Maoist) which in February 1996 declared a “people’s war” and started an armed struggle.

In April 1998, AI Nepal launched a human rights training program for the police under the auspices of Teaching For Freedom. Since then the program has been expanded and has been conducted in four phases. To date the AI Section has provided human rights training for 2,218 police men and women, from general officers to the Chief of Police.

Aims and objectives of the training program

- To familiarize the police with the human rights provisions enshrined in the international and domestic laws and in the Constitution of Nepal, focusing in particular on the issue of torture.
- To educate and inform the police about the illegality of torture and change attitudes and practices.

[photo caption]

Role-play group work. © AI

[end caption]

Resources

After the first phase of the training program, held in Katmandu in January 1999, an assessment identified a need for:

- A training package with ideas and activities for human rights training.
- A training manual for both the participants and trainers.
- A handbook in two parts, the first containing a summary of the training sessions and the second the text of relevant national and international human rights instruments.

The training package and manual were developed and piloted with a group of 20 police personnel in February 1999.

Methodology

The training sessions use participatory and interactive techniques including group discussion, group work and role-play. The trainers were aware of the need to make the sessions as participatory as possible but also identified the need for further training for themselves in these techniques. After every phase the Section conducted an evaluation, which consisted of feedback given at the end of each training, through questionnaires sent out by the Section and in face-to-face interviews with a sample group of participants three months after the program.

[photo caption]

Police officers receiving human rights training. © AI

[end caption]

Improvements

From the evaluations AI Nepal was able to identify how the training program could be improved. Changes have also been introduced in line with recommendations from an evaluation that was carried out in six districts by the Rural Development Foundation, a local non-governmental organization (NGO), on behalf of the British Embassy during the third phase of training.

In consultation with the Nepalese police, the AI Section is planning to:

- Make the training material more reader-friendly by including pictures.
- Shorten the sessions devoted to the historical development of human rights and the work of AI.
- Introduce new sessions on humanitarian law, arrest procedures, use of force, dealing with people.
- Ensure that there is at least one lawyer in every team of trainers.
- Conduct human rights training courses in districts that have a police training centres.

AI Nepal will continue to lobby for human rights training to be integrated into the general training program for police and for training to be given in areas such as crowd control and the use of firearms.

The Section is currently considering developing human rights training sessions for local politicians. The police have complained that pressure from these politicians often prevents them from carrying out their work properly. The Section plans to prepare a curriculum and lobby for this to be integrated into the regular training course for local politicians.

Media

Press releases about training programs are circulated to the media and have received good coverage. As a part of AI's policy to integrate HRE and campaigning, the Section has used AI's Campaign against torture to promote the project.

Challenges

As a result of regular changes of those in charge of the police training department, AI Nepal has often had to repeat and reinvent its training program. To address this problem, the Section has contacted the trainers involved in the programs and asked them to brief new incumbents about the importance of the training program.

The continuing campaign by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has had a major impact on the Section and its training of police officers. Since the declaration of a state of emergency in November 2001, armed attacks on police personnel have occurred almost daily. It has become difficult for police departments to allow officers to meet in one place for training on three consecutive days, because of the risk to security this presents.

One of the main challenges for the AI Section has been to maintain a pool of volunteer trainers. Various training of trainers programs have helped, but the Section feels it needs to devote more efforts to sustaining and enhancing this group through the use of continuous learning methods and by finding more practical ways of organizing the training sessions (for example, the Section does not pay air fares for trainers and participants so they have to travel overland).

Through the police human rights training program, AI Nepal has developed an awareness of the underlying factors that influence police attitudes and behaviour, and believes its HRE work with the police has acted as a counterpart to its oppositional work. The Section feels its training program has helped to pave the way for a change of attitudes within the police force and that the force must also take concrete steps to alter its beliefs and practices.

[photo caption]

Group work in a training session. © AI

[end caption]

The Section now considers that responsibility for the eradication of torture must also be taken by the general public which is often supportive of police practices, such as the use of torture. It has attempted to address this issue by educating the public through street drama.

In its police human rights training program, AI Nepal tries to bear in mind that it is not training "bad guys" but that the police officers are part of a system that needs changing. It hopes that its efforts will lead to a cultural change within the police force.

Human rights – what have they got to do with the police?

