

**PDHRE, People's Movement for Human Rights
Education presents:**

**Developing
Sustainable Human Rights
Cities**

**Knowing, Claiming and Securing Our Right to
be Human**

MOVING POWER TO HUMAN RIGHTS: A historic initiative in which a whole community examines traditional beliefs, collective memory and aspirations as related to the Universal Declaration of human rights... --Guided by the commitment made and obligations undertaken by their governments - having ratified numerous human rights conventions- all its governing bodies and community institutions and groups, learn about human rights as related to their daily lives and concerns.. --to assure that all the laws, policies, resources and relationship in the community maintain the dignity and serve the well being of all its members.. --Moving to develop a sustainable Human Rights City.

“ No single phrase in recent human history has been more privileged to bare the mission and burden of human destiny than [the phrase] “human rights”... --the greatest gift of classical and contemporary human thought is the notion of human rights. Indeed, more than any other moral language available to us at this time in history, the language of human rights is able to expose the immorality and barbarism of the modern face of power.”

(From “Inhuman Wrongs and Human Rights”- Prof. Upendra Baxi)

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THE VISION:

A WORLD WHOS SIX BILLION INHABITANTS ALL KNOW
AND CLAIM THEIR
HUMAN RIGHTS. A WORLD WHERE WOMEN, MEN, YOUTH
AND CHILDREN,
LEARN, REFLECT AND ACT TO ACHIEVE
EQUALITY, CIVIL, CULTURAL,
ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR
ALL.

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

PDHRE serves as a comprehensive “extension service”, to energize, and motivate communities to embark on a life long process of holistic learning about human rights as relevant to their daily struggles and concerns; and to recognize human rights as a powerful tool for action. Programs and projects are demand driven, designed to respond to self-defined needs and requests for assistance and advice regarding formal and informal learning about human rights. International and local educators, human rights experts, and community workers collaborate to develop meaningful methodologies and strategies to make the programs and projects possible.

PDHRE programs are planned by, for, and with communities to catalyze and enhance human rights mentoring and monitoring; gender equality; local human and social development programs - guided by the human rights framework; actions to overcome discrimination; the strengthening of citizens’ equal and informed participation in the decision-making, problem-solving processes; and to enable women and men to become agents of change.

PDHRE, offices and affiliates in Africa, South Asia, Asia Pacific, Latin America and Europe are uniquely qualified to enhance the learning about human rights as a holistic value system protected by international laws, assisting communities in developing: "*A new political culture based on human rights*" Nelson Mandela.

PDHRE's advocacy work was instrumental in the United Nations proclamation of a Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

PDHRE -- MOVING POWER TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Three major long-term programs mark the work of PDHRE:

Regional Learning Institutions for Human Rights Education, RLIHRE. PDHRE's International office with its Regional partners is in the process of planning and establishing RLIHREs, targeting four regions: Latin America, Africa, South Asia and Asia Pacific. Its objective is to create on going workshops and field work to introduce community workers to a wide number of subjects such as political economy, psychology, sociology, human rights and human rights education for social transformation and engage them in developing a new vocation: Human Rights Community Educators. At these workshops participants will learn, share, and develop practical methodologies and strategies for extending and promoting human rights education in their own countries. At each of the several workshops to be held annually, forty participants from ten countries in the Region will be trained. Returning to their countries, the trainees will work with their organization to integrate programs of human rights education in their activities, and plan comprehensive ongoing national plans for methodical outreach to various sectors of society. It is expected that through a ripple effect, new political leadership guided by the human rights framework will emerge throughout the region.

Learning about the Human Rights of Women: Since its inception, PDHRE has worked very closely with community-based women organizations. At the Beijing Women's Conference, PDHRE held a nine-day Training Institution and has since then developed and facilitated numerous training about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW. For that purpose a large array of visual and written materials, introducing a holistic human rights framework to women, were developed: "*Women Hold Up The Sky*" a dramatic video series of eight short compelling stories was produced in 1999 to introduce communities to the human rights of women and girls, as protected by CEDAW. These are eight short narrative dramas, which capture and celebrate the complexity, strength and vibrant determination of women living in a globalized patriarchal world. Accompanying the Video is "*Between their stories and our realities...*", a comprehensive training manual designed for educators and participants alike. (Available with English, French and Spanish subtitles.); and soon to be published is Passport to Dignity, connecting the 12 areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action to the human rights framework. The guide and workbook uses the comprehensive framework of the Platform to demonstrate the holistic nature

of human rights as a powerful tool for action in the achievement of full equality, well being and participation in the decisions that determine women's lives.

PDHRE's publications are a dynamic and interactive process whereby learners can adopt the human rights framework in their actions.

Human Rights Resource Packets. PDHRE has produced twenty-four human rights resource packets for international, regional and national NGOs, and various international fora, to build awareness of the governments' human rights commitments and obligations.

Human Rights for the 21st Century. It has initiated and supported this important publication by The University of Pennsylvania Press and the soon to be published "World report on HR Education for Social transformation".

Web Site. Britannica Website editors have selected and awarded PDHRE's website as "one of the best on the Internet when reviewed for quality, accuracy of content, presentation and usability": <http://www.pdhre.org>

Imposed ignorance is a human rights violation

Human Rights Cities. Since 1998, PDHRE, drawing on its rich experience and perception of needs, and with the enthusiasm of local communities, is facilitating the development of Human Rights Cities. This is a historic initiative in which programs are developed to examine traditional beliefs, collective memory and aspirations as related to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...--guided by the commitments made and obligations undertaken by their governments- having ratified numerous human rights conventions- all its governing bodies and community institutions and groups learn about human rights as related to their life in the city.. --to assure that all laws, policies , resources and relationships in the community ,maintain the dignity and serve the well being of all its membership. Four cities are implementing on going programs; These are: Rosario, Argentina -pop. one million; Thies, Senegal --Pop. 300,000, including 10 Human rights villages; Nagpur, India - pop. 2.8 Million and Kati, Mali -- pop. 50,000. Three more cities are now joining this effort in the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Austria. These cities were selected on the basis of a demonstrated widespread commitment to human rights among a range of civil society actors and of past success with other projects in these countries. The program is driven by an exciting and expansive definition of human rights learning as a tool for political, economic and social change. Human rights education highlights the normative and empirical power and limits of human rights as a tool in individual and collective efforts to address inequalities, injustices, and abuses at home, in the work place, in the streets, prisons, courts, and so on. Even in "democratic" societies, citizens and policy-makers must learn to understand human rights and the obligations and the responsibilities, which they entail in a holistic and comprehensive way, and they must learn to monitor and enforce human rights effectively and efficiently. The Human Rights Cities initiative seeks to expand, facilitate and institutionalize this process.

The Historic Backdrