

19th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights:
Human Rights Education and Training
4-6 November 2019, Tromsø, Norway

SEMINAR REPORT

Introduction

Human rights education is essential for creating a culture of human rights – that is, societies in which each of us is encouraged and empowered to take the initiative to respect, protect and promote the full spectrum of human rights for all. This message was reinforced by the three keynote speakers – H.E. Ms Ine Marie Eriksen SØREIDE, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Professor Fernand DE VARENNE, UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues and Professor Vitit MUNTARBHORN, UNESCO Human Rights Education Prize Recipient, who emphasized the universal importance of human rights as a backbone of democracy. Both human rights and democracy form the basis for peace and stability of society. The keynote speakers reiterated how human rights education opens the way in confronting intolerance and hatred. Human rights education, therefore, needs to start at an early age and it has to go beyond formal education with engagement of multi-stakeholders and creative methods of teaching and learning. With the current global backlash against human rights and democratic regression, human rights education and training is more important than ever.

The 19th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights on the topic “*Human Rights Education and Training*” was organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (nominated by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. The Seminar, hosted by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought together 123 official government representatives and civil society experts, representing 44 ASEM Partners to discuss the state of human rights education and training. A Sámi Camp visit was part of the Seminar programme followed by a panel discussion on “Sámi & Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Arctic Areas” (organised by UiT, The Arctic University of Norway).

The Seminar ran for 3 days from 4-6 November 2019 in Tromsø, Norway. Representatives from different groups have participated actively in debates and

discussions. The Seminar convened four working groups which each discussed one of four topics:

WG1: Human Rights Education in School Systems

WG2: Equal Access to Human Rights Education

WG3: Human Rights Education & Learning Beyond the Classroom

WG4: Human Rights Education & Professional Training

This report summarises and synthesises the seminar presentations, discussions and conclusions. The report includes summary reports by the four rapporteurs assigned to each of the seminar groups: Mr. Frank ELBERS from the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB), Dr. Sriprapha PETCHARAMESREE of the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University; Dr. Felicia YEBAN of the Philippine Normal University; and Mr. Knut Aspland, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

Key Messages

From the very vibrant and open discussions, it is evident that there is no lack of commitment from the member states of ASEM. These states have expressed their commitment through the ratification of international human rights treaties and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the UN Human Rights Council. In addition, all UN Member States have adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training – although not a binding legal document, it reminds states that everyone has the right to access, seek and receive information about their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is particularly important for state officials – from law enforcement officials to teachers and others acting on behalf of the state, who have a responsibility to respect and protect human rights. Commitments by all States in Asia and Europe are reinforced by the UN Decade for Human Rights Education alongside the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which will enter its Fourth Phase in 2020 (until 2024).

All UN Member States, which includes all ASEM countries, have also committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes Target 4.7 that commits States to ensure that “all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, through, among others, education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” by 2030.

Several regional human rights treaties that have been ratified/adopted by ASEM Member States

– including the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, and the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education – refer to the importance of learning about human rights and can

be interpreted as obligations on states to provide and facilitate human rights education.

In spite of clear commitments made by states in Asia and Europe, the implementation of human rights education and training has been rather slow. Despite this rather “slow start”, human rights education and training are here to stay in both regions. This has been evident since the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia of the late 1980’s and 1990’s. Since this period human rights and human rights education have taken root in many societies in Asia and Europe. Learning in, for and about human rights is addressed in a variety of ways; in school curricula, in institutions of higher education, by civil society organisations, national human rights institutions and by governments and associations of professionals that have a duty to respect, protect or fulfill human rights. Participants expressed the view that in order to build on the momentum of this global/regional human rights education movement, it is important to invest in the human rights education infrastructure. This includes;

- 1) Investing in strengthening support for educators, trainers, university instructors and all those others who facilitate learning about human rights;
- 2) Investing in ensuring more coordination and coherence in legal and policy frameworks and guidance for actors involved in human rights education;
- 3) Investing in sharing good practices and lessons learned; and,
- 4) Last but not least, investing in research and evaluation in order to develop educational practices and create the necessary evidence-base for showing the impact of human rights education.

It was also noted that democratic space is crucial for human rights education and training to be fully embedded into society.