Ann-Marie Orlor, Programme Manager, Council of Europe Police and Human Rights Programme

February 2003

In my job I travel a lot. I meet many police officers and I hear many different stories. My experience is that police officers always have something in common, and that police officers listen to each other. That is why I think it is so important for police services that already have a more modern, democratic approach to policing to support and help those that have just started to work towards it. All changes take time and there is a lot of resistance in the beginning when old methods have to be replaced. But to move from a “hard” way of policing to a “softer” way is the only way forward.

In 1997, the Council of Europe set up a project intended to develop a more organized and structured approach to human rights in the police. The purpose was to assist and support police services within the member states of the Council of Europe in their transition towards modern democratic policing.

The project drew to a close in December 2000. At the closing conference, the new “Police and Human Rights – Beyond 2000” programme was announced. The programme is a permanent part of the Council of Europe’s activities and is run by seconded police officers. The advantage of having police officers is that they have first-hand, up-to-date knowledge of policing and, perhaps most importantly, have credibility within the police services of the member states. Police officers are the best salesmen of the value of human rights policing.

The objectives and the vision for the programme are: “To promote the development of police services that respect and protect the human rights of the public and police officers and to have police officers for whom respecting and protecting human rights is the core function of policing.”

The strategy devised to achieve this vision involves developing long-term relationships with the relevant authorities of member states and non-members states associated with the Council of Europe. I believe this is the only way to make a real impact on the police’s attitude to human rights in certain countries and to achieve sustainability. It is all about changing attitudes and behaviour and that will take time. It cannot be achieved with a just couple of seminars. The so-called “police culture” is not an easy thing to challenge, but I am convinced that everybody wants to do their work in the best way and be seen as professionals. We can teach police officers alternative methods for solving problems and serving the people.

Instead of “police force” I prefer to use the term “police service”. Of course, I am aware that we still have police forces, but if we think of police work as divided into “force” and “service”, I believe that 95 per cent should be “service” and 5 per cent might be resolved with “force”. This is generally speaking, but I think it is worth thinking about.

[photo caption]

Ann-Marie Orlor. © AI

[end caption]

For police officers, human rights may seem very theoretical and not always easy to apply in practice. From my point of view, our aim is to integrate human rights into the normal way of policing because they cannot be separated from it.

In many European countries human rights education is already included in the police training and policing is in accordance with the European standards on human rights. For others, it is something strange and new. Everything

that is new is frightening, but once you show that it is the best way of doing the job, it can only be a win-win situation. People in the hands of police officers should be treated as the human beings they are (even if they have committed a crime) and the police officer carrying out his or her duty in a professional way will, I am sure, face fewer problems.

I often describe the police programme of the Council of Europe as trying to transfer the European Convention on Human Rights and other international standards into daily policing practice. The training we offer uses methods which produce open-minded teaching. We study cases from the European Court of Human Rights and ask the participants to create new cases based on their own experiences and circumstances. This has shown to be a very fruitful method.

I described our strategy as developing long-term relationships – let me explain. Before taking on new projects we analyse the situation and get a picture of the police in the country concerned. This can include studying reports from the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and from NGOs such as AI. Myself or someone else in the team visit the country concerned accompanied, when necessary, by experts in the field being addressed, with the purpose of identifying our partner's needs.

The results of this research will be discussed with the authorities and a plan of action will be drawn up. The final stage of any project is an evaluation to make sure that we have fulfilled the objectives identified.

The Council of Europe police programme is very well equipped to assist member states with training. We have several free training booklets translated into different languages. We have a network for police services and NGOs with which we discuss common issues and work on a national and European level, in the spirit of the Council of Europe.

Human rights – what have they got to do with the police? My answer to that question is: everything. You cannot carry out your duties as a police officer without applying the European standards on human rights, signed up to by 45 of the countries in Europe. What can be more important for a police officer than to respect and protect human rights?

[box]

Police and Human Rights – Beyond 2000 Publications

Human rights and the police – A workbook for practice oriented teaching

Case studies covering police and human rights. The guide invites you to reflect upon and increase your understanding of the importance of human rights and their application to every-day, operational policing.

The human rights challenge in police practice – A reference brochure

Designed to speak to all police officials in Europe, it demonstrates clearly the link between police practice and European human rights standards.

A pamphlet for police – Human rights and their protection under international law

Formulated in a “question and answer” structure this pamphlet's purpose is to provide a clear introduction to international human rights law standards and mechanisms. If handed out as part of an introductory presentation on the topic of police and human rights, it will serve to generate thought and discussion about some of the common misconceptions that exist about the reason for and the effect of human rights on police work.

