

Human Rights Education Associates

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HREA's work

HREA is an international organization with offices in the Netherlands and the United States.

- ◆ HREA supports partners in developing capacity
- ◆ HREA provides training for human rights advocates and educators
- ◆ HREA conducts research and evaluation to inform human rights policy and programming
- ◆ HREA serves as a clearinghouse and networking hub for human rights activists

HREA's programs can be divided into five areas:

- ◆ Curriculum and materials development. In partnership with national organizations HREA develops new curricula and textbooks. HREA also undertakes teacher training and helps to introduce HRE into national curricula.
- ◆ Training of professional groups, including judges, legal professionals and teachers.
- ◆ Web-based education and learning for activists, educators and interested citizens.
- ◆ Distance Learning Program. Eight courses are offered each year via the Internet. The courses are usually 12-15 weeks long, and are based on a combination of web-learning tools and email communication. Each course is facilitated by experienced human rights practitioners or academics. Each year the following courses are offered:
 - Human rights advocacy
 - Human rights monitoring
 - Rights-based programming
 - Project development and management in the NGO sector
 - Research and evaluation in the NGO sector
 - Introduction to the European human rights system
 - Introduction to the United Nations human rights system
 - Introduction to Human Rights Education
- ◆ Networking for human rights advocates and educators. This often occurs through email and other web-based fora.

Global Human Rights Education Network

The network was started in 1999 as a listserv for people interested in human rights education. The list is called the Global Human Rights Education Listserv. Via the listserv people share information about new publications, upcoming trainings, new approaches to training and evaluation, and national programs for introducing human rights education in a specific country or sector. The list serv now has 3300 members from 150 countries.

In an attempt to overcome language barriers and regional differences, HREA has created human rights education list serves in partnership with various organizations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America/Caribbean. The listservs are run in various languages, including Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic and French.

HREA has used the list serves as avenues for exchanging experiences and informally evaluating the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, which is going to end in December. In 2000, at the request of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR), HREA convened an on-line global consultation to evaluate various activities that have taken place around the world during the UN Decade. People described human rights education activities that have been initiated at the primary and secondary school levels, informal education activities and human rights trainings of professional groups. Some of the on-line listserv discussions were included in the General Assembly's report on the progress that has been made in human rights education during the first five years of the UN Decade.

Two years ago, the UNHCHR asked HREA to organize an on-line forum asking human rights workers from around the world what steps should be taken once the UN Decade for Human Rights Education ends. A request was brought to the UNHCHR asking for a second official Decade for Human Rights Education, but there was no political will to adopt a resolution for a second Decade. Instead a World Program for Human Rights Education was started. The World Program has no official beginning or end, but it is one way of keeping human rights education on the international agenda. The UNHCHR adopted the World Program, and the General Assembly will consider it at the end of this year.

UNESCO and the UNHCHR now have the task of creating a plan of action for the World Program. The first three years of the World Program will focus on human rights education in primary and secondary schools. This is an attempt to make the goals, objectives and results of the World Program concrete, so that in 2008 we can evaluate the progress made and determine what the major obstacles were.

To facilitate this process, HREA is organizing an on-line discussion about the World Program on its main listserv and on each of its regional listservs. The discussion will last for five weeks. Every Monday the moderators send out a message with a set of questions on a certain topic. At the end of the five weeks HREA will take all the messages received, compile them and create a report with the main conclusions. This report is sent out to the list serv for verification that it indeed represents what most of the human rights education community thinks should be done to strengthen human rights education in primary and secondary schools. The final report will be sent to the UNHCHR. Reports from previous on-line fora have been included in UN policy

documents, so HREA is optimistic that the report from this global consultation will be a good way for human rights workers and NGOs to have their voices heard at the UN.

Exercise

The participants were split into five regional groups. Each group was assigned one of the themes from the on-line global consultation, and was asked to respond to that theme. Each group was asked to send notes from their discussions to HREA to be included in the final report.

Themes for the Global Consultation on the World Program for Human Rights Education

- ◆ Strategies for introducing HRE into primary and secondary schools at the national level
- ◆ Resources and tools necessary to support actors involved in HRE
- ◆ National benchmarks for measuring and evaluating progress
- ◆ Mechanisms for support and coordination at the national, regional and international levels