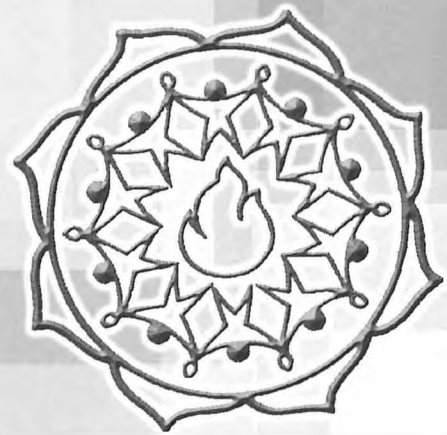

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A COMPILATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SUCCESS STORIES

Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC)
Supported by DANIDA and the Norwegian Human Rights Fund

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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Contact Address
P.O.Box 26 Bungthonglang
Bangkok 10242, Thailand
Tel: (662) 377 5641, 731 0829
Fax: (662) 731 0829
Email : arrc@ksc.th.com
Website : www.arrc-hre.com

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Compiled and Edited by
Ploychompoo Sukustit
Theresa J.Limpin

Editorial Team
Anjani F. Abella
Jamela G. Pangilinan
Jonathan Wong
Ploychompoo Sukustit
Sanjay Gathia
Theresa J. Limpin

Design
Chartree Thablamom

Drawings taken from ARRC's 1998 My Drawing My Rights Project

PREFACE

Does human rights education make a difference? Stories from the field answer this question in the affirmative. Human rights education does make a difference.

Compiling stories of successful human rights education activities is not, however, meant to simply prove that human rights education makes a difference. Rather, it is meant to provide people the chance to step back and assess how far they have gone in attaining the goals of human rights education. The stories by themselves are not complete. They indicate what steps to take next.

These stories are for human rights educators. It is meant to remind them that there is a collective human rights education experience to draw inspiration as well as ideas from. It is meant to tell them that their own experiences are shared by others.

More importantly, this collection of stories is a way of giving due recognition to the tireless efforts of so many human rights educators in Asia and elsewhere.

These stories are also for those who aspire to become human rights educators. It is meant to showcase the hardship as well as the fruits of doing earnest human rights education work. Inspiration to the would-be human rights educator should be based on a pragmatic understanding of the tasks involved.

Human rights education would be unfairly judged if the yardstick is only the number of people involved, or the amount of materials produced, or the issues covered. Education is a process that cannot be gauged by such standard of measurement. It is judged by the impact that it makes on people.

The stories in this collection provide glimpses of human rights education experiences in making a difference on people.

Through this collection, ARRC continues its mandate of gathering and disseminating information on human rights education experiences in the region. Its work goes on as long as there are stories waiting to be told.

Jefferson Plantilla
ARRC Board Member

INTRODUCTION

ARRC believes that people learn from experience, from the successes and mistakes of others. For human rights educators, the experience of other educators likely inspires them to continue their task on human rights and sustainable development. Experience enlightens people and gives them ideas on how to create better initiatives.

This book is a compilation of **human rights education success stories** contributed by human rights educators/activists in the region. The compilation is divided into seven categories - children, development, education, indigenous people, labour, law, and women/gender. It covers formal and non-formal human rights education experiences. These stories of successful human rights education experiences are truly inspiring both for the human rights educators and the people who are struggling to realize their rights, the marginalized more specifically.

ARRC is carrying on with its best effort of documenting every type of human rights education experiences. It hopes that this type of publication sustains the continuation of effective and relevant human rights education programs at the community level.

ARRC calls on human rights educators in the region to help inspire others by telling stories on how to make a difference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first to deserve acknowledgment, with all humility and respect, are the human rights educators who shared their stories for ARRC's first compilation of stories in human rights education. Stories of sacrifices and struggles and how they overcome them, stories of failures and successes, stories indicating a promise of success yet only time will tell where the journey would lead to, are the stories we would like to capture in this project. The journal, Making a Difference, and this compilation would not see the light of day without their stories so generously shared. The cooperation of the following is therefore deeply appreciated: A.K.Merchant, Anchalee Phonklieng, Aung Myo Min, Chompoo Trakullertsathien, Christopher Drake, Clarence Dias, Edel Silan, Jerald Joseph, John Lowrie, Kathy Bond-Stewart, Otto Malmgren, People's Movement for Human Rights Education(PDHRE), Prasittiporn Kan-Onsri, Rukshan Fernando, Sophie Kavoukis, Teresita Barrameda, Xuyen Thi Dangers, and Yangling Wang.

The preparation of this compilation, on the other hand, was made possible through the support of several individuals and organizations. The following are acknowledged for their respective contributions in preparing this compilation:

- **Ploychompoo Sukustit** for researching, compiling, and editing the stories. She is likewise translating the journal into Thai language. ARRC is very grateful to her.
- **Theresa J. Limpin** for collecting, editing and giving guidance on how to proceed with the implementation of the project.
- **Rinjani Abella** for editing the remaining two volumes of the journal.
- **Sanjay Gathia**- for editing the first volume of the journal.
- **Sucharat Sathapornanon** for doing the lay out and distributing the journal to the network partners of ARRC in the region.
- **Jonathan Wong** for making all the stories published in the journal available in the internet (www.arrc-hre.com).
- **Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB)** - for supporting and facilitating the translation of the journal into Burmese.
- **Piengporn Panutampon** for editing the journal in Thai.

Appreciation is also given to all the **READERS** of the journal for their comments and words of encouragement.

Lastly, we acknowledge DANIDA and the Norwegian Human Rights Fund for helping make this endeavor happen. Their belief in the success of the project is the greatest incentive for everyone.

CONTENTS

Page

CHILDREN

Growing Up As A Better Person In CWA

By Edel Silan

Ratjai (middle right) listens attentively to Kae (CWA youth volunteer) during a cultural exchange activity in children's participation.
Photo from CWA's photo bank

Ratjai Adjayutpokin, was one of the participants in the *Regional Human Rights Training of Trainers for Peace Building*

organized by Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) in October 2001. The training gathered NGO staff from various Southeast Asian countries including Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor, Burma/Myanmar and Cambodia. The story of Ratjai gives us a glimpse on the life of a social development staff in a regional child rights organization, some concrete lessons learned in educating children on participation, and on how the *ARRC* program contributes in its humble way to developing capacities of NGO workers.

Ratjai has a natural liking to work with children. She came in contact with *Child Workers in Asia (CWA)* for the first time in 1989 when she was working in the Refugee Camp (for Cambodian, Laos and Vietnamese) in Phanatnikom, Chonburi Province in Thailand. She was teaching French to Cambodian and Vietnamese children who were preparing to leave for France where they had been granted asylum. During that period, she met Panudda Boonpala (Pin) the first Co-Ordinator of *CWA* in Bangkok and thus learned a little about the organization. She later found the opportunity to work with *CWA* when one of the staff got a scholarship to study in the USA and left the organization.

"*I started working as the Administration Officer, I was also handling all the correspondence and the small library in the office*", says Ratjai. *"CWA was not a big organization then and since there was not a lot of work in administration, I used to help Pin interview children, meet people from the various NGOs working in children's issues, and attend meetings – both national and international, advocating for children's issues. I would also accompany the Thai staff to be their translator in various meetings.*"

During her over ten years of work at *CWA*, Ratjai learned

> ***"Another example is on discussions on children's rights. This can be started by asking "What do you need in life?", the responses can be linked then to the basic rights."***

how to facilitate activities by actually going through her "on-the-job training" (as she calls it). "*I have learned about a lot of issues from the street and working children themselves, and from the other NGO staff. When I started working with CWA it was a young organization. It has expanded and had a wider network of NGOs and I feel that I have also grown along with CWA during these past years.*"

The *ARRC's Regional Human Rights Training of Trainers* in 2001 came at a time when *CWA* is already pursuing more intently its agenda of promoting children's participation. As the Southeast Asian Program Officer of *CWA* now, Ratjai is responsible for providing technical assistance to young leaders and to various (former) working children's organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities promoting children's rights, and responding to various child labour concerns in several countries. She is also the focal person of the secretariat on facilitating support for actions on issues of migration and trafficking in the region. By sending her to the *ARRC* training, the organization (CWA) was aiming to hone her skills in developing and assessing various training modules related to children's rights and child labour, and further enhancing her facilitation skills. The exposure to the *ARRC* training provided Ratjai with more confidence in her skills as a Program Officer to identify capacity building needs of partners and provide necessary technical assistance to the *CWA* partners, both adults and young people.

CWA strongly advocates for children's participation.

If programs are to truly serve the best interests of children, children who are affected by the issue should be able to participate in analyzing the problem, planning, making decisions, and implementing and monitoring actions in an appropriate (culturally and developmentally) and sustainable manner. In this region, because of cultural reasons, children could not fully enjoy their right to participate. "*We still needs to clearly translate what the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)says on how children can participate and why we need children's participation. If CWA is to become effective in being a network of partners finding solutions to the child labour problem, we must develop our ability to promote children's participation. This demands in-depth understanding of Asian societies, children's rights, human rights, and skills in facilitating and training others*", said Ratjai.

> ***"The methodology we have developed on educating children on participation is more based on learning by doing."***

Ratjai said, "*Through local and regional activities that CWA are facilitating, links among the young leaders are being built. Many young leaders who participated in our trainings have become stronger and are now actively initiating, facilitating and participating in the programs and activities that promote enjoyment of children's rights in their own communities. They have now started organizing local activities and are teaching school children about child rights and child labour, using popular education methods. Some of them are now being tapped too, for active participation in regional consultations.*"

"*The methodology we have developed on educating children on participation is more based on learning by doing*".

she said. And *"for example, when we start the sessions, we ask the children to brainstorm and make the house rules amongst themselves. The young people themselves facilitate the program as much as possible, with some help from adult facilitators. Thus the children learn facilitation skills more by doing it themselves and seeing how it is done."*

She continued, "*the participating children in the meanwhile are further encouraged and motivated to share their experiences of what they think as children working on the streets, etc. and look to the children facilitators as inspirations.*"

"*Another example is on discussions on children's rights. This can be started by asking "What do you need in life?", the responses can be linked then to the basic rights. The children are encouraged to speak in small groups and share their experiences." We encourage them to do the same in their own communities so that other children too can learn from them. We help them in making viable work-plans. We also implement processes for them to be aware of their own cultural sensitivities and contexts. For example what is applicable to the children in the Philippines may not be applicable in the same manner to the children in Laos. Like saying - "Oh that is not a good idea, stupid idea, etc." The basic idea behind the facilitation is not to give lecture-based inputs, but rather use activity-based learning processes. The adult facilitators could just help synthesize and deepen the meaning of each activities and conclude the session*", she explained.

One of Ratjai's most memorable experience while working in CWA has been seeing Fa, a 14 year old child worker in a factory. The Foundation for Children Development (FCD), one of the closest partner of *CWA* in Bangkok has helped Fa to participate in non-formal education and various vocational

training. Now Fa has a professional job and is now married. "*Such incidences have been my inspiration. I have seen a lot of children grow up in the past 10 years of my career in CWA and it has given me great strength to work more for the children to help them actually develop as individuals with potentials and be given the opportunity to realize their potentials.*"

»

Child Workers in Asia (CWA) started in 1985 as a support group for child workers in Asia and the NGOs that were working with these children. It was first formed with a small group of five organizations, and now has grown over these years bringing over 50 organizations working on child labour in more than 14 countries.

A. Program Objectives:

1. Strengthen the NGO (including some GO) and children's network through capacity building in advocacy, organising children, conducting action researches, documentation, and monitoring.
2. Propagate the concept of children's participation
3. Organize/strengthen Task Forces for concrete actions addressing bonded child labour, child domestic work, and migration and trafficking
4. Encourage and support NGOs in conducting studies on sectors and countries where relevant information necessary for action is not available
5. Monitor existing approaches to combating child labour in Asia, examine international interventions, and disseminate

information on innovative programs

6. Lobby with international organizations and UN bodies for the participation of children and NGOs in policy making and in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs.

B. Programs and Activities:

1. Focused interventions on child domestic workers, bonded child labour in South Asia and children migrant workers and trafficked children
2. Capacity Building for NGOs
3. Promotion of Children's Participation
4. Research, Documentation, and Information Dissemination
5. Advocacy and Lobbying

»

For more details contact:

Child Workers in Asia

Visiting address: 16/27 Charoensuk Village, Soi Sua Yai Utit, Ratchadapisek Road Bangkok 10900 Thailand

Mailing address: P.O. Box 29 Chandrakasem Post Office, Bangkok 10904 Thailand

Tel: (662) 930-0855

Fax: (662) 930-0856

Email: cwanet@loxinfo.co.th

Website: http://www.cwa.tnet.co.th

Leading Role of the Students in Class Activity

By Yanling Wang

In the past half century, Chinese people, under the leadership of Chinese government, have been pursuing and endeavoring to improve human rights conditions in China. As a result of our efforts, human rights conditions have greatly changed and progressed. We attach great importance and give special attention to human rights in every respect of people's life and work. As a primary school teacher, I witness the great improvement of human rights in primary school education. The concept of human rights has been introduced into class and such ideas as, showing respect for children and have students play the leading role, have gone deep into people's minds. Here, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my personal experience in my teaching work.

My description is largely in two aspects:

First, keep the initiative in the students own hands.

I am a Chinese teacher in charge of a grade-one class. On the first day of the students entrance into school, I try to have

them play the leading role in class and make them have the sense that each one of them is an important part of the class. By offering them opportunities to display and develop their ability of various kinds, their consciousness of responsibility is enhanced and what one can see is a class full of vigor and vitality.

My specific work is as follows:

1. Have the students conduct Daily Broadcast activity, which is a reflection of the students school life. It consists of various items, such as Morning Song, Daily News, My Opinion, New Story in Class, etc. Broadcasting Station is made up of the head, correspondents, announcers, special editors, etc; they are a combination of volunteer services and election result.

In the activity, the students not only acquire knowledge and broaden the vision, but also have a chance to develop their eloquence and present their abilities. What is more important, their self-confidence and initiative are promoted.

2. Organize the students to edit Class Weekly, Blackboard Bulletin. They are encouraged to write for themselves, make comments and offer suggestions on the class issues. Good deeds are praised while behaviors of violating school regulations are criticized in order to form a healthy class atmosphere and to make them able to tell the difference between right and wrong.

> ***"By offering them opportunities to display and develop their ability of various kinds, their consciousness of responsibility is enhanced and what one can see is a class full of vigor and vitality."***

3. Have the students perform duty by turns. They take turns to be the week monitor in charge of the class affairs of the week.

They take a detailed record of goings-on in class, which is to be filled in the Class Diary at the end of the day. The week monitor will sum up his work of the week and come up with some advice when his duty is finished.

4. Encourage every student to advance. Children hope to be approved by others and approval from others may inspire them to do better. As teachers, we should regard every individual student as unique, value their opinions and do more to develop their potentials no matter he or she is a top student or a problem student. Thus, he will act more actively and recognize the value of himself.

For example, I encourage those students with poor performance in study but with a warm heart to take part in the class election. By doing so, they are aware that they are members of the collective, they have the share in deciding on the important things of the class.

A naughty student made his election speech to the whole class: Though I am not a very good student, I am glad that I am given such a chance to elect. I love our class and I have a strong desire to do something for the class. I like sports so much and I believe I can help in the sports class. I am longing your vote for me. Along with his last words was the applause from his classmates. Finally, he had his wish fulfilled.

They come to know that the opportunity belongs to everybody and once they have the opportunity they will try their best to make his contribution to the class. From then on, deciding on the important things by voting becomes a tradition of the class. For instance, they were going to attend the handwriting newspaper contest of the school and all of them got actively involved in it. Some were responsible for searching materials while some others responsible for designing the newspaper. Through discussion, five best designs were selected. By contrast and revision, they made the best of the five designs to

form the final for the contest, which won them the first prize. In these activities the students have learned a lot that they cannot obtain from books. They are more self-confident in managing themselves and the class.

In the meantime, everybody is assigned a post to fulfill his share of duty in class, which has made some of them get rid of inferiority complex, for what he has done is recognized and appreciated by his peers.

There was such a boy who often bullied the others in class. He was so eager to do something for the class but he was afraid that he could not have his classmates confidence. To his enjoyment, he was given the chance to be responsible for the work of turning off the lights of the class when school was over. The work was not as easy as it seemed to be. He was often the last one to go home. His persistence and responsibility impressed his classmates. He was so happy to be recognized that he wrote in the class diary: Thank you all for trusting me. I will try my best to do better. The students experience of playing multi-role in class activities helps them move away from unhealthy tendencies in psychology development and helps them to learn to work for the team, to cooperate with others and to show consideration for others.

Second, respect and love students.

A teacher not only teaches the students knowledge, but he or she is also a good friend of the students. He/she should create an equal harmonious atmosphere as well as show his/her respect and trust on them when he/she talks and discusses with the students. "*Love is the basis of education and love can make a teacher go into the inside world of the students*". In these years, I help my students form good habits in many respects of their study

get ill I go to visit them at home; when they meet difficulties in life I always give them a hand; when they have difficulties in study I explain to them until they can understand; when they commit any mistakes I talk patiently with them until they realize that they really need to improve. As long as I have free time I am involved in my students games, singing and laughing with them, which does good for the teacher and the students to communicate and promote understanding.

I believe teacher offers something besides knowledge. He/she cultivates the children's potentials, helps them grow in spirit, to nudge them down the right trail, to fan sparks, to suggest good books and to point out a pathway for the students. When the students grow, the teacher grows with them.

»

Kindly contact for further details:
Professor Zhang Hongyi or Miss Yanling Wang
From Experimental Primary School
Attached to Beijing Normal University, China
e-mail: zhongyi@public.fhnet.cn.net

Story of Donkoi Children Development Center

By Sanjay Gathia

Arriving at Vientiane, we met a friend from Church World Services (CWS) - Lao, Madam Xuyen Thi Dangers, by profession, a Social Worker and a Regional Consultant for Women and Children in Difficult Circumstances. During our conversation she told me about Donkoi Children Development Center (DCDC) which began as an "After School Activity Program" in March 1998, their philosophy being, "All children have potentials", derived from the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Social Work's basic principles. She is a strong believer for social work education and is a passionate advocate of the CRC. She told us that the objective of CWS/DCDC is primarily *"Prevention program of children and youth's problem, especially the dropouts of school, drug abuse, delinquent children, trafficked children and the children at risk; and Village development in the integrated approach".*

Natural Childhood

In its philosophy of developing the children's potential, DCDC in fact has aimed at promoting Natural Childhood, i.e. promoting

children playing with traditional games or whatever they have in their own home community. *"Children need to learn to be conscious about their environment and nature around them"*. DCDC believes in practical education and has been successful in bringing education outdoors into the realms of the children's daily lives. The children are therefore sometimes taken on a study tour to learn about the culture. In fact, during the harvest season they are also encouraged to help each other in the plantation of rice, so that they all learn to keep in touch with their cultural and traditional heritage and practices.

Madam Xuyen told us the basic idea of DCDC, *"I felt a strong need to do something as an alternative . Being out of school, there is a need to tap their attention and ability so that they could learn something apart from getting into trouble. I felt that if they stay in school, it would be much better for at least they will learn something. And one has to start with the children at one point, otherwise they are left out, for every child has potential in her or him. It's a matter of getting the opportunity to explore the potential and develop the child. That is the basic idea behind DCDC."*

We also met Mr. Khamvanh Phaengmany, Manager of DCDC, (who was earlier working as a gardener in her place and also used to repair broken furniture for the children in other project areas). He volunteered to make a bookstand for the school as he wanted to help in a good cause for the children, the children also watched him make furniture and sometimes even helped him. Madam Xuyen stated that, *"Looking at the interest of the children in this activity, we thought that it would be nice if the children had some small hammers and small nails to work with. Some small hammers and nails were bought and the children soon got involved enthusiastically, thus was born the first after school activity and it was called, I am a Young Carpenter Club. The Carpentry Club was thus the first step towards forming DCDC. Khamvanh thus started teaching the children to make toys*

and miniature imitations of the traditional musical instruments of Laos."

Lanat Lao musical instruments made of wood by young carpenters.
Young dancers created their own dance and designed their own costume.
Photo from DCDC's photo bank

The principal liked the idea of the carpentry club as the children's activity after school, for it kept them away from glue sniffing, a big problem that was emerging among the unemployed youth and children. CWS along with the school principal consulted the village committee (seven village elders) and explained to them that they would like to help them tackle this problem. The school principal as well was interested in CWS for the primary concern of the school is the well being of the children, especially who were convicted or were getting into trouble with the authorities. CWS along with Khamvanh, expressed a lot of interest in the activities and even managed and organized some small group activities and games. Children were asked what they liked the most, in order to get an

idea of their interest. The Head of Donkoi village and officers also participated in it. Open-mindedness has been demonstrated, thus established good rapport with the officials.

Mr. Khamvanh further explained that, *"the enthusiasm of the children to form more and more groups, which was suited to their interests thus gradually expressed by the children themselves. The children were enthusiastic because everyone was praising them for the beautiful miniatures made. This encouragement made the children to start requesting to allow them to come and work at his place after dinner. Soon, they requested me to get one of the rooms in the school opened on Saturdays for them to play. They were carried away so much by their new found interest. Slowly the children then started spending their time on the activities that it became a full time activity. The children also requested CWS to increase the number of days from two times a week to five days a week. However, this too was not enough for them to satisfy their quest and during the summer holidays they would request CWS to have all the activities seven days a week."*

There is also *"A Little Love"* project in which 14 CEDC (Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances) cases were provided with small scholarship (school uniforms and notebooks). Each case was monitored by DCDC youth volunteer and the youth visit the family once a week, keep an eye on these children 'at risk' and write progress report so that the children can continue school. DCDC is trying to help keeping these children in school for development.