While a number of good practices were identified and shared by participants, there was agreement that in recent years various challenges have become pertinent. In particular, there has been a backlash against human rights. Support of governments has been waning. This became apparent in 2019 when the UN human rights treaty bodies were unable to meet on their regular schedule due to insufficient funding. This is the first time that this has ever occurred. Many states in Asia and Europe are experiencing “a shrinking space” for human rights, alongside setbacks to the rule of law. At the same time, the emergence of populist and radical political movements has also undermined human rights. The language of human rights has been abused and misused by state and non-state actors worldwide. We have seen instances where the term ‘human rights’ is misused in the name of security and state effectiveness in order to combat corruption, terrorism, illegal drugs, criminality, and other issues that have popular support. With the democratic deficit and threat against human rights and human rights defenders, academic freedom has also been threatened, particularly in Asia. A recurring theme of discussions is the budgetary constraints at both regional and national levels. This often conflicts with the need to prioritise human rights education and training. Further major challenges which were identified include;

lack of capacities, resources, clear strategies and policies on human rights education and training. It is important to note that even in countries where economic development is higher, institutions implementing human rights and peace education still have to rely on external funding.

Digital technologies can be a very useful tool for innovatively imparting human rights education beyond borders. However, this digital space can also exacerbate human rights abuses and lead to misuse of media platforms. In this globalised world, where the business sector contributes to growth and development, it can also become one of the greatest human rights violators, especially in countries where government is weak. Despite new technologies and further spaces being available for human rights education and training, various barriers prevent some groups from accessing education. Therefore, these groups are denied human rights education. These groups include children, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, refugees and asylum-seekers, members of the LGBTQI community, those working in informal sector and those living in remote areas.

Participants view civil society, and in particularly NGO's, as an essential provider of human rights education in non-formal and information education. The important role played by NGO's should be recognised and they should be allowed to operate in a legally conducive environment and be supported (including with public funding). National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI's) are uniquely positioned between States and civil society as monitors and promoters of human rights. NHRI's have a mandate to provide human rights education, but often lack the capacity and recourses to do so. Local institutions such as local NGO's, human rights centres in universities and human rights offices in provinces play, and can play, a big role in ensuring that human rights education efforts reach local professionals, including local government officials, members of local police units and local media. This is particularly important as only a limited number of such local stakeholders can usually attend national trainings.

However, in regard to the right to education (including human rights education) access to free and basic education is not enough. It is important for governments to strive harder in providing free and accessible basic education for all, regardless of legal or political status. It is also important that the education system can be adjusted to meet the needs of the children and parents. Furthermore, curriculums should be open to civil societies and various human right organisations to contribute to improving its standards. Through the involvement of civil society, there is an increased possibility of promoting educational freedom and equality. In achieving the above, it is important to have cooperation between governments, stakeholders, regional bodies etc. in working towards making human rights education compulsory and inclusive. The role of the mainstream media cannot be overemphasised as it provides an opportunity for the transfer of information on human rights education to areas where it is not easily accessible. However, there should be ways to monitor and assess what is being shared on media platforms, as it can be used to spread misleading information (on human rights).

General and Specific Recommendations for Furthering Human Rights Education and Training for members of ASEM

1. Human rights education is only successful if built upon a foundation of academic freedom. Relevant stakeholders, holding key decision-making positions at regional and national levels, should take responsibility to affirm and ensure that academic freedom is respected, promoted and protected. University leaders and teaching staff must play a pivotal role to inculcate academic freedom among students and all concerned individuals, thereby creating an environment that is conducive to free expression and creativity.
2. Preconditions for effective training include institutional commitment, sufficient funding, proper methodology, long-time perspective and assessment plans. Trainees should have access to supervision when they seek to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the training. Experimental approaches should be encouraged, but their effectiveness needs to be assessed.
3. To address the implementation gap, more coordination and coherence is needed among all actors involved in human rights education. National Plans of Human Rights Education are a useful vehicle to ensure such coordination and coherence.
4. Increase support for teachers to introduce human rights in their classrooms and schools.
5. Capacity building for all actors including the National Human Rights Institutions, civil society organisations, government agencies, private sector and media to deliver human rights education.
6. Strengthen academic research in human rights education practice.
7. Online teaching tools on human rights need to be used more in higher education systems, particularly in Asia where universities still tend to rely on traditional teaching methods.
8. For States to ensure that at least one human rights course is offered to all students at higher education institutions. This should be supported with systematic capacity-building tailored to equip lecturers.
9. Foster collaboration between academics from both Asia and Europe to strengthen human rights teaching.
10. Non-formal human rights education plays a critical role in reaching those learners that do not have access to formal schooling – be they girls-out-of-school, migrant domestic workers or refugees. Governments should provide more support (both financial and in terms of accreditation) for non-formal learning providers.
11. European civil society organisations in non-formal and informal education can learn a lot from their Asian counterparts' experience in reaching marginalised groups and it may be desirable to set up a formal exchange

infrastructure in non-formal and informal education based on similar models as those in higher education.

12. All law enforcement officials, teachers, health and social workers, and others acting on behalf of the state have a responsibility to respect and protect human rights. States should double their efforts to ensure that all state officials have access to human rights training relevant to their responsibilities.
13. Develop more innovative approaches to reach and teach professionals through pre-service and in-service training, such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), e-learning and; distributed learning that combines the conventional classroom teaching with on-the-job coaching and e-learning.
14. Follow up with Universal Periodic Review recommendations that pertain to human rights education and open space for both civil society organisations and ASEM Member States, to monitor their implementation.
15. Use Agenda 2030 platform and SDG 4.7 to develop and monitor human rights education against international standards, by states and NHRI's. Optimise use of SDG 4.7 to foster convergence and synergy among the different stakeholders.
16. Consider the application of the innovative blended learning programmes by ASEM governments and professional associations (especially countries in Asia) to strengthen human rights knowledge of judges, lawyers and prosecutors.
17. Develop a knowledge hub and network for human rights education to consolidate knowledge created, resources, and experiences to optimise sharing and exchange, including an ASEM academic publication(s) in research and evaluation in human rights education and training.
18. Actors involved in human rights education in Asia and Europe have a lot to learn from each other. Governments and civil society actors should strengthen existing and establish new Asian-European cooperation programmes in human rights education through cooperation of civil society networks and universities. Strengthening and fostering of intra and cross-regional collaboration is encouraged.
19. Explore the development of quality standards, competencies, guidelines, or mechanisms for certification towards professionalisation of non-formal human rights actors.
20. Make information available in the language(s) that is/are understandable.

Working Group 1 Report:

Human Rights Education in School Systems

In order to tackle the vast area of human rights education in school systems in Asia and Europe, the working group considered the following five areas of action (as suggested by the Plan of Action of the First Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education):

- laws, guidelines and standards;
- approaches and practices to improve the learning environment;
- teaching and learning tools for the classroom;
- professional development for educators and other adults;
- evaluation and assessment approaches.

After a round of introductions and identification of priority issues, members of the working group divided up in small groups around the following themes:

- teaching & learning tools (general resources on HRE; digital resources for digital rights, including the arts);
- higher education (teacher training; vocational education and training; service-learning);
- critical approaches; cultural sensitivities; power relations; and
- evaluation and assessment.

The context of human rights education in school systems varies tremendously from country to country. Yet there are some similarities in that in few countries HRE is a stand-alone subject. In fact, many participants agreed that HRE should not be a stand-alone subject but transversal, cross-curricular (and whole-school based). Many considered a **whole-school approach** with emphasis on school council and democratic governance to be the most successful and impactful approach to human rights education.

In many countries HRE is considered to be too political, and outside the role of the state to offer human rights education. Teachers often lack the confidence to address human rights in the classroom. There was a general agreement that **teacher training** needs to be problem-oriented. For example, teachers will not come to teacher trainings packaged as HRE or migration, but they will come when labelled as relevant for teaching profession. If HRE is not examined, then teachers do not give it much priority during their (in-service) teaching training nor during their practice as a teacher. **Assessment and evaluation of learning** in human rights is critical and lacking national standards can be substituted by making linkages to the SDG 4.7 and various tools developed under the aegis of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the HRE2020 indicator tool. The importance of **empathy** and perspective-taking was emphasised by many working group members. If children in early age were sensitised about rights-based skills and attitudes like empathy and conflict resolution, later in the schooling career they can be taught about human rights. **LGBTQI issues** are sensitive and sometimes considered to be controversial, but they must be addressed and taught because it is part of human rights.

Good practice examples

An interesting good practice example is Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow (<https://www.ytassociation.org>), an art and visual-storytelling curriculum

concentrating on eliminating innate prejudices and implementing empathy. This educates and empowers students far beyond the classroom setting, entrusting children with the skills and knowledge to positively contribute to society. The curriculum can be a stand-alone project or part of other subject matter. It can be used in every country of the world because they are local projects rather than national level. This practice example has been used in conflict settings and refugee camps and is based on a pedagogy developed by three universities. Equitas' evaluation handbook was another example discussed, especially given the growing trend for more student assessment and self-assessment by teachers. The *Understanding Human Rights* manual developed by ETC-Graz is an example of a widely-used teaching tool now available in 17 languages.

Recommendations

The working group concluded its deliberations with the following recommendations.

