



## **Submission No 29**

### **Inquiry into Human Rights and Good Governance Education in the Asia Pacific Region**

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Submission to the  
**Parliament of Australia**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Defence and Trade**  
**Human Rights Sub-Committee**

Re: Inquiry into Human Rights and Good Governance Education in  
the Asia-Pacific Region



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# Human Rights Education in the Asia-Pacific Region

## Introduction

This submission aims to:

1. Provide an overview of the human rights education situation in the Asia-Pacific region;
2. Identify needs and areas for improvement;
3. Provide some recommendations to the Australian government in line with the idea of creating a support program for human rights education in the region.

## Development of human rights education in the region

Human rights education is a growing field in the Asia-Pacific region. Its growth started mainly with human rights organizations and other non-governmental organizations doing community-based education programs. The repressive situation in many Asian countries during the decade of the 70s pushed to the forefront the need for educating people on their rights. Lawyers' groups in South, Southeast and Northeast Asia engaged in educational programs to complement their "fire fighting" activities, that is, legal assistance to victims of human rights violations. In the 80s, paralegal training spread to many groups in South and Southeast Asia as a major form of education on legal rights.

The 90s brought a different set of issues for human rights. The focus turned to particular concerns such as environmental destruction, exploitation of women and children, disruptive development projects, displacement of indigenous peoples, consumers' rights violations, and health problems. Human rights began to be linked to these issues, a departure from the "older" framework of focusing on civil and political rights. But this did not mean that the long-standing issues such as militarization, national security laws, abuses by the police, suppression of freedom of expression, among others, have disappeared. This new focus signified the broadening membership of the human rights community. It was no longer limited to lawyers' groups and the so-called human rights organizations (generally considered as those organizations focusing mainly on civil and political rights issues). Groups working on environmental, women, children, minority, and development issues have started to use much more the human rights language. This was evident in the 1993 NGO preparatory meeting for the World Conference on Human Rights held in Bangkok. The two hundred NGOs

represented in the meeting covered a much wider set of human rights issues than ever before. The NGO declaration shows the wide-ranging issues discussed.<sup>1</sup>

Toward the middle part of the decade of the 90s, another category of institutions begun to make their presence felt in the region – the national human rights institutions. Initially doubted by the NGOs, these institutions slowly started to earn the cooperation of the former. These institutions now constitute the third sector in the human rights equation. The governments and the NGOs comprise the other sectors.

In the field of human rights education, the United Nations' Decade of Human Rights Education (1995-2004) provided a much-needed support. This Decade gave governments the chance to see human rights education from a more positive light. For the NGOs, the Decade legitimized their programs. Human rights education was no longer seen simply as a means to foster dissent against the government, but as a means to protect the rights of victims of human rights violations such as the women, children and other marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society. The series of UN world conferences from Rio to Copenhagen constituted another important boost to the recognition of human rights across many issues. The widened scope of human rights provided the space for the three sectors (NGO, national human rights institution, and the government) to work together in human rights education.

### **Institutions and programs**

Among the three sectors, the NGOs have been most active. They cover a wide range of issues, and implement programs at different levels – from the community to the region. The national human rights institutions and the governments are catching up in their own ways. The NGOs referred to may either be national NGOs or regional NGOs.

National NGOs may be classified into any of the following:<sup>2</sup>

- a social development agencies such as those doing social mobilizing/animation or community organizing activities for social, political, economic and cultural development;
- b. human rights organizations such as those that document, disseminate information and launch campaigns on human rights issues;

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<sup>1</sup> See *Our Voice - NGO Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights*, Asian Cultural Forum on Development (Bangkok: 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Based on the article of the author entitled "Asian Experiences on Human Rights Education" in *A Survey of On-going Human Rights Education in Asia-Pacific*, Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (Bangkok: 1995.)

- c. social action groups such as those that take up social issues and put pressure on the government and other institutions to resolve the issues;
- d. sectoral organizations such as women's groups, peasant organizations, and workers' unions that focus on organizing the sectors concerned and taking action on issues affecting them;
- e. law groups such as those providing legal assistance and education to grassroots communities;
- f. grassroots/popular education groups such as those providing basic literacy services to communities; and
- g. art/cultural groups such as those that inform the general public about issues affecting the society through plays and other art forms.

Their human rights education programs may take the form of any of the following:<sup>3</sup>

- a. conscientization/campaign (public exposition of issues);
- b. legal literacy (education on laws - domestic and international);
- c. skills training (acquisition of specific know-how on human rights work);
- d. social research (participatory way of finding out the conditions of people);
- e. community organization/mobilization (facilitation of the formation of structures in communities such as establishment of organizations);
- f. community education (functional literacy program with social dimension);
- g. social action (activities that address social issues such as making petitions to government and other institutions); and
- h. popular education (program to increase people's knowledge on how to assert their right to participate in societal affairs).

At the regional level, NGO programs generally fall under the following:

- a. Research and information dissemination,
- b. Training,
- c. Material development, and
- d. Networking.

The regional human rights education programs of NGOs are the following:<sup>4</sup>

1. Capacity-building for grassroots communities

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The description of the different regional programs is taken mainly from the author's article, "HRE and NGOs" in *Human Rights Education Review*, Institute of Human Rights Education, number 5 (Osaka: October 1998). The article was published in Japanese language.

