

MEMBERS MEETING: HRE WITHIN THE UPR PROCESS

24 NOVEMBER 2014

Objective of the meeting: to highlight the relevance of the UPR for national HRE efforts; to take stock of HRE recommendations that have been made so far; and to consider how HRE 2020 members can engage with the UPR process to strengthen the implementation of HRE on a national level.

INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING WITH UPR

Participants of the meeting introduced their work and experience they have of engaging with the UPR.

Cecilia Decara & Lis Dhundale, advisors on HRE and NHRIs at Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)¹



Cecilia and Liz spoke about DIHR's work monitoring HRE in Denmark and their broader HRE engagements with governments, civil society and national human rights institutions outside Denmark. Cecilia introduced DIHR's extensive mapping of HRE in schools in Danish primary, secondary and teacher training institutions. This has involved engaging with the political system, school authorities and curriculum



development.

Regarding the UPR, Lis described DIHR's work building the awareness and capacity of human rights NGOs to engage with the UPR and submit reports. In Denmark, they coordinated a joint civil society submission, as well as producing their own independent report. DIHR met with delegations of around ten Member States in Geneva several months ahead of Denmark's review. They shared their recommendations to the Danish government with other Member States and it is evident that some of DIHR's recommendations appear in the final outcome report. They have also found that meeting with Embassy staff based in Denmark has been an effective way of influencing the recommendations made by Member States in the UPR.

Barbara Schmiedl, Head of Human Rights Education department at European Training and Research Centre (ETC) - Graz

¹ DIHR are not a member of HRE 2020 but have an interest in HRE and the UPR so were invited to join the meeting,



Barbara explained that Austria currently does not have a national human rights institute, but there is a process in which the Ombudsman office is likely take on this role. ETC-Graz, a civil society platform of around 270 organizations, is monitoring the development of a NHRI and a final national action plan for Austria. They are currently looking at good examples from other countries of how to incorporate HRE into the national action plan. ETC-Graz is engaging with the relevant government departments in Austria to follow up on HRE recommendations they received in the 1st cycle of the UPR. These included recommendations from: 1) Philippines and Costa Rica on HRE within the formal education system, 2) from Spain on a national plan against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance that includes aspects such as education and training in human rights for all levels of public administration.

Frank Elbers, Chairperson of DARE Network and Executive Director, HREA



DARE Network has little experience of using UN human rights mechanisms to promote HRE. Rather, DARE has focused its advocacy efforts on the European parliament submitting policy briefs on education, citizenship and human rights issues to the European Commission. Frank understands UN mechanisms may be easier to access and greater chance of influencing HRE policy than the EU mechanisms and avenues.

Kazan Fujii, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) Geneva representative and Chairperson of the NGO Working Group on HRE



Kazan explained that despite the Japanese government claiming to promote HRE, it has not been raised in their UPR so far. Japan does not have an NHRI and focal point of HRE in the country is a small governmental agency. There is a discrepancy between the levels of HRE in schools in different region of the country, and civil society is very active on HRE within local communities.

Sarah Herder, Education Director at Advocates for Human Rights



Advocates for Human Rights have participated in the UPR process through monitoring the obligations of treaty bodies and submitting reports. They work on advocacy efforts both in the U.S. and in collaboration with NGO partners in other countries, such as with organisations in Croatia on domestic violence. In the U.S., the areas of focus of Advocates for Human Rights have been citizen rights, migrant protection, and the death penalty. In addition, they have capacity building initiatives on international and regional monitoring and reporting. The UPR submission on HRE with HRE-USA was the first time Advocates for Human Rights have produced a report specifically on HRE.

Cecilia Thompson, Senior Programme Officer at EQUITAS



Cecilia introduced the work of EQUITAS International as an organization that advances social justice through transformative HRE programs. Their experience with the UPR has been at the national level where the organization works with partners to implement and monitor recommendations.

TAKING STOCK OF HRE WITHIN THE UPR SO FAR

Adele Poskitt, HRE 2020 Coordinator, gave an overview of the UPR, a mechanism of the Human Rights Council established in 2006, aimed at improving the human rights situation on the ground of each of the 193 UN Member States. Under this mechanism, the human rights situation of all UN Member States is reviewed every 4.5 years. Forty-two States are reviewed each year during three Working Group sessions.

The result of each review is stated in an 'outcome report', which includes recommendations made to the State under Review to improve the human rights situation in the country. The recommendations are the key element of the review and can vary in nature and issue. During the first cycle, approximately 21,000 recommendations were made to 193 States. The State under Review has the possibility to accept or decline recommendations. The response to each recommendation must be clearly explained in writing in a specific document called "addendum", which is submitted to the Human Rights Council in advance of the adoption of the report at the HRC session.

Based on the categorization of recommendations by UPR Info, 1471 recommendations have been made on human rights education and training so far in 1st and 2nd cycle. The graph below shows the top ten most raised issues in the 1st and 2nd cycle.

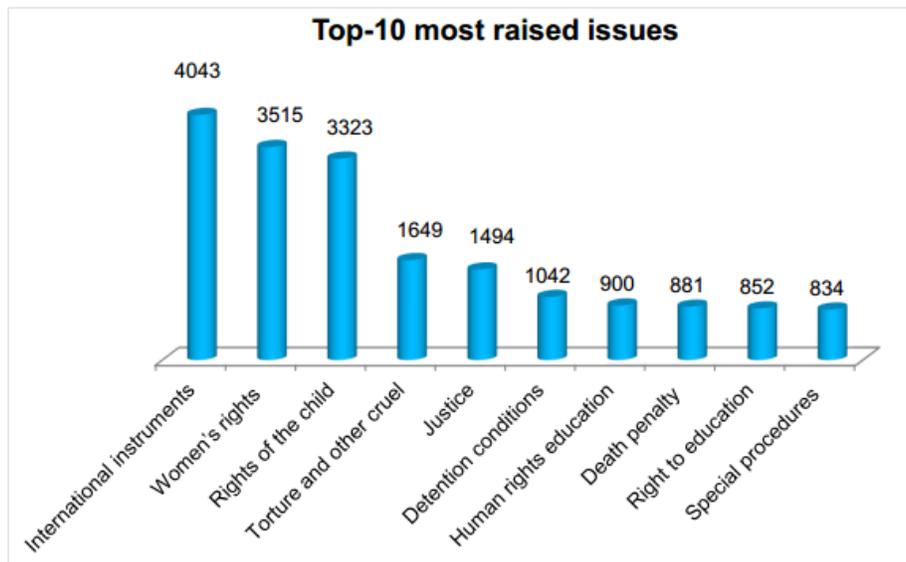


Figure 1. Beyond Promises. UPR Info (2014)

The main themes of the recommendations on HRE are awareness raising campaign on violence against women/children's rights/discrimination; adopt national plan of action; training for law enforcement officials/judiciary/prison staff/military; HRE in schools & teacher training; and the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

Adele presented several examples of SMART HRE indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound):

“Continue to develop a national strategy for human rights education in the school system at all levels, in accordance with the Plan of Action 2005-2009 of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, including the review and revision of curricula and textbooks, the training of teachers and the practice of human rights in the school community.”(Italy to the Bahamas)

“Work with the Ombudsman for Children and relevant civil society organizations to create programmes to educate law enforcement officials on how to proactively address the problem of adolescents from ethnic minority backgrounds feeling stigmatized by and lacking trust in the police.”(USA to Norway)

Conduct a public awareness campaign, with engagement at the highest political levels, to strengthen the implementation of the 2006 Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, and highlight the unacceptability of violence against women and address the attitudes and stereotypes that perpetuate discriminatory practices that are harmful and violent towards women.”(Canada to Malawi)

The table below shows the Member States that have made the most HRE recommendations within the 1st and 2nd cycle.

| Recommending State | Number of recommendations |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Czech Republic | 61 |
| Canada | 59 |
| Spain | 46 |
| Morocco | 44 |
| Italy | 40 |
| USA | 35 |

Adele outlined some of the ways in which HRE 2020 coalition members and partners are able to engage with the HRE recommendations, including reviewing the implementation of HRE obligations; submitting country reports; and undertaking national level advocacy with governments and the policy makers at the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL HRE SUBMISSION BY HRE-USA

On behalf of HRE USA, Felisa Tibbitts and Sarah Herder shared their work during 2014 on developing and submitting the first UPR report focused on HRE in the United States. HRE USA is a young network that was established three years ago with the mission to build a strategy for incorporating HRE in schools.

Due to limited capacity, resources and a restricted timeframe, the network decided to restrict the consultation process to the formal education system. HRE USA was able to mobilise their network of individuals and organisations to get input on the most pressing issues to be raised in the submission.

Felisa outlined the process which primarily involves consultative meetings, an online survey and self-education. The main issues raised in the report were curriculum standards, teacher training and school environment.²



Consultative meetings: HRE USA collaborated with a representative of the US Human Rights Network, Joshua Cooper, to organize three consultative meetings in New York, San Francisco and Boston. HRE-USA had a strong representative in each of these areas and members that were able to host the consultation meetings.

Online survey: HRE-USA discovered that many people were not able to attend the in-person consultation meetings, despite wanting to contribute to the process. In order to capture their input, an online survey was designed and disseminated. The survey was based on the Indicator Framework developed by HRE 2020 to assess the implementation of HRE obligations, but then contextualized to be suitable for the U.S. policy environment.

Self-education: HRE USA benefited for working with HRE 2020, through Adele Poskitt, on the structure, style and format of the submission report. HRE 2020 had the technical expertise of engaging with international human rights mechanisms that helped HRE USA focus their research and report. A webinar by USHRN was also very helpful for organizing and scheduling the consultation and report writing process.

Lessons learned

Sarah acknowledged that there was significant trust and collegiality among the group that made this work effective and an enjoyable collaborative experience. Each person involved brought an expertise and willingness to work together. HRE USA were able to benefit from the work Advocates for Human Rights has done on regional and national reporting, including a recent report on immigration rights, LGBT students and human rights violations by the police.