Learning tools:

- offer professional development for teachers (incl. higher education teachers) in e-learning;
- encourage cross-curricular HRE;
- encourage institutional networking between schools & NGO's to focus on whole-school approach to HRE (particularly at primary level);
- make HRE relevant and practical to teachers and students;
- provide more e-textbooks/tools online;
- prioritise a whole-school approach and a human rights school culture (democratic school, health and safety, global school, environment);
- emphasise importance of the arts, visual language, empathy.

Higher education, teacher training & service learning:

- strengthen collaboration with faculties of educational science to advance pedagogy;
- apply/encourage interdisciplinary approach;
- reach out to disciplines and faculties traditionally not so involved in HRE;
- strengthen the relationship between academic theory and practice;
- create more synergies with global citizenship, education for democratic citizenship and HRE;
- facilitate and fund advanced research in HRE.

Critical approaches; cultural sensitivities; power relations:

- need for teacher training that is based in academic freedom and broader flexibility in the national curriculum;
- encourage teacher exchanges (UNESCO can be a good framework);
- make HRE relevant and practical to teachers and students;
- include conflict resolution in curriculum (dialogue, promotion of empathy);
- make HRE an inclusive process that includes all relevant stakeholders: parents, CSO's, educators, service providers, governments AND students;
- apply a multicultural approach instead of a national approach.

Impact and assessment:

- need for global impact assessment methodology;
- use Agenda 2030 platform and SDG 4.7 to develop and monitor HRE against international standards, by states and NHRI's;
- develop student assessment tool(s) drawing on existing standards/competencies;

- strengthen linkages to SDGs in general;
- prioritise funding for research bodies.

Working Group 2 Report:

Equal Access to Human Rights Education

Access to human rights education is contingent on access to education. This set of rights is also related to the right to culture and equality. The working group took note of the fact that some groups such as Sami, Roma and Rohingyas, due to their distinctive cultures, including language, cultural practices and religious beliefs, are barred from access to education. In the same vein, formal education systems are often designed in such a way that some cultural practices are impossible, and this hinders children to participate fully in both cultural practices and formal education.

The right to education and to human rights education are conditioned by access to other rights including economic, social, cultural as well as political rights. The indivisibility of human rights is the key here. The working group discussed and identified key issues pertaining to human rights education. Namely who is being denied access to their right to education and human rights education, and what are the existing barriers. The Working Group then produced some good practices as well as recommendations.

Who are denied access to education and human rights education?

There are groups of peoples who do not have access to education. The term “peoples” includes discussions around both children and adults. Some major groups were identified as being disadvantaged and discriminated against in accessing formal education and human rights education. These groups include (but are not limited to):

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities, both children and adults, face different challenges in realising their right to education and accessing human rights education. These challenges include whether they should be offered separated education that caters to their specific needs or an inclusive/integrated one. This would require facilities to be properly implemented. Although there are no conclusive answers to this question, it is essential that education for children and adults with disabilities is inclusive and of quality.

(Undocumented) migrants

Migration is becoming a general phenomenon in both Asia and Europe. In Asia in particular, most migrants and children of migrants, especially those who are undocumented, are prevented from accessing education and human rights education. Even if laws allow them access to education, States may not provide sufficient financing for this education. Access to public education tends to be limited in many countries.

Refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons

Alongside migrants; refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons are not included in the formal education system, especially in Asia. The fact that most Asian countries

are not party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, means that the recognition of refugee status is difficult. Only a few countries provide for universal education regardless of the legal status of these groups. Lack of status, documentation (including birth registration) and lack of financial means constitute the key barriers to accessing education and consequently human rights education. Support from UNHCR and other organisations may not be practical, sufficient or sustainable.

Peoples living in remote areas

Peoples living in remote areas, especially ethnic minorities, are always in a disadvantaged position when it comes to the right to education and human rights education. Lack of proper physical infrastructure prevents them from access which leads to exclusion for education systems.

Girls and women in the informal economy

Millions of women are engaged in the informal economy where their work is invisible. Not only can these girls not access general education, but vocational training and knowledge about their rights as workers is also an issue. Girls are always discriminated against when it comes to the right to education. Early child marriage is still prevailing in some Asian countries especially in South Asia.

What are the barriers preventing access to education and human rights education?

As alluded to earlier, a variety of barriers prevent different groups of peoples from accessing education and human rights education. These barriers range from economic and financial barriers to lack of political rights and enabling policies of the governments, as well as attitudes of both parents and society. Other barriers identified include law, socio-cultural factors as well as physical accessibility.

Economic and financial barriers

Although many countries have made primary education free and compulsory, parents still incur costs to carry. Costs for uniforms, learning materials, food, as well as transportation make it challenging for people to access to education. Even in the countries where refugees and asylum-seekers are allowed access to education, often no funding is allocated to support them.