The Asian Coalition on Housing Rights (ACHR), a broad regional coalition of NGOs, community-based organizations and individuals, promotes exchange of information and experiences on housing conditions and helps develop alternatives to eviction. It holds training workshops on capacity building (focusing on community organizing and survey of housing rights situation) for members of grassroots communities. It also organizes exchange visits for young students such as those taking engineering, medical and law courses in order to relate technical science to social realities. It advocates for school curriculum change to include the housing rights issue.

## 2. General study course on human rights

The Asian Forum on Human Rights and Development (FORUM Asia), a regional membership organization, held a series of regional and national workshops on fact-finding and documentation in the 90s. It holds workshops on economic, social and cultural rights. It started an annual human rights study session, which takes up general human rights course for NGO workers in South and Southeast Asia.

## 3. Seminars for journalists and judges

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), though mainly focused on mobilizing international public opinion on human rights issues, has started to undertake training activities. It holds seminars for journalists and judges.

## 4. Training on the use of participatory methodology

The Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) holds workshops for human rights educators. It focuses on the propagation of participant-centered educational method to support the programs of national groups in the region. It likewise collects materials on human rights education for regional information/material dissemination. It publishes directory of groups related to human rights education work, catalogue of human rights education materials, survey of human rights education experiences in Asian countries, and human rights education handbook. It is doing campaigns in support of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

## 5. Teacher training and teaching material development

The Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA), a local institution supported by the local governments and the social movement in Osaka (Japan), has a regional program on human rights education. Its activities are concentrated at present on human rights education in schools. It has been

documenting human rights education in schools experiences in the region.<sup>5</sup> It started a training program for teachers and other educators in the formal education field in South and Southeast Asia.

The Asia-Pacific Center for Education on International Understanding (APCEIU), established by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, has been focusing on teacher training and the development of teaching material. It recently held a training workshop for Pacific teachers dwelling on peace, environment, sustainable development and human rights issues.

The Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (APNIEVE), a network of values education teachers, produced sourcebooks for teacher education and tertiary level education. The sourcebooks cover human rights.

#### 6. Training on women's issues

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), a network of non-governmental organizations in the region working on issues of women and law, focuses on legal literacy for women's rights advocates. Its programs promote the importance of law and feminist perspective in the women's struggle for change. Its Beyond Law program examines various strategies in using law to protect and promote women's rights. Its program on Feminist Legal Theory and Practice focuses on law reform and litigation. It holds regional- and national-level training activities.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia-Pacific (CATW-AP) has launched a Human Rights Documentation Training on Violence Against Women (in partnership with Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems or HURIDOCS) to develop tools for documentation and information handling for human rights advocacy. It has national and regional training activities. It also supports national-level training for non-governmental organizations and urban poor communities on the issue of trafficking of women.

The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), an international organization based in Bangkok, provides training on Feminist Participatory Action Research methodology and on the use of human rights framework in dealing with trafficking in women issues.

#### 7. Training on child issues

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<sup>5</sup> See [www.huright.or.jp/education\\_e.html](http://www.huright.or.jp/education_e.html)

The Child Workers Asia (CWA), a regional network of grassroots organizations involved in the working children issue, provides a forum for sharing experiences among these organizations. Through field visits, it tries to expand the knowledge base of these organizations on human rights and strengthen their campaign programs. The month-long field visits involve groups from Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India and Nepal. It also holds regional and national seminars and workshops.

The End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children (ECPAT), an international network of organizations with the secretariat based in Asia, engages in activities that build awareness on child prostitution. It supports the activities of its national contact organizations in 25 countries worldwide through information dissemination. It holds capacity-building activities on child protection measures, and offers training for the police on handling cases of victimized children.

#### 8. Training on the use of the United Nations human rights mechanisms

The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP), one of the oldest training institutions in the region (based in the University of New South Wales, Australia), holds the Annual Training Course on human rights for NGO workers. Its training curriculum includes Various Frameworks of Analysis of Human Rights Issues (includes review of International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, human rights instruments and mechanisms, and current debates in human rights movements), Peace-Building and Resolution of Conflict and other Strategies in Human Rights Work, Socio-Economic Crisis and Strengthening Peoples' Movement for Social Change, Skills in Peoples' Diplomacy and Tools of Human Rights Education. Field visits are also part of the activities.

#### 9. Training on migrant workers issues

Several organizations hold regional training on migrant workers issues. The Canadian Human Rights Foundation held (in cooperation with organizations in the region) workshops for Asian labor attaches, the Asia Monitor Resource Center (AMRC) has internship program for Asian labor organizers and activists on documentation and information management, research, publication and project- or issue-based programs,



In South Asia, the South Asia Forum for Human Rights does human rights education in addition to its human rights monitoring program.<sup>6</sup>

Complementing, and in many cases in cooperation with, the NGOs are the human rights education programs of the national human rights institutions.<sup>7</sup> They are generally good in initiating dialogues with governments on the development of human rights education programs for government personnel, the members of the police and military, prison officials, and public school teachers. They have also produced human rights teaching/learning materials on various issues. To further develop their human rights education programs, they send their personnel to the training programs organized by NGOs such as the Canadian Human Rights Foundation (CHRF)<sup>8</sup> and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The following institutions are either previously active in implementing human rights education program or are in the position to undertake such program:

- The Child Rights Asianet, a regional network for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, held training workshops in the region for representatives of government and non-governmental organizations involved in child rights protection. It focused on the strengthening of national-level system on juvenile justice, and monitoring/reporting on progress of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Law Association of Asia and the Pacific (LAWASIA), though with a mandate to disseminate knowledge on human rights, has not been actively doing human rights education work.
- The Jesuit Refugee Service, an international organization with an Asia office, engages in human rights education as a component of its direct services to refugee communities. It plans to have a more sustained human rights education program to complement intermittent human rights education activities along the Thai border. It collaborates with other human rights organizations on human rights education activities.
- The Asia-South Pacific Bureau on Adult Education (ASPBAE) has identified human rights education as one of its key programs. It has however not been able to develop the human rights education program, which can be offered to its members in the region.
- The Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), a membership organization, published a book on human rights education. It tries to bring the human rights component to the programs of development NGOs. It held workshops on specific human rights and development/culture issue.

<sup>7</sup> As of 1998, the then existing national human rights commissions have developed a number of human rights education programs. For a discussion on these programs see the author's article "National Human Rights Institutions and Human Rights Education," in *Human Rights Education Review*, Institute of Human Rights Education, number 4 (Osaka: 1998). The article was published in Japanese language.

<sup>8</sup> CHRF held a series of training workshops for senior staff and commissioners of the national human rights commissions in Manila from 1999 to 2001. This was in cooperation with the Philippine Commission on Human Rights.

<sup>9</sup> The APF held a number of workshops on various issues such as the use of the media, and investigation skills.

Government-programs on human rights education have also been increasing during the last few years. Japan, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Pakistan have adopted national human rights education action plans. Many local governments in Japan have developed their own local human rights education action plans and established human rights centers which function, at the very least, as sources of basic information on human rights and related domestic legislations. Some countries have either incorporated human rights education in the school curriculum or are in the process of doing so. The Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Japan, Mongolia, south Korea, China, New Zealand and Australia invariably belong to this category. There are also human rights education in schools programs independently undertaken by NGOs or national human rights institutions or teachers' groups in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Bangladesh and Iran. Human rights education in schools is considered part of:

- o Civic education (Vietnam)
- o Moral studies (Indonesia, Malaysia)
- o Legal education (China, Philippines)
- o Religious education (Malaysia)
- o Values education (Thailand, south Korea, Philippines).

There is also a trend toward teaching human rights across different subjects as in the case of the Philippines.<sup>10</sup>

In support of these programs, teaching materials have been produced and teacher training has been held either by the governments alone<sup>11</sup> or in partnership with other institutions. HURIGHTS OSAKA held training for teachers and other educators in South and Southeast Asian subregions. It is cooperating with the ministries of education and other institutions in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam on the preparation of human rights teaching guides. APCEIU has recently started a similar project but for regional consumption and covering issues other than human rights (such

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<sup>10</sup> For more detailed information on the experiences in various countries visit: [www.hurights.or.jp](http://www.hurights.or.jp)

<sup>11</sup> Specialized education institutes are involved, such as the following:

- o National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) - India
- o National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) - India
- o National Institute of Education (NIE) - Sri Lanka
- o National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) - Bangladesh
- o National Institute of Educational Science (NIES) - Vietnam
- o National Curriculum Development Center [NCDC] - (Indonesia).

as peace and sustainable development). It also held a teacher-training workshop for teachers in the Pacific island states as mentioned earlier.<sup>12</sup>

Universities in India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, among others, offer courses on human rights. Most courses are offered as graduate programs. Hong Kong City University and Mahidol University (Thailand) offer graduate courses designed for human rights/NGO workers.

Human rights research centers, established in a number of countries in the region, constitute a possible fourth sector in the human rights equation. There are three types: government, NGO and university centers. At present, there are more than 30 such centers in the region.<sup>13</sup> Though research is their main program, they also produce human rights education materials, hold seminars and workshops, and provide needed information for NGOs, national human rights institutions, relevant government agencies and the general public.

The use of the new information and communication technology for human rights education has started. Websites have been created specifically for human rights education purposes. The following are some examples:

- a. The Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education website ([www.arrc-hre.com](http://www.arrc-hre.com)) contains directories of groups in Asia and the Pacific related to human rights education work, a catalogue of existing materials on all types of human rights education activities and programs;
- b. The Asian Human Rights Commission website ([www.hrschool.org](http://www.hrschool.org)) called *Human Rights School* provides teaching modules on human rights;
- c. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (Australia) interactive website ([www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)) is geared for students and adults;
- d. The Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center website ([www.hurights.or.jp](http://www.hurights.or.jp)) contains information and materials related to human rights education (especially for schools).

The United Nations' specialized agencies have long been supporting regional and national human rights education programs. They support material development, training of trainers, development of national action plans, and research on human rights education programs. See Annex for some of the activities that they have supported in 2002.

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<sup>12</sup> See Marion Kim, "Holism, Dialogue and Critical Empowerment: A Pedagogy for Peace," *Sam Saeng*, autumn 2002, pages 22-31.

<sup>13</sup> Visit [www.hurights.or.jp](http://www.hurights.or.jp) for a list of such centers.

## **Lessons learned**

To understand the issues arising from the human rights education activities in the region, the lessons learned during the recent activities in 2002 would be helpful.<sup>14</sup> These activities raised important issues for human rights education programming.

### Regional arrangement on human rights

The participants of the Sub-regional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice<sup>15</sup> brought back the issue of having a regional arrangement on human rights for the Pacific as one region.<sup>16</sup>

They urge “the Governments and civil societies of the Pacific region to reopen discussion and reflection on the possible drafting of a Pacific regional human rights instrument.”

Discussion of the concept of regional human rights instrument and mechanism for Asia and/or Pacific is an important subject in human rights education. It leads to the analysis of international human rights instruments and mechanisms as they apply to the Asia and/or Pacific context.

### Multicultural understanding of human rights

The participants of the Sub-regional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice discussed the application of international human rights standards to the particular cultural context of the Pacific. They declared that

The Pacific benefits from a strong tradition of community policing and the workshop recalls the importance of preserving the best elements of these systems. The workshop also expresses reservations regarding any suggestion that effective policing is solely reliant on costly infrastructure. Police

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<sup>14</sup> This portion is entirely taken from the introductory remarks of the author in the 11<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region held on 25-27 February 2003 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

<sup>15</sup> This workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji on 25 - 27 June 2002.

<sup>16</sup> This in effect revives the initiative taken by the Law Association of Asia and the Pacific (LAWASIA) in the 80s which proposed the establishment of a Pacific Human Rights Commission as contained in its draft Pacific Charter on Human Rights.

effectiveness is ultimately rooted in a healthy knowledge of and respect for human rights, strong community ties and sensitivity for community structures.

They also recalled that the

Pacific region has developed distinctive and effective practices for the promotion and protection of human rights in the framework of community life. In particular, the experience of Pacific States in employing traditional means of dispute settlement, including mediation and restorative justice, is a rich one and should be integrated into efforts to further promote respect for human rights within all aspects of the administration of justice.

The APCEIU Pacific Region Teacher Training Workshop,<sup>17</sup> on the other hand, explored the indigenous Pacific language concepts related to human rights.

These are examples of efforts toward contextualized discussion of human rights in education activities. It puts value on relevant indigenous ideas and practices that enrich human rights practice.

#### Dissemination of information on materials, best practices, experts, and other resources

Most 2002 initiatives have similar objectives of identifying best practices in human rights work and setting appropriate standards in determining best practices. There is indeed a value in learning from the best practices drawn from the region.

Best practices serve as guide in improving existing systems that are either established to support human rights or have the potential of adversely affecting human rights. The participants in the Sub-regional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice see the value of best practices when they stated that:

The workshop urges that the States of the region review policing practices, taking account of both positive and negative aspects and benefiting from best practices and "lessons-learned" experiences in the region and elsewhere, with a view to the police operating more effectively in a rights-based manner.

The participants further stressed that

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<sup>17</sup> This workshop was held in Suva, Fiji on 16-20 July 2002.

A number of Pacific States have developed penal systems which, at the international level, are highly distinctive (for instance regarding the use of systems of trust and the involvement in society of prisoners). The workshop recommends that these experiences be drawn upon by States of the region in the development of their prison systems and that they be more effectively brought to international attention, including by means of the dissemination of the report of this workshop.

The discussions in the Asian Civil Society Forum<sup>18</sup> workshop on human rights education reveal the need to disseminate information on human rights education experiences not only to governments but to non-governmental organizations as well. Much of the questions raised refer to the desire to know how different human rights programs are developed and implemented. The need to disseminate relevant information on different human rights education programs is therefore a priority.

The participants in the Human Rights, Media and Racism workshop<sup>19</sup> validated the use of the media to disseminate information about human rights. But they also noted factors affecting effective use of the media such as large countries with diverse populations, limited resources, and distrust between non-governmental organizations, the general public and the national human rights institutions. They likewise pointed out that the media have limitations.

The use of the internet and local or community radio is a new area for human rights information dissemination. Numerous websites of non-governmental organizations, government-supported human rights information centers, national human rights institutions, and university centers existing in the region are valuable sources of information and materials for human rights education.

#### Development of national human rights plan

The national, multi-sectoral conferences held in Australia and Malaysia respectively reaffirm the appropriateness of multi-sectoral consultation mechanism as a means of developing national human rights plans. These experiences are similar to the development of the national plans in the Philippines and Thailand. Open discussions whether in conferences or series of consultation workshops held around the country have much to gain in terms of people's education and participation, and representation of various issues and sectors in the development of national plans.

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<sup>18</sup> This workshop was held in Bangkok on 10-13 December 2002.

<sup>19</sup> This workshop was held in Sydney on 15-16 July 2002.

Another important learning is the necessity of evaluating national plans. Serious consideration of the results and recommendations of a fair and objective evaluation of national plans would improve the implementation of human rights programs. The Philippine experience is instructive in this regard. The evaluation of the Philippine plan focused on several areas, namely,

- national plan as an instrument for human rights advocacy, sensitization and direction;
- collaboration between government agencies, people's organizations and non-governmental organizations in addressing human rights issues;
- human rights programming and agenda setting;
- monitoring and resources for implementation;
- sectoral working group activities;
- role of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights; and
- link of the plan to development plans of the country.

In addition, the evaluation need not be limited to the implementation of the plan at the national level but also those undertaken at the local level. This is one lesson learned in the Philippine case, where for reasons of time and resources "regional" (as against national) implementation of the plan was not evaluated.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, evaluating the implementation of national plans at the local level is significant.

#### Content, methodology and duration of human rights education workshops

There is a growing recognition of the need for training on specific skills required in human rights work in general, or human rights education work in particular. This is evident in the way most workshops and training activities invariably raise the issue of continuing skills training activities. Developing human rights education programs, integrating human rights education into the school curriculum, developing teaching/learning materials, working with the media – both old and new forms, investigating human rights violations, and creating networks across different institutions within national and regional levels are some of the areas that require skills training.

The report on the Asia-Pacific Regional Training Program in Human Rights Investigations states that:

The lessons learned from the pilot project suggest that future training in investigations skills should be narrowed to focus on one or two core skill areas.

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<sup>20</sup> *Proceedings and Outputs – External Validation Workshop, Evaluation of the Philippine Human Rights Plan (1996-2000)*, Development Academy of the Philippines (Pasig city, 2003).

This would mean either conducting training on an institution-specific in-country basis and/or conducting regional workshops covering a more tightly defined agenda for institutions with the same identified training and development needs.

While training on specific skills is important to focus on, a general overview of international human rights standards and mechanisms is still considered a significant learning area for the participants. It provides participants with a general framework within which particular human rights work can be located.

The report on the Sub-regional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice states that:

[A]mong immediate pressing education requirements is the need to more effectively and widely disseminate awareness of international human rights standards within all parts of the justice sector, including among lawyers and judges, court officials, the police and prison personnel. To the extent possible, training should be multi-faceted and inter-disciplinary in form, assisting all actors within the justice system to better appreciate the inter-related and inter-dependent roles which they exercise for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Reports on the other activities echo the same need for an over-all understanding of the international human rights standards before proceeding to specific subjects.

The workshop on minorities stressed the need to understand international human rights mechanisms such as the UN Working Group on Minorities.

The suggestion on shorter training period was raised in the Training Programme for National Human Rights Institutions in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>21</sup> While training activities are opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, too much information and activities within a short period are likely to affect the capacity of the participants to properly absorb them.

Another important component in training is on methodology. Effective training methodology as defined at present is one where there is utmost exchange and interaction between facilitators and participants and among the participants themselves during the training sessions. A training program, with less lectures and more group work is one form of this effective methodology. Again, the report on the Asia-Pacific Regional Training Program in Human Rights Investigations has something to share on this point:

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<sup>21</sup> This workshop was held in Bangkok in October - November 2002.



The Training Program was firmly based on a student-centred adult learning philosophy. The workshops were designed as a shared learning experience. From the outset, and throughout the workshops, participants were encouraged to bring their own expertise, insights and understandings to the workshops. Trainers acknowledged that, while they were experts in their particular subject areas, the participants, as Human Rights Officers, [have] something valuable to offer each other. This approach was well received by the participants.

### Sustainability

The development of human rights education activities depends to a large extent on addressing the needs of identified target groups in the region. One need is continued training for people who are involved in human rights/human rights education work.

Training programs in turn are dependent on the availability of funds. The financial support provided by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP as well as private funding agencies (which supported most of the non-governmental organizations' programs) is certainly significant.

Another important factor is the availability of expertise from the region and outside. The region has experienced trainers who can respond to the needs of target groups as shown by the variety of activities held. But there is no system in place yet that can facilitate the involvement of trainers beyond their respective networks.

Finally, the creation of networks among the participants is a good result of the activities. Such networks can help develop and implement follow-up activities, while regional institutions can provide support.

### **Needs**

The number and variety of activities being held should not give the impression that there is a sufficient response to the need for human rights education in the region. There are problems and limitations affecting these activities. Following are some issues for consideration:

#### a. Documentation and assessment

Only ARRC and HURIGHTS OSAKA are documenting human rights education experiences in the region. ARRC is mainly focusing on non-formal education

programs while HURIGHTS OSAKA is concentrating on the formal education programs. Neither institution can fully document the initiatives existing at the national level. Thus the documentation of these experiences should likewise be done by national centers, which fall under the human rights education resource centers prescribed by the plan of action of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). Best practices are the best teachers in creating as well as improving human rights education programs. Thus whatever best practices are there should be documented and disseminated to as many groups as possible.

Assessment of programs is an entirely separate matter. There is no regional mechanism that can systematically assess the existing programs in the region. Many of the assessment initiatives are one-off projects, rather than continuing programs. There is likewise no agreed approach and method of assessing programs. One of the reasons for the lack of standard assessment approach and method is the lack of consensus on what to assess in human rights education. Assessments are sometimes used to limit rather than improve programs. Thus assessment done for the limited purpose of satisfying a donor's administrative reporting requirements do not help programs, and instead stifle their development (and in certain cases lead to cutting off of needed financial support).

#### b. Training programs

The existing human rights training programs - both non-formal and formal education programs - do not satisfy the needs NGO and government personnel. Many of the training programs are ad hoc in character. Continuity of the programs is not assured for a number of reasons.

In many countries in the region human rights education programs for the following are not yet in place:

- police and military personnel
- immigration personnel
- prison officials
- judges, prosecutors, lawyers
- school teachers
- other government officials.

