



Canadian Human Rights Foundation  
Fondation canadienne des droits de la personne

# **International Human Rights Training Program**

*Presentation of Results*

November 2004

Ce rapport est également disponible en français.

Canadian Human Rights Foundation  
1425 René-Lévesque Blvd West, Suite 407  
Montréal (Québec)  
Canada H3G 1T7  
[www.chrf.ca](http://www.chrf.ca)

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents an overview of the evaluation results of the International Human Rights Training Program (IHRTP), organized annually in Montreal by the Canadian Human Rights Foundation (CHRF). It is intended for various CHRF stakeholders, including funding agencies, Canadian diplomatic missions abroad, international institutions, and other interested parties.

The Canadian Human Rights Foundation (CHRF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights through education, in Canada and around the world. Created in 1967 by a group of Canadian scholars, jurists and human rights advocates, the CHRF has over 37 years' experience in human rights education and training. Through its programs, the CHRF contributes to building the capacity of organizations to engage in human rights promotion and democratic development.

The IHRTP is at the heart of the CHRF's activities. This intensive, three-week program is intended for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) as well as other institutions involved in the advancement of human rights. Every year, it brings together more than 110 participants from approximately 60 countries. The 2004 session of the IHRTP brought together 125 participants from 68 countries: 35 participants from Africa; 32 participants from Asia; 26 participants from Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia; 5 participants from Canada; 16 participants from the Caribbean/Latin America; and 11 participants from the Middle East.

The goal of the IHRTP is to strengthen the capacity of human rights organizations to undertake human rights education efforts (e.g., training, awareness campaigns, information dissemination, and advocacy) aimed at building a global culture of human rights. To this end, the Program places a strong emphasis on transfer of learning (i.e. application of learning to the work situation) and on follow-up activities. Some examples include: translation of training manuals, organization of training sessions based on certain components of the IHRTP, integration of participatory methodology in training sessions, creation of networks and development of new programs and partnerships.

The expected results of the IHRTP can be divided into 2 main categories:

1. The *immediate, or short-term, benefits* that participants derive from the Program. The immediate objectives of the IHRTP are to increase participants capacity to:
  - a) Analyze the challenges in their societies using a framework based on international human rights standards and principles
  - b) Develop and deliver effective HRE activities which promote the rights of women, men, girls and boys.
  - c) Engage in policy-level dialogue on issues related to human rights
  - d) Transfer new knowledge and skills to their organizations
  - e) Establish sustainable international, regional and national networks

2. The **longer-term impacts** of the IHRTP on participating organizations. The expected results include the increased capacity of targeted human rights organizations to:
- undertake HRE initiatives
  - Engage in policy-level dialogue on issues related to human rights
  - engage in networking and collaborative efforts

In order to assess the achievement of the IHRTP's objectives, the CHRF relies on responses to the IHRTP evaluation questionnaires, on feedback obtained through follow-up questionnaires sent 6 and 24 months after the Program, on follow-up missions in the field, and on interviews and group meetings with former Program participants. The results presented herein relate to the participants of the 2004, 2003, 2002 and 2001 sessions of the IHRTP. They comprise only some examples of the initiatives undertaken by former participants.

## **Short-term Benefits obtained by Participants during the Program**

In the past few years, the IHRTP has adopted an integrated approach to HRE, combining Human Rights content (values and attitudes, knowledge and skills) and educational methodology (for example, educational techniques), thereby allowing participants to get a better idea of HRE as a whole. Emphasis is placed on the retransmission of learning and the development of strategies for future action. The evaluation questionnaires and feedback received from participants in the IHRTP 2004 clearly demonstrate the benefits obtained during the Program:

### **a) Participants in IHRTP have increased their capacity to analyze the challenges in their societies using a framework based on international human rights standards and principles**

*According to the 2004 IHRTP Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- An average of eighty-five percent (**85%**) of participants indicated in the General Evaluation that they had a better or much better level of understanding of the international human rights instruments after having attended the IHRTP.
- Ninety-nine percent (**99%**) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they analyzed the issues and situations encountered in the work of their organization using a framework based on internationally accepted human rights values and principles