Political barriers

It is not just a lack of political will but also sometimes policies introduced by governments and schools that hinder different groups from accessing education and human rights education. These policies cover topics such as language and uniforms. Furthermore, some countries have clear policies against allowing children without legal status to access public schools or formal education.

Legal barriers

Legal barriers are particularly serious for undocumented migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. Some countries in Asia do not recognise the legal status of these groups. In some countries, conflicting immigration and education laws

have a serious impact on access to education for these groups. Legal punishment of parents (applied in Europe) does not help.

Attitudinal barriers

Society has a rather negative view of persons with disabilities and discrimination is prevalent. “Special education” or segregated education seems to be a trend in both Asia and Europe. Access to higher education is even more difficult. Some parents do not recognise the importance of education, especially for girls. This is particularly true for some Roma parents.

Socio-cultural barriers

As already pointed out for some indigenous groups and minorities, cultural beliefs and practices are essential. For some groups the design of schooling is not flexible enough to accommodate their way of life. A clear example are the Sámi whose traditional practices were hindered by schooling system. Another example is school uniform especially for girls which are “not fit” for some groups with different religious beliefs and practices. There is a lack of cultural sensitivities in formal settings.

Physical accessibility

This is particularly acute in Asia, where large numbers of people are still living in remote area where transportation is lacking. Boarding schools are not always available nor ideal. The physical accessibility is also linked to the high cost for transportation.

Some good practices

Some good practices were discussed. The following good practices are worth mentioning.

- Some countries and regional groupings, Europe in particular, have plans in place both at national and regional levels to guarantee access to education.
- Introduction of special measures such as the provision of subsidies and quotas for students with disabilities in higher education.
- Outreach programmes being implemented by civil society groups to bring education to different groups such as migrants and workers.
- Capacity building for instructors and other professionals. There is training on human rights for teachers in most countries in Asia and Europe.
- Integration – not segregation. A highlighted example was making sure that if segregated education is necessary, then the location of normal and special schools should be connected to ensure interactions and shared learning space of students with different disabilities and students without any disabilities.
- Use of the internet and digital technologies. Internet and digital technologies are useful tools for promoting the access to education and human rights education, if they are designed in an innovative and attractive way. While technologies are useful, it is important to caution against any forms of cyber violence and hate speech.
- Engagement of various stakeholders especially civil society groups with education expertise. CSO’s should be engaged in the whole process from designing curriculum to monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

- Adaptability of education to meet the needs of children, families and communities.
- For states to provide free basic education for everyone regardless of their legal status.
- For states and formal education institutions to open possibilities for other stakeholders to become involved with the implementation and monitoring of GCR and GCM.
- Engage with CSO's in designing, teaching and learning processes.
- For the regional human rights mechanism in Asia to learn from the existing regional human rights systems in Europe.
- Making information available in the language(s) that is/are understandable.
- Make human rights education compulsory at all levels of education.
- Human rights literacy for media and other professions as well as target groups.
- Networking of human rights institutions, organisations etc.
- Capacity building of instructors.
- Active involvement of/with parents.
- Cultural orientation for migrants.

Members of the working group considered the following elements imperative for HRE:

- protection of the rights of human rights defenders;
- upholding political rights of all;
- protection of academic freedom;
- educating those in decision making role and those who are majority and not marginalised;
- ensuring inclusion, not exclusion.

Working Group 3 Report:

Human Rights Education & Learning beyond the Classroom

Introduction

What follows are themes generated from the discussion and sharing by members of Working Group 3. This Working Group focused on human rights education and learning beyond the classroom (more popularly known as non-formal human rights education).

In surfacing these themes, participants attempted to answer the following questions:

- What problems do we seek to address through HRE outside the classroom?
- What are the HRE trends and challenges in non-formal spaces?
- What are the best practices in the non-formal HRE sector which are good case studies for others?
- What do we need States, civil societies, private sector, universities to do?
- Which target should we focus on?
- What approaches?
- What do we need to stop, start, continue?

The themes generated served as backdrop for the recommendations formulated by the working group.

Understanding HRE

HRE is evolving and maturing. HRE was given global emphasis when the United Nations promulgated the UN Decade for Human Rights Education from 1995-2004 to alert global human rights actors of the importance of raising global awareness about human rights. This commitment was reinforced by the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which is currently in its third phase. HRE practices have since progressed accumulating best practices and cases studies that provide diverse experiences to draw lessons from.

Formal and non-formal HRE is fluid. The lines that divide formal and non-formal HRE are increasingly being blurred. There are overlaps in terms of providers, audience, approach, methodology, content, activities, and format. The two sectors continuously learn from and enrich each other's experiences. The exchange of lessons is fluid and bi-directional.

The universality, indivisibility, and inviolability of human rights remain constant. There are a variety of transformational educational programmes that address similar issues to HRE. These programmes equally claim to touch upon human rights. These programmes may be called different names such as (but not limited) to education for sustainable development, democracy education, global citizenship education, peace education, multicultural education, education for tolerance, anti-discrimination education and more. Despite such diversity and fluidity, what remains as the constant

content theme is the recognition that human rights are universal, inviolable, interdependent, and indivisible. The inclusion of this essential content makes such program a human rights education programme.

The space for HRE is shrinking. The space for democratic debate and exchange is gradually diminishing and consequently so does the space for human rights education. Unlike in the past, where HRE actors such as non-government and civil society organisations commanded unquestioned and untarnished credibility, the time has come when no one is viewed as having “clean hands” anymore. NGO’s and CSO’s, have been accused of political patronage and biases which have allowed the spaces for HRE to shrink further. Access, equity, and sustainability have hounded HRE programmes.

The human rights language has been hijacked by populism. A tide of populism has enveloped the world. The language of human rights has been abused and misused by state and non-state actors worldwide, who have (mis)appropriated it to provide legitimacy to their actions. We have seen instances of misusing human rights in the name of security and state effectiveness to combat corruption, terrorism, illegal drugs, criminality, and other issues that have popular support. Politics has become so contentious that it has polarised sectors, individuals, and communities. The current challenge is how human rights language can be used as a common language to widen democratic debate and civic engagement.

Post-truth and post-trust era has further complicated HRE. The digital space has made possible the manufacturing of “truth” and lead to fake news which obscures the line separating facts from fiction. Public opinion that shapes policy is increasingly formed by appeals to emotion and mere assertions rather than evidence based. This is further exacerbated by increasing distrust in purveyors of information such as the media. We no longer know what or who to believe. It is dangerous when people begin to doubt authoritative reports, becoming confused between fact and fiction. Particularly in relation to politics and governance. Given this complexity, it is imperative that HRE should touch upon equipping the public to have the skills to determine reliable from non-reliable information particularly on human rights issues.

HRE should involve navigating the VUCA world. The world is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). This is the world that HRE must respond to. The challenge for HRE is how to turn human rights into concrete tools that equip individuals and communities to navigate and overcome the challenges of the VUCA world. An essential characteristic of the VUCA world is the expanding digital space made available by new technologies. Connectivity is key as HRE navigates the VUCA world.

HRE in a nutshell is about our collective vision of a good society. There is a diverse range of programs that offer a variety of approaches to social transformation and people empowerment. Depending on a country’s openness to such programmes, these take on different names with assorted content. Given the intricate dynamics among education actors and providers, we should not lose sight of the fact that these are all expressions of our common journey towards a shared vision of a good society. Human rights provide us with a framework for common values towards that end.

HRE is primarily about people's lived experiences. When HRE was initially offered, the focus was how the international human rights instruments can be effectively taught to individuals and communities. As human rights educators gained experience through HRE, there was a common realisation that the people's lived experiences are the most effective departure point in any educative process. The purpose of HRE is to facilitate a way for these experiences to be examined, using human rights as an analytic tool. The human rights instruments best serve the public when human rights principles are elicited from the actual life experiences of communities and individuals. How are these actually lived?

HRE cannot use a one-size-fits-all approach. Doing HRE is not just about workshops and the human rights instruments. There is no single format of HRE that addresses people's human rights issues. The content and format of HRE are determined by people's lived experiences and their respective claim of human rights. HRE is a range of activities designed to facilitate how people may examine their issues and claims using human rights perspective.

There is a shift in the role of the human rights educator – from didactic to facilitative. The human rights educator ceases to be the expert who is expected to teach esoteric and technical human rights knowledge. The expert in human rights education is the one with the epistemic privilege of its violation. The insider's perspective is critical in facilitating human rights knowledge. Getting someone from the affected sector to talk about human rights and facilitate the discussion on how such rights are violated is a trend in the developing pool of human rights educators. HRE is facilitative and not didactic.