Existing experiences in implementing human rights education programs need to be shared, evaluated, and adapted in the region.

Additionally, programs that provide a general review of human rights instruments and mechanisms are needed. These programs may cover approaches

and methods of mainstreaming human rights in NGO and government activities. There are not enough programs of this type.

c. Institutionalization/mainstreaming of programs

Human rights education should be employed to institutionalize human rights in government policies, programs and systems. Despite the consistent affirmation of the value of human rights education by governments (along with ratification of human rights conventions), their policies, programs and systems are not necessarily changed to accommodate human rights.

Institutionalizing or mainstreaming human rights in government policies, programs and systems require a substantial amount of work including enacting laws, changing administrative rules and regulations, and in-service personnel training. Human rights education in schools programs, for example, need reform in the school curriculum, change in textbooks to include discussion on human rights, teacher and school administrator training, and changes in school policies and regulations. While these changes cannot be done immediately, a consistent effort over time to make improvements in line with these reforms would be needed.

d. Development and distribution of materials

Teaching and learning materials constitute an important component in any human rights education program. These materials to be effective must be adapted to the particular situation of the users. School-based programs require materials that are different from those needed by government personnel. Likewise, materials for human rights or NGO workers are different from those of members of the communities they give assistance to. These types of materials exist but have not been widely distributed to the target users. Many materials are unknown to those who need them most. Also, limited number of copies greatly hinders their widespread use.

### **Recommendations**

The goals of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) have not been fulfilled for a variety of reasons. Many countries still do not have national human rights education action plans. Consequently, many of the proposed components of such plans such as creation of national focal points, training

programs, development of teaching and learning materials, cooperation between NGOs and governments are not programmed. Many governments have their reasons in not having national human rights education action plans, or most of the proposed components for human rights education. But since they have not withdrawn support for human rights education, there is a still room to urge them to undertake the proposed measures.

A good starting point for any assistance program is the recent output of the 11<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region held on 25-27 February 2003 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The governments in that workshop

28. Recognize that human rights education can play a crucial role in enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and can contribute to the promotion of human rights, the prevention of human rights violations and the achievement of a culture of peace;
29. Recognize that human rights education should benefit from diverse social and cultural values and traditions that enforce the universality of human rights, having the aim of promoting a multicultural understanding of human rights;
30. Recognize the desirability of including human rights education as a component of national human rights plans of action, development plans and other relevant national plans of action;
31. Encourage Governments to promote the development of national plans and strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive, participatory, effective and sustainable, and to accelerate the pace of implementation of such plans and strategies within the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), so as to realize significant achievements by the end of the Decade;
32. Note the implementation of, and substantive report and conclusions relating to the workshop on human rights and the administration of justice, held in Fiji in June 2002;
33. Recognize the important role of national human rights institutions in human rights education and encourage a sharing of lessons learned and best practices among them in this regard;
34. Recognize that human rights education in schools is a comprehensive process which concerns not only the inclusion of human rights elements in the curriculum, but also the further development of textbooks and teaching methodologies, the human rights training of teachers and school administrators as well as the fostering of learning environments which encourage the full development of the human personality;

35. Note that priority should also be given to human rights education for all those involved in the administration of justice, including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police, prison officials and relevant Government officials as well as among the marginalized, vulnerable and illiterate section of the population;
36. Acknowledge the important role that non-governmental actors can play in furthering human rights education, and stress the need for governmental and non-governmental actors to enhance partnership to this end.

The Australian government may consider providing technical and financial assistance to governments and NGOs in the region in support of the following programs:

- a. Research on practices in the region that enrich human rights principles and mechanisms. The practices cited by the lawyers, judges and other government personnel in the Sub-regional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice are good examples.
- b. Development of regional and national training programs for "all those involved in the administration of justice, including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police, prison officials and relevant Government officials."
- c. Improvement of programs for "marginalized, vulnerable and illiterate section of the population."
- d. Review and/or development of "textbooks and teaching methodologies," and the adoption of programs on "the human rights training of teachers and school administrators."
- e. Monitoring of human rights education programs and dissemination of information on "best practices." This includes reproduction of teaching and learning materials for wider distribution.
- f. Strengthening linkages among human rights educators through systems for exchanging information and materials. Since materials, programs and expertise exist in the region, a system for pooling these resources together is a necessity.

These activities support the programs in the region discussed earlier. They build on the experiences of many human rights educators who have been involved in those programs for years.

The Australian government may also discuss these suggestions in the annual Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region as follow-up measures to the conclusions made in the 2000 (Beijing), 2002 (Beirut) and 2003 (Islamabad) workshops.

## Annex

# Summary of the 2002 Human Rights Education Activities in the Asia-Pacific\*

### Regional initiatives

#### A. Research and documentation

The Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) launched in 2001 a project to document successful implementation of human rights education programs. The documentation covers various types of programs including those for communities and for schools. The project tries to bring out field experiences that can guide the development of effective human rights education programs. This project continued in 2002.<sup>1</sup>

The Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA) compiles reports on experiences, surveys and studies relating to human rights education in schools from various countries in the region. The reports are published in an annual journal<sup>2</sup> and circulated to educators in the region.

These projects constitute an important stimulus for the human rights educators in the region. They provide appropriate recognition of the work being done at ground level. They facilitate the dissemination of actual experiences to those interested in developing human rights education programs. They provide a basis for understanding how much work has to be done to make human rights education widely and effectively institutionalized in the region.

#### B. Teacher training and teaching material development

The Asia-Pacific Center for Education on International Understanding (APCEIU) has started a training program for teachers based on UNESCO's program on peace, human rights, environment and sustainable development. Its recent teacher training activity was focused on the Pacific and held in Suva, Fiji in

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\* This is taken from the introductory remarks of Jefferson R. Plantilla during the 11<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region held in 25-27 February 2003 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

<sup>1</sup> For further information see *Making A Difference*, a newsletter of ARRC for this project.

<sup>2</sup> The annual journal is entitled *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*.

cooperation with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific and the Fiji National Commission for UNESCO on 16-20 July 2002. Teachers attended the training workshop from 10 South Pacific countries including Fiji, Cook Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and New Zealand. The workshop covered discussions and planning on human education programs in schools.<sup>3</sup>

In September, a Chinese delegation went to the Philippines for a study tour. The OHCHR-organized study tour was held on 16-24 September 2002. This study tour is part of the technical assistance of OHCHR to the People's Republic of China for the development of human rights education programs for the police, judges, teachers and other professionals. This is also a follow-up to the recommendation of Chinese educators to develop a national human rights education program for primary and secondary schools in a seminar held in Beijing on 8-9 November 2001. The members of the Chinese delegation were briefed on the different programs and institutions involved in human rights education in Philippine schools. They also observed human rights classes in primary, secondary and tertiary levels. And they interacted with educators from Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia about policy support for human rights education in schools, project implementation, and teacher training.

The Asia-Pacific Network on Values Education and International Education (APNIEVE) continued producing its sourcebooks that include human rights education. Its second sourcebook<sup>4</sup> has already been printed and introduced to Asia-Pacific teachers in a workshop in Adelaide, Australia in October 2002.

The Southeast Asian Writing Workshop on the Development of Teaching Guides on Human Rights<sup>5</sup> produced enough human rights lesson plans to justify their compilation into one publication for use by teachers in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The lesson plans are models for teachers to use in making their own lesson plans. The review of the lesson plans was done during 2002. APCEIU, on the other hand, launched in late 2002 a project to develop a teacher-training manual on "education toward a culture of peace" that includes human rights.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Marion Kim, "Holism, Dialogue and Critical Empowerment: A Pedagogy for Peace," *Sam Saeng*, autumn 2002, pages 22-31.

<sup>4</sup> *Learning To Be - A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development*, UNESCO-APNIEVE Sourcebook, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, (Bangkok: 2002).

<sup>5</sup> This workshop (writeshop) was held in Manila, Philippines in June 2001. For more information, see volume five, *Human Rights Education in Asian School*, pages 79-90.

<sup>6</sup> See "Drafting the Framework for the EIU Teacher Training Manual," *Sam Saeng*, op cit., page 32.



The workshop on "Universalizing the Right to Education of Good Quality: A Rights-Based Approach to Achieving Education for All," held in Manila on 29-31 October 2002, and jointly organized by the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, SEAMEO INNOTECH, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights discussed, among other items in the agenda, the extent to which national constitutions and laws, policies and practices, have been harmonized with the core human rights obligations relevant to education, and the extent to which qualitative and quantitative data are available in individual countries to demonstrate progress towards both fulfilling the core obligations emanating from the principal human rights treaties and advancing the implementation of Education for All (EFA) and to share experiences and best practices in generating necessary and internationally comparable data.

### C. Sector/theme-based programs

A workshop<sup>7</sup> held during the Asian Civil Society Forum held on 10-13 December 2002 reviewed the state of human rights education program implementation in the region and discussed the need to cover issues relating to environment and sustainable development. The workshop raised questions and concerns as basic as the following:

- How can human rights education be incorporated into the school curriculum?
- What are the examples of integration of human rights education in the school system?
- What financial support do the UN and governments allocate to human rights education?
- What human rights education programs are there for law enforcement officers, other government officials and members of parliament?
- What teaching/learning methodologies for human rights education would contribute to the empowerment of people?

The Regional Youth Human Development Rights Education Workshop, held on 28 July - 1 August 2002 was an Asia-Pacific follow-up to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and other Forms of Intolerance. It was attended by 27 youth leaders from Australia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan,

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<sup>7</sup> Educational Approaches for Human Rights, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter, Thematic Workshop III-C, Asian Civil Society Forum 2002, 12 December, 2002, ESCAP Building Bangkok, Thailand

Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.<sup>8</sup> It was supported by UNESCO.

On training and education, the youth leaders committed themselves to do several activities in their respective countries such as:

- National human rights training workshop;
- Distribution of copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to non-governmental organizations, formal and non-formal educational institutions and local community groups;
- Interfaith programs to promote dialogue among young people from various faiths as a reconciliation tool against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Cooperation with United Nations and other international organizations on conflict resolution skills training workshop for children and young people.

The subregional seminar on minority rights<sup>9</sup> held in Chiangmai, Thailand on 2-7 December 2002 focused on issues about minorities and indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. The seminar participants recommended, among others, to

- Sensitize and train public servants, police, members of judiciary, prison staff and government officials on human rights, in particular the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples;
- Highlight in educational policies and programs that diversity and unity are not necessarily opposites and integrating diversity is conducive to good governance;
- Institute programs in schools to fully educate students about the realities of minorities and indigenous people;
- Provide training for community-based organizations on the skills of doing research on the impact of development;
- Strengthen capacity-building programs of minority groups and indigenous peoples' communities on advocacy work.

The Sub-regional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice was held in Nadi, Fiji on 25 - 27 June 2002. It was attended by judges, lawyers, police, prison officers and other professionals and government officials working in the justice sector and representatives of civil society from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Zealand,

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<sup>8</sup> See "Asian Youth Network for Human Development," in *FOCUS Asia-Pacific*, issue number 29, September 2002, page 13.

<sup>9</sup> Minority Rights: Cultural Diversity and Development in Southeast Asia, a subregional seminar organized by the OHCHR, the UN Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Minorities and Chiangmai University.

Papua New Guinea, Republic of Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu. The workshop discussed the role of judges and lawyers in promoting and protecting human rights within the judicial system.

#### D. Staff training for national human rights institutions

The Training Programme for National Human Rights Institutions in Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok on 21 October - 1 November 2002 was attended by middle-level management staff members of national institutions in Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Palestine, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. They cover a review of international human rights standards and the work of national institutions.

A more focused training for national institutions staff were also held, namely, the Asia-Pacific Regional Training Program in Human Rights Investigations, and the Regional Workshop on National Institutions, Human Rights Education, Media and Racism.

The investigation techniques training workshop, held in Sydney on 15-16 July 2002, was attended by representatives of national institutions in Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The workshop is a pilot program and thus experience drawn from it will be used to design "subsequent programs that will fully meet the diverse needs and expectations of regional human rights institutions."

The Human Rights, Media and Racism workshop, held on 15-16 July 2002 in Sydney, was organized as a direct response to the 2002-2004 Programme of Action. The workshop was attended by representatives of national institutions in the region, international and regional media organizations, governments, regional and national human rights NGOs, the OHCHR, and other international organizations. Discussions in the workshop reveal the need to focus human rights education efforts to members of the media to assure more accurate and informed presentation of human rights issues. The discussions reiterate the need to reinforce the campaign in support of freedom of expression.

#### E. Annual training programs and graduate courses

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) organized its 6th Annual Asian Human Rights Training and Study Session jointly with the Center for Social Development (CSDS), Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University on 6-26 October 2002 for those working on

human rights, social justice, development and peace issues. This study session is meant to provide a comprehensive human rights course for activists in Asia.

The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP), affiliated with the Faculty of Law of the University of New South Wales (Australia), held the 13th Annual Training for Human Rights Defenders from the Asia-Pacific and Indigenous Australia on 3-21 February 2003 in Bangkok. The training program is named "Human Rights and Peoples' Diplomacy." DTP's training program generally contains the following contents: a. Information on international human rights and public international law, human rights and humanitarian principles, accessing UN human rights agencies and procedures, regional human rights mechanisms and organizations; b. Practical skills in lobbying, working with the media, "peoples' diplomacy," effective strategies for non-governmental organizations and using the internet for human rights.

The Mahidol University in Thailand offers the "International Master of Arts Programme in Human Rights" for educators, academicians, advocates and students interested in human rights. The program offers interdisciplinary inquiries and research opportunities.

The Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong offers a master of laws program in human rights. Women and members of minorities are particularly encouraged to apply.

### **National initiatives**

Complementing regional initiatives are a few examples of initiatives at the national level.

The National Strategic Conference on Human Rights Education, organized by an Australian non-governmental organization called National Committee on Human Rights Education, was held on 23 August 2002 in Sydney. The conference is designed as a contribution to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). With the participation of people from various sectors involved in human rights education, the conference started the process of developing national human rights education strategies by crystallizing the current state of development of human rights education in Australia and identifying key directions for its future development.<sup>10</sup> The conference formed a

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<sup>10</sup> National Strategic Conference on Human Rights Education, University House, Australian National University, 1 Balmain Crescent, Acton, Canberra, 23 August 2002.

consultative forum to move forward the development of a collective vision for a national human rights education agenda. The conference results were subsequently presented to a parliament committee holding hearings on Australian policy on human rights education.

A month after, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia held a national conference on human rights and education. The conference was attended by more than 300 participants representing schools, the Ministry of Education, non-governmental organizations, media groups, and other sectors. The presentations and discussions covered various topics relating to access to education, teaching human rights in schools, media and human rights, and several human rights issues.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, a meeting between representatives of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia and the Malaysian Ministry of Education discussed ways of integrating human rights education into the school curriculum.

On the other hand, the evaluation of the Philippine Human Rights Plan (1996-2000) which includes provisions on human rights education was finished in 2002. This evaluation is seemingly a first in the region. The evaluation examined the implementation of the plan as well as institutional arrangements made available. The evaluation report recommends, among others, the establishment of a continuing advocacy and education on human rights.<sup>12</sup> Validation of the evaluation report has started since December 2002.

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<sup>11</sup> Conference on Human Rights and Education held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 9-10 September 2002 and organized by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia.

<sup>12</sup> See *Proceedings and Outputs - External Validation Workshop, Evaluation of the Philippine Human Rights Plan (1996-2000)*, Development Academy of the Philippines (Pasig city, 2003).