Discussion tools – A police and human rights training manual

A manual of 15 discussion tools aimed to help the trainers set up an interactive training with participation, reflection and self-determination by trainees. A complement to the workbook and the brochure.

Policing in a democratic society – Is your police service a human rights champion?

This guide invites the reader to reflect upon and increase his or her understanding of the importance of human rights and their application to every-day, operational policing.

Vision, innovation and professionalism in policing violence against women and children – VIP guide

An awareness-raising tool, designed for self-directed study and personal development by individual police officers. The VIP guide will provide access to the vision and understanding which has informed new police responses to violence against women; give examples of innovations within European policing; enable police officers using it to develop their professionalism; and offer trainers and managers a resource to inform their efforts to develop good practice.

A visit by the CPT – What's it all about? 15 questions and answers for the police

This booklet explains what happens during a typical visit by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). It also provides some background information on the CPT and the standards it has set for the treatment of people held in police custody.

For more information or to order copies contact: Morven.train-reeb@coe.int

Police and Human Rights – Beyond 2000, Directorate General of Human Rights – DGII, F-67075, Strasbourg Cedex, France. Tel: + 33 3 88 41 38 50, fax: + 33 3 88 41 2736

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HRE in Trinidad and Tobago

Dan Jones from AI UK, supported by Virginia Segal, Americas Regional Campaign Coordinator at the IS, held a HRE workshop in Trinidad and Tobago on 22-23 March 2003.

The AI Trinidad and Tobago members, who are hoping to be recognized officially as an AI group shortly, are a dynamic group of people of all age groups (the youngest only 10 years old!). The workshop included the creation of a human rights charter; assessing media coverage of human rights issues; how the UN Commission on Human Rights works – part of which revolved around a fictitious session of the Commission in which the delegates represented countries from around the world; fundraising ideas and more. The ideas, imagination and energy of AI Trinidad and Tobago members was impressive and hugely encouraging. We welcome their contribution to AI's HRE work in the future.

[photo caption]

AI Trinidad and Tobago members, who participated in two very successful and enjoyable campaigning training and HRE workshops in Port of Spain, March 2003. © AI

[end caption]

[end box]

Reflecting on discrimination

[quote]

Discrimination is an assault on the very notion of human rights. It systematically denies certain people or groups their full human rights just because of who they are or what they believe. It dehumanizes, leaving its victims vulnerable to other human rights abuses. After all, if they are less than human, how can they have human rights? It paves the way for torture by severing the bonds of human sympathy.

Them and us: fighting discrimination and preventing torture (AI Index: ACT 70/002/2001)

[end quote]

We all have multiple identities, some of which are constant and others flexible and changeable over time; some real, others imposed; some public and others private. We identify ourselves and are identified by others by our race or ethnicity, our gender, nationality, profession and sexual identity.

The way in which we experience different aspects of our identities will vary depending on the context in which we find ourselves. Identities affect the way people view us and interact with us, they can affect our social relationships, educational and professional experiences, and our life chances. Life experience is different for women than for men; for racial and ethnic minorities than for racial and ethnic majorities; for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people than for heterosexuals; for middle-class than for working-class people; for able-bodied people than for disabled people. And because we all have many aspects to our identities, we may also experience many forms of discrimination. For example, not all women experience sexism or patriarchy in the same way. It will vary with ethnicity, sexuality and class. All too frequently people's identities are the cause or underlying motive for human rights violations.

The HRE team at the IS, along with staff from the campaigns program, has been piloting a series of workshops on identity-based discrimination.

[photo caption]

The participants of the Hong Kong workshop. © AI

[end caption]

To date we have run four pilot workshops, two with AI Venezuela, a third with AI Hong Kong and the fourth with AI Poland, focusing specifically on gender, race/ethnicity and sexual identity as particular triggers of oppression and human rights violations. Using a mixture of participatory methods, case studies and more traditional presentations we encouraged reflection, discussion and debate on the nature of identity, the link between prejudice and discrimination and the operation of power and prejudice in society. The workshops sought to clarify AI's work on identity-based discrimination and offer some examples of and recommendations for advocacy work in these areas.

