

THE POWER OF YOUTH LED HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

YOUTH CASE STUDY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL KENYA



SUMMARY

Founded in 2012, the youth led Inter-Varsity Human Rights Debate is an annual campaign aimed at provoking knowledge generation, innovative strategies and empowerment of the student community. It provides young people with the opportunity to participate in positive social change in Kenya and make an impact through human rights education.



DESCRIPTION

The key aspect of this Human Rights Debate is that it is youth driven. Amnesty International Kenya's role involves logistical support, content development and provision of resources but University students and clubs conduct the mobilization and actual implementation of the debate. The program actively engages University students as leaders as well as participants across five different regions in Kenya. The model of engagement involves University representatives from planning and design to implementation and evaluation. Every year debate topics are chosen based on suggestions from young people. In past years topics such as torture, housing rights, refugee rights and accountability have been covered. In 2012 the format was quite simple. It was a two day event, one day for preliminaries and the second day for finals, but through active participation and evaluation, the project has expanded. Regional training workshops, online engagement, human rights education and the prize of an internship at Amnesty International Kenya are now all a part of the annual Inter-Varsity Human Rights Debate Project. This student led-approach and peer to peer model of human rights education makes for a lively and productive debate on key human rights issues.

“Everyone can debate. It is not only for law students. All youth should get involved and engage with others on human rights issues through this amazing debating platform.”

OBJECTIVES

- Create a culture of human rights among young people.
- Engage young people from various Universities and institutions in discussions.
- Raise human rights awareness among young people.
- Influence the knowledge, skills and capacity of participants.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Stella Andenyi and Franklin Mireri, winners of the 2014 debate went on to represent Amnesty International Kenya as a youth delegate and a volunteer at the 2015 Amnesty International Council Meeting in Dublin.

“Winning the debate changed something profound in me.”

TIPS AND TRICKS

- *Promote youth leadership!* Youth leadership, engagement and participation is crucial to the sustainability of this project.
- *Incorporate youth ideas and innovations!* For example the internship opportunity as a prize was implemented based on evaluation and ideas from young people.
- *Promote through youth networks!* Youth-led social media campaigns helped raise awareness, support and participation in the program.
- *Incorporate youth participation across all levels!* Youth are not only debate participants but also trainers and judges at the National Debate Championships.



IMPACT

- Student participation has grown from around 200 in 2012 to over 1,000 in 2015.
- The program created a platform for young people to actively engage in current affairs through a human rights lens.
- Students reported increased confidence in articulating human rights issues.
- Capacity building and debating skills are acquired through training workshops for trainers and debaters.
- The program has grown sustainably since 2012. In 2016, the debate championship was supported by two ‘Training of Trainers’ workshops and regional workshops in Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi, Eldoret and Nakuru.

“It has been a very enriching learning experience for me. Sharing ideas and learning with others has been completely awesome.”

STAKEHOLDERS

- Amnesty International Kenya offers support and strategic direction in organizing the debate as well as networking opportunities.
- Student Consortium on Human Rights Advocacy (SCOHR) has been a key mobiliser in local universities and their members act as trainers in the debates.
- Kenya National Debate Council (KNDC) train participants on debating skills.
- Students and Universities are the primary participants and organizers.

External organizations that work on human rights issues central to that years’ debate topic are often involved or consulted. For example, in 2014 the Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH) were helpful in the discussion of torture. In 2015 UNHCR was engaged in the discussion of refugee rights.

LEARN MORE!

- Read more about the Inter-Varsity Human Rights Debate [here](#).
- Contact AI Kenya for more information: amnestykenya@amnesty.or.ke.

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