*Quotations taken from the IHRTP 2004 Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- *J'avais entre autres objectifs de m'approprier les instruments internationaux et les techniques pédagogiques. Le résultat a été atteint. Je sors de ce processus avec beaucoup d'expériences et de connaissances. (Niger)*
- *My organization deals with Human Rights Education and it was very important for me to learn about the applicability of fundamental HR in participants' societies for developing my seminars and teachings*

**b) I Participants in IHRTP have increased their capacity to develop and deliver effective HRE activities which promote the rights of women, men, girls and boys.**

*According to the 2004 IHRTP Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they explored ways in which human rights education can increase the effectiveness of their human rights work.
- Ninety percent (90%) of participants said that the Program's integrated approach to learning, which combines human rights content and human rights education methodology, has increased their capacity to design and/or facilitate training activities.

*Quotations taken from the IHRTP 2004 Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- *I was looking for ways to develop manuals about training police and law enforcement officials in particular. Through the knowledge and skills I gained in IHRTP, I feel I got more and better knowledge and skills than what I expected (Yemen)*
- *Before I came to IHRTP, the capacity to design a training program was very low for me as I stated in the pre-training assignment. But today I'm much confident that I could greatly improve my training programs. (Sri Lanka)*
- *I did not come to the IHRTP to learn about human rights but to learn how to be more creative educator. And I got it from the three weeks training both in class as well as out of class. (Indonesia)*
- *J'ai amélioré considérablement mes connaissances en production de plaidoyer. J'ai appris plusieurs techniques d'animation que je ne connaissais pas ou que je n'avais jamais utilisées. (Haiti)*
- *The significant change was in idea of human rights education. These methods/ways of learning are new for my country. Since we never had any human rights education before! (Iraq)*

**c) Participants in IHRTP have increased their capacity to transfer new knowledge and skills to their organizations**

*According to the 2004 IHRTP Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that preparing the Individual Plan for Putting their Learning into Action was a practical method for planning how to implement knowledge and skills acquired during the IHRTP.
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) stated that the IHRTP has enabled them to increase their capacity to apply their learning within their organization and society.

***According to the IHRTP Follow-up questionnaires (2001-2003):***

- Participants who attended the IHRTP identified and developed concrete human rights education initiatives (individual plan) to be implemented within their organizations upon their return home, **66%** of participants had already implemented their Individual Plan six months after the program.
- **78%** of organizations made changes to their work as a result of their representative attending the IHRTP
- **76%** of organizations made changes to their way of evaluating human rights education activities after attending the IHRTP

***Quotations taken from the IHRTP 2004 Evaluation Questionnaire:***

- *Le manuel nous a facilité la restitution parce qu'il est vraiment détaillé (Burkina Faso)*
- *I have gained a lot and what I learned here will enable my organization to develop a training manual and also know how to sustain programs and incorporate advocacy (Tanzania).*
- *Well, the program didn't fulfill 100% of the needs, but what is outstanding is that it has skilled me to know how to fulfill them myself! (Yemen)*

***Feedback from IHRTP alumni***

- *The IHRTP has not only benefited the organization that I work with. As a provincial trainer for Amnesty International South Africa in their Human Rights Education group the knowledge I gained at the IHRTP has been extensively utilized. I was a co-trainer at two national HRE sessions since my return from Canada. I used the manuals extensively in teaching about participatory methodology, the learning cycle and evaluation and assessment techniques. The group also appreciated the many new icebreakers and games that I brought back from the course. I have also been asked to do facilitation skills training for another organization (the Black Sash – a paralegal organization) from this year and will continue to use the manual for this. (South Africa)*
- *Suite à notre participation au PIFDP nous avons obtenu le financement de notre session annuelle de formation de para juristes sur les droits des femmes où j'ai animé en suivant l'approche participative « Comment les êtres humains apprennent ». Ainsi 30 femmes para juristes ont acquis des connaissances sur les droits de la personne et plus particulièrement sur les droits de la femme sur la base des autres techniques de formation basées sur l'approche participative. (Burkina Faso)*

#### **d) Participants in IHRTTP have increased their capacity to establish sustainable international regions and national networks**

*According to the 2004 IHRTTP Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- Ninety-six percent (96%) stated that the IHRTTP has enabled them to facilitate networking and partnership activities essential to furthering the cause of human rights.

*Quotations taken from the IHRTTP 2004 Evaluation Questionnaire:*

- *Not only the content which was basic but comprehensive, the atmosphere was unmatched - It was a lifetime opportunity to be a part of Mini Human Society gathered here - This was, in fact, the real learning opportunity. (Pakistan)*
- *No doubt, the IHRTTP has increased my capacity immensely and has also created the opportunity to meet others and establish networks which are relevant to my work. (Nigeria)*
- *Because I work for a government institution, and most people work for NGO's, their resources and experiences helped to look at same problems with different lens. (Brazil)*

## **Longer-term Impacts of the IHRTTP on Participating Organizations**

The impacts of the IHRTTP over the longer term include, notably, an increased capacity of targeted human rights organizations to engage in HRE initiatives and the establishment of networks between these organizations in order to support their initiatives leading to greater respect by states of their obligations and prevention of abuses and to the emergence of a culture of human rights. To assess the achievement of these impacts, the CHRF communicates with alumni during field missions, follow-up questionnaires sent 6 and 24 months after the Program and the organization of meetings with alumni, etc.

### **1. The IHRTTP leads to an increased capacity of participating human rights organizations to undertake HRE initiatives. Participating organizations have undertaken follow-up initiatives, using and adapting IHRTTP content and methodology. CHRF is providing support to alumni initiatives.**

According to the follow-up questionnaires sent to alumni, 92% of organizations have incorporated the IHRTTP experience into their work. For example, organizations have developed new programs, expanded existing programs, integrated HRE principles into other types of activities, incorporated international standards into HRE activities, and so on. The following are examples of the HRE activities being developed by IHRTTP 2004 alumni, based on the knowledge and skills they acquired during the Program:

### ***Feedback from IHRTP 2004 Alumni:***

- *I just concluded a TOT workshop on police Reforms and Conflict Transformation which my organization organized for trainers at Nigerian police colleges, this is one out of 8 workshops slated for the police colleges in different parts of Nigeria. The idea is to mainstream Conflict transformation in the curricular of police colleges in Nigeria with the aim of improving their conflict handling style. I am in charge of this project and have been busy preparing for it as well as executing it, I would have written earlier than now. Thank you for the opportunity to attend the IHRTP 2004, I really benefited a lot from the programme, the first time since we started the police project, I received a present from the Commissioner of police in charge of the college we trained to show their appreciation. My organizational skill has greatly improved and I am now more confident of myself thanks to IHRTP. My colleagues were surprised at the transformation. I will forever cherish the memories of the IHRTP and John Abott College, friends I made, contacts, and your excellent team that put up such wonderful programme. (Nigeria)*
  
- *We carried out a training session in Sao Paulo which was attended by 28 representatives from Quilombo communities (afro-descents communities) from 11 different Brazilian States. The training lasted 3 days and focused on economic, social and cultural rights, especially housing and land rights. The activity was part of a National Campaign launched by COHRE and the Quilombo communities last June, regarding the regularization the territories they have been occupying since long time ago, and still have no titles. The activity contributed to empower their knowledge of the national and international legal instruments available for use to guarantee their rights to the land and to adequate housing, as well as to prevent and remedy ESC rights violations. We used many resources provided by your training manual, such as the study cases (the one referring to minorities and the other referring to evictions – Anuk communities). We translated some information into Portuguese and informed the participants that the methodology was taken from your manual. (Brazil)*

## **2. The IHRTP has facilitated networking and collaborative efforts essential to furthering the cause of human rights:**

Over the years, past IHRTP participants from various countries all over the world have expressed a strong interest in developing IHRTP alumni networks. The main objective of the alumni networks is to strengthen the impact of HRE work through collaboration at national and/or regional levels. Specifically, alumni networks explore how to adapt the content and methodology of the IHRTP to their own contexts; how to take advantage of each other's expertise and lessons learned; and to discuss possible joint initiatives.

### ***According to the follow-up questionnaires (2001-2003):***

- 79% of participants are engaged in networking or partnership activities taking place as a result of their participation in the IHRTP.

The following Countries or sub-regions are already engaged or have expressed an interest in developing an IHRTP alumni network: South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan), Indonesia,

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, The Middle East, Eastern Africa and the Horn (Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania), Haiti, the Philippines, Ukraine and Central Asia.

Recognizing the importance of such collaboration, the CHRF has been supporting these initiatives by undertaking field missions in different countries, organizing alumni meetings, sharing information and lessons learned and linking alumni engaged in such initiatives.

### **Examples of initiatives undertaken by groups of IHRTP alumni:**

- In September 2004, an IHRTP Alumni from Bahrain was imprisoned. This generated a lot of concern and involvement from the alumni who had created a listserv to keep in touch after the IHRTP. The CHRF, responding to a suggestion from the Alumni, coordinated the signing of a petition to the King of Bahrain and other Bahrain officials requesting the release of Abdul-Hadi. Over 400 (four hundreds) IHRTP alumni and members of their networks signed the petition. Mr. Abdul-Hadi has been released mid-November after almost two months in jail. Members of Mr. Abdul-Hadi's organization reiterated that the petition has been extremely useful in obtaining his release.
  
- In India, The IHRTP alumni group, after active e-mail exchanges and a preparatory meeting in November, met in Goa in December 2003 to discuss ways and means of strengthening the IHRTP alumni network in the country. As a result of the meeting, the group agreed to undertake the following activities:
  - Identify other IHRTP alumni known to each group member and interest them in joining the group so as to widen the alumni network,
  - Collect materials and create a database of organizations, institutions and individuals involved in HRE at the school, college and university level,
  - Prepare a schema which will contain details about the desired contents, methodology of teaching and pedagogical techniques of an ideal HRE curriculum to be introduced in colleges and develop an action plan for implementation of this activity,
  - Launch efforts to lobby with the Education Departments and School Boards to introduce HRE within the next 3-5 years.

Since this meeting, an advocacy campaign has been undertaken by IHRTP alumni to lobby the political parties during the general elections that took place in India in the spring 2004 in order to include human rights education in the school curricula.

### **Feedback from IHRTP alumni**

- *The Middle East group used the opportunity of participating in the IHRTP to plan a regional program similar to the IHRTP starting with establishing a network between them. (Iraq)*
  
- *As a result of my participation in the IHRTP, I have established interesting and useful contacts. From friends from Armenia, Manipur, Uzbekistan, Trinidad and Tobago and others I am receiving important information about different events. From my side I am trying to inform them about interesting events taking place in my country and current activities of my organization. In addition, I would like to underline that yahoo group for IHRTP participants, was a very good initiative. (Georgia)*

- *We are in regular contact with the IHRTP participants from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Russian Federation. We exchange information about human rights activities and education programmes. Through these exchanges we have learned a lot about the ways in which NGOs and governments can collaborate (Kazakhstan)*
- *We have kept in touch with participants from other parts of the world with regular updates on what each person is doing. Such communication has made it possible for our organization to participate in some human rights activities abroad. A Programme Assistant with our organization is now on distance learning programme on Project Development and Management. (Kenya)*

## **CONCLUSION**

The International Human Rights Training Program organized by the CHRF is unique in many ways, due to its international nature, content, methodology, and impacts, as well as to the number of countries and organizations represented.

In order to ensure that the IHRTP responds every year to the expectations of human rights activists around the world, the CHRF must continue its efforts to guarantee the success of the Program, through: the rigorous selection of organizations and participants; Program content and methodology that is adapted to a constantly-evolving, global human rights context; sustained attention to the retransmission of the knowledge and skills acquired; and adequate follow-up with former participants.

Participants to the 2004 IHRTP wrote :

*“Great!!! Learned a lot, worked in a wonderful group, learned a lot from facilitators, became a richer person and more committed to do HRE.” (Moldova)*

*“Best training I had attended not only because of substance and process but because the atmosphere and attitude of staff, interns, facilitators and participants encourages respect for human rights.” (Philippines)*

*“It is a highly organized, inspiring, and motivating program - a rare chance that is provided for lucky people who believe in HR!” (Yemen)*

*“Mes impressions sont si bonnes au point que mon souhait est la participation de plusieurs responsables d'ONG de mon pays au PIFDP”. (Côte d’Ivoire)*

As long as the CHRF continues to elicit such enthusiasm from participants, we can be certain that the IHRTP will have positive results.