



## **Submission No 38**

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

**Organisation:** Centre for Democratic Institutions

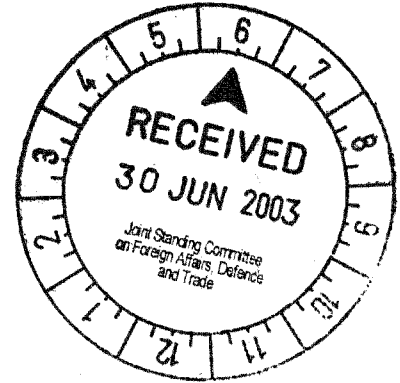
**Contact Person:** Mr Roland Rich

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Canberra ACT 0200



28 June 2003

Mr Adam Cunningham  
Secretary  
Human Rights Sub-Commission  
JSCFADT



Dear Mr Cunningham

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

Thank you for your letter of 29 May in which you asked for further comments on a number of points.

AusAID conducts numerous capacity building programs for good governance and many of these will already incorporate human rights training. One means of strengthening this aspect might be to set an informal quote of, say 30%, of activities undertaken through the Human Rights Fund to be directed at human rights education.

It is always difficult to consult civil society especially where there is no peak group to coordinate views. Nevertheless, aid donors should attempt to incorporate consultations with civil society at the design phase of their governance projects.

Human rights education already forms an integral part of CDI programs. Government officials engaged in democracy promotion should have a strong knowledge of human rights. AusAID and DFAT already provide courses on human rights for their officers. Other government departments may wish to follow this example.

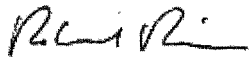
A national policy consultation would be a useful initiative as a means of exchanging information and looking for better ways of working with other deliverers. But it should not attempt to claim a coordination role as that could complicate matters by adding an additional layer of bureaucracy to decision-making. For that reason I am not sure there is a role for a National Centre for Human Rights Education or a national coordination council. There is great value in sharing information and ideas and allowing cooperation to flow on an informal basis and an existing body such as HREOC may be able to take on this role.

CDI conducts English language courses when they are essential for the purpose of reaching our target audience. CDI has used providers such as the Australia Indonesia Language Foundation in Jakarta and the Australian Centre for Education in Phnom Penh. English language training can be tailored for specific purposes including human rights teaching.

The region has its limited consultation mechanisms through the Regional Workshops arranged by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the regular meetings of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. The region is very diverse and it is difficult to force the pace on issues of regional governance architecture. It may be possible, however, to request the two existing regional meetings to undertake a type of audit of human rights teaching. It may also be possible for these meetings to act as a clearinghouse for requests for assistance in human rights teaching.

A final point worth considering is the possibility of strengthening the links between tertiary academic institutions teaching human rights. Human rights are universal and can be taught the same way in any country in the world. Exchanges of people and materials between such institutions may be a useful way to enhance human rights education.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Roland Rich', written in a cursive style.

Roland Rich  
Director