Using Puppet performance and Drama

"One of the DCDC's aims is to promote education among the children. However, we found that popular education i.e. fun based education, which can be easily accepted by the children, since it was more like having fun while learning", said Madam Xuyen. *"The*

basic idea behind this has been to combine our natural childhood approach and blend it with popular educational method. In this manner children do not get into trouble and the same, to help the school in decreasing the dropout rate."

Some of the youth and children were selected from DCDC to undergo some training programs which would help them in building capacity and leadership qualities, helping them to be aware of what is going on around them and in the world. *"These youth leaders who had been sent to the various training sessions on child participation and leadership camps had been more enthusiastic to share their experiences with the other children. They had gradually learnt the importance of rights for the children and also the importance of sharing their experience with their peers. Their exposure to puppet shows using puppetry conveyed messages on child labour, and raise social concerns etc. was something, which they had enjoyed while learning. These youth leaders had expressed their desire to put up the same kind of shows for the children in Donkoi. This was an encouragement for us as the demand came from the children themselves. Earlier, these young leaders used to put up puppet shows made by them for fun and entertainment. However, their exposure to use theatre as a means to convey youth's ideas and social messages was the most important development. What was more encouraging was that the adults too took interest in these puppet shows and whenever they used to be put up, nearly all of the village became its audience."*

"Gradually these children started voicing their concerns using puppetry, theatre and role-play as a means. This process if seen in totality is very encouraging as this helped the Donkoi community understand about the various issues which affected their children and what little steps they could take in terms of helping their own children for a better life."

"However, the biggest surprise to us came when the children prepared and came up with their own drama on child labour. They had reached such a consciousness level", said Madam Xuyen. *"The puppet show on Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was in fact prepared by the child leaders of the drama group, who had been also facilitated on 'participation and leadership skills of children'. The facilitation has been in various activities to promote the enjoyment of children's rights in their own communities. These young child leaders have now started organizing local activities and are teaching the children at DCDC about child rights and child labour."*

If one looks at the long term effect that has been on the children, now they have started voicing their concern against the use of child labour and started raising concern about voicing their ideas on the issues which affect them the most. Madam Xuyen stated, *"the children through the various performances have not only pointed out their needs as children, but also what they think about how the world should be towards children."*

The performance made at the *"Children's Hospital" triggers the consciousness and awareness level of both hospital personnel and the children. Because of various exposures of these youth leaders, they were able to capture social issues and problems, specifically on children, such as child trafficking, child labor, HIV/AIDS and the environment. The group uses the puppet shows as a communication tool to demonstrate their concerns, problems and sentiments. At present, they are focusing on the UNICEF'S Campaign, "SAY YES to 10 critical actions to make the world a better place for children"* explained Madame Xuyen.

Leadership Development and Community Solidarity

DCDC's involvement in planning and developing actions and strategies for the children along with the community in tackling

their issues had gradually resulted in leadership capacity building for local people. Mr. Khamvanh is the living example of this and he has now become the Manager of DCDC. He is managing and taking DCDC forward. His knowledge and his ability to bring about a mutually agreed community development, which has the involvement of the local officials and the community member's have earned him a deep respect among the community in Donkoi. His understanding of the development concept, basic principles of social work and the Children's Rights has grown many folds since the time he was a simple villager, who helped the school fixing tables and chairs at Donkoi. In fact he is the real inspiration behind the DCDC. In Donkoi, there is no one who can match his understanding of developing the children and community building. His determination and good hearted nature has inspired a lot of children at Donkoi and even the village elders, that they can come altogether as a community and work for the betterment of the community and the children.

DCDC strongly believes in the grassroots approach, where one should start in small activities involving the human resources in the village, which can help them fully in their community-based development. DCDC has become a learning center, where now even the teachers have their workshops to learn new methods on child participation and after school activities. Leadership training provides opportunities to the village youths to be facilitators who go out to other schools in different districts to follow up projects, and in fact train others on CRC and child labour issues, using their initiatives through activities. DCDC keeps continuing its education-based methods in promoting the rights of the child and as the same time, its commitment to protect the rights of the children in Laos.

»

Contact for further details:

Donkoi Children Development Center (DCDC)

House No. 199, Unit 15,

Donkoi Village, Sisatanak District,

Vte Municipality, Laos PDR

Tel. (856-21) 351280

Contact Person:

Mr. Khamvanh Phaengmany

Church World Service (CWS)

74/2 Fa Ngum Rd, Box 820,

Vientiane, Lao PDR

Tel. (856-21) 212785

Fax. (856-21) 212786

Email. cwslao@laonet.net

Contact Person:

Madam Xuyen Thi Dangers

Regional Consultant for Women and Children in Difficult Circumstances

Email. xdangers@laotel.com

DEVELOPMENT

Coal - fired Ferment

By Chompoo Trakullertsathien

> ***"Our political system does not serve the people's needs. The current constitution may be progressive, but as long as it is not implemented, there is nothing sacred about it. Power will remain in the hands of politicians and those with money if we villagers do not do something to address this. But here we have been trying to make use of Article 56 [on a commu- nity's right to manage its natural resources] even though there is no organic law to put it into practice."***
>
> **Charoen Wat-aksorn**

Charoen Wat-aksorn, a 35-year-old activist is standing in trial today along with four other villagers who have strongly opposed the construction of a coal-fired power plant in their

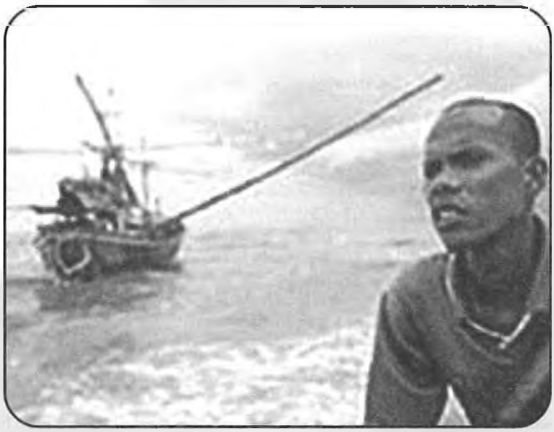
community. Charoen himself faces 11 charges, from illegally detaining and assaulting power-plant staff, as he puts it, *"all the other similar sounding charges they could scrape up to throw at me"*. Such a carefree, nonchalant approach to life, and its glitches, is typical of Charoen. When he led busloads of protesters from Prachuab Khiri Khan to the Government House in January – on the eve of National Children's Day, incidentally – he told the minister who rushed out to greet them that the villagers would "be extremely delighted if someone could guide them around the marvelous domes structure" (on Children's Day young visitors normally get to tour the building, which houses the Prime Ministers Office). But the politician was too smart to fall for this playful ruse. That wasn't Charoen's first trip to Phitsanulok Road and is unlikely to be the last either. He knows from personal experience what it feels like to go from one authority figure to the next, submitting petitions asking for a review of the grand scheme – only to face disappointment at the end of the day.

The Bo Nok power plant project – the $800 million (34 billion baht) brainchild of Gulf Power Generating Company- is a vital part of the Independent Power Producer Programme touted by technocrats who say it will enhance the "nation's energy security". The plant, to be fuelled by imported Australian coal, is expected to generate 700 megawatts of electricity (by 2004 according to the initial schedule) – and "lots of wealth" for the locals.

In one minute alone, the plant will need to pump in 550 cubic metres of seawater to cool down its boilers. The Gulf Power-commissioned environmental impact assessment (EIA) study estimates there are two fish larvae per cubic metre of seawater. So, every minute the plant is in operation, up to 1,100

baby fish would be cooked in the super-heated water. Regardless of the timeframe you use, the resulting massacre will mean the demise of local fisherfolk's livelihood.

There are other worries, too. The fact that no de-sulphurisation equipment is to be installed (the company says that it is not necessary since only high-quality coal will be used). The potential for acid rain. Safe disposal of the huge amount of ash that would be created. The questionable nature of the EIA (notably the glaring absence of any mention of whales spotted in the area). Dubious land transactions including alleged encroachment on a plot designated as public land. Conflicts of interest among committee members appointed to oversee the public hearings (held only after the villagers staged a long series of protests).



Charoen Wat-aksorn starring at the sea.
Photo Courtesy of: Bangkok Post

"If the plant were to remain in operation for 25 years, that would mean a loss of 14,454 million fish and 130 billion shrimps," Charoen continued. *"We can't afford that. The government claims that a lot of jobs will be generated. But we don't want to work in the power plant. Fisherfolk here can earn a handsome income from the sea, and we can take a break whenever we feel tired. But life in a factory is subject to the clock."*

"I don't think we need this sort of 'gift', though", quipped Charoen. *"I'm opposed not to 'progress' or 'development' in itself but to the kind that will put my community at great risk. Mother Nature has already bestowed us with so many gifts...the sea, fish, the beauty of nature.... To appreciate and live on, none of us want this peculiar present disguised in the cloak of 'development'."*

Gulf Power sponsored overseas trips for several of the first generation of protesters may have "convinced" some to suddenly regard the power plant in a more favourable light. But gruesome scenes the villagers have witnessed, notably at Mae Moh – a lignite-fire electricity generating complex in Lampang – have confirmed their fears. In 1998, Charoen and scores of Bo Nok Villagers went on a study trip to Lampang and recorded a documentary on video revealing how residents have suffered from soil, water and air pollution. On his return home, Charoen toured the province, showing the video in one hamlet after another, talking to villagers answering their questions and inspiring them to challenge the power-plant executives and technocrats who draft the country's energy policies.

One intriguing aspect of the Prachuab protest is the communal sharing of information. There's the periodic distribution of leaflets by an environmental coalition opposed to Bo Nok

and to another coal-fired facility planned for Ban Krut in the same province. The coalition runs a semi-bilingual web site at (www.prachuabcoal.com) which contains news archives as well as analyses and a chatroom. A plan to set up a community radio station is also in the pipeline, Charoen said.

Often, research by these rural folk uncovers a different set of "truths", one that puts so-called experts in an embarrassing position. Once, an American executive from Edison Mission Energy, which holds a 40 percent stake in Gulf Power, assured the villagers that the new plant would use "modern and ecologically-friendly technology" on par with that used by their American counterparts. So the villagers need have no fear, he insisted, citing low sulphur dioxide – emission figures that, he said, would even pass "more stringent" environmental standards in the US. Shortly afterwards, the American ambassador at the time echoed his compatriot's statement.

A recent protest by Bo Nok- Ban Krut villagers in front of the Goverment House.
Courtesy: www.prachuabcoal.com

Prachuab Khiri Khan villagers subsequently sent a letter to the Air Resources Board (ARB), an environmental agency in California, requesting verification. A reply from ARB this April stated clearly that the emission figures in the company's EIA would make it ineligible for a construction permit in California. Apparently the volume of nitrogen oxides to be released by the Bo Nok Plant is three times the Californian limit: 18.4 times the maximum for sulphur oxides an almost three times the maximum amount of carbon monoxide allowed there.

After the Bo Nok villagers' dramatic success in winning virtually all the seats on the local tambon administration organization (TAO), Charoen was elected head of the Rak Thong Thin Bo Nok (We Love Bo Nok) Group. *"Our struggle has become more forceful because now we have representatives who heed what we say. Before it was like fighting with only one leg. The authorities often obstructed us or tried to help the power plant. But we can now walk and run on two sturdy legs."*

But these gains have not been made without a price. Many leading members of the protest movement have been subject to harassment and persecution: they have been shot at, received murder threats, charges of impropriety have been leveled against government officials involved in the protest: they've been the victims of arson and assaults – both physical and verbal. Charoen has been through it all - both the carrot and stick treatments.

Prior to Prime Minister Thaksin's declaration on May 10 that he was postponing the Bo Nok and Ban Krut projects for two years, speculation was rife that the government, in order to make a compromise between the conflicting demands of investors and local people, might opt for one project over the other. The Bo Nok scheme was cast in a less favourable light and looked more likely to be

scrapped.

To many outsiders, the spirited action taken by the people of Prachuab Khiri Khan has appeared to verge on violence. The slogan "If you build [the power plant], we will burn [it down]" has been reverberating throughout the eight-year history of the struggle. So close did the protest come to a boiling point that the demonstrators even made the decision to start a blood bank. But Thaksin's May 10 announcement has eased the tension and the donated blood has since been transferred to a local state-run hospital.

Whales at Bo Nok will become extinct if the power plant is built
Photo from www.talaythai.com

Charoen insists that he and his neighbours would never resort to violent tactics unless they were pushed against the wall. *"We've been living in peace for generations. We've never encroached on the land of those nai thun [capitalists]. But*

now our living space in under siege. What do you expect us to do? Actually, the investors are too smart to get their hands dirty. They get others to use violence on their behalf."

"The government keeps saying that our demonstrations have 'spoiled the investment climate', that we are scaring off potential investors. But they never see the other side of the coin."

"I too could say that the investment climate in our communities has been spoiled. We've been scared off (by the power plant project) as well. Nowadays, we don't dare grow mangoes, or buy new fishing boats or plots of lands." Then in a half-serious, half-mocking tone, he makes one of his trademark quips: *"Would they listen to me if I told them how I, as an investor, have suffered a loss of investment opportunity too?"*

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Extracted, with permission, from "Coal-fired Ferment", published in the Outlook section of Bangkok Post on June 27, 2002 by Bangkok Post.

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For full article kindly contact:

Ms.Chompoo Trakullertsathien
The Post Publishing Public Company Limited
Bangkok Post Bldg.
136 Sunthornkosa Road, Klong Toey, Bangkok 10110 Thailand
Tel: (662) 240-3772-79
Fax: (662) 240-3785
Email: outlook@bangkokpost.net
Website: www.bangkokpost.com

People's Struggle Against Anti-people Projects

by Sanjay Gathia

A recent demonstration by the AOP
Courtesy: AOP website.

Having heard about the Assembly of the Poor (AOP), I was curious to learn more about them and what kind of work they were involved in. I contacted Mr. Prasittiporn Kan-Onsri, who is working

with the AOP as Advisor, he has been actively involved in conducting training programs and seminars in the various areas where the network of the AOP is spread in Thailand.

We met at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, where he had come to attend a network meeting regarding their latest plan of action against the Kangsuieten Dam near Donchai village, Phrae Province, Ubon Rachadani and also the Rublo Dam in the south, both which the government is proposing to construct.

Mr. Prasittiporn said that about 3 years ago, when the government started planning to build the Kangsuieten Dam near Donchai village, Phrae Province, Ubon Rachadani and also the Rublo Dam in the south, the Assembly got together again. This time however, they had 10 years, he said, to prepare the villagers and mobilized them together. The village leaders with the help of AOP had gained leadership acumen through their exposure to other peoples work and gaining experiential knowledge during all these years, they also got to know about the environmental impact of the huge dam on their community. *"Not only was it going to affect their farming activity, about 1000 families are going to be affected near the Kangsuieten dam and about 400 families near the Rublo dam, but the flood area was also going to cover the Natural park that is located near the Kangsuieten Dam site in Ubon Rachadani".*

The villagers had also learned through their experience sharing in the AOP network about the post-construction problems in the Pakmoon dam. They came to know that the government had given compensation to the villagers at 35,000/- baht per rai of land, which however was not adequate. The construction of the dam had increased the prices of the land nearby and one rai of land was selling at 50,000/- baht. Thus making it difficult for the villagers to get back to their farming activities, apart from the loss of the actual

determined to oppose the construction", Mr. Prasittiporn said.

The Assembly of the Poor was formed more than a decade ago. Mr. Prasittiporn told me that, initially, he and some of his friends got involved in the study of the Pakmoon Dam located in Kongjeum District, Ubon Rachadani, about 10 years ago, because they wanted to know about the effects of the dam on the local people, the environment-as they had learnt that huge dams had seldom brought benefit to the people and rather brought about more harm to the eco-system apart from displacing the people living over there. Once the study was over and the effects known, they began efforts to mobilize the community living there.

However since at that time there was a Constitutional Monarchy and also the Centralized governance system, villagers deferred to government officials and thus any effective mobilization could not take place.

As Mr. Prasittiporn puts it, there were several reasons for this:

i. Lack of access to information regarding the project itself;

ii. Lack of information or knowledge of the new environment policy being drafted and the analysis of such a policy; and

iii. Absence of required documentation, i.e. the land registration papers, etc.

Mr. Prasittiporn also pointed out that, they lacked much co-ordination on the issue, though they had formed the Moon River network to address the issue with other groups for exchange of ideas and experiences. *"From this point onward we decided on a strategy to tackle issues in a Five-phase manner"*. These strategies are:

i. Study-get more knowledge on the issue, to gather as much as data, information;

and of the problems they would face while tackling the issue:

iii. Analysis–looking at causes of this problem and how it can be solved, through discussions and brainstorming with the villagers. This process ensured that villagers share their own knowledge and views on the issue and seek answers to these issues.

iv. Action–activities such as sending letters to the local government offices concerned and also to the Prime Minister, meeting the leading government officer in the province and organizing actions of protests to draw the attention to the issue.

v. Evaluation – to evaluate the outcome and to understand why they could not solve the problem. Once they found the reasons, then to repeat from step one.

They had realized during this time, that they could not work in isolation for any cause. *"We needed to build up our own network with other organizations and concerned parties, i.e. academicians, students, citizens, who were also working on these issues. Our main target became to gather as many as people concerned with the issue and to put forth our point to the government against the building of the dam or any issue affecting poor people."* Thus their main activity started out as building network with other people, organizations and concerned bodies.

The villagers have now got mobilized together in their activities of advocacy against the construction of these dams and started engaging in activities like media publications, protests and lobbying with various organizations and with the government against these projects and even came up with their own counter measures (see text in the next page).

The World Bank and the Villagers

When World Bank (WB) officials visited Donchai village to make an environmental feasibility report, the were stopped by the villagers from visiting the site. Despite the assurances given by the WB officials that the construction of the dam was for their good, the villagers did not listen, as they had learnt from their experience sharing form the other villagers of the futility of such projects and the destruction it causes to the local habitat. When all their persuasion failed to convince the officials not to write the report favoring the project, they got angry and stoned the car. The officials returned back to Bangkok, without visiting the site. The villagers also staged a protest later and burned the WB lobo, in front of the WB office in Bangkok. Since then, as there has been no report and in fact the WB has withdrawn from the projects. (The Government, however, is still pursuing the project.)

The success with the protest against the WB officials gave a boost to the villagers in their struggle. The villagers also thought of other ways to ward of the construction of the dams then later came up with the idea to buy the land near the construction sites. They created their own fund and in fact bought some land near the construction sites. They bought 15 rai of land worth 200,000/-baht near the Rublo construction site and 30 rai of land worth 300,000/-baht near the Lamdomyai Dam in Datudom district. This land they bought is very near the national Forest area and have assigned some caretaker volunteers. These caretakers look after the land and also inform the others incase of any activity at the dam site.

"Now the villagers feel empowered. During all this time of their struggle, they have now gained the knowledge of law and the policy of the government. They now tackle the government officials themselves, without our help. Earlier, they would not even talk to these government officials and were even afraid to go in front of them. They used to consider the words of the government officials as the law and never raised any objections against them."

A recent demonstration by the AOP.
Courtesy: AOP website.

Mr. Prasittiporn said, when I asked him about the impact of this struggle on the villagers and what have they learned through this struggle. *"In the process they have also learnt that under the new constitution, people have their rights and protection by law. Now, if there is any issue they want to take up, they form their own group and discuss the issues among themselves, they have now*

learned to gather information and then take up the issues with the higher government authorities. In case there is any help, we provide them, but they have now learnt to act on their own and demand their rights."

Their struggle has led them to oppose the construction of a dam, which was heavily backed by the government. Under all those odds, they have struggled for their rights, this fact is visible through the media attention that got generated and also a lot of pressure was build up, thus leading to the creation of the new law for the environmental protection. They are struggling against the State policy of development for their own self-determination of "their way of development".

The AOP has not taught them any course on human rights nor has it given them any legal training, rather they have just brought the villagers together and made them aware of their strength as a collective group, where they can share their experiences and learn from each other.

What more can be needed for human rights education, than to live in dignity and respect.

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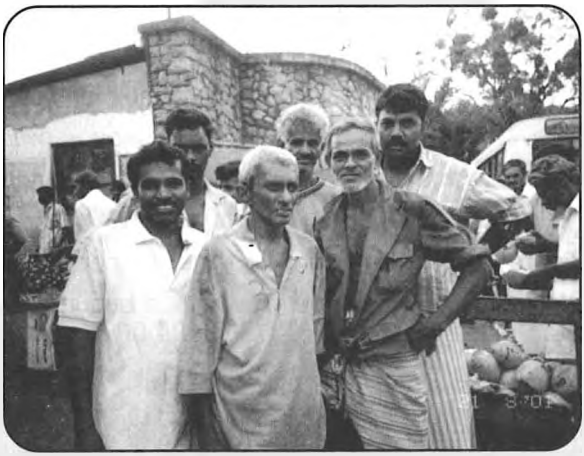
For further details kindly contact:

Mr. Prasittiporn Kan-Onsri (Noy)
Friends of the People (FOP)
Assembly of the Poor (AOP)
99, 3rd Floor Nakorn Sawan Road, Pomprab, Bangkok 10100 THAILAND
Tel/Fax: (662) 2811916, 2812595
Email: fopthai@asiaaccess.net.th, fopthai@hotmail.com
Assembly of the Poor website: http://www.thai.to/aop

Putting People First

A fresh approach to consciousness raising and empowerment

By Rukshan Fernando



Mr. Bandara Aiya, Mr. Amal, Mr. Nawaratne with a few of their colleagues, at their work place - the entrance of the Central Market, Kandy
Photo by Rukshan

Things that went on at Satyodaya when I was around gave me a picture of what it is involved in. There was a young boy who

came to get the certificate for a technical course he had followed at Satyodaya. That would apparently be extremely valuable in a job interview to which he was called. The person responsible was out, but he was served with a cup of tea and was assured that something would be done to help him: he would be informed by telephone so that he could come and collect it. Later on, as I was talking with Lalith, the present chairperson of Satyodaya, a retail vendor with a bag full of products walked in. Lalith seemed very interested to make some purchases from him. *"It's a hard walk up this hill. More than the big establishments, we must support this kind of simple people struggling to make a living"* was Lalith's simple explanation. A few minutes later, a Satyodaya member came in accompanying two young girls, who, it seems, were in danger of harassment at a military or police checkpoint. On another day, in the afternoon, when I walked in to Satyodaya, I found my friend Amal, the daily worker in the Kandy market, whom I had talked with in the morning regarding this research. *"I brought the letter our association is writing to the Parliament Ombudsman, and Satyodaya will help us to type it"*, says Amal.