Working on the UPR submission was a learning process for HRE USA, both on an individual level, and as a network. They plan to build on upon this learning and follow up with national advocacy efforts as well as monitor the implementation on HRE obligations by the U.S. government to engage with the mid-term review in 2017, and the next review in 2019.

² HRE USA and USHRN submission: http://www.hreusa.net/system/files/HRE_USA_-_USHRN_Stakeholder_Submission_US_UPR_Sept_2014_0.pdf

Felisa has presented the HRE USA efforts in several HRE forums around the world over recent months. She has learnt how civil society is engaging with the UPR in different ways and found the experiences in Denmark particularly interesting.

HRE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

As a founding member of HRE 2020, Amnesty International has a particular interest in increasing their work on strengthening the accountability and implementation of HRE obligations, and one channel of this has been through the UPR. As Sneh Aurora, International Human Rights Education Manager of Amnesty International explained, they looked closely at the human rights obligations of countries where they currently work and identified opportunities to mainstream HRE into national and international advocacy work. During 2014, the International HRE Team within Amnesty International worked with country offices in Egypt and Slovenia, as well as colleagues from the International Advocacy Programme, to develop HRE recommendations to be included in their recommendations to States considered in the 20th round of the Universal Periodic Review. They selected Egypt and Slovenia because: 1) both countries were scheduled to be reviewed in the 20th HRC session; 2) they had strong national programmes and staff; 3) there was an existing civil society UPR consultation process taking place that HRE could be incorporated in to.

When developing the national HRE recommendations, Sneh emphasized the importance of having specific, focused recommendations that were rooted in the national context. In Egypt, they looked at strengthening national commitment to the standard of the UN Declaration for HRET, the WPHRE and developing a national HRE action plan. In addition, Amnesty International made HRE recommendations related to reform of the security forces, and ending torture and other ill-treatment. For Slovenia, their HRE recommendations focused on gaps in the national HRE action plan, the formal education system, and exclusion of Roma students.³ The final submission can be found [here](#).

In their advocacy work at the HRC, Amnesty International has found that submitting abbreviated recommendations to the review process has been very effective to influence statements delivered by recommending states and the national outcome report of the State under review, as delegates only have a limited capacity to consider issues and recommendations.

³ See Annex 1 for the full text of the recommendations made by Amnesty International for Egypt and Slovenia.

ANNEX 1: RECOMMENATIONS TAKEN FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UPR SUBMISSIONS

Extract from submission to UPR for Egypt, 20th Session

“Implement Human Rights Education”:

- Adopt a National Human Rights Education Plan in line with commitments under the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the World Programme on Human Rights, and with a commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of human rights education in curricula and textbooks for all levels of education, and to incorporate human rights education in teacher training;
- Ensure all legislation, guidelines and policy documents, including those related to the development and adoption of new curricula by the Centre for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development, emphasize and reflect human rights principles of equality, human dignity, respect, non-discrimination and inclusion, accountability, participation and empowerment.

Under the section “Reform the security forces”:

- Integrate human rights education in trainings and curriculum for law enforcement and military personnel in order to enhance human rights related knowledge, skills and attitudes; such trainings should use learner-centred teaching methodologies and include relevant international standards, including the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.

Under the section “Torture and other ill-treatment”:

- Establish measures to prevent torture and other ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners at each stage from arrest and detention to custody, during trial and criminal detention, and in all places of detention; such measures should include human rights training programmes for security forces, police officials, prison staff and relevant military personnel.

Extract from submission to UPR for Slovenia, 20th Session

“On Human Rights Education”:

- Further develop regular monitoring and evaluation of human rights education and training in the formal school system, ensuring that policies and practices focus on knowledge, skills and attitudes, and employing learner-centred methodologies, in line with existing international standards and frameworks, such as the UN Declaration for Human Rights Education and Training and the World Programme on Human Rights Education.
- Further strengthen human rights education in schools by including issues of discrimination, in particular as regards discrimination against the Roma.
- Include human rights education in the training of teachers and teaching assistants, including Roma teaching assistants.

- Include human rights education in training curriculum for law enforcement and military personnel, civil servants, health workers, social workers, journalists and other professionals.
- Ensure educative processes, including teacher training, include teaching of Romani culture, history, traditions, and, as an elective, Romani language, at all levels of school, including schools with a significant number of Romani students.

Under the section “On the erased”:

- Ensure issues relating to “erasure” and human rights violations suffered by “the erased” are reflected in the school curriculum.

Under the section “On Roma”:

- Strengthen education outreach activities in Roma settlements, targeting young people and their parents, to encourage higher school attendance and completion rate.
- Support Roma students studying to become pedagogical workers with training, scholarships and other support measures, and ensure that Roma teachers and teaching assistants have equal employment conditions.
- Ensure that any segregation of Roma children in primary schools is only temporary pending their full integration, and that Roma children are not subject to sub-standard teaching;
- Ensure systematic collection and disaggregation of data regarding to Roma students in schools, with particular focus on attendance rates, compulsory education completion rates and correlated to their socio-economic background.