[photo caption]

Kate Moriarty of the IS HRE team, assisted by Kate Shiell, a campaigner at the IS, conducting a session at the Hong Kong workshop. © AI

[end caption]

Discrimination is in itself a violation of a person's human rights and can create a climate in which graver human rights violations occur. Prohibition of discrimination is at the heart of the main UN human rights instruments, yet, as AI has documented over the years, prejudice, discrimination, the dehumanization of individuals and groups based on a real or perceived identity continues to be a source of major human rights abuses. Our message as AI activists is clear: no human being, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity or sexual identity is disposable – all of us have the right to be afforded equal treatment and dignity in line with international humanitarian and human rights law.

A small training pack based on the experiences of the pilots will then be produced for use by HRE coordinators in AI Sections and structures. If you are interested in finding out more about this work or have developed anti-discrimination training materials in your section/structure please get in touch with the HRE team at the IS.

[photo caption]

Delegates in one of the Hong Kong workshop sessions. © AI

[end caption]

“Learning and thinking about discrimination”

AI Italy HRE work to combat racial discrimination

In anticipation of their Campaign against discrimination, which started in March, AI Italy ran a course on “Human rights and racial discrimination”. The course, part of a project financed by the Equal Programme, took place in Rome from December 2002 until January 2003 and brought together approximately 40 participants, including AI members, activists from other NGOs and university students.

The course was based on the belief that the right to equality before the law and the protection of all persons from discrimination, together with the respect and promotion of the rights of minorities, is essential to the proper functioning of any democratic society. Participants met seven times to discuss different aspects of discrimination, based on their own experiences, analysis and input from experts in the field of racial discrimination. Patterns of racism were described in an attempt to define the places and the contexts in which racial discrimination occurs, such as in the administration of justice, in laws, when the state fails to protect its citizens, and in conflicts.

Participants identified discrimination as a human rights violation, since racism has to be considered an attack on the very notion of universal human rights. They also identified discrimination as one of the causes of torture, as race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender and sexual orientation have been used to justify the use of torture. The genocide and ethnic conflicts that occurred in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s were raised as examples of the way in which racial discrimination can lead to serious human rights violations.

The group engaged in an analysis of existing anti-discrimination legislation which helped identify key areas of the law and anti-discrimination standards that require further development, and to open the debate on good and bad practices and other potential changes to international standards to overcome discrimination.

The group looked at questions of immigration and way the media plays a role in forming crude stereotypes in public opinion through negative representation of minorities. They considered the impact of this type of prejudice and discrimination on government policy and practice in relation to asylum-seekers.

Participants shared their own work in the area of combating racial discrimination and offered a perspective on actions that can be taken to uncover the patterns of racism and to institute remedies that tackle the causes of discrimination. These include a serious commitment to promoting equality and valuing diversity, challenging stereotypes, ending impunity for racially motivated crime and the implementation of international treaties.

The role of education and training were identified as fundamental to creating awareness of the issue of discrimination and changing attitudes, practices and behaviour. Within this framework, AI Italy believes this course on “human rights and racial discrimination” has made a contribution towards understanding and challenging discrimination.

Rossana Zaccaria

Tutor of the course “Human rights and racial discrimination”

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Children's rights yacht reaches South Africa

Since 1996, AI has been collaborating with French sailor Thierry Dubois in a campaign to raise awareness about children's rights around the world (see HRE Issue 9). In September 2002, Thierry Dubois set off in the "Around Alone" 2002-2003 around-the-world solo yacht race with the aim of promoting AI and children's rights.

One of the cities he stopped off in was Cape Town, where the campaign reached many South African children and adults in primary and high schools, youth projects, shelters and camps. AI South Africa organized a special event to celebrate Thierry Dubois' arrival in Cape Town on 21 November 2002.

The event at the waterfront

An audience of 300 adults and children greeted the yachts of the "Around Alone" race, as they arrived in Waterfront Amphitheatre, Cape Town.

[photo caption]

Competition winners on Thierry Dubois' yacht. © AI

[end caption]

Festivities to celebrate the event opened with an energetic Gumboot dancing from Turfhall primary school (Lansdowne), followed by a beautiful rendition of a freedom song from AZ Berman primary school (Mitchell's Plain). Cape Town's mayor, Nomaindia Mfeketo, then welcomed the sailors to Cape Town.

Sofie Geschie, a member of AI South Africa, accompanied by four children, greeted the sailors in four languages, French, English, Xhosa and Afrikaans. The audience then joined hands to make a "wave", symbolizing the way that the message of children's rights can be passed from one person to the next, creating a wave of belief across the world.