Before this, I was explaining the concept of collecting success stories to Fr. Paul Casperez, who had begun Satyodaya in 1972. *"I don't like the name success stories. I think what we can share are struggle stories"* he told me. That certainly gave me something to think about! Later on, Lalith told me that though Satyodaya gets foreign funding support, their actions are meant to accompany people responding to the people's own needs. *"We can't always go by a project proposal. If the situation and the people demand something, we have to become involved, not bothering whether that is in the project proposal or not"* says Lalith.

Lal was the one who accompanied and introduced the communities and people I talked with later. Originally, he had been

helping Fr Paul with household chores and was a driver. *"Being a driver, took me to the communities Satyodaya was working with. Instead of sitting in the vehicle like some drivers do, I would join in the meetings. That was my initiation to community organizing"* Lal told me. He had formal education up to Grade 5 and had not attended any foreign training. *"Social Workers are born, not made. Lal is an example"* says Fr. Paul. Getting back to Lal, he was heavily involved in the relief and welfare activities of Satyodaya after the 1977 ethnic riots. *"But soon, I realized welfare and simply giving money was not enough. I realized the need to work with people to empower them and that community organizing was a powerful way of doing that"*. Lal's are not empty words – it is Lal who had organized the Craigingilt community, the daily workers and the retail vegetable sellers in the Kandy market. (Refer to the following stories.) According to Fr. Paul, organizing and empowering marginalized groups seems to come naturally and easy to Lal.

I learnt that the three main targets of Satyodaya Field work today are:

a. Strengthening of civil society through the empowerment of the powerless

b. Protecting and promoting the environment

c. Enabling women to take their long delayed place in society

According to Fr. Paul, Satyodaya is an inter-religious, inter-linguistic, inter-sex, inter social class community. Lalith's words that Satyodaya has to be the carpet, or even the dust under the carpet on which people find their way to inherit the earth, which was theirs from the beginning, aptly sums up the Satyodaya approach and convictions.

There is no program named "Human Rights Education" in Satyodaya. But a closer look at their involvements told me that Satyodaya in fact promotes human rights all the time. The following

stories indicate how Satyodaya helped people to become aware of their fundamental rights and empowered them to obtain their rights through struggle.

Story 1: Struggle of GER Lanka Retrenched Employees Relief Association for Workers' Rights

> "They thought that we won't be able to do anything, because most of us are women, but we have proved that women can stand up and get what is right".

Background:

The textile department had been a state owned enterprise for decades. In 1982, it was privatized, despite protests of its employees who feared job insecurity and loss of other benefits. However, workers were promised all benefits that they were receiving would be continued after privatisation. Under this privatization scheme, 5 of the factories (in Nuwara Eliya, Nawalapitiya, Ginigathhena, Ragala and Sangili Palama) were sold to GER Lanka, a German based company.

The issues involved:

In 1984, the factory in Sangili Palama was closed down, citing a Hydro Electric power project. The other four factories were closed down abruptly on 30th September 1995. The reason was the low profit ratio. (That is, the company was not making enough profits!)

Five hundred employees, the majority of them women, suddenly found themselves without jobs and the very survival of all their families was threatened. Workers were given only 5 days notice. No compensation was paid. At that time, they knew that this was

illegal and that they were entitled to certain benefits. But they didn't know exactly what these were, and as well how to obtain things like the Employees Trust Fund (ETF), Employees Provident Fund (EPF), Gratuity (to be paid according to the number of year's service).

The Struggle:

The workers were introduced to the Dispute Settlement Relief Work and Legal Aid Unit of the Satyodaya Sub Center (Meepitya, Nawalapitiya) and the advisor there, Mr. Basil, helped the victimized workers to become aware of their rights and as well how to set about obtaining them.

According to Mr. Basil, the main approach used was *discussions with the workers themselves and the process of empowering came about as the workers started to initiate actions* to get their dues.

In the words of Mr. Basnayake, one of the retrenched employees, *"at that time, we didn't know our rights – but now, we know and can talk confidently with the directors of any department"*. Ms. M. M. Kamalawathie, the President of the association states, *"they thought that we won't be able to do anything, because most of us are women, but we have proved that women can stand up and get what is right"*. When the Labour Department didn't help them to obtain redress, they tried to use other options available and came to know that they can appeal to the Parliament Ombudsman. This they did and the Ombudsman intervened on their behalf.

Victories:

In 1998, they were able to obtain the gratuity and compensation for abrupt termination of service. Afterwards, after several discussions with the Labour Department, they received

cheques for ETF. However, the amount of ETF granted was a fraction of what was due to them, and after discussing amongst themselves, they made a collective decision not to accept those cheques and instead demand the actual amount due. This, they received just a few weeks ago.

The struggle continues:

But they still have a long way to go. The workers of Sangili Palama have still to get their due payment. They are now going to focus on obtaining EPF and ETF due to them after their work in Textile Department had been terminated. But through their research and discussions they realized that they are entitled to these as they were forced off as state employees despite their protests, due to privatization.

Unlike in the past, the workers themselves are confidently having discussions with the Director of the Textile Department as well as Labour Commissioners. They are ready to take matters to the courts if no redress is obtained and are convinced that they can't be hoodwinked by lawyers, as they are aware of their legal position.

Mr. Basil's dream of breaking the monopoly of lawyers and court officials on the law has come true. By profession, he himself is not a lawyer, but rather an experienced Court Interpreter. However, he has a extensive knowledge of law, including past court decisions and many a time has applied his knowledge in the best interests of the poor and oppressed. *"The court was my university. I listened intently to lawyers arguing cases and studied court reports"* says smiling Mr. Basil.

In fact, though this group engages, the services of lawyers, they are not at all dependent on lawyers. They themselves advice

their lawyers about legal provisions that would help their case, including past court decisions. In this way, they say, *"lawyers can't cheat innocent people, especially by just dragging cases for ages, thereby earning high fees"*

Overcoming challenges along the way:

At first, they didn't know that there are laws guaranteeing them rights as workers, and they didn't know how to get about obtaining them. They also had to face up to unhelpful attitudes of government officers, influenced by the bribes offered by company owners.

According to Ms. A.A.Wimalawathie, *becoming organized as a group and getting in touch with groups who can help them they become aware of their rights.* In their case, the Satyodaya Sub Center helped them to meet challenges. Mr. K. G. Jayasinghe stressed that it is important to be united and act as one, and not individually.

Former Weaving Assistant of GER Lanka, Ms. Sumana Arachchi, says *"it is my involvement in the struggle of GER Lanka that has made me develop. Now, I can help so many other people, especially women."* Since 1999, Ms. Sumana Arachchi has been working full time at the Satyodaya Sub-Center. Besides leading the campaign to get entitlements of workers retrenched by GER Lanka, she also assists Mr. Basil in providing legal advice to people with a variety of problems.

"If we don't know our rights, we can't fight for them" emphasizes Mr. Basil. "We are ready to help any other such groups to become organized and to help them become aware of their rights" concludes Ms. Sumana Arachchi. Indeed, Mr. Basil, Ms. Sumana Arachchi and the GER Lanka Retrenched Employees Relief Association have come a long way in helping workers to know their

rights and how to go about obtaining them.

Story 2: Emergence of the Craigingilt Community

The story of Sarawanamuttu:

Craigingilt is a tea estate in the hills of Sri Lanka. It is situated around Alawathugoda, between Kandy and Matale. Saravanamuttu was born there in 1953 and grew up in the estate. During the ethnic riots in 1977, Saravanamuttu lost everything and had to live in a welfare center with others like him. Satyodaya helped with food, medicine etc. After coming back, he started a pre-school with the help of Satyodaya. Slowly, awareness programs about health, nutrition, environment and other social issues also began to be added. Saravanamuttu was taking the leadership in various community projects when he again became a victim in the 1983 ethnic riots. He went to the north, where he got a piece of land and started farming. Disaster struck again, and this time his farm was totally destroyed by floods and he again became a refugee. A shattered, but still courageous Sarawanamuttu returned to Craigingilt and started by living in a house in shambles. He again started teaching children and his community work.

The people:

The stories of many people who work on the tea estates are similar. Known as "Indian Tamils" they were brought to Sri Lanka from India, by the British, almost as slaves and some are still enslaved in a system as evil and oppressive as any system can be. They remain amongst the most marginalized communities in the country - socially, economically as well as politically. The irony of the system is that the tea, produced by their sweat and blood which has made

Sri Lanka famous and brings in huge amounts of revenue to the country, has not improved their own quality of life!

Mr. Saravanamuttu in front of his house with Mr. Lal (in cap)

Housing has and continues to be a major issue confronting them. For as long as one remembers, they have been living in "lines". A "line" bears some resemblance to the long houses of the Indigenous Peoples in Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysia) except for the long common verandah. Significantly however, the line residents don't own the land and the building. The rectangular building itself is rather long and is divided by internal walls into several rooms. Each line-room is a "home" for a family. They are hopelessly overcrowded and lack basic facilities. *"We were not even allowed to do some home gardening or raise some goats or chicken by the estate"* says Saravanamuttu.

Getting started to have their own houses:

As Satyodaya continued to work with the community, Saravanamuttu as well as others had realized that having a decent house to live in is paramount to lead a dignified and healthy life. But where could they get the land? When Janasaviya (a government welfare scheme for the poorest, where each family received Rs 2500.00 – USD 28 at current exchange rates) was introduced, they were told it was not meant for Tamils! *"I went to Satyodaya the same night and wrote a petition, and started collecting signatures. Soon we got Janasaviya"* says Sarawanmuttu. They were quick to understand that this could be used to get a piece of land that would be a basic foundation to develop their community. *"Again, the Janasaviya loan was not given to us. If anyone deserved this in Sri Lanka, it was us. I was determined to get this for our community. I went 120 times to the bank for this. I knew it would be important, so I had recorded all the details, and even wrote to the President. Finally we got it".*

With savings from the Janasaviya, and financial help from Satyodaya, the community purchased the estate. (Satyodaya was able to help them by means of a large group given by the Swiss Association of House Owners on the occasion of their centenary.) With their own efforts, they built houses as well as access roads, water tank etc. In September 1995 it was a huge victory when the Craigingilt housing scheme was opened. It was not just the houses that they had. It was the feeling that it was they who built it – from fighting to get their entitlement of Janasaviya to the physical labour in building.

Struggling to live as dignified and equal citizens:

One example – when they were living in the lines, they had

to collect their letters from a nearby shop. However, having their own houses also instilled a sense of worth and dignity and they insisted that letters should be delivered to their own houses, which were registered with numbers allocated. *"Why should we not get letters to our houses like those in the village? So, I went to the Post Office and told them. But, at first the postman would still leave our letters in the shop. So I told the shopkeeper not to accept the letters and informed the Post Office. Now, we receive letters to our own door step"* says a proud Saravanamuttu.

The garbage dump, against which the Craigingilt community is taking action.

The Craigingilt community is aware of maintaining a healthy environment. Once, they noticed a bakery owner dropping stale cakes along the road, and immediately took down the number and complained to the authorities concerned. It didn't happen again.

A challenge they are facing is the garbage dump nearby, which is quite close to the Hindu Kovil and pre-school. Saravanamuttu has taken the lead in pressurizing authorities. He organized protest marches and once slept across the road in protest. They had discussion with the Public Health Inspector, who had blamed the Provincial Council. *"We have also been threatened by the Police, but won't stop until we get rid of this dump. We are also getting legal advice"*, says a determined Sarawanamuttu.

Secrets of Success:

Saravanamuttu says that they became aware of the importance of this type of matters through the training courses that Satyodaya provided. *"Because of the training we not only got awareness about our rights, but also courage and skills in standing up and fighting"*. Even as I was coming down with him to the main road, Saravanamuttu was encouraging some young people to go to the training course scheduled the next weekend in Satyodaya.

Today, Saravanamuttu and the community work hard to make sure Craigingilt enables all of them to live in dignity. "Saraswathie People's Organization" was started in 1993 and takes the lead in community initiatives. The organization has helped develop more leaders. *"Earlier, if I was not involved, the well wouldn't be cleaned. But now, we have four leaders who are responsible to ensure that it happens, and I also follow them."* says Saravanamuttu.

"We managed to develop like this because we tried to involve everyone. We need the ideas and help of everybody" concludes Sarawanamuttu, standing in front of his beautiful and neat house. In fact, Craigingilt with its small but spacious and clean housing and surrounding is a stark contrast to the miserable "line-room housing" provided by tea estates. What is even more significant is the

community's self-assurance and confidence and sense of dignity. But we all hope for the time when all tea estate workers will live in dignity like those at Craigingilt. Craigingilt indeed can be role model for the integral development of estate communities.

Story 3: United Welfare Association of Vegetable Retailers–Central Market, Kandy

The Central Market in Kandy

The central market in the heart of the Kandy town is a bustling place from sunrise to sunset. People living in the town, those coming to work from the outskirts, as well as those transiting in the city and catching connecting buses and trains, all drop by at various times. They are also a cross section of the mixed socio-economic population of Kandy. Serving them all faithfully with fresh vegetables are the vegetable retailers in the market. It is easy enough to find them, with their wares spread out on mats on the ground. For some of them, the sky is their roof, while others have a canvas over their head to shield them from sun and the unpredictable rain.

Mr. T. A. Wijesinghe, the President of the association, along with Mr. A. G. W. Perera, willingly left their stalls just before lunch to have a chat with me. *"In the 1970s, the market was only for the wholesalers. Retailers sold vegetables on the roadside"* recalls Mr. Wijesinghe. *"At that time, there was a chap called Rathumalli who started selling vegetables near the entrance to the market. One by one, others followed. The Police harassed us. Some of us were even arrested"* says Mr. Wijesinghe. At that time there had been 88 members in the association and membership fees were 10 cents (USD 0.001 at today's exchange rate). Vegetables were not sold according to weight, but rather based on the number or as lots.

Mr. T.M.A. Kularathne, the secretary of the association is

one of the thousands rendered unemployed by the 1980 July strike. Since then, he had worked in a shop, but that was not enough to take care of his family. So, he started selling vegetables in the market. *"Even the Public Health Inspectors used to harass us by trampling our vegetables"* said Mr. Kularathne. *"We were really helpless – we could not do any other job and our children would starve if we didn't sell vegetables. At this time, we were all desperate and the association was not very strong".*

Getting started

It was at this time that they saw the Daily Workers getting organized. So, they contacted Satyodaya to help them too. Satyodaya didn't give them magic solutions, but basically helped them to come together and gave them the opportunity to participate in a lot of training courses. In 1990, the new association was formed. Gradually, they were convinced that they had to stand up and assert their right to livelihood. For 15-20 years, the retailers have been paying a daily sales tax to the Municipal Council. Analyzing this, they came to the conclusion that the Municipal imposition and acceptance of this payment is an acknowledgment of their right to sell vegetables in the market. However, lately, this payment has been termed a "garbage removal fee" and the retailers have been classified as "temporary traders", allowed to trade only from 6.00 – 9.00 a.m.

"For the tax that wholesalers pay, they are granted legal rights to shops built with concrete, electricity and other facilities. We pay almost 50% of that amount and what are we given?" asks Mr. Wijesinghe.

What made the situation unfavorable for them was that the Municipal Council had built a new Market a few kilometers away in an adjoining town, for the wholesalers. They refused to go, but the

Mr. T.A. Wijesinghe, President of the United Welfare Association of Vegetable Retailers, Central Market, Kandy, at his open vegetable stall. The stalls occupied by the wholesalers are in the background.

Municipal Council had to pay back the loan to the Asian Development Bank, which had funded the project. So, the Municipal Council compromised with the wholesalers, offering them the option of doing retail sales from their existing shops in the market and to conduct wholesale business from the new market. Of course this would mean that the present retailers would completely lose their livelihood, but this does not seem to have crossed the minds of Municipal officers or perhaps they simply didn't care.

"We studied all the facts and decided that we are not ready to lose our livelihood and offer our jobs to the wholesalers on a platter, just to compensate the Municipal Council's ill advised project" said Mr. Wijesinghe.

Taking Action

The association has started negotiations with the Municipal

Council. As they were not getting a favorable response, they looked for other means to obtain their rights to trade in the market. Satyodaya made them aware of the role of the Parliament Ombudsman, and currently, they are discussing the matter with the Ombudsman. In the meantime, they have also presented their case to political parties and other civil society organizations in the city which are forced to support their cause, in view of the hard facts. *"We are not going to stop selling vegetables in the market, unless we are provided a suitable alternative place".* That was Mr. Perera, determination written on his face and heard in his voice.

"Some weeks ago, we heard that the Municipal Council has agreed to grant us the right to sell vegetables in the market as we have been doing for so many years. We also sense this, but so far we have not heard anything directly, either verbally or in written form" said Mr. Wijesinghe, sounding hopeful of victory after a long drawn battle.

They gratefully acknowledge that it was Satyodaya who helped them to become organized, and helped to make them aware of their rights and means of obtaining them. Satyodaya also helped members to develop leadership skills. *"We were never turned back at Satyodaya. They put all their facilities at our disposal".*

The vegetable retailers don't have any tangible success to show. But the long drawn out struggle, the fruit of awareness of their rights and determination, is indeed a success. What enabled them to sustain this struggle? *"First we had to know our rights. And then, we also became more organized. Amongst us, we had differences, but we always searched for the common good and were united in our fight to have a decent place to engage in our work"* concludes Mr. Wijesinghe.

Story 4 : Daily Workers' Welfare Association–Central Market, Kandy

Kandy Market and the Daily Workers:

The Market at Kandy would not function without them. Everyday, they unload and load vegetables from and to the lorries, serving farmers, wholesalers, retailers, middle-persons, and transporters alike. And of course, indirectly, the thousands of customers who daily come to the market. They also go to the railway station to unload the sacks of vegetables arriving by train. But for too long their immense services were taken for granted by everyone. Their work was considered "lowly" and "menial".

That has changed now. *Who and what brought about this change?* Eager to discover this, I sat down with Bandara Aiya (Aiya is a local term meaning Elder Brother) and Mr. Amal, in the market itself. In the background, I could still see some Daily Workers carrying what looked to me enormously heavy sacks of vegetables to and from lorries.

Bandara Aiya is the President of the Daily Workers' Welfare Association–Central Market Kandy and Mr. Amal is the Secretary. *"I have been doing this work for around 15 years"* started Bandara Aiya. *"Our work is a very responsible job. We have to be careful to deliver the correct sack to the correct wholesaler / retailer. If we make a mistake, the whole process will be confused. The transporters as well as the shop keepers depend on us and entrust the whole responsibility to us"* adds Mr. Amal: *"Not everyone can do this work. You need special skills. If you won't carry the sacks in a certain way, your skin will come apart and you will start bleeding".*

"In the past, the Police always harassed us. Our friends used to be taken to the police station and beaten. Ten years ago,

we were paid only Rs. 50 cents per sack (USD 0.005 at today's exchange rate). Once there was a funeral and the family had no money, even for a coffin. The body was just laid on a mat. We collected some money amongst ourselves and tried to help, but nobody had savings" recalls Bandara Aiya.

It was at that time that they had realized that they needed to have a better income if their families were to lead a dignified life. They also realized that it would help if they were organized. They contacted Satyodaya for help.

"Satyodaya provided us with a lot of training courses. They helped us develop leadership skills and showed us the way to organizational development. Above all, they emphasized that our work was a dignified profession and that we had a right to be treated as such and earn reasonable wages" says Bandara Aiya. According to Mr. Amal, Satyodaya helped them to form their own association and they learnt skills of networking with other associations, police, city officials and even politicians.

Gradually, they were able to negotiate with transporters and shopkeepers and to increase their wages and today, they earn Rs. 5.00 per sack. In 1995, a businessman beat one of their members. The association launched a strong protest and that had been the last incident of that nature. *"Today, if there is a complaint about any of our members, the businessmen or the police will complain to the association and we will look into it. If any of our members have a complaint against them, we will also investigate and discuss matters with them"* says Bandara Aiya.

The association decided that all the daily workers should have an identity card, indicating their profession. That would give them a sense of the dignity of their work and help to gain public recognition of their dignity. It would also facilitate business transactions. Bandara Aiya showed me his identity card.

Today, the community recognizes the work and contribution they make to the community and are respected. They work in a spirit of critical collaboration with other associations as well as officials. Indeed, the Police, City officials and other organizations invite and consult them on important issues of the market place and the city. *"We always try to collaborate with anyone or with any group. We are ready to listen and dialogue. We want to look after our interests, but we are also concerned about the farmers who produce the vegetables, transporters and other parties involved"* says Bandara Aiya.

The association has also introduced a "token" system that has helped to streamline their work. Their identity card allows them access to public institutions like hospitals, government offices, prisons etc. They maintain files for each member and for correspondence with different agencies. The number of files amounts to 190. They also have their letterheads. For an association that has no office and other facilities, they seemed highly organized and systematic. Recently, the Police sought their help to track down a daily worker who had committed bigamy and they obliged.

In the future, they want to come up with a scheme to help provide better housing facilities for their members. *"Training at Satyodaya has made us realize that health and nutrition are important. So, we want to make sure our members have good housing with sanitation facilities. Even I still live in a hut covered by canvas"* says Bandara Aiya with conviction and determination. Mr. Amal adds that registration of their association is also on the cards. They are also negotiating with the Municipal officials to have a small space for an office.

Having being thus organized, **they have also helped** to organize a association of daily workers involved in a nearby street, carrying retail goods such as rice, flour, sugar etc. They introduced

them to Satyodaya. *"That association has some problems now, but they have asked us to help again and we will be happy to do so".*

I asked them whether they like to pass on **any tips for other upcoming groups?** Bandara Aiya replies promptly *"Yes, it is important to be united. And we need to be committed too. We must also learn to be patient, as even in our association, we have different individuals".* Mr. Navaratne, the vice president who had just joined us chips in: *"It also helps to be systematic"*, he refers to the files that I saw before. *"And then, as an association, we must be able to judge what are the most important issues to be tackled, and as well what is urgent and what is not so urgent".*

Having learnt the hard way and coming through their own experience, this is sound advice indeed!

It is almost lunchtime and Bandara Aiya, Mr. Amal and Mr. Navaratne insist that we have something to eat. We adjourn to a nearby restaurant. And as I was enjoying the hospitality of my hosts, I realized my initial question had been answered already – *with some help from Satyodaya, it was the Daily Workers themselves, ably led by my friends beside me, who had enabled them to be dignified persons engaged in a dignified profession.*

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To contact the author:
Rukshan Fernando
Email: ruki@isplanka.lk

For further details kindly contact:
Satyodaya Centre for Social Research and Encounter

30, Puspadana Mawatha,
Kandy, Sri Lanka
Tel: (94-8) 222955
Fax: (94-74) 471540
E-Mail: satyoda@eureka.lk

EDUCATION

Adult Education for Democracy Amongst Grassroots Community

By Jerald Joseph

Kreung tribals in Cambodia used drawing for group discussion.
Photo by Johan Tan

Background Malaysia

The context of Malaysian democracy must be mentioned in order for all to get a clearer picture of the "type" of democracy that

is being practised in Malaysia. Malaysia is a nation of 22 million people that is governed by an almost-autocratic leader that "uses" democracy to suit the government's economic and political pattern. At best it is a pseudo-democracy that is rife with a strong police force, non-independent judiciary and a muzzled press. To top it all, it has a host of legislation that is in direct contravention of most human rights standards.

Malaysia is a small country, and its multi-cultural society has lived in relative peace for decades without any incidence because of the strong powerful state that disallows dissent. Schools hardly teach democracy. At the most it teaches about the election system that in it is far from free and fair. Vote buying, total media black-out and disallowing campaign speeches of the opposition have maintained the same ruling political party their power in the country for the past 42 years.

Democracy

It is in this context that democracy is being nurtured. Working amongst grassroots communities like the indigenous peoples and the urban poor poses many difficult challenges, the first education on democracy. The very concept has been subverted by the ruling coalition to mean guided-democracy in a very structured form. So the first task is to start with the basics of democracy again.

Democracy is about participation in a social, economic and political system that respects both individuals and communities. It is about people experiencing that they matter in the life of the nation, society, community, group and family....being part of the decision making process that shapes their lives. When engaging with grassroots community, one needs to popularise that democracy is an experience of realising the innate human rights within. The people are taken through a series of education process to "feel",

"understand" and "act" to experience democracy in the smallest unit possible within their community. This is to enable the people to come to terms with the very nature of their existence within the social, political, economic and cultural reality.

Community Organizing

This process is seen within the overall community organizing framework. Community Organizing (CO) is the process of working with the grassroots community to develop their leadership capacity and the community understanding of taking ownership of their own critical issues (i.e. land, squatter eviction, displacement etc). This is done through a participatory methodology that employs all the tenets of democracy. It promotes confidence amongst the community, gives hope from their helplessness and offers possibilities to tackle their situation. In short, it is a process of empowering people to take control of their own lives. This process is done using what is commonly called popular education or popular communication. This is a very effective method for adult education amongst grassroots peoples.

In one workshop in the urban poor village in Kuala Lumpur when the community persons were given a workshop of using an automatic still camera, they initially shied away. But as they got used to handling the camera, the 'myth' that these gadgets belong to the 'experts' and the 'those in control of resources' was broken. People realised that it is just a tool that can be used by everyone. This empowered them to learn it for themselves and their community.

Leadership Development

The Community Organising invites us to have a long-term involvement with the community in order to build their leadership capacity chosen and developed from the community themselves. This does not rely on traditional leadership roles assigned to the

village head etc. One of the obstacles in democracy is the type of traditional leadership that does not allow democracy to flourish. In this process, leadership is developed through the ongoing community organising processes in order that the emerging leaders themselves are convinced of the participatory principles. These identification processes may take months and once the ready few (men and women) are identified, then some extra deliberate attention and focus must be given to them in terms of learning facilitation methodology and on how to use popular communication tools.

In a village like the indigenous community of the Semai tribe, for years the Village headman did not like the efforts of organising done by young women. Then after 5 to 6 years when the work was showing some positive results that community members were voluntarily involved, the assistant headman started joining in almost all activities organised by the CO.

In order not the commu-nities create dependence but instead allow greater opportunity to grow, the NGOs and the COs should prepare a *"phase-out plan"*. This exit plan will allow the community to gradually take tasks and finally take full responsibility for its sustainability.

Awareness Building

The CO process starts with the process to facilitate an organized method of mapping their overall social, economic, political and cultural situation that is affecting their community. This is in order to give the community the "big picture". Most people know bits and pieces of information but never really put into a comprehensive framework. This is trying to "democratise information" from those who know and to "offer information" for those who may be ignorant of these facts. This is an important step to set up a common understanding of the issues effecting the community and

to understand the key "actors" that contribute, benefit, control or suffer from it.

This mapping is normally very community-specific and starts from their local issues effecting them the most at that point of time. It can be done using the A-Ha method, which is a group-facilitator dialogue session. Here, the facilitator puts down all their answers on a big board, by using drawings or pictures. At the end when the board is filled with information given by the participants, these will be processed, known as "information/data linkaging." This process analyzes how is one "actor" to linked to another or one part of the problem linked to another. This then draws the conclusion that if we want to handle the critical issue we must know every detail, linkage and information so that we can strategize effectively. The community then keeps this "big picture" in a common place for future reference. The centre uses cartoons to illustrate and present information for better understanding of the community and those who visit them. This picture can also be used as a constant check when different issues emerge. More pictures can be added to this as new issues emerge.

"One of the best ways of building solidarity is to have "people-to-people" exchange, where are community is brought to another community to spend a day or two to exchange experiences, information and strategies and also build friendship. This has been an important learning tool amongst the people because some things that are said in their own language or cultural norms get absorbed easier than sometimes all the workshops they have gone through".

A Kalimantan CO used photos to describe the condition of the community
Photo by Johan Tan

Planning and Issue Handling

Once the community is in motion, the CO must develop a plan of action and strategy in tackling their issues. If their issue, for example, is demanding for community land titles for the indigenous village, then together with the community, planning has to begin. The community must, together, start on information gathering, evidence collection and preparing their documentation. When this is complete, then they decide collectively what actions should be taken to get government attention. Is it going to be through the politicians, media or government departments etc.?

Although this may seem like common sense but it must be a conscious process, as every step of the way is an education process for the adult and it must continue to abide by the participatory methodology principle. This develops confidence in the democratic

model and people get used to using and integrating it to their own lives. In addition, there must be a constant contact group that will do all the local work within the community. They will call for the meeting and call the shots in the community. It must be evident that the role of an NGO is of a support role to the community. This shows respect and honour to local officials and residents there who are capable of organizing their own community. The presence of an NGO community organizer is to facilitate a process to this effect.

In addition to the main core issue like that of the land stated above, there are many smaller issues that needs to be handled together i.e. poverty, women empowerment, gender consciousness, youth development, cultural reawakening etc. This contributes to building a more dynamic and holistic community. This holistic approach is important so that every aspect of the community comes within the concern of the CO.

Networking and Solidarity

The local leadership must be encouraged to linkup with neighbouring communities and other communities who are also going through similar situations, to build solidarity and networking amongst the people. This is to encourage them to feel a sense of strength as a larger community. It is also a chance for the local COs to start the multiplying effect on developing a new set of COs within the neighbouring communities using the process that they went through themselves within their own village. This is to ensure that education is not static and is used to pass on the knowledge to others and invite the same to join in a similar process.

"One of the best ways of building solidarity is to have "people-to-people" exchange, where one community is brought to another community to spend a day or two to exchange experiences, information and strategies and also build friendship. This has been

an important learning tool amongst the people because some things that are said in their own language or cultural norms get absorbed easier than sometimes all the workshops they have gone through". The language of the grassroots people amongst themselves is much easier to understand. In Semai Village in Perak, heard the impending development projects that may affect them visited another village that had been displaced by the newly constructed airport in Kuala Lumpur shared their sentiments caused by the construction. This sharing gave the community the opportunity to work harder in preparing themselves to fight for their cause.

Methodology

Education is a tool for empowering, encouraging and enabling people and it is for these reasons that we engage in organizing people. The education of democracy must be a lived-democracy. This means the CO must be a living example of democratic practices. It is imperative that learning by example is given precondition. Also mutual learning from democratic practices amongst the community people would encourage those who practice and give others a practical model to follow.

The most important tool used is a participatory facilitation method that makes the leader a "facilitator" rather than a "teacher". This is a process that takes time and allows time and space to be able to use popular communication methods to bring out the "answers" from within the participants. Paulo Freire, in the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" expressed the theory on literacy that empowers peasants in Brazil. Some of the tools to facilitate this type of process can include any creative activities. This may include Group Dynamic Activities, Drawing, Action Songs, Video, Drama/ Theatre, Photo-essay, Puppets, Games etc.

Does it really work?

Like most works, this is a long-term involvement with the community but with obvious results. In many communities, women and youth get evolved into these new leaders (non-formal) and are convinced of these democratic style of organizing community. For most grassroots community people in Malaysia, this process is a fresh breath of air where they can have their own space of democracy to learn democracy, to try democracy and to finally take action as a community from their democratically elected government. The small actions they take are encouraging signs that it can work.

When Ken Merjah, a 45-year old woman stands up in front of the community to articulate her point and encourage the village, then perhaps it is positive. While before she was a silent observer, now she is speaking up. This will slowly spread and more will stand up and speak.

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(This is a revised version of the paper presented by the author at the International Conference on Pursuing Democracy Through Lifelong Learning: Concepts and Practices Across the Globe, in Kiev, Ukraine for UNESCO Institute for Education - UIE)

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For the original article and further details, kindly contact the author:

Jerald Joseph,
Pusat Konunikasi Masyarakat (KOMAS)
No. 14-1 Jln. 16/38D
Tmn. Sri Sinar, Segambut
52100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Telefax: 603 627-56602 Email: jerald.joseph@lycos.com

Developing Sustainable Human Rights Cities

By People's Movement for Human Rights Education (PDHRE)

PDHRE is a nonprofit international organization founded in 1989. In the last twelve years it developed and facilitated training in human rights education for social transformation in more then 60 countries around the world.

Human Rights Cities. Since 1998, PDHRE, drawing on its rich experience and perception of needs, and with the enthusiasm of local communities, is facilitating the development of Human Rights Cities. This is a historic initiative in which programs are developed to examine traditional beliefs, collective memory and aspirations as related to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...guided by the commitments made and obligations undertaken by their governments- having ratified numerous human rights conventions- all its governing bodies and community institutions and groups, learn about human rights as related to their life in the city–to assure that all laws, policies , resources and relationships in the community, to maintain the dignity and serve the well being of all its membership. Four cities are implementing on going programs: These are: Rosario, Argentina -population one million; Thies, Senegal – pop. 300,000,

including 10 Human rights villages: Nagpur, India – pop. 2.8 Million and Kati, Mali – pop. 50,000. Three more cities are now joining this effort in the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Austria.

These cities were selected on the basis of a demonstrated widespread commitment to human rights among a range of civil society actors and of past success with other projects in these countries. The program is driven by an exciting and expansive definition of human rights learning as a tool for political, economic and social change. Human rights education highlights the normative and empirical power and limits of human rights as a tool in individual and collective efforts to address inequalities, injustices, and abuses at home, in the work place, in the streets, prisons, courts, and so on. Even in "democratic" societies, citizens and policy-makers must learn to understand human rights and the obligations and the responsibilities, which they entail in a holistic and comprehensive way, and they must learn to monitor and enforce human rights effectively and efficiently. The Human Rights Cities initiative seeks to expand, facilitate and institutionalize this process.

In December 1999, the city of Nagpur, India was inaugurated as a Human Rights Sensitive City by PDHRE's local partner, YUVA, in association with other local NGOs, CBOs, municipal officials, the office of the Mayor, lawyers groups, representatives from academia, business and various other professions and stake holders. Several in-depth training and dialogues followed the inauguration, which was heralded throughout the city with posters at major road

The program is driven by an exciting and expansive definition of human rights learning as a tool for political, economic and social change.

intersections, with environmentalists, educators, economists, women's organizations and local youth groups.

Each session concentrated on the practical challenges of making Nagpur a human rights sensitive city. The three-day event concluded with a Rally led by some of the poorest slum communities in the city, and a city-wide one day meeting of women organizations who came together to reaffirm the commitment made and to join in defining the needs for the realization of human rights. A citizen's committee has now been formed to follow processes and methodologies similar to those being undertaken in Rosario.

Why Nagpur?

The continuous degradation and dismal performance of the human rights record especially in urban centers can be attributed to the stresses of urbanization. Urban settlements have become the primary centers for the struggles for development. Cities and towns are seriously affected by grave development problems like overcrowding; environmental degradation due to excessive production and consumption leading to pollution of air, water, solid and liquid wastes; social disruption; under employment; and poor housing; infrastructure and services. Most of the violations of human rights owe their origin to these issues.

Nagpur lies in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. situated in the very heart of India; 832 kms from Mumbai by rail. It is also fast growing as an important metropolitan and industrial hub of the central India. The ever-increasing problems of degradation in environment, health, but also in civic life, legal and political issues seem to have surrounded the everyday life of a common man.

In this context, the concept and implementation of a Human Rights City of Nagpur became extremely crucial and critical. A human rights city is one all of whose members, from policy makers to ordinary

citizen, learn about and adhere to human rights obligations.

Relating human rights norms to their immediate and practical concerns, they join to make a commitment to enter into a community-wide dialogue for the purpose of developing the guidelines of their human rights community. All organizations - public and private- join to monitor violations and implementation of human rights at all levels of the society. They develop the methodology to ensure that human rights norms and standards bind all decisions, laws, policies, resource allocation, and relationships at all levels of the decision-making and problem solving process.

The primary objective of the human rights community was to transform the general public into educator, monitor and 'documenter' of human rights in the city of Nagpur by launching a massive awareness campaign. This community can help ensure that the government will fulfill their human rights obligations to their people.

The creation of a human rights community in Nagpur would mean:

- Focusing attention on the importance of improving the living conditions in one's community.
- Highlighting the potential for community action to enhance the quality of lives of citizen, as well as its limitations.
- Taking the initiatives to strengthen existing partnership within the community, and to explore the possibilities for initiating new partnerships; and
- Building upon the potential of community to mobilize public opinion, particularly in support of more effective partnerships.

Objectives

- Create a dialogue, through a national consultation in which the concrete connections between human rights and citizens of Nagpur daily lives would be shown.
- Develop and implement comprehensive human rights educational materials and methodologies at the national levels.
- Make available to social and cultural workers and professionals in the fields of social and economic development the content of human rights instruments, and to put them in context.
- To launch a thorough and exhaustive inventory local conditions local initiatives, local actors, hopes and difficulties in human rights terms.
- Launch the first stages of the nationwide program, exploring a variety of techniques and approaches.
- Creation of a national commitment to human rights education, integrating human rights education into existing initiatives by civil society.

YUVA, Nagpur facilitating the activities in the city has been working for more than 15 years in the field of Human rights to obtain social and economic justice, equality and empowerment. These activities will be fully integrated into the program of the human rights city. Some of these are:

- Striving for rights of Indigenous groups on natural resources and rights of tribals for their self rule.
- Resource and Support for Development.
- Urban Transformation Through Human Intervention.
- WID to WID (Women in Distress to Women in Development.

- Empowering Youth and mobilizing them through capacity building.

Actions being taken to develop a Sensitive Human Rights City

- Identification of target groups and issues in the city
- Child Human Rights
- Physical and mental abuse
- Labor Human Rights
- Trade Unions
- Mental and physical health
- Social Human Rights
- Environment Exploitation
- Sustainable development
- Differently "abled": education and work
- Economic equality Mother's Human Rights to health: Pre natal and Post natal
- Children For lowering IRM Malnutrition and dreaded diseases
- Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- Prisoners Minority Rights
- Empowerment women and girls Education
- Adequate civic amenities
- Education of the general population
- Exploitation
- Protection of identity and culture
- Housing Rights
- Adequate living conditions
- Slum dwellers
- Human right to land title
- Poverty Alleviation

- Low income groups-Slums
- Unemployment and Job security

Planning Human Rights (HR) Activists

Initial process was to list HR activist, already involved with community work through information available in print media, through known contacts, visiting university - HR departments, university libraries, advocates working on issues related to Human Rights etc.

This led to individual and group meetings to understand their levels of interest. What emerged is a group of committed people who joined to work on the concept building process. The process then moved in the form of a study groups with expert inputs coming in, leading to the formation of a core group.

Identification of stakeholders

The next critical step was identification of stakeholders and sharpening the approach on involvement of various stakeholders. Again the core group took the initiative to list down the names of all stakeholders as follows: NGO community, CBOs, HR activists, Women in development, Environmentalists, Lawyers, Doctors, Journalists, Academicians, Institutions, Corporations, Media & Press, Handicapped Children, Youth, Vendors, Slum dwellers, Unorganized sector, Organized sector, Trade unions, Bureaucrats, U.L.S Bodies, Counselors, Corporate sector, financial institute, Elected representatives, the government of Nagpur, a wide range of NGOs community and religious leaders, educators and media workers, all persons in positions of political, cultural, economic and religious leadership, women in development, as well as activists working on housing, food, health, education, development and peace issues, involving women, children and men.

Youth group activists with the ability to mobilize young people

throughout the country; including students as well as unemployed young people and those working in the self-employed and agricultural sector. People involved in communication; the media and traditional communicators (grits and hunter societies, chasers). Educators in the formal and non-formal sectors. Union organizers, Members of the judiciary, Health workers, especially those involved in areas of women and children's health care.

Criteria for Selection

The process of developing a Human Rights City was to fully involve all sectors of society working on issues that are meaningful to the daily lives of the people of the community. Full representation and participation of all sectors was the central element of the plan.

- Their existing involvement in all the domains of work for social change
- Their concerns due to their being directly affected
- Their demonstrated commitment
- Their ability to be representative of various social and economic sectors of society (including considerations of ethnicity, age and gender) and the ability to carry this representation across the regions
- Their ability to represent various political positions

In addition the Human Rights City Secretariat has planned the following actions:

- Dissemination of materials in local language
- Training of trainers
- Training for educators
- Monitors and documenters.
- Human Rights training for the eight committees.

Future plans:

Support and Solidarity in the City

Open Forums amongst the citizens

Preparation of a human rights charter for the city of Nagpur

Developing a Human Rights Citizen Forum

Establishing of a Human Rights Court in the city

Establishing a Human Rights Commission for the city of Nagpur

Attending to the legal structure and implementation of the plans of action

Establishing of a Fact Finding Committee

Creating a legal base for the city

Establishing a Fact Finding committee

Public Interest Litigation

Research on facts and figures of human rights violations and realization

Case studies and reporting

Documentation of the process

For further details kindly contact:

PDHRE - People's Movement for Human Rights Education,

526 West 111th Street, Suite 4E,

NY 10025, U.S.A.

Tel: 1-212-749-3156

Fax: 1-212-666-6325

E mail: pdhre@igc.org

Web Site: http://www.pdhre.org

Fulfilling Human Rights through Living Values Education

by Christopher Drake

Living Values: An Educational Programme

Each time we look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it offers us a timely reminder of the fundamental human standards that we all want, and need, to live by. It remains one of the most inspiring documents written in recent times and its simple truths constitute a basic blueprint for daily life, reminding us of our rights and also the responsibilities that we have toward our fellow human beings. Recognition of these rights and responsibilities is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Yet over 50 years after the Declaration's proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly, and despite its widespread endorsement and actions to uphold it, human rights continue to be violated on an international, social, professional, and interpersonal level.

The vision of what we want to achieve–the universal observance of fundamental rights and freedoms – is clear. The Declaration is a vision that has now been endorsed by governments, championed by organizations, and claimed by individuals worldwide. And yet, notwithstanding its universality, its standards are often

relegated to the backseat of social progress, leaving exploitation, violence, and injustice to prevail in one form or another. It is as if the link between aspiration and action, between principle and practice, has been severed, exposing a gap between what we believe and accept as correct and what we actually do.

This raises the question of why we are unable to do that which we want to do: to implement clear and cherished aspirations that make for a better quality of life for all. The aspirations of the Declaration may be high, but are they really beyond our reach? They are certainly neither physically nor financially impossible and they have widespread political acceptance; they embody a way of life, and values, which we all believe in and identify with. So how can we implement the common standards of achievement set out in the Declaration?

Education must undeniably be at the heart of our efforts and, along with other components of such education, there should be a greater focus on the value system that is the framework around which the Declaration has been crafted. Effective human rights education must help individuals identify and adopt personal and social values that they can call on to guide their decisions, relationships, work, and life as a whole. It must help them develop a depth of character and a clear sense of their own identity, integrity, and what they believe to be important in life.

Effective human rights education must help individuals identify and adopt personal and social values that they can call on to guide their decisions, relationships, work and life as a whole

Given the universality of human values and rights, it follows that education can no longer limit itself, whether by content, gender

bias, or age cut-off, but must transcend these frontiers. Education must become an inclusive, universal, lifelong learning process that embraces the family and community, as well as the classroom, as places of learning. In a world where rights are too often abused, leading to poverty, deprivation, and insecurity of many kinds, the maximization of all inner personal resources is essential. A values-based and rights-based approach to education requires that all within society are engaged in learning, for themselves and others.

We must learn, and keep learning, about the rights we have as individuals but also about the responsibilities that go with them. To do so, we must embrace the values that are the building blocks and the very essence of rights and responsibilities. We cannot truly understand rights and responsibilities without first understanding the values on which they are based and, indeed, developing a far better understanding of ourselves. We live in a world where our greatest achievements have primarily been technological in nature and our toughest challenges are essentially personal: the challenges of learning to live together with other people, to share with and care for those around us and to tolerate diversity and understand differences while maintaining self-respect. Achieving this vision of a global community of world citizens who are at peace with themselves and each other is both the challenge and the promise of the 21st Century.

To realise this vision, each of us will be called upon to develop and exercise a tremendous breadth of personal capacity and the ability to make informed and balanced choices: choices we make as individuals in our own right, exercising our freewill, and also as members of our immediate society and of the world community. To prepare individuals for the responsibility that this vision asks us to accept is one of the main tasks of educationists today. If we are to continue to strive towards this "necessary Utopia",

it is clear that learning must be a life-long process but it also needs to be life-wide and life-deep: it must address the whole person and give individuals a breadth and depth of personality and personal skills in their preparation for life. As well as nurturing intellectual development and e-literacy, education must help individuals identify, and adopt, personal and social values that they can call on to guide the decisions they make, their relationships, work and life as a whole. It must help them develop a depth of character and a clear sense of their own identity, integrity and what they believe to be important in life.

So we must learn, and keep learning, about the rights we have as individuals but also about the responsibilities that go with them. We must learn about the values that will guide us towards desirable, fulfilling and worthwhile outcomes in our actions and daily life as individuals in our own right, the masters of our own selves, but also as citizens of the world community. For values relate to who we are and how we choose to live and let live.

Living Values believes that each individual has the right, and responsibility, to discover, construct and deepen his or her own values and it aims to help children and young adults in this process. Further, it seeks to do so in a way that leads to an outcome derived from an awareness of the basis, significance and consequence of the choices made. Values then become something valuable: they are no longer handed down as outdated heirlooms whose purpose has long been forgotten or imposed as a one-size-fits-all straitjacket or stumbled upon so as to amount to little more than beliefs picked up as a random message-in-a-bottle drifting by in an ever-shifting sea of endless possibilities. Instead they are values that are alive, living values, that will guide behaviour in a way that is judged to be worthwhile, fulfilling and desirable. There are sensitivities involved and we must think carefully about values and the consequences of

implementing them. We must also take account of others' values, and their right to them, and accept the near-inevitability that we need to continue to reflect on and modify our understanding and practice of our own values.

As important as the task itself is how we learn about and teach these values. Values such as respect, responsibility, tolerance and unity must not just be thrown down from on-high but role-modelled and practically experienced if they are to be freely inculcated and become part of the instinctive and spontaneous behaviour of people. In a suitable environment, individuals can learn, acquire and express such values and corresponding attitudes, habits and behaviour and in preparing the world citizens of the 21st century, education must have human, moral and spiritual principles and values at its heart, and the resulting expression of them as its aim.

Addressing this need, the Living Values Educational Programme offers a package of materials containing practical methodologies and tools for use by teachers, and parents, to help children to explore and develop twelve key personal and social values. The twelve values specifically covered in the Programme are:

Cooperation Freedom Happiness Honesty
Humility Love Peace Respect Responsibility Simplicity
Tolerance Unity

The Programme materials have been developed by educators from around the world, in consultation with UNICEF's Education Cluster, with the support of UNESCO and the sponsorship of the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, UNESCO's Planet Society and an international non-governmental organization, the Brahma Kumaris. The Programme's approach is experiential, participatory and flexible, allowing it to be adapted according to varying cultural,

social and other circumstances. It also contains special modules for use by parents and care-givers and for refugees.

The Programme provides a means for educators around the world to collaborate–creating, sharing and dialoguing as they work with a variety of values-based educational experiences. This cooperative partnership has produced positive results in a variety of educational settings, as described in more detail below. The Programme's contents are varied and include reflections and discussions as well as games and other practical activities for use within school curricula and other educational contexts. The common element among these activities is that all have values at their core. Some then create situations of simultaneous teaching and learning where values become tools for building, sharing and integrating – where learning is an expression of what we believe in and live for. The Programme is based on the view that each human being has the potential for peaceful and loving attitudes and actions and to grow and learn new life-skills. When educators create open, flexible, creative, and yet orderly, values-based environments, students will naturally move closer to understanding their own values and develop their own way of thinking.

The Programme's vision is of people living together in a world of inclusion in which there is respect and appreciation for each culture. Its activities aim to help children and young adults learn to perceive, understand and act in ways that promote peace, justice and harmonious coexistence and respect diversity. It is only with values such as these that humanity will be able to comprehend, face and resolve the challenges in today's world.

The purpose of Living Values is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognizing that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Its aims are:

- To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, others, the community and the world at large;
- To deepen understanding, motivation and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices;
- To inspire individuals to choose their own personal, social, moral and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them; and
- To encourage educators and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development and choices so they may integrate themselves into the community with respect, confidence and purpose.

When educators create open, flexible, creative, and yet orderly values-based environments, students will naturally move closer to understanding their own values and develop their own way of thinking.

The initial Living Values materials became available in March 1997 and by late spring that year were being piloted at 220 sites in over 40 countries. Following piloting, and reflecting comments and including contributions from educators around the world, the outcome was six LVEP books:

- Values Activities for Children, Ages 3-7;
- Values Activities for Children, Ages 8-14;
- Values Activities for Young Adults;
- Facilitator's Guide for Parent Values Groups;
- Values Activities for Refugees and Children-Affected-by-War; and

- LVEP Educator Training Guide.

In the LVEP Values Activities for Children, Ages 3-7, Ages 8-14, and Values Activities for Young Adults, reflective and visualization activities encourage students to access their own creativity and inner gifts. Communication activities teach students to implement peaceful social skills. Artistic activities, songs, and dance inspire students to express themselves while experiencing the value of focus. Game-like activities are thought-provoking and fun; the discussion time that follows those activities helps students explore effects of different attitudes and behaviour. Other activities stimulate awareness of personal and social responsibility and, in the case of older students, awareness of social justice. The development of self-esteem and tolerance continues throughout the exercises. Educators are encouraged to utilize their own rich heritage, and develop their own activities, while integrating values into everyday activities and the curriculum.

In the Facilitator's Guide for Parent Values Groups, facilitated sessions are designed to help parents and caregivers develop the understanding and skills needed to encourage and positively develop values in children. The process includes sessions which help parents reflect on their own values and how they "live" those values. In many group sessions, parents play the games their children will play and learn additional methods to foster values-related social and emotional skills at home. Common parenting concerns are addressed, as are particular skills to deal with those concerns. The Guide can be used as a precursor to the LVEP Values activities or as part of an existing parenting class or programme. Parents are asked to think, create and model the values they would like their children to enjoy. Additionally, methods are presented which show parents how to incorporate values as they nurture their children's

development. The process-oriented sessions are designed so parents can:

- Assess which values are most important to them;
- Determine which values they want to impart to the children;
- Build awareness about how children learn about values; and
- Develop understanding and skills they can use in teaching their children about values.

In the Values Activities for Refugees and Children-Affected-by-War, fifty daily lessons provide tools to begin a healing process of releasing and dealing with grief while developing positive adaptive social and emotional skills with the values of peace, respect and love. Teachers are encouraged to proceed to the normal values activities after the 50 lessons have been completed.

Artistic activities, songs, and dance inspire students to express themselves while experiencing the value of focus.

The last book, the LVEP Educator Training Guide, covers the various activities within LVEP educator training workshops. Sessions include values awareness, creating a values-based atmosphere and skills for creating such an atmosphere. Sample training agendas are offered for one-, two- and three-day educator training programmes and a five-day train-the-trainer session.

To mention a few in the region of "Living Values Practices", West Kidlington Primary School in Oxford, England began Living Values classroom activities in 1995. Mr. Peter Williams worked with somewhat older students for several months in a middle school in

Beijing, China. When he asked his Chinese colleague, Ms. Ao Wen Ya, why she thought a peace visualization was successful, she said: "It helped the children to find peace by themselves. It helped the children to feel happy and relaxed. It made them really want to be happy and motivated to build a better world and be kind to each other." She additionally noted: "Sometimes the children can be naughty in class; they don't concentrate. Now they are more engaged in their subjects because they are interested. They are motivated to learn because they are valued as people....

They are now calmer and not as naughty. The quality and standards of work are higher. They are willing to take risks to express themselves well with more confidence." Mr. Williams added: "The lessons really did something. Their attitude is more positive and they are better organized both individually and as a group." An observer from the Chinese Academy of Sciences commented that the motivation of the children had been greatly enhanced, and it transferred to other lessons.

The same kind of response has been found since early 1999 with the revised materials, amended and expanded following piloting process. For example, teachers in Malaysia consistently noted good results even though the Programme had only been implemented for a short time. One secondary teacher, Mr. Mohdsura, noted good growth in motivation, respect toward peers and adults, honesty, responsibility and the ability to cooperate.

The practical outcome of using Living Values activities in schools, and an awareness of the changes that can come about, are helping to strengthen appreciation of the benefits, relevance and necessity of values in the classroom. This in turn is highlighting the crucial role to be played by educators, as education must be values-based if it is to provide the indispensable preparation that is needed for life in a challenging world. The demands that are being

imposed on front-line teachers and their need for training, materials and support cannot be underestimated. It is hoped that Living Values materials, and a supporting network, can help educationalists in meeting the need of the hour – the delivery of empowering values-based education, without which formal education may lack purpose and direction and is certainly incomplete. As human progress continues to break new ground, education that brings values back to the heart of life must take the lead in order to give direction to the way ahead as we journey forwards in search of a better world of which we are all citizens. The task may be challenging but it is one that we must all take up; after all, it is our world.

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For further details kindly contact:
Christopher Drake
Living Values: An Educational Programme,
G/F, 15, Lower Kai Yuen Lane,
North Point, Hong Kong SAR, China
Tel: +852-2570 4929
Fax: +852 2510 0442
Email: chris@livingvalues.net

Human Rights Education in Bahai Schools

By Sanjay Gathia

The Baha'i philosophy is an independent faith and believes that the religion of human kind is one that is progressive and continuous, it promotes the philosophy of peace and tranquility. The Baha'i community believes in principles of equality, unity and harmony and that the most important way to resolve today's problem is to understand that the human race should look upon this planet as a common homeland, regardless of the race, religion, caste or creed background he/she belongs to. Dr. A.K. Merchant, Director, Baha'i Office of External Affairs, (who has been involved in Baha'i for the last 24 years) was drawn to the Baha'i faith by its philosophy of peace and tranquility during his college days in Bangalore, India. He originally hails from Burma (Myanmar), were he witnessed a lot of hostilities and was moved by the human rights violations taking place over there. His involvement in the faith and its close connections with the philosophy of human rights and his realization for the need to spread knowledge and awareness of human rights has led him to propagate the need for human rights education in schools.

When I asked Dr. Merchant, how did the concept of human

rights develop in the Baha'i faith?, he told me that - originally the faith developed in Iran with Baha'u'llah's revelations. However, the Baha'is, were discriminated, they struggled in the countries where they were in minority and where they were persecuted, this led them to look upon the UDHR for protection. *"The UDHR was our main shield", Dr. Merchant said, "and thus awareness about human rights became an incentive to understand the issues."* We at Baha'i don't believe in violent methods for the attainment of rights, rather we believe in negotiations. Universal and compulsory education is one of the fundamental percepts of the Baha'i faith. HRE thus became an important activity for institution building of the values of dignity, rights, peace and tranquility.

In response to the question of, "why and how had Baha'i started incorporating HRE in school curriculum, and how would it fulfil their objective of HR institution building?" Dr. Merchant said, *"Since universal and compulsory education is one of the fundamental percepts of the faith, we see education in terms of knowledge, qualities, skills, attitude and capacities that enable individuals to become conscious. Education is seen by Baha'i's as a continuous and creative process and is a powerful instrument for profound societal transformation. The children are the main planks of any institution building and also of HRE, he said. In the context of the UDHR and other covenants, we at Baha'i have prepared simple texts to acquaint the school children about HR."*

The kind of material they use to teach the children are in the form of simple texts prepared for the schools that have been developed to explain (via illustrations) and complement the 30 articles of the UDHR. The material contains along with these articles of the UDHR, similar statements from the scriptures of the recognized world religions. This not only helps acquaint the children about the concept of human rights but also about other religions too. *"Since the children*

are young and at the crucial age of value inception, this aim of teaching them about the concept of human rights using the UDHR becomes a main task" pointed Dr. Merchant.

There are about 40 Baha'i schools all over India which use this simplified text to teach human rights as one of the extra-curricular activities in schools. Dr. Merchant emphasized, *"Our aim is to educate the children in a participatory manner and not just as a text, which they have to learn because the school is teaching so. NO, that is not our objective. The children are taught about the UDHR and the concepts of HR through cooperative games, participatory lectures, where they learn to share their experiences and thoughts, etc., through story telling. Thus the children become conscious about the notion of respect for others. They may not be able to understand the concept of human rights in total, but their thought process towards it is initiated. In this manner we also emphasize the importance of all the faiths in the world and their values."*

"Our aim is to educate the children in a participatory manner and not just as a text, which they have to learn because the school is teaching so."

Dr. Merchant further emphasized that, along with this, the children are taught about skills, life values or moral science. Their idea is to help the children understand the basic concepts of these values. The aim is not just facilitating the learning of the UDHR to the children, but also at the same time teach them about the rights of children. *"Though we teach them about rights, but over here in this, we also make them realize through these life values that just as they have rights, they also have duties too. And that they cannot experience those rights without their duties towards their parents, friends and other people around them."*

"We feel that the school and the curricula is helping the children grow up as conscious beings. We don't force our learning method on the children, we encourage them to join into the process of learning in a fun based manner" Dr. Merchant said. He mentioned that as the program is just about 3 years old, they have not done any formal evaluation of any sort for the program and yet, however, looking at the response the curricula is getting and the parent's enthusiasm is enough to tell that the novelty of teaching the children the UDHR and the CRC in a participatory manner, with the importance given to the family and promoting an awareness of fundamental unity of humanity is a success in itself.

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Further information regarding Baha'I faith and human rights education curricula contact:

Dr. A. K. Merchant

Director, Baha'i Office of External Affairs

6, Canning Road, (Opposite Andhra Bhawan),

New Delhi– 110001 INDIA

Tel : 91–11–3389326, 3386458, 6227919

Fax : 91–11–3782178

Email : extaffairs@bahaindia.org / akmerchant@hotmail.com

Story of Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB)

By Aung Myo Min

ARRC conducted an interview with Mr.Aung Myo Min, the Director of the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), to know more about the kind of work his organization is involved in and the methodology generally used for a Training of Trainers (TOT) facilitated by HREIB.

The Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB) is a progressive organization administering and facilitating human rights, leadership and media training for Burma's diverse communities, by conducting short and medium term training, coupled with a long term internship program. HREIB uses participatory teaching methodology to empower grassroots activities, community leaders, women, sexual minorities and youth, who can then become trainers themselves.

ARRC: Can you give me a brief background of the HREIB's Training of Trainers?

HREIB: In a TOT (Training of Trainers), we provide the trainees facilitation skills in terms of how to teach human rights or the methodological approach to *human rights education* and *NOT* what to teach. *HREIB* believes that only the people who belong in a community have the capacity and the authority in the selection of issues they would want to learn with the facilitators. *HREIB* holds two *TOTs* annually for people who have already undertaken basic human rights education training in the camps and borders of Thailand, Bangladesh, India and China. We usually facilitate the trainings with community members belonging to women groups, migrant workers and the grassroots communities in Thailand, India, China and Bangladesh.

After a series of trainings facilitated by our organization, we realized that the most effective way of reaching out to people in their communities through a *TOT* is to train trainers who are able to walk miles in the targeted communities and who can effectively converse in their local languages. This is the objective of a Training of Trainers, to train people from the local community to be trainers who will be responsible to re-echo and share knowledge and skills to their own communities what has been learned in accordance to the community's language, culture and history.

ARRC: What is the primary thrust in conducting a TOT?

HREIB: Human rights education is getting more and more popular because many people have become victims of various human rights violations. These people desire not only to attain freedom from such violations, rather, to understand that they have the right to live in dignity and reclaim peace. This principle is precisely what human rights education upholds, to give them an opportunity to learn their

rights. A major impediment to the promotion of human rights education, however, is that the *HREIB* has a very limited staff and trainers. Therefore, in order to address such limitation, we decided to widen our network of trainers by creating a pool of trainers so as to be able to reach out to more communities.

ARRC: What are the main issues that constitute a TOT?

HREIB: The main topic/subject we teach at a TOT is facilitation skills, how to introduce human rights that most often cover issues on women, children and sometimes trafficking of human persons. However, as mentioned previously, the issues and how relevant they are in a targeted community mainly depend on the participants. Many of the trainers normally select human rights, refugee rights and/or migrant worker rights. So the ideas and experiences basically come up from the participants.

ARRC: What is the methodology commonly used in facilitating a TOT?

HREIB: The *TOT* starts with the selection of the participants. As human rights trainers, we select basic human rights trainees based on their degree of interest, commitment and potentials to become effective trainers. Understanding that not everybody can easily become trainers, we select trainees who already possess some good facilitation skills. Many of our trainees are also human rights activists. Why human rights activists? Because many activists already have a sense of human rights involvement and most of the time wish to expand their knowledge base so as to deepen their commitment for the betterment of their communities. A good example would be the Karen and Mon communities who prefer their trainees to be *Karen* and *Mon* activists. A TOT can only accommodate 18-25

participants for purposes of making the training more effective and manageable. Although 18-25 participants make up a small group, a *TOT* still entails hard work given the limited time of the program, which is usually held from one week to ten days.

Since we started the organization in 2000, more and more people are starting to get interested in human rights education. Trainings are by no means an easy task because it requires interaction between facilitator and trainees. The process needs to be participatory and interactive. To be effective trainers, we need to have special skills that will motivate our trainees to speak out, analyze together as groups and decide for their own goals and plans. For this reason, a *TOT* thus is very important to develop this skill within community trainers.

The human rights education methodology we use is the *ADIDAS*, a popular human rights methodology being practiced in some countries in Asia. *Activities* (A) are the process by which we as facilitators encourage our trainees to share their experiences and express their personal concepts in regards to an issue. This is then followed by some sort of *Discussion*, which stands for D. Through *Discussions*, the trainees are made to tackle the issues derived from the activities and, to take the issues to a deeper level. After the discussions have taken place, the I or *Input* comes next in the *ADIDAS* methodology. Under the *Input* procedure, the facilitators are then given a chance to disseminate knowledge and important information (e.g. laws, UN instruments and statistics) that the trainees normally are not aware of, for instance, imparting to the trainees existing international instruments and the diverse problems of the world. The combination of the first three steps then result to a *Deepening (D)* of the discussion. *Deepening* would mean relating one's life to the existing structures in society and analyzing life against reality. This process ushers in *Analysis (A)*. All of these stages then culminate

to *Synthesis (S)* – arriving at a resolution in regards to what can be done and what needs to be done. It is a very popular method of teaching human rights and has proven to be quite effective and very useful for us. The *ADIDAS* methodology encourages participation by means of activities beyond regular discussion such as: role play, drama, small group discussions, games and experimental learning.

Aung Myo Min is facilitating human rights education to a Burmese group in a refugee camp located in Thailand.
Photo from HREIB's photo bank

ARRC: What is the value of the TOT apart from training trainees to become effective trainers in their communities?

HREIB: The most important thing a TOT can result to is the practice of the *3H education*. The first H stands for the *Head*. At the head level, the trainee is able to obtain new knowledge or is able to deepen existing knowledge in regards to the issues at hand. The

second H stands for the *Heart*. Trainees are encouraged to feel and take to heart what has been discussed. Under the heart level, questions such as *Why* and *How* often surface revealing issues faced by them or by the people around them. The last H stands for the *Hand*. The hand that will execute what needs to be done to address such issues. This is our philosophy in the promotion of human rights education!

ARRC: What are the difficulties and obstacles that HREIB often encounter during trainings?

HREIB: Difficulties encountered by the HREIB varies from one Asian country to another. Among the countries that we find difficulty with would be Burma because of the country's *"culture of silence"*. Burma has a long history of military rule and dictatorship and for this reason, besides human rights violations, freedom of expression has been suppressed. It is very hard to make people from Burma speak out to voice out their opinions and analyze their situations in an interactive way. This is our greatest challenge. To analyze is a means of identifying the real cause of a problem, unfortunately, even those knowledgeable of the factors that led to their worsened situation do not have the courage to speak out because of FEAR or suspicion. Burma closed its boundaries from the international scene for 45 years and no training such as the TOT has ever penetrated into the country until now. Because of this, it remains to be a challenge to break into Burma's culture of silence and fear.

Another problem would be amongst us, trainers ourselves. Some trainers still continue to be burdened with inferior complex and lack of confidence. Some of them undermine their capabilities and it is an effort for us to do more encouragement to believe in themselves by telling them that they are NOT lecturers, neither teachers, rather they are facilitators. A facilitator doesn't have to be

an expert, he or she doesn't have to know everything, there is to know about human rights and its international instruments – this is impossible. A facilitator is someone who facilitates a training, who shares knowledge with the trainees and learn from them as well. Our trainings basically hold the principle of shared and mutual learning.