Communities and HRE actors should take both ownership and accountability of HRE. The "target" of human rights education should own their own journey of human rights awareness. HRE is an intervention programme that must be informed by a theory of change. Individuals and communities as well as the HRE providers should be clear on their desired change and be aware of how human rights education could help them bring about such change. This requires HRE actors and providers to have a certain degree of professional competence enabling them to design and implement an HRE programme. The key to accountability is monitoring and assessing whether efforts are indeed achieving what they claim to be.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are being proposed by the working group members:

- expand the HRE network both online and offline.
- Develop knowledge hub for HRE to consolidate knowledge, resources and experiences, to optimise sharing and exchange.
- Support National Human Rights Institutions' capacity to deliver HRE.
- Use appropriate technology for HRE that promotes better understanding of humanity.
- Make human rights visible in social media as a strategy for educating the general public.

- Encourage universities to adopt communities as extension work for human rights.
- Optimise use of SDG 4.7 to foster convergence and synergy among the different stakeholders.
- Expand HRE activities focused on youth and their involvement in communities, with the support of their parents and family.
- Revitalise programmes for training of trainers (TOT) for HRE to benefit from multiplier effect.
- Continue supporting general human rights awareness raising programmes.
- Multiply best practices such as human rights community-led development.
- Pursue shared accountability based on genuine partnership rather than a donor-donee relationship through flexible and shared development of evidence-based mechanisms that assess result or impact.
- Respect autonomy of NHRI's and human rights education actors.
- Build a regional cooperation mechanism or framework for human rights education.
- Continue HRE programmes for law enforcement officials, media practitioners, editorial boards, teachers, academics, civil servants, and youth.
- Revitalise National Human Rights Education Action Plans to make efforts more strategic, coordinated, and effective.
- Explore the development of quality standards, competencies, guidelines, or mechanisms for certification towards professionalisation of non-formal human rights actors.

Working Group 4 Report:

Human Rights Education & Professional Training

Working Group 4 had lively and engaging discussions throughout the group work sessions. All participants, including the note-takers, were actively involved in these discussions. Some time was spent on sharing experiences about how human rights training had been conducted in different national settings. Particularly the experiences from Asia showed that a lot of effort has been made in order to run human rights trainings for an array of professional groups. It is clear that a lot of well thought-through activities have been conducted in the last twenty years.

Beneficiaries of human rights training include (but are not limited to); law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, police, military personnel, civil servants/public officials, detention/officers prison officers, teachers, health personnel, and in line with the Third Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2015-2019), media professionals and journalists.

The discussion in the group was affected by the current situation of human rights globally. On both continents we are experiencing what has been referred to as “a shrinking space” for human rights, and setbacks to the rule of law. Participants provided examples of human rights trainings during transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy. Laconic comments were made that we are now facing what may be termed as a “transition from democracy”; and that it is under such conditions that human rights education is carried out today and in the near future. This may require other ways of approaching human rights issues, and thus human rights education and training.

The working group noted that local and regional actors, such as human rights centres at universities and regional NGOs, often play a crucial role in providing human rights education to target groups in their areas such as local government officials, members of local police units, and local media. Support provided to national organisations tend to give priority to activities in the capital may in some instances be negligent towards the more remote regions.

In line with the Chatham House Rules under which the working group operated, the recommendations are not attributed to, nor are they directed towards specific States. The conclusions from the group, and thus the recommendations, tend to primarily address the “how?” of human rights training for professionals. These are aimed directly at organisations and institutions running such trainings, more than governments and international organisations (ASEAN, EU, UN). Still, budgetary constraints and the need to give priority to such trainings was a recurring theme. In addition, the potential of requiring the national human rights institutions to carry out such trainings was emphasised.

The importance of empathy with the target group, and the ability to address human rights in a manner that takes into consideration the everyday reality and needs of the target groups was emphasised throughout the group work.

With regard to how human rights trainings for professional groups should be planned, organised and run, **the group recommends the following:**

- Trainings need to address the challenges that the target group faces. This relates particularly to their efforts to uphold (respect, protect, promote) human rights in their contact with members of the community.
- Human rights training programmes and materials for professional groups need to be developed specifically for the different categories of beneficiaries (the different professions).
- Issues to be addressed should be identified based on the target group's needs and these should be developed with a sense of empathy for the target groups. Obstacles to effective human rights compliance, such as contradictory laws and procedures, should be identified and these underlying causes needs to be addressed concurrently with the trainings.
- Generic training content should be kept to a minimum. Legal norms need to be translated into a language that matches conditions under which the recipients work. The implications that specific human rights law may have for a given professional group in carrying out their everyday tasks, need to be addressed by the instructors and should not be left to the target group to have to identify.
- When you have cascades of training (training of trainers) one should be aware that the quality of the course content will drop as it delivered through the chain. Thus, one needs to ensure that what reaches the ground level is "good enough". If a training programme does not communicate well with the audience at this level, it needs to be revised.
- Unless the target group consists of human rights lawyers, or people involved in UN related activities such as reporting, lengthy theses about human rights treaties and their substantial content, or the workings of UN mechanisms, may put off even the most highly motivated listener. Trainings need to start from an experience-near perspective and address recognisable issues for the target groups.
- In cases where NGO's train state actors who may be prone to committing human rights violations, efforts must be made to create a mutual understanding of each other's roles. In order to build an accommodating learning-environment one needs to build bridges and sometimes clear the air.
- The starting point should be the understanding that human rights trainings should be based on transparency, openness and sincerity and that one should not have to "sneak human rights through the back door". However, different strategies could be applied in order to overcome hostile attitudes among the recipients of training. Sometimes human rights trainings could be framed as "law trainings", "civic education", etc. in order to render them more acceptable.
- When addressing hierarchical organisations such as the military, principles of seniority will come into play. Such training programmes need support from the top, and officers of superior rank need to be involved to ensure that the rank and file find the message acceptable.
- Some target groups may be prevented from attending lengthy human rights courses that may require attendees to take three days off in order to

participate. Half-day courses over six weeks could be an equally effective way of organising a training.

Evaluation and impact assessment

Human rights training for professional audiences is not a quick fix, and the impact of human rights trainings cannot necessarily be measured overnight. It takes time for institutional changes to take hold.

With regard to evaluation and impact assessment of human rights trainings, **the group recommends the following:**

- Preconditions for effective training include institutional commitment, sufficient funding, proper methodology, long-time perspective and assessment plans. Trainees should have access to supervision in the phase when they seek to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the training.
- Experimental approaches should be encouraged, but their effectiveness needs to be assessed. Clearly, not all progress is quantifiable and cannot be easily measured. More qualitative analyses of the foreseeable outcomes of different approaches to human rights education should be encouraged. What may initially seem to be a good idea may not yield the expected training dividend, and alternative approaches may in some instances lead to unexpectedly positive results.
- Feedback from participants during and after the trainings will provide valuable information that could be applied to improve the quality of human rights education and trainings. Does the recipient group find the training useful? Are the knowledge and skills acquired put to use when trainees return to their work place? Do they regress into habitual malpractice when routine catches up with them? What measures may mitigate such backsliding?
- Evaluations should be facilitated around the trainings from their onset. Targets should be set beforehand. Bringing in external evaluators after trainings are completed is less useful. Linking projects to research (such as MA degrees, or parts of PhD projects) could provide additional inputs on the project-design.
- With regard to the participants' evaluation of courses, it should be noted that people who have committed to participate in a training might be overly positive in their evaluations.
- The group did not propose that national standards should be developed for human rights training, but governments are encouraged to actively take into consideration the work of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.
- The working group provided some successful, comparable examples around whether empathy could or should be engaged by devising encounters between victims of violations and potential violators during human rights trainings. It was noted that great care should be taken if such encounters are to be orchestrated, and that the needs of the victims should be given maximum consideration. Also, the manner in which the subjects of trainings will perceive the situation should be anticipated as this will have a lot of bearing on whether such encounters will have a positive effect and contribute to a positive outcome of the training.

Conclusion

There were recurring issues brought up by all groups and participants. Especially the critical importance of academic freedom, without which human rights education and training will be constrained, and learning and sharing will be more or less impossible. Democratic space is one of the pre-conditions for the promotion of human rights and human rights education. The current trend in Asia and Europe is somewhat worrying as we witness the transition from democracy, rather than to democracy. The world is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). This is the world that HRE must respond to.

What was also highlighted throughout the forum, is the connection between human rights education, training and the right to education. Access to education is an essential part of human rights education. Like human rights, human rights education is universal, indivisible and inalienable. Human rights education is not only a mission of governments and the whole society but represents a collective vision of a good society that we all envision.

The seminar reminded us that human rights education is not just a product of teaching, but a process of learning about, through and for human rights. It is not just about gaining knowledge and understanding of human rights, but it is also about learning to respect the human rights of others. It is also about empowering individuals to exercise their rights, which also includes respecting other people's rights. It contributes to fostering attitudes and behaviours needed to uphold human rights for all members of society.

In any case, human rights education and training are not a quick fix but have to be framed in such a way that they are acceptable to different contexts whilst keeping in mind their universal character and value. Existing experiences found in the two regions should be multiplied and shared. While building national ownership of human rights education and training is recommended, multi-stakeholder engagement and regional and cross-regional cooperation is encouraged.