Thierry Dubois' passion for human rights came across very clearly when he spoke to the audience. "I am sailing around the world to bring attention to the plight of children in this world," he said. "The fact that you are here this afternoon tells me that you all care about human rights, especially the rights of children."

The focal point of the day was the announcement of the winners of the "Children's rights in Africa" drawing competition. The winner of the 12-18 years category was Asmeeta Chavda from Turfhall with her drawing depicting the right to play. Maya le Maitre from Tamboerskloof was the winner of the 6-11 years category with her drawing depicting the rights of the handicapped. Eleven more winners were announced and their drawings shown to the audience. The best picture was reproduced on the sail of Thierry Dubois' boat.

[photo caption]

Thierry Dubois with competition winner Asmeeta Chavda. © AI

[end caption]

AI South Africa member Jeandre Williams called on the audience to join in the struggle for human rights around the world, and in the wish that children take this message with them in whatever they do. A small gift was given to Thierry Dubois and his family as an expression of gratitude for his work and the inspiration he has given to children.

The event closed with a very apt and beautiful song from the children of Turfhall, “We are the children of the world, and we must stand together... let us fill the world with love.”

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FUNDS HRE PROJECT FOR WEST AFRICA

The HRE Team is delighted to announce that AI has been successful in raising 1.5 million euros to fund a major HRE project in West Africa. This is the first ever regional HRE project of its kind that AI has developed. Eighty per cent of the money will come from the European Commission of Human Rights funding body, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. The remaining 20 per cent will come from the Norwegian broadcasting corporation NRK.

The project was planned in detail together with the HRE coordinators from the participating AI Sections and structures in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Its title is: Preventing the practice of torture through education.

In the long term the project aims to contribute to the eradication of torture in all its forms (including violence against women) in the 10 West African countries where AI has a recognized membership structure.

The project will contribute to the prevention of torture by:

- Developing the skills and capacity of small networks of human rights activists in the 10 West African countries to plan, design, implement and evaluate HRE programs and activities to combat torture.
- Preparing training and campaigning materials on preventing torture that are culturally relevant for the identified target groups, to be used in workshops, seminars and campaigns.
- Increasing the general level of awareness within selected sectors and communities about the human rights instruments that are relevant to the prevention of torture.
- Raising awareness about the high incidence of gender-based violence in West Africa and contributing to its prevention.
- Developing effective HRE networks and strengthening existing ones for AI and other relevant NGOs in West Africa to support AI's global theme campaigns (including the Campaign against torture and the Campaign on violence against women).

The first phase of the project targets activists who are currently working on or are interested in working on HRE activities. This group will be provided with the skills and knowledge to plan, design, implement and evaluate education programs to enable them to work with teachers, journalists, community and women leaders and AI activists. The indirect beneficiaries will be schoolchildren, women and communities.

The project will be implemented on two levels – both regional and national level events – and training courses will be organized. A project office is to be established in Dakar, Senegal, linked to the existing IS office.

For more information please contact Claire Thomas in the HRE Team at the IS (cthomas@amnesty.org).

New acquisitions in the HRE library

Montrer le chemin: guide d'entraînement des femmes au leadership

Author: Afkhami, Mahnaz; Eisenberg, Ann

Publisher: Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace (WLP)

Standard number: 0971092222

Shelfmark: G-WO/AFK

A manual published by the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace, with the collaboration of women's groups in Morocco, Nigeria and the Palestinian Authority. It contains chapters on methods for women to use in order to attain leadership roles, communication, and how to mobilize for action. It is a prototype guide to be adapted to local conditions in Morocco, Nigeria and the Palestinian Authority.

Website: www.learningpartnership.org

Toolkit for tackling racism in schools

Author: Dadzie, Stella

Publisher: Trentham Books

Standard number: 1858561884

Shelfmark: G-RA\DAD

Provides guidelines for tackling racism and discrimination within the classroom environment including developing anti-racist policies and strategies. Outlines teaching techniques and approaches which aim to challenge racist attitudes and assumptions. Includes lists of organizations, books and video resources.

Formación en derechos humanos para policías

Author: Ruiz, Ileana; Achkar, Soraya El

Publisher: Red de Apoyo

Standard number: S1212

Shelfmark: AMR-01/RUI

Website: <http://www.derechos.org.ve/defender/voluntar/red.html>