Participants analyze together a group work during a HREIB's workshop.
Photo from HREIB's photo bank

ARRC: What happens after the Training of Trainers?

HREIB: The *TOT* is not an end itself. We hold a series of discussion after our trainers are back to their communities to re-echo what has been learned. In these follow-up meetings, we encourage our community trainers to share their success stories and also the problems they encountered during the trainings they held in their respective communities as a process of reflection and evaluation.

ARRC: What are the outcomes HREIB expects from training potential trainers?

HREIB: We expect to raise general awareness in the field of human rights in the community of Burma. By doing so, we are gradually working our way up to establish a culture of human rights where people can know their own rights, and also to respect other people's rights as well. We believe that as long as there is respect for yourself and mutual respect within a community, a culture of human rights will be directed inward and this can only be achieved by *Education.*

We believed the trainings have been very successful. Some of our trainers are also dedicated human rights advocates and lobbyists to free Burma, some of them have attended international forums and conferences held in New York and Geneva. We have trainers who did not undergo the formal *HREIB TOT* and have achieved so much as well. *HREIB*, as an organization dedicated to human rights, also provides materials and publications on capacity building to help dedicated individuals read and develop their skills at their own pace.

The study of human rights opens ones' world to the realities and principles that exist at present time. Knowledge of human rights gives a person the ability to clearly see what role he or she should take upon that will help people realize their humanity.

HREIB has already trained many trainers who are competent enough to facilitate effective human rights trainings.

At present, we focus on the production of materials and continue to develop curriculum in teaching human rights.

Among one of our major thrusts as of the moment is to find ways on how we are able to intergrate human rights education from informal education to formal education, the whole essence of grassroot education.

Note: ARRC is co-founding member of HREIB

For further details kindly contact:

Mr. Aung Myo Min

Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB)

P.O. Box 37

Chiang Mai University PO

Chiang Mai, 50202 THAILAND

Tel/Fax: (6653) 276-256

Email: hreburma@chmai2.loxinfo.co.th

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Gender Capacity Building for Hill Tribe People

By Ploychompoo Sukustit

The Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand Association (*IMPECT*) is an indigenous and tribal non-government developmental organization with a staff support of representatives from indigenous communities. The Association currently covers a jurisdiction area of eight provinces in the North of Thailand working with 250 indigenous and tribal communities that comprises 145 core villages with more than 100 co-coordinating villages. There are six indigenous and tribal peoples involved in the Association's activities, namely, the *Karen, Hmong, Mien, Lisu, Lahu* and *Akha peoples*.

As part of *IMPECT's* mission in its efforts of empowering the hill tribe people is imparting to them the need to recognize the utmost importance of gender as a basic concept for development activities. The *Gender Capacity Building Program* was established for the purpose of strengthening and building upon the capacity of staff members and community leaders in both concept and skill development to effectively address gender issues. The program focuses on indigenous women's groups by

providing them greater opportunities, and encouraging their active participation in decision-making and developmental activities at the local level.

During my interview with Ms. Anchalee Phonkliang, a trainer of *IMPECT*, I was told that the program was developed to address existing human rights violations in remote areas of indigenous and tribal peoples. There was a need to develop the *Gender Capacity Building Program* because access to information by the highlanders was very problematic and due to this, made the highlanders more vulnerable to the abuse of government officials. In this light, the *Gender Capacity Building Program* therefore aims at building knowledge and empowering the community for the protection of their most basic rights.

Ms. Anchalee (far right) is discussing with hill tribe villagers on community development.
Photo from IMPECT's photo bank

"For women, due to culture and tradition, their roles have been limited to domestic work as compared to the men who most often than not engage in productive work. This difference in role plays a significant factor in widening the gap between men and women. The advantageous position of men in terms of getting employment outside the community does not immediately equate to the positive development of the community for reasons that their interaction with urban areas has in many ways affected their lifestyles, for instance, introducing them to the abuse of illicit drugs. This contributes to the inefficiency of many hill tribe men nowadays in terms of providing for their families and the community itself. On the other hand, the women who are left in the communities are able to find means in coping with this inefficiency, many of them taking in the responsibility of supporting their families within the limitations of work made available in their respective communities that is often based on gender. Due to the increased productivity and maybe, dependency on women-led families, women should be given a democratic space and the opportunity for them to share their ideas and participate in activities in their community", said Ms. Anchalee.

Under the mandate of *IMPECT*, it is significant that a short study is made before actually engaging in the formal training developmental process of *Gender Capacity Building*. This short study is supposed to contain information on the needs of the member communities and the people and the problems and current living situation they find themselves in. By identifying these, a training program will be drafted to ensure that the needs, plights and proposals of the villagers are addressed. Ms. Anchalee added, *"the Training Need Study is necessary to identify what the villagers want for the development of their*

community. Prior to each training, we prepare the procedures by holding a series of meetings to analyze the community's situation, which will then lead to the planning of suitable activities for each hill tribe community." And *"every time IMPECT holds trainings, we invite all groups of women villagers, young and old to attend because it is very important that there is mutual learning and a sharing of different experiences and ideas."*

"For capacity building, apart from giving women knowledge, women also need to be given the confidence to talk, discuss and make inquiries in regards to the issues they are interested on. Furthermore, women should be given equal democratic space to promote their involvement in development work as their confidence level and understanding may be different from that of men. For these specific reasons, there is sometimes a need to separate men and women during the training programs particularly when gender issues are on the table", said Ms.Anchalee.

"We have to realize that what holds greater importance than feeding the villagers with input, data and the study of issues is providing them an opportunity and/or a venue where they are able to share their thoughts, listen to each others' experiences and disseminate community khowledge to the public."

In regards to women participation, Ms. Anchalee stated, *"women often encounter great obstacles in participation because society dictates that women alone should only do household chores. Women are placed in boxes of cultural expectations and are only allowed to work within the*

domestic sphere by feeding their kids, doing home chores and the like. Due to these multiple responsibilities, many women who attend our trainings often fail to concentrate on focused activities. We see this as an obstacle and not as a woman's problem as this inability to focus and concentrate is explainable by hardbound traditions and cultures moulded to what is now defined as "women's work". In our attempts of reaching out to the women and making them feel comfortable at the same time, we often hold the meetings when women are free from their chores and/or allow them to bring their kids to the training venue. On another note, we also hold our trainings outside of the community for the women to see and learn new things."

Another impediment to the success of the training program is the attitude of men towards women. Men in general feel women's ideas are not reasonable, thus neglecting what the women have to say. Women are perceived as just confined into doing housework and taking care of the children. There are even instances when one man would stand up during a training program and voice out his opinion against women's participation in a tribal meeting. How society perceives a woman poses as a stumbling block to the success of the training programs. However, as Ms. Anchalee stated, *"the organization adjusts to this "reality" and is lenient when it comes to children's presence during the training. In this respect, at times, the organization provides the children with videotapes for viewing to entertain the children so their mothers are able to complete the training program."*

Among the targeted results and outcomes of the *IMPECT* Training would be: a better relationship within hill tribes with a deeper understanding of co-existence and shared work and participation. From the inputs shared by *IMPECT* to the hill tribes, traditional attitudes on women's roles gradually change.

Prior to the trainings, most often than not, women fail to acknowledge that they are poorly treated and taken advantage of because of their gender. With the introduction of such a training, more and more women in the hill tribes learn to speak out and actively participate not only on domestic affairs, but also towards the betterment of the community itself. Although the attitude and acceptance of men to gender issues vary from one hill tribe to another, what is important is that *IMPECT* is able to open the eyes of both men and women gradually, making both sexes understand that women, their presence and participation are in fact important to the development of the community.

More and more women are now being entrusted with more responsibilities and opportunities to take part in community activities and projects beyond the domestic sphere. In addition

New Year's Day at Akha community. Members gather and prepare for the swing ceremony.
Photo by Sucharat Sathapornanon

to these, some more open minded hill tribe members even start encouraging political participation of women in their communities. An example would be women participation in environmental management and the general upkeep of the community, such as the Karen women for instance.

The Akha children enjoy more toys in celebration of Children's Day.
Photo by Sucharat Sathapornanon

IMPECT hopes to see an empowered young generation to follow through with *IMPECT's* work. Given today's skill and focus on capacity building, it is not very difficult for the next generation to follow through and even improve on the breakthroughs IMPECT has already done. Finally, *IMPECT* envisions as well, the people with adequate awareness and sensitivity to the protection of their community and all peoples belonging to it, regardless of sex and gender, to address

community problems in a unified way, ushering in cooperation and understanding between men and women.

For further details kindly contact:

Ms.Anchalee Phonkliang

Inter Mountain People Education and Culture in Thailand Association (IMPECT)

252 Moo 2, T. Sansainoi,

A. Sansai, Chiang Mai

50210 THAILAND

Tel: (6653) 492-544, 398-591

Fax: (6653) 398-592

Email: impect@cm.ksc.co.th, anchaleeph@hotmail.com

LABOUR

Learning and Fighting for Labour Rights: Factory Workers' Case in Thailand

By Ploychompoo Sukustit

> *"The government policy to develop Thailand into a newly industrialized country through promotion of foreign investment and export industries, which has turned the country consequently into a production base of transnational corporations that benefit from exploitation of Thai labour forces, has led to a rapid increase in number of factories at the same time as severity of labour problems, including low wages, long working hours, poor safety, health and other working conditions, retrenchment, and violation of workers' rights, such as rights to form labour unions and to negotiate with the employers."*
>
> **CLIST**

The Centre for Labour Information Service and Training (CLIST) is a centre that was founded ten years ago as an agency

that conducts training and education to raise awareness and provide basic human rights knowledge to workers in Thailand. According to Mr.Somyot Pruksakasemsuk, the Director of the organization, *CLIST* aims at building human rights awareness in protection of the rights of the workers and in promotion of workers' formations as vehicles to uplift workers' status and living conditions. Furthermore, *CLIST* is an agency that campaigns for amendments in Labour Laws to better protect workers' rights and interests and to provide assistance to workers whose rights are violated.

Mr.Somyot (far right) joins a workers' demonstration against President Kim Dae Jung demanding the release of Korean labour leaders kept in jails.
Photo by Pongsak Chanon

Among the various activities *CLIST* takes charge of are organizing trainings, group meetings and movements and campaigning for the promotion of the formation of workers' groups and organizations. In regards to training, *CLIST*'s participatory training is aimed at assisting target group workers in the acquisition of

knowledge, situational analysis, planning and building organizational management capacity. The participatory training also carries out conscientization training aiming at motivating target group workers, particularly women workers, to encourage participation and involvement in labour movements with the aim of improving all aspects in their overall quality of life. Content of the training includes an analysis of problems in factory, community and society, understanding gender inequality, women's rights, workers' rights, labour laws, and understanding the country's social, economic and political situation. Training, as an entry point, builds workers' self-esteem and confidence in recognition of the benefits of working in a group or an organization and prompting them to take part in labour activities. The rationale behind training is to improve workers' livelihood, which will thus spur the development of the country as a whole.

How does CLIST run the program?

"CLIST conducts two training courses a) Basic Level – the provision of workers inputs on labour rights, the importance of gathering as a union which includes labour rights and labour law; b) Leader Level–the training of factory workers in organizational management, bargaining and negotiating skills and giving them a better understanding of the politics and economics behind working skills", said he. He further explained that it is necessary for the trainings to be participatory thus such trainings can only accommodate an approximate of 15–25 participants. In addition to

> ***"The most important thing besides knowledge and information sharing by CLIST facilitators is gradually encouraging workers to search for answers by themselves."***

this, although there are no requirements to the selection of resource persons, previous factory workers who now are CLIST's trainers have facilitated majority of the trainings bringing with them past experiences to further educate workers/trainees.

Said Mr.Somyot, *"this kind of training motivates the workers to review and analyze existing problems and how these violate their human rights. By doing so, workers are able to find ways to address existing problems in their workplace."* Among the more popular problems most workers face is uncompensated hard labour with very low-wages, they get that not only furthers the company's profit gains. Moreover, it also fails to sustain their families at a minimum living condition. Earning less than what is required to sustain a family is a violation against the ILO Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *"Due to low-wages and so many other violations existing in selected working environments, the process of action planning thus is imperative calling for workers to access their right to form unions, that of which our organization supports and assists the workers."*

CLIST aims to help groups of organized labour unions and workers found in 20 factories all over Bangkok and industrial zones, eighty percent of whom are women working in export factories. *CLIST* goes around to meet and educate targeted workers found in the streets, the slums, night clubs and even inside the homes of the workers. The training *CLIST* facilitates is not only in the field of human rights, but to disseminate information and knowledge in terms of capacity building as well. The training is also focused on consciousness changing, self-confidence building, and inculcating a culture of human rights unto the workers.

"Each group of workers undergo formal training once or twice, after which is followed by actual lobbying for change in current working situations and environments. The kind of trainings we conduct

for workers are very interactive and participatory. Our facilitators do not only disseminate information and facilitate capacity building, and awareness, they also work in solidarity with the workers, lobby with them for change. The most important thing besides knowledge and information sharing by CLIST facilitators is gradually encouraging workers to search for answers by themselves", said Mr.Somyot.

Patience is needed...

"The realization of change does not come overnight, it is a life-long process, which requires a lot of patience, tolerance and understanding as in Thai culture, seniority and patronage are two factors very difficult to overcome. Many workers hope for outsiders to help them but CLIST believes that only those who belong in the inside group knows better and can actually instill change – only the workers themselves. To effect change is a gradual process for the reason that lobbying for one's rights has its set-backs as reality would put it, some workers are sometimes forced to quit their jobs, are fired and have to return to their hometowns. Unfortunately, there is also not much support coming from the government at times workers are at a threat and are subject to violence."

> ***"Although change is a gradual process, even entails sacrifices, and the returns are slow hence 'capitalist' are starting to realize that they do not have the right to treat their workers as 'slaves' and that the poor, like everyone else have the right to live in dignity."***

What are the common outcomes of CLIST Trainings?

In general, *CLIST* is able to empower workers by saving workers from apathy, building hope and confidence and motivating them to

lobby effectively for their rights as human beings and as workers even if there is always a looming threat of getting fired. Nonetheless, in response to this, *CLIST* tries to find other measures of protecting these group formations or unions by means of campaign work, demonstrations, protest actions, filing law suits against oppressive companies and factories. *"CLIST supports the efforts of these workers and through cooperation, we share information, meet and plan together and at times, we provide them with some sort of financial support"*, added Mr.Somyot.

He continued, *"preparation for the movement can last from one night to a year especially for big issues in terms of policy and law. In fact, towards the end of July, we will be holding a huge labour movement where hundreds of our target groups will come out in the streets to make demands for changes in labour issues. Prior to this effort, we have already submitted a petition with six demands. Some of these demands have already been placed on the table for discussions in the government and although conceivably less than one percent of the total demands were addressed, at least we were able to voice out our own demands on selected matters."* From the knowledge CLIST provides, these workers have a better understanding in other human rights issues and are a major group joining in other rights-based movements in Thailand.

Said Mr. Somyot, *"these workers that lobby with us are the movement's hope. With them walking together with us, we gradually chose that slow path to change. Although change is a gradual process, even entails sacrifices, and the returns are slow, 'capitalists' are starting to realize that they do not have the right to treat their workers as 'slaves' and that the poor, like everyone else have the right to live in dignity."*

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For further details kindly contact:

Mr. Somyot Pruksakasemsuk

Centre for Labour Information Service and Training (CLIST)

166/23 Moo Baan Natthakarn 3,

Klong Thanon, Saimai,

Bangkok 10220 THAILAND

Tel/Fax: (662) 972-7035

Email: clist@loxinfo.co.th

Teaching International Human Rights Law at Jilin University

By Otto Malmgren (NIHR)

In September 2001, a Workshop in International Human Rights Law was held in North-Eastern Chinese town of Changchun. This is a brief account of the lessons learned and the outcomes of the workshop.

The three-week workshop was a cooperation between the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights (NIHR), Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI), The Danish Center for Human Rights (DCHR), and our Chinese partner, the Center for Jurisprudence Research at Jilin University (CJR). The workshop was held in its entirety at the Jilin University campus. This workshop was the first time in China that 25 law teachers from 21 Chinese universities met to study the fundamentals of International Human Rights Law (IHRL). The partially translated manuscripts of the International Human Rights Law Textbook and International Human Rights Law Documents volume were circulated as reference for the teaching. Our goal was to encourage teachers to start courses in the subject or integrate aspects of IHRL into existing courses.

Despite initial difficulties, the Provincial authorities approved

the workshop. One of the most important reasons for the final approval was the complete backing from the Law School at Jilin University, a decision not to be underestimated in the light of the controversial nature of the workshop. The entire workshop was filmed and reports were submitted to the authorities at the end of the three weeks for the sake of supervision. These reports contained all teaching materials and the recordings of the lectures as well as the discussions. After the completion of this workshop we were informed that the Chinese Ministry of Education was planning a writ stating that IHRL now will become an approved course in law schools, a change which will increase the importance of this workshop further.

Facilitators and Participants

The facilitators were high-profile scholars affiliated to the Nordic partner institutions and some of the best Chinese scholars in the field. The participants were chosen from among 45 applicants on the basis of language skills and potential for future teaching in the field. For most participants this was their first exposure to international human rights law. For all, it was the first opportunity for a systematic and in-depth introduction to the subject as it is taught in Western countries. The Chinese facilitators, with few exceptions, held their lectures without resorting to many of the teaching tools and effects that some of the Nordic facilitators relied on to present their lectures. It should be noted that some of the Chinese facilitators gave their lectures in Chinese instead of English, the main teaching language, this of course affected the participants' level of participation. It became clear since early, that during the workshop, language would be a problem. Although there were attempts to alleviate the problems, there were still persons among the 25 participants that did not follow the English language presentations too well.

Twelve lecturers from six countries all lecturing on different

aspects of IHRL would give plenty of opportunity to experience a very diverse and interesting series of lectures. It was indeed very interesting to have human rights law explained by some of the best in the field both on a national level in China and on an international level. However, the presentation of the topics varied greatly from lecturer to lecturer. Some of the differences were clearly cultural, other differences could be attributed to personal styles. The teaching was scheduled to four lectures a day lasting from 1 to 2 hours per class, a very strenuous schedule for all, both facilitator and participants. Most of the time, the facilitators managed to keep within the allotted timeframes. There were a few complaints about the structure of the teaching times and the main complaint was that there was not left enough time to rest. After the first week, the schedule was amended to include a two-hour lunch break. It left one hour less for lectures, which had slight consequences for one of the lecturers. On the other hand the extra rest had a great influence on the stamina of the participants.

A positive aspect of facilitators who do not use the Textbook nor a unified teaching method is that the participants were confronted with different teaching methods and were shown that the topic of IHRL may be taught in different ways and with different tools.

The progress of the participants could be seen on a day-by-day improvement in the understanding of IHRL. Many of the participants had very little knowledge of IHRL from the start and it was very encouraging to notice how the knowledge of the topics at hand became deeper and more reflected in the discussion both during and outside lectures. Questions posed during the workshop also became more sophisticated as the

general knowledge of IHRL increased. The participants, although all were legal scholars, mostly were not familiar with the principles of international law and IHRL. As they became more aware of the holistic nature of IHRL, their interest in the topic also increased and several participants expressed their intention to, either continue research in the field, or to consider establishing courses at their own universities.

A lesson in the use of methodology

As reference material the partially translated "International Human Rights Law Teaching Textbook" (from now referred to as the Textbook) was used. The Textbook comes out of another NIHR project and was in the final editing stage at the time of the workshop. It was thought a benefit, both to the Workshop and as reference Textbook in teaching. Although the Textbook has a methodological approach to its teaching outlines, these were not explained nor used by most of the facilitators during the Workshop. Both positive and negative effects may be drawn from that experience. The fact that very few facilitators used the Textbook while teaching may be attributed to many factors. One reason, and maybe the most obvious, is that only two of the total 12 facilitators had worked with the Textbook as editors being more familiar with the structure and content of the Textbook they could have facilitated the use of the book. However, the Textbook was used as reference by other facilitators.

A positive aspect of facilitators who do not use the Textbook nor a unified teaching method is that the participants were confronted with different teaching methods and were shown that the topic of IHRL may be taught in different ways and with different tools. The Nordic facilitators' variety in teaching methods got the most attention in both the written and oral evaluation after the completion of the workshop. The Chinese facilitators' methods were the most criticized

in the oral evaluation, however, the same criticism was not as clearly reflected in the written evaluation.

On the other hand, there are points in which the unstructured use of methods in teaching could be seen as negative. Since there was no discussion on method and course structure prior to the workshop, the facilitators often did not know what already was covered by other lectures and often felt the need to digress and to "fill in" in areas. At times this repetition could be seen as necessary but more often than not it contributed to further confusion as to the importance of the topic that was supposed to be covered. It was also one of the main points in the oral criticism given both at the evaluation meeting as well as comments during the workshop. For instance, the structure of the UN was explained in great detail and length on three different occasions.

A second negative point in not using a consistent teaching method, more specifically the method of the Textbook, is that the aim of the course is to encourage teachers to start courses in the subject or integrate aspects of IHRL into existing courses. It did not receive the emphasis that it was originally intended. Part of the problem was, we did not give any consistent introduction to the use of the Textbook, and neither did we introduce *the forte* of the Textbook in preference over other teaching materials. In the end, there were still many of the participants who did not understand the intended use of the Textbook.

Teaching methods used ranged from plain lecturing (mostly Chinese facilitators) to the use of handouts and overheads. It was clear from the participants' reactions that the professor spending a lot of time preparing lecture notes and handouts were, by far, the most appreciated of the Nordic facilitators. If this was, solely because the lecturers were very clear and concise (which they were) or it was because the handouts that had been distributed made it easier

to overcome language problems was not clear. However, the level of English among the participants would suggest that a handout could facilitate comprehension to a large degree. One problem was that the preparation time of these lecturers was so long that the facilitator had to forego spending time and commenting on the lectures of others as it was intended from the start.

Afterwards...

RWI and NIHR together offered two scholarships for successful applicants from the course to continue research on international human rights law for six months at the Norwegian and Swedish institutes. Applicants were chosen on the basis of their research proposals. These were required to evidence research skills, familiarity with basic materials in the field and a methodological approach. The deadline for the application was in October 2001, and the two successful candidates will commence their research in Scandinavia during the coming spring and summer.

Several participants expressed a new interest in teaching and research related to human rights. Participants were requested to give feedback on the Textbook manuscript. As anticipated comments were made on the difficulty of producing quality translations of human rights terminology. Even some official UN translations are ambiguous or contain errors. As a consequence of the linguistic barriers that were experienced during the workshop, a new project was initiated: Two scholars well acquainted with the problems in translating human rights terminology into Chinese started on the task to identify problematic terms that needed further explanation or even new translations. The results of this work will hopefully be made available later this year.

and now...

We are presently in the planning stages of a second advanced course in IHRL. From the experiences drawn during the conduct of the course, learnings and different insights that surfaced created an opportunity to improve the quality and do more consultations for the future courses. Nevertheless, the textbook focuses on the importance of teaching methods. This is vital to create a venue for and among the educators and participants for active interaction and further study and analysis through exchanges of information. Moreover, this is crucial for the stakeholders, specially funding institutions, to widen their perspective on the teaching of IHRL. The use of such workshops and courses are at the point where two legal cultures meet and an exchange of views occurs. The value of this kind of exchange is great for all parties: it increases the plurality in the debate on IHRL, the exchange affects the quality of the research being done in the field and ultimately increases the potential for the application of IHRL in a multi-cultural environment.

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For further details kindly contact:

Otto Malmgern
Consultant, China Program
Norwegian Institute of Human Rights
P.O. Box 6832 St. Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo, Norway
Tel. 22 84 2058
Mobile. 92 205 204
Email. otto.malmgren@nihr.uio.no
Web. http://www.humanrights.uio.no

Social Justice, Human Rights, Law and The Role of NGOs

By Clarence Dias

> ***"Social justice means meeting the basic needs of the many instead of pandering to the wants of a few. It means that human development takes precedence over economic development at human cost."***
>
> **Clarence Dias**

Government Lawlessness and Inhuman Wrongs

In most countries of Asia it seems naive to talk of social justice, human rights, and the law. The reality confronted on a day-to-day basis by grassroots communities is widespread governmental lawlessness and the cruel infliction of inhuman wrongs upon those who are vulnerable and powerless to fight back. The noble principle of the "rule of law" has degenerated into law of the ruler. Human rights are enjoyed by a few, and often at the expense of the many. There is little social justice

but instead, the grossest forms of injustice perpetrated by diverse anti-social elements.

Not surprisingly, therefore, most NGOs have extremely negative perceptions of law. The least that the poor have to do with, the better. This seems to be the prevailing attitude of many Asian NGOs. But, unfortunately, ignoring the law is a luxury that the poor cannot afford. Even if they wish to leave the law alone. The law can be a very potent weapon of oppression and is repeatedly invoked against people struggle against exploitation and struggling for justice. This is especially true when people attempt to organize themselves for more effective struggle.

Thus NGOs need to change their attitudes towards law. At the least, they must learn to defend against the use of law to thwart people's efforts at organizing themselves for struggle. At best, NGOs can help people in the very crucial struggle to recapture the law itself.

Law for Justice or Law against Justice

It is often reiterated that law is part of the structures of oppression; that law serves the interests of the ruling classes; that the legal system is meant for the rich only; and that access to the courts can only be through the legal profession. While much of that is all too often true, it must also be stressed that there are contradictions within the legal system, which can be exploited to enable the poor to recapture law.

The first step in recapturing law for the poor lies in making a critique from people's perspectives of the state's legal system (State law) and of conventional lawyering. A second step involves articulating the characteristics of "peoples law" (Alternative law) and of the alternative lawyering process needed to close the gap between state law and peoples law.

State law provides legal recourse. Alternative law is concerned with developing and using legal resources. State is satisfied with providing access to law. Each person shall have his day in court. Alternative law is concerned with providing access to justice through law. State law is often a straight-jacket since it tends to reinforce the status quo. Alternative law seeks to mould law into being an instrument of social change. State law emphasizes the rights of the individual. Alternative law emphasizes collective rights – the rights of groups of victims organized and exerting countervailing power against exploitative elites. The processes of state law are slow and the remedies available are often inadequate. Alternative law must operate on the principle that "justice delayed is justice denied" and must fashion effective remedies and not just "paper remedies". State law is implemented solely through the agencies of the state. Alternative law creates important roles for people's participation, along with state agencies, in implementation of law. State law starts with a problem and tends to fragment reality. Alternative law starts with a process and attempts to reconstruct reality. In the State law system, the lawyer tends to be both judge and jury. The alternative lawyer acts as a facilitator helping people strategize when and how to invoke law themselves.

The process of recapturing law involves a joint struggle with alternative lawyers, sympathetic NGOs and peoples' organization lawyers, all working together. The first step is to break the legal profession's monopoly over knowledge of law because knowledge is power. This can be achieved by alternative lawyers and supportive NGOs undertaking, at the grassroots level, community legal awareness programs and trainings to help create community barefoot lawyers. The objective is to develop community legal self-reliance by which is meant the

capacity to understand law and legal processes and the ability to strategize when and how to use the law. The role of NGOs and alternative lawyers lies in facilitating the participatory enforcement of laws and the formulation of people-initiated law reforms.

Powerful corporations and large landholders have the resources to develop and purchase the services of legal specialists with an expertise on matters affecting them and their interests. NGOs and alternative lawyers must try to develop themselves into legal resources centers with a specialized expertise in fields of law affecting land and water rights, access to rural credit, organization of labourers, recognition and improvement of squatters and slum dwellers – all of which are of crucial importance to the rural and urban poor.

Social Justice and Human Rights

In country after country in Asia, the fact remains that even several years after independence from colonial rule, a disproportionately small number of the people possess, enjoy, and consume a disproportionately large amount of the country's wealth and resources. Poverty is on the increase in both absolute and relative terms. Development has come to mean self-perpetuation and self-aggrandisement of a few, at the threat to the very survival of the many.

The concept of "social justice" seeks to redress these harms and injustices. But social justice means more than equality (in an unequal society). It means equity. Social justice means much more than absence of discrimination. It means affirmative action and compensatory discrimination to redress historic inequities and inequalities. Social justice means meeting the basic needs of the many instead of pandering to the wants of a

few. It means that human development takes precedence over economic development at human cost.

During the last decade there has been a growing human rights movement in the Third World and especially in the countries of Asia. Human rights NGOs in Asia have been gradually evolving a participatory, human rights empowerment approach, which is quite different from human rights activism in the developed world. This approach places fundamental importance on the organizing of victims groups. Individually, victims are powerless. But collectively, the strength of their numbers enables them to develop a countervailing power in demanding redress or in asserting other rights. Thus, enabling victims to assert effectively their rights to organize, is the first task of Third World human rights activists.

Through organization, the approach seeks to have victims' groups assert human rights in an instrumental fashion as a means to secure empowerment, accountability and participation. Only then can the victims of human rights violations fight back effectively against the structural causes and processes of victimization, since the key to such processes of victimization are marginalization, governmental lawlessness and exclusion. Thus human rights are a means for empowerment of victims through resisting exploitation, debt bondage, pauperization and marginalization.

There is the real sense of urgency underlying present-day human rights activism in Asia today. If human rights are to prove meaningful to those who most need them (namely the victims of human rights deprivations), it is vital to adopt a "participatory approach" to development of human rights and their enforcement. Thus, for example, in the development of a Human Rights to Food, it is vital that the rural poor presently confronted with hunger and malnutrition articulate their concerns and needs in regard to deteriorating food situations and formulate

their strategies to effectively address such situations. Such a participatory, human rights-empowerment approach stresses victim group and grassroots participation in all aspects of human rights activism from standard setting and promotion, to monitoring and enforcement.

The essence of any human right is the power to command the protections promised by the right. The participatory human rights-empowerment approach is designed to help victims of human rights deprivation gain that power. The participatory human rights-empowerment approach is based on four underlying propositions:

1. Law is a resource, which can be used both defensively and assertively by the rural poor in their struggles against conditions, which produce impoverishment, deprivation and oppression.

2. Human rights are very important "legal resources" because they empower the rural poor to participate in these struggles and demand protection of their basic interests.

3. NGOs of various kinds (from grassroots to international groups) have vital roles to play in these struggles.

4. Human rights must help bring about the structural changes needed to ensure the dignity and worth of all human persons, especially the "have-nots".

"If human rights are to prove meaningful to those who most need them (namely the victims of human rights deprivations), it is vital to adopt a "participatory approach" to development of human rights and their enforcement."

Liberating Ourselves From Ourselves

The quest for social justice and human rights is much too important a

> ***"Those involved in grassroots human rights education work must appreciate that education is not so much a process of "putting in" but "drawing out". Formal education talks of the 3R's (reading, 'riting and 'rithmatic). But development educators must imbibe and exude the 3H's of humility, honesty and humanism."***

quest to be left to lawyers alone. Moreover, lawyers need to "unlearn" much of what they think they know and "relearn" from community experiences and people's struggles, much of what they must realize that they do not know. Otherwise, despite the best of intentions, they will contribute little to struggles of people, despite a smug complacency that they have done their professional best.

Those involved in grass-roots human rights education work must appreciate that education is not so much a process of "putting in" but of "drawing out". Formal education talks of the 3 R's (reading, 'riting and 'rithmatic). But development educators must imbibe and exude the 3H's of humility, honesty and humanism. The role of human rights advocacy must be to wage a relentless war against inhuman wrongs so that for all, especially the exploited and the disadvantaged, that most cherished of human rights can become a reality.

To many this might seem utopian, and impossible or, a distant dream. But NGOs involved in the struggle for social justice an for the realization of all human rights must be convinced that what mind can conceive, we can achieve – especially through shared and collective struggle. Human rights NGOs and activists need to serve both as the conscience and the memory of the global community and also as a facilitator and resource for local communities

engaged in the struggle for justice.

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Extracted, with permission from the author, from the "Social Justice, Human Rights, Law, and the Role of NGOs", Empowerment Justice and Social Change : A Shared Struggle" published by the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD).

»

For full article kindly contact the author:

Mr. Clarence Dias
International Center for Law in Development
777 United Nations Plaza
NY, New York, USA
Email: inhumawrongs@yahoo.com

Banteay Srei: Women's Village Working Group

By Sophie Kavoukis

Cambodia has survived 20 years of internal conflict and violence and the displacement of thousands of people. With the achievement of relative political stability since 1998, Cambodia's economic and social framework has been transformed. The consequences of war now merge with the impact of globalization. Weak infrastructure, rapid environmental degradation and decreasing international economy has affected the majority of the rural poor in a largely negative way, pushing families practicing subsistence agriculture into poverty.

Rural women in particular were affected by these changes. A fact that is compounded by their vulnerability to sex discrimination in all sectors albeit representing the majority of the labor force. They have difficulties in the access to services and information more so in the rural areas where there is a distinct lack of health services particularly on reproductive health. The high costs of private services are beyond the reach of the majority of women. Illiteracy is widespread among the women. Violence against women is increasing as a result of increasing poverty leading to prostitution, trafficking and the rapid

spread of HIV/AIDS.

Women's empowerment lies at the core of all the projects of Banteay. Rather than simply providing material inputs, the capacity and skill of women to manage their own activities is also developed and strengthened via skills training and other related areas. Lack of self-confidence and gaps in education impair women's participation in decision making and leadership. The involvement of women in economic activities does not mean a guarantee in their equality to opportunities. There is a need for women to support them in building their confidence through leadership skills and active involvement in community activities.

Banteay Srei, formerly known as the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), is one of the few local NGO's which is fully managed by local Cambodian women and is aimed at the grassroots level, for rural women. *Banteay Srei* approaches the issues facing rural Cambodian women through community development projects with both a practical and strategic focus on women's rights. Banteay Srei's experiences demonstrated that this holistic approach increases the well-being and quality of life of not only women, but also of family members and the wider community.

Integrating Women and Human Rights

Mrs Sarath, a married woman now in her late 30's, is one of the many examples of women who have been empowered by Banteay Srei projects. She firstly became involved in the Cow Bank Project in 1994 introduced into her village in Kralanh District, Siem Reap Province. She later became a Committee member of the Cow Bank and also of the Credit program. In 2001, she was re-elected as the head of her Village Working Group (VWG).

Over the years, Sarath has attended numerous trainings such as skill-building in book keeping, basic arithmetic and writing.

She started working closely with the Village Gender Promoters on violence against women issues and encouraging women to stand as Commune Election candidates. Before she became involved in projects and attending training sessions she says she thought of herself as weak because she was uneducated. However, after the involvement, she has had confidence and a sense of worth as she has become aware of her rights and power. This she accounts to her involvement in projects, which have allowed her the opportunity for personal growth and development.

> ***"As rural women become more confident approaching VGP and CGC with issues regarding violence in their homes and filing complaints with local authorities, the cycle of silence and cultural attitude that domestic violence is a family affair and not a societal issue, begins to break down."***

The Women's Leadership Building component is the key to ensuring the sustainability of all other project activities, and in particular it is integrated into food security and leadership committee structures. Female participants are encouraged to increase their own capacity and confidence to take action within their communities, and to support project activities. In the next 2 years Banteay Srei plans to hand-over project ownership and management to these women's Village Working Groups.

The women's rights projects follow a slightly different strategy to the Women's Leadership and other projects. Non-formal education and awareness activities within the communities are implemented through male and female Village Gender Promoters (VGPs). In each village, there are one man and one or two women promoters trained in Reproductive Health and Violence Against Women, and are

supported by two Commune Gender Counselors (CGCs) who are in charge of training, monitoring and quality of information. Banteay Srei works also closely with the Provincial Department of Women and Veterans Affairs staff (PDWVA) to support the VGPs and CGCs in their work. This network ensures ongoing support to communities and also provides a basis for cascade training and participatory evaluations.

Village working group members in Battambang receiving training on monitoring skills.
Photo from Banteay Srei's photo bank

The Reproductive Health and Violence Against Women components have four main activities: training, raising awareness, counseling, and the facilitation of service provision through the existing legal structures and local institutions. Training is provided for the CGCs who extend community counseling and support on issues of violence against women and reproductive health. The VGPs are

trained to organize workshops and small discussion groups with members of the community, addressing problems of violence against women (namely domestic violence, rape and trafficking) and reproductive health (birth-spacing, STD, HIV/AIDS). The promoters also advice individual women and their families on ways to deal with domestic violence, where it is possible to find help, shelter and support.

Workshops like awareness-raising activity whereby the target beneficiary is the whole community, are facilitated by Banteay Srei, VGP and CGC staffs. Community awareness provides information on the extent of the issue in Cambodia, its contributing factors, current laws and strategies adopted by government and NGOs in addressing the problem. It also focuses on the direct impacts of domestic violence, rape and trafficking upon the individual, family and community. In this way, a change of behaviour and attitudes, in both men and women perpetrators of violence against women are encouraged.

The local authorities, the police, and the justice department are also encouraged to support and actively involve in awareness-raising activities. Local authorities were given training on violence against women issues including Human Rights, Women's Rights and Children's Rights. The aim of targeting this particular group of participants is to encourage them to be more sensitive and responsive to violence against women incidents.

"As rural women become more confident approaching VGP and CGC with issues regarding violence in their homes and filing complaints with local authorities, the cycle of silence and cultural attitude that domestic violence is a family affair and not a societal issue, begins to break down."

Prior to training, these local authorities had no knowledge of violence against women laws or women's rights and were not even

aware of their obligatory role as protectors and problem solvers. However, after being involved in the project, they are giving more attention to cases of violence against women as more complaints are being filed and made public.

Community Development Approach

The main goal of the organization is to improve the standard of living and the well being of poor women and their families. Involving women's participation reduces their vulnerability particularly those who belong to the lowest social strata. Projects that had been extended helped augment family's income and ensure food security; awareness raising and advocacy on women's right and reproductive health is the primary concern; and finally, capability building through leadership and management skills training helped women in building their confidence.

A group of female beneficiaries/members of the permaculture project who were undergoing some training on gardening techniques
Photo from Banteay Srei's photo bank

Banteay Srei's work contributes to women's well-being by involving the whole community in awareness-raising programs, community education on women's rights and reproductive health, and promoting links to access community health and legal services as well. It strengthens and empowers women by encouraging their participation in community organizing that will help in the setting-up their community structure and its representatives. This will support the promotion of gender equality within local bodies vis-a-vis enhancing poor women's participation concerning life's decision making. Banteay Srei's local networks of village volunteer promoters and counselors are also trained to provide extension services and community support in specific areas.

> ***As women we are given the opportunity to become leaders, theirs skills are therefore developed along with their self-esteem and confidence***

There are project activities coordinated through representative committees (elected by activity members) and Village Working Groups – currently consisting of 291 individuals of which over 90% are women. The activities are implemented through groups of 20–30 female members according to the community needs, in the areas of savings and credit, animal banks, small water infrastructure and permaculture home gardens. Each group activity agrees on the guidelines set for implementation, members' rights and duties, and functions have been defined. The group elects a number of representatives to form a committee for the identified activities. The representatives will choose one member to participate in the Village Working Group.

In this way, women in the position of decision making and coordinators develop a structure of project management and

monitoring. As women were given the opportunity to become leaders, their skills are therefore developed along with their self-esteem and confidence. Having been empowered enables them to not only be role models for younger and other women, but to also challenge community attitudes. Further, to correct the wrong notion that women do not need education and skills because once they get married and have children they will not be able to practice it.

Banteay Srei's approach provides a model for integrated development and gender equality, women's rights and empowerment in rural communities, which directly answers the demands of poor women. Food and economic security is a precondition for future change, along with increased self-confidence and community organizing capabilities. Through the integration of activities to develop better home gardens, to access water, to raise animals and to undertake small income generation enterprises, poor women can increase their income, acquire greater economic security, and enhance their social status. Through the opportunity to make decisions, determine project direction, manage and monitor activities, *women become leaders.*

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For further details kindly contact :

Sophie Kavoukis
Banteay Srei
Mailing Address: PO Box 529,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Visiting Address: #36, Street 480,
Sangkat Phsa Deurn Tkov Khan
Chamkar mon, Phnom Penh,
Cambodia

Tel/Fax : 855 023 216 922
Mobile : 855 012 932 357
Email : banteaysrei@bigpond.com.kh

Fostering Rights Awareness through Community Publishing

By Kathy Bond-Stewart

The Community Publishing Program

The Community Publishing Program began in 1986 with the Ministry of Community and Cooperative Development, which until 1989 included the Department of Women's Affairs. The aim of the program is to build up the confidence, creativity, practical and analytical skills of development workers and local leaders through books and workshops. Although the Community Publishing Program serves a wide range of development workers, its main focus is the multipurpose Village Community Workers, about 95 percent of whom are women. Most of them are farmers who had participated in the Liberation struggle. They receive a small allowance from the government.

One of the main inequalities in Zimbabwe is the gap between the communal farmers, mainly women, who live on the worst land with the least resources; and the commercial farmers (mainly white and male) who live on the best land with the most resources. Although communal farmers have received more support since Independence, the average income of a communal farmer is still fifty times less than

that of a commercial farmer.

Program Methodology and Guiding Principles

Process

The books are produced collectively and democratically. First, the book team travels around Zimbabwe listening to what people want in a book. They meet a wide range of people at province, district, ward and village level to get ideas and information on themes for the books. The visits are followed up through correspondence. The book team then puts together a first draft, based on their research journeys and documentary research.

To get a national consensus on the final form of the book, the first draft is widely tested. After this, the books are translated, printed, and distributed. Workshops are used as a vehicle for testing and distribution. Participants learn how to use the books effectively and to create their own media on local themes not covered in the books.

Principles

- The process is as important as the product.

  The books are not only produced for training, but book production is an essential part of training.
- Method should reinforce content

  We not only write about democratic organization, but practice democracy in producing the books.
- Two-way communication

  Readers are active participants and contributors rather than passive recipients. Visits, workshops and correspondence facilitate two way communications.

- Accessibility

  Basing the program on village community workers ensures that the books will be available in every village and accessible in terms of language level.

- Decentralization and coordination

  At the national level, books are on national themes, with contributors from all fifty-five districts. At the local level, production of local media on local issues is encouraged.

The Community Publishing Program uses participatory methods because democracy promotes the quality and popularity of our books while it prepares our participants to take up leadership roles in society. Participatory methods are generative and in keeping with our aim of promoting creativity. In the end, what convinces people is the experience of these methods. We have seen that workshops using these methods mobilize people for change, for they offer participants a positive experience and a taste of what the future should be like.

Products of Community Publishing

People

Our main product is people. Development is not about projects, it is about building people, so they can build a future for themselves....Development is the change of relationships between people... Development is about enabling people to take control of their lives. The end product of development is people.

Books

As a way of developing people we use books, which are of two types: national books and local books.

Response to the Community Publishing Program

Although we have had lots of problems (mainly transportation, insufficient numbers of books, and overwork), in every way the outcome of the program has been better than we anticipated. The program is very popular in rural Zimbabwe, and the books have had a much wider readership than the target readership. The Community Publishing Network is expanding with every book. The program is not only building confidence and skills, but dealing with the much deeper human need for recognition, meaning, creativity, belonging and fulfillment.

An evaluation of the Community Publishing Program, done with 100 rural participants in 1989, shows the kind of impact the program is beginning to have. Words used most frequently by participants in the review were "happy", "honoured", "confident", "stimulated", and "fulfilled". Other comments included:

"I really feel great. I feel I am contributing to the writing of books geared toward transforming society".

"The way these books have helped us as communities is very important. They have changed our attitudes and working style. These books were an eye opener to the community leaders and to us as development workers".

"The books will raise the awareness of the people at the top, and help them improve their attitudes".

Lessons from the Experience

There were many lessons we have learned through community publishing. Although they look simple, they were learned through much struggle. While they relate to community education in the context of development, any program attempting to integrate rights education could benefit from this experience. Some of what we learned has to do with designing a program, some with methods

Using participatory method
Picture from "Legal Literacy"

or approaches to education, and some with the content and skills people need to acquire if they are to develop their potential as active participants in the process of positive social change.

Choosing the right starting point

By basing the women's book on village community workers and those they work with, we are able to reach a large proportion of the population. In the course of the project, we have been very inspired by the energy, creativity, commitment and intelligence of the village women we worked with. One of the most exciting aspects of post independent Zimbabwe is the emergence of more women with a new consciousness. In remote villages in Zimbabwe, women not only are discovering that they are productive farmers and capable mothers, but also community leaders, poets, artist and thinkers.

Using participatory methods

The process used should be appropriate to the goals to be achieved.

Recognizing the positive and negative in people and situations

We train people to recognize the positive and negative in all people and situations, and to build on the positive while dealing with the negative. This helps them to base their development work firmly on reality, rather than on "shallow fashions" and theories which distort much development thinking.

Accepting that criticism is essential

We teach participants methods of constructive criticism. It helps us realize that reality is complex and that there are many different ways of promoting social change.

Dealing with opposition, problems and conflicts constructively

In dealing with opposition, the most useful lesson the book team has learned is that it is necessary to recognize the humanity of our opponents and deal with conflicts humanely. By disciplining yourself, controlling your anger, and trying to understand the fears, pain and potential of your opponents, you will convert some into supporters.

Building unity while acknowledging diversity

For implementing change and building unity we need to be very clear about who our potential allies are. We also need to be aware of our potential opponents. Then we can work systematically at building strong, widespread alliances with those who share our views, motivating those not previously involved and dealing with opponents constructively.

Developing coordination skills

Several conditions are needed for effective coordination:

- Good group-building skills such as trust-building, shared

leadership, etc;

- A clear definition of a common goal;
- A clear description of roles and tasks;
- Regular two-way communication and well-organized meetings when needed;
- An overview of the situation.

Having a long term time frame

The changes we are working for are deep and difficult, and will take a long time. So while being encouraged at small successes, we need to build up the patience and strength to keep going for many years.

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Extracted from "Fostering Rights Awareness through Community Publishing, Legal Literacy", published by UNIFEM

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For further details kindly contact:

UNIFEM

304 East 45th Street, 15th floor,
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: 212/906-6400
Fax: 212/906-6705
Email: unifem@undp.org
Website: http://www.unifem.undp.org

The Informance Play

"Tumawag Kay Libby Manaoag"

Women's Stories of Successes, Failures, and Inhuman Wrongs

By Teresita V. Barrameda

In its 33 years of existence, Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) has presented educational and developmental performances on various political issues. In this sense, the presentation of plays on women's issues is not new. However, the *informance* (information through performance) play *"Tumawag Kay Libby Manaoag"* (Call to Libby Manaoag) may be considered as something old, yet something new. Old, since informance as a form has been with PETA from the start. Yet, the play may also be considered a new endeavor for PETA as it attempts to provide information about an issue and at the same time, develop an artistic form that would touch the hearts of its audience.

The Women's Theater Program launched the informance play "Tumawag Kay Libby Manaoag" on November 25, 1998 to mark the International Day of Protest Against Violence Against Women (VAW) and the start of the 16-days of Activism Against VAW. Aside from being the initial offering for the 1998-1999 Mobile Theater Season, the informance play was toured nationwide to various site partners of the National Family Violence Prevention Program (NFVPP) in

support of the advocacy, education, and social mobilization efforts done by the NFVPP site partners.

Since its launching, the informance play has had 41 shows before an estimated audience of 28,000. It has exceeded the target of 20 performances and request for more performances have grown even beyond the NFVPP partners. On tour, the informance was staged in halls, small auditoriums, gymnasiums, public parks, basketball courts, shanties, and even atop a six-wheeler truck. The audiences varied from urban poor communities to academic communities, professionals, lawmakers, local government officials, rural communities, tricycle drivers, indigenous peoples, women members of people's organizations and NGOs, and women survivors of gender violence.

Actors portraited women in different roles.
Picture from "Breaking Silence"

The audience turnout was unexpected as it exceeded the initial target audience of 100 per show. The large number of audience

reached points out the potential of the informance in generating public awareness to a wider range of mass. Given this potential, it is an effective strategy for campaigns, particularly on issues that remain relegated in the private sphere like family violence. Aside from its potential as a campaign strategy, it proved to be a very good tool for public information, education and advocacy.

The informance does not attempt to give clear-cut solutions. Rather, it opened discussions to help women act on their own. The debriefing workshop takes 1to 2 hours. At the end of each performance provided the audience the opportunity to give feedback, reactions, and comments in an interactive discussion between the actors, the partners and the audience. The workshop further elaborated on women and children's rights and called for possible (local) actions from the audience and organized groups to address the issue of violence against women. In this case, theater was also used to bring about decisions.

During the workshops, a PETA facilitator took charge in the debriefing of the play, while a WCC (Women's Crisis Center) staff facilitated the deeper discussions on the issue, the identification of community action points, and the formation of the women's human rights action teams.

For most of the actors involved in the play, the chance to interact with the audience proved very fulfilling – performing before the grassroots audience and hearing from the audience after the informance. People, particularly the women, discuss what they have seen after the informance. *Women usually talked about their own experiences, breaking their own silences.*

In Novaliches, for instance, actors and audience sat around in a circle to discuss the performance. One woman tearfully shared how she can identify with Bella, the battered wife character. She said:

"Ako 'yun. Kaya lang sa totoong buhay, nakatakas ako di tulad ni Bella". (That could be me in real life, only I managed to escape unlike Bella).

A group of young women asked how to advise a neighbor raped by her boyfriend. One could sense distress in their eyes and a resolve to stop the violence from recurring.

A streetwise mother related how she disregarded accusations of "meddling" whenever she reported abuses in other homes to the barangay (a small local unit of a town). She was a battered wife herself.

> ***"Women usually talked about their own experiences, breaking their own silences."***

Another woman-leader said:

"The informance reassured us that we are on the rights track. Your drama has given us new confidence. It was inspiring to hear all that".

It was truly inspiring to see the courage of the women that "Libby Manaoag" met in the Informance tour. It was striking how the characters in the play would inevitably find an echo in the audience, and how the women in the audience could get the message across more sharply. After hearing stories from women in the communities, their own lines and testimonies were then integrated into the play so that it will continuously evolve as it tours several other sites. The audience themselves have "enriched" the play.

(This article is an edited version, kindly contact the organisation for the full article)

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Extracted from the "Informance Play, Tumawag Kay Libby Manoag : Women's Stories of Successes, Failures & Inhuman Wrongs, Breaking Silence", published by Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA)

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For further details kindly contact:

Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA)

61 Lantana Street, Cubao,

Quezon City, Philippines

Tel: (632) 410-08-21 to 22; 724-96-37

Fax: (632) 410-08-20

E-mail: peta@drama.com.ph

Women's Empowerment

"Teach the women, reach the men!"

Ms.Sao Phanna & her husband Mr. Phon with their baby.

Ms. Sao Phanna wanted so much to attend her Human Rights Teaching Methodology (HRTM) training in Chlong District, Kratie Province but how could she do it? She was still breast-

feeding her baby. Well, in an admirable arrangement defying Cambodian tradition, she and her husband, Mr Phon, agreed he would look after the baby. But the arrangement did not last long. Just two hours to be exact. Cambodian men are not used to such tasks. Phanna's earnest studies were interrupted by her baby's crying. She was excused from her class to attend to the child. Meanwhile the lesson on gender discrimination went ahead, with Mr. Phon listening in. Soon he became an avid listener, to such an extent that by lunchtime he resolved that, to be fair to his wife, he would make a better effort to look after the baby. Phanna completed her course without further interruption.

"Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander"

This may be an apt phrase in the outside world, but not for many rural women in Cambodia... at least it wasn't in Kranlanh District, Siem Reap Province, not until the Institute's HRTM team visited there. Teacher Ms. Supheak was one who used to think women shouldn't ride motorcycles. It was not the done thing. Women were weaker than men. These social taboos were discussed and put to rest at her training. When she arrived home she told her husband Mr. Seng. He was pleased to know that from now on his wife would exercise her newly learned right of equality. She would ride the family motorcycle on her own, and just for good measure, he would ride as pillion passenger!

»

For further details kindly contact:

John Lowrie

Cambodian Institute of Human Rights

30 Rue 57, Sangkat Boeng Keng Kang 1,

Khan Chamkar Morn-Phnom Penh,

Cambodia P.O. Box 550

Email : cihr@forum.org.kh

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Excerpt action module from the ARRC HRE Pack publication

Appendix B:

Editorial Collective

Appendix C:

How to submit a story

Appendix D:

Message from the Coordinator

Appendix A

Excerpt action module from the ARRC HRE Pack 2 publication 1995.[1]

I. Learning objective:

At the end of the lessons, the participants are expected to appreciate and reflect on their own, and others' experiences of struggles for human rights, and arrive at action plans to address a particular human rights issue they want to focus on.

II. Activity: "Autobiography"

Ask the participants to write about the history of their human rights work or any experience they have had related to the defense of their rights.

III. Discussion:

1. When was the time you were forced to defend your rights?
2. Were you successful? Why do you think you succeeded? Or failed? What did you feel?
3. What difficulties did you encounter in defending your rights? What did you learn from those difficulties? How do you think those difficulties could have been overcome?
4. What did you do afterwards? What else do you think you should have done? What attitudes have you developed after that experience? Do you think it's the rights attitude?

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[1] See *HRE* Pack (Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education, Bangkok, 1995) p 105.

IV. Input:

Refer to the article on the success stories of the worldwide human rights movement.

V. Deepening:

Do you intend to be part of the human rights movement? What role do you intend to perform?

VI. Synthesis:

Ask the participants to identify which of the human rights issues and concerns they wish to focus on. Ask them to develop a "10-year Program of Action" they intend to carry out.

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Appendix B

Editorial Collective from Issue No. 0011

We are thankful to our contributors who have taken the time to write their experiences and share it with others. We would encourage our readers to kindly send forth any other success story they have known or witnessed.

In Ruki Fernando's own words: organizing and empowering marginalized groups seems to be the main targets where HRE can strengthen civil society through the empowerment of the powerless which helps people to become aware of their fundamental rights and empowers them to obtain their rights through struggle. Ruki has in detail shared with us experiences of the struggling communities and groups that have found their rights to be unjustly denied to them and their determination to take on the struggle in a collective and legal manner. Ruki says, "even though many of them lacked basic education, with some help from Satyodaya, it was the Daily Workers themselves, who had enabled them to be dignified persons engaged in a dignified profession".

John Lowrie from Cambodia, wrote that, "here are two little stories that tell about the big story, the success of human rights education in Cambodian schools. This organization has a project on Human Rights Teaching Methodology (HRTM), that teaches teachers how best to teach human rights to their school students." Mr. Prasittiporn Kan-Onsri told that, "they have now learned to gather information and then take up the issues with the higher government authorities. In case there is any help, we provide them, but

they have now learnt to act on their own and demand their rights."

Despite many of the shortcomings of the present educational system in many countries in the Asia Pacific region, Formal Human Rights Education has begun as a necessity in some of the educational system in schools. In India, the Baha'i experience as told by Dr. A. K. Merchant, which takes into account the various religious and ethnic diversity of India and combines the same to formulate its interpretation of the UDHR to educate the children about the principles of human rights and to promote respect and dignity among them for each other. Dr. Merchant said, "Since universal and compulsory education is one of the fundamental percepts of the faith, we see education in terms of knowledge, qualities, skills, attitude and capacities that enable individuals to become conscious. Education is seen by Baha'is as a continuous and creative process and is a powerful instrument for profound societal transformation."

Professor Zhang Hongyi and Ms. Wang Yanling from China have been working in the Beijing Normal University and have shared their experience of working with children in the schools. Prof. Zhang Hongyi wrote, "I appreciate your wise decision for making HRE success story. I have asked an outstanding teacher Miss Wang Yanling who works in primary school to write her experiences of human rights education in their school." Miss Wang Yanling, who is a primary school teacher wrote, "As a primary school teacher, I witness the great improvement of human rights in primary school education. The concept of human rights has been introduced into class and such ideas as show respect for children, having students play the leading role, have gone deep into peoples minds. Here I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my personal experience in my teaching work."

Christopher Drake from Hong Kong (China) has also shared

his experiences of Living Values-Educational Program, which is about effective human rights education to help individuals identify and adopt personal and social values that they can call on to guide their decisions, relationships, work and life as a whole.

I thus end with a note of hope that this maiden issue would encourage our friends to write for the journal and share their experiences.

»

Editorial Collective from Issue No. 0012

Different Actions, Different Approaches, One Goal: Women Empowerment

In this issue, we are providing you with just a few of the educational programs provided by the NGOs to women. Although, these NGOs work in different parts of the world they have one objective the empowerment of women through education.

The Philippines Educational Theater Association (PETA) used Informance Play as a means to present educational and developmental issues on various political issues. PETA used theater arts for public information and advocacy campaign. "Tumawag Kay Libby Manaoag (Call to Libby Manaoag)" is about women's stories of successes, failures and inhuman wrongs, by which we can deduce the actual, happening in a day to day living. Disseminating information through performance (Informance) draw together people from various sectors and walks of life from urban poor to academic professionals, indigenous groups, and people's organization and non-governmental organizations. The group performed in halls, auditoriums, gymnasiums, public parks, basketball courts, and shanties and even in mobile vans. They have been doing these to express their views on the issues of violence against women and inform the public about the National Family Violence Prevention Program.

The Community Publishing Program extends another form of community educational information tool on human rights awareness. This aims to build up the confidence, creativity, practical and analytical skills of development workers, local leaders and readers of the book. The program publishes national and local books. This is in response to Zimbabwe's problem in insufficiency of books,

aside from dealing with economic inequalities - the gap between the white and the colored farmers, transportation and the like. As such, the NGO had a tie-up with the government. To develop their coordination skills, Participatory Method is used to come up with the book and to sustain creativity through environmental scanning, visits and correspondence. To test the effectiveness of the book, they conduct workshop for its evaluation. As a result, the stakeholders, particularly the Village Community Workers, became confident, believe themselves that colored can be productive as white farmers, and discovered that they are capable to become leaders, poets, artist, and thinkers.

Finally, in Cambodia, Banteay Srei target beneficiaries are rural women. The NGO aims to improve the standard of living and well being of the poor. This project serves as a model for integrated development and gender equality, women's rights and empowerment in rural communities.

The Project has adapted Community Development (CD) to facilitate the implementation of the three components which includes women leadership building component, reproductive health and violence against women, and finally, the non-formal education. They used awareness-raising program, community education on women's rights and reproductive health, more importantly, promoting link to access community health and legal services. As a result, the increase in economic security and enhancement of social status regained women's self-confidence and reliance.

In the recent March 8 International Women's Day Message of Ms. Mary Robinson, Chair of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), she mentioned the significant roles of women in development. *"The work women do is often unpaid and under-valued. Furthermore, women are frequently excluded from economic decision making, and their concerns ig-*

nored. Globalization, if left to operate without a human rights compass, will continue to marginalize millions of women in all parts of the world. Vital financial resources for development must be increased and steered towards meeting basic human needs, such as health, education and social services. More must be done to relieve the burden of debt servicing, and to target development assistance to women's needs. We must listen to women's voices and recognize fully their role and contributions if we are serious about poverty reduction and sustainable development for all."

"Discrimination against women shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." Article 1, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

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Editorial Collective from Issue No. 0013

Making A Difference: First Year in Service

September marks the 1st year Anniversary of ARRC's newsletter "*Making A Difference*". For a year now, ARRC has dedicated itself in providing our readers within the Asia-Pacific region a newsletter that contains innovative articles and ground-breaking success stories in our efforts together with civil society to instill a culture of human rights within and across boundaries. "*Making A Difference*" serves as a newsletter that aims at disseminating information and sharing activities and stories to serve as an inspiration for all human rights activists and defenders who continue to struggle for social change, as well, for all the underprivileged, the deprived and the poor who remain to be boxed inside and oppressive cycle of violence.

Over the years, humanity has seen devastations and continuous violations and deprivations of the most fundamental rights of many peoples and societies.

However, in the same fasion, more and more people are starting to see positive outcomes brought about by the perseverance and dedication of civil society and human rights activists in the gradual realization of social change.

"*Making A Difference*" is for anyone who longs to maintain, regain and empower the people. We hope that we are able to serve as an instrument of inspiration in challenging existing structures and realities, and to pave the way for evident positive changes.

In *Making A Difference's* 3rd Edition, we provide our readers with a diverse set of stories that range from: A Growing Up Experience in Working with Children, The Fight for Labour Rights, The Community Right to Development, TOT (Training of Trainers) Practice for Activists, and article on Law, Social and Human Rights

and a piece on Gender Capacity Building for Hill Tribe People in Thailand. Most of the stories in this issue were narrated by human rights advocates who have many years of expertise and experience in the field of human rights education, advocacy, and training. This issue is concluded by a brief report on the Asian Youth Network for Human Development Workshop that was first held in Bangkok, Thailand from July 28th - August 1st , an even that brought together youth leaders from all over the Asian region.

"*Making A Difference*", is an on-going project of the ARRC in its efforts to serve as an instrument of advocating human rights education and take part in solidarity with all our friends and networks. ARRC hopes to encourage more people towards making a difference and further commitment to social change, standing as a witness that there is indeed HOPE and indications of gradual CHANGE.

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Appendix C

How to submit a story

It has really been a wonderful pleasure to receive stories from around the Asia-Pacific region and to learn about the various experiences of our colleagues who are making human rights education a reality for those thousands, who are struggling to fight poverty, injustice, social and economic disparity and political neglect.

We at ARRC wish all our friends success in their future work and hope that ARRC can bring more and more stories like the stories featured here in this edition to the forefront and share it with our friends across the globe.

We would like to encourage our friends, whose stories are unheard and unsung to take the initiative and share their experiences and knowledge with other friends who could gain from them.

The particulars of the story is given below:

- Kindly send a covering page consisting of the title of your story, along with your name, full postal address, contact telephone/fax numbers and email(s).
- The story is to be a Word document, A4 page, between 2000-2500 words, Times New Roman Font, 12 point size with 1.5 line space.
- We would appreciate pictures too. Kindly send as JPG via email and send the originals via post along with the story.
- Two copies of the story should be sent via post, marked "HRE Success Story"

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Appendix D

Message from the Coordinator

Does Human Rights Education Make a Difference?

Welcome to the maiden issue of the Human Rights Education Journal. This is a journal-cum-newsletter on human rights education. It is with pride that we share with you the first collection of successful human rights education experiences in the field.

Numerous grassroots human rights education programs have existed in the Asia-Pacific for decades. Many have been successfully implemented. Unfortunately, these experiences are largely unknown outside the community or country where the programs are. These successful experiences can inspire people to get involved in human rights education. More importantly, they provide models of human rights education in practice.

"*Making a Difference*", documents experiences, reflections and insights of human rights advocates working in the region. ARRC plans to prepare analytical reports based on the success stories collected to show trends, common or peculiar characteristics, components, and other factors that make a program or project successful.

At the beginning of the project we were thinking of putting the best practices in the field into one publication. But we found it difficult to keep the stories in our file until a significant number of stories have been collected. We thought it best that stories we obtain are shared with everyone without delay. Hence this journal-

cum-newsletter. This is a quarterly publication.

"*Making a Difference*", contains stories on non-formal and formal human rights education experiences, resource material catalogues, and ARRC's bulletin board. We have not abandoned the idea of a book on success stories though. We will select such stories every quarter, and compile them into a book later on.

This maiden issue of HRE Journal, is the first collection of stories from colleagues who responded to our appeal for stories on September 13, 2001 through the Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) Listserve (www.hrea.org <http://www.hrea.org/>). The featured article of this issue is the report sent by our researcher in Sri Lanka, Mr. Ruki Fernando. His reflections on human rights education experiences is shared by our editorial board.

I would also like to introduce to you ARRC's latest member of the secretariat team. He is Mr.Sanjay Gathia from India. He has been working with us in this project as a Senior Researcher. He has a MBA specializing on Human Resource Development and Training from India, during which he has also done research on "Social Responsibilities of Business Enterprises in the Twenty first Century". He had a short stint with the Child Workers in Asia (CWA) on research and documentation of bonded child laborers in South Asia.

We believe that people themselves are the one who can make a judgement on whether human rights education really make a difference. And this is proven by the positive responses from many people and colleagues. They inspired us even more to make this project successful too.

We thus hope to receive your stories in the next issue(s).

Sincerely,

Theresa J.Limpin

Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC)

The Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) is a support institution for human rights education work in the Asia-Pacific region. It aims to facilitate and promote the sharing of experience among groups involved in human rights education. It engages in the following activities:

- Documentation of human rights education work experience in the field;
- Collection of human rights education materials
- Production and distribution of materials, translations of these materials into regional languages, adaptation of these materials for the region, and in accordance with the needs of user groups;
- Organizing training activities at regional as well as national levels
- Publication of important practical information about human rights education work, such as a directory of human rights groups, and research reports; and
- Establishment of a network of resource people for human rights education work

ARRC pursues an extensive linkage program in order to reach out and build networks with as many groups a possible in the Asia-Pacific region. It encourages these groups to establish working relationships between each other. Through its publications and materials, ARRC hopes to keep the groups informed and in support of human rights education.

Human rights can not be realized except through the people who possess them. This is what human rights education is all about. This is what ARRC aspires to.

Making A Difference : A Compilation of Human Rights Education Success

HRE/ASP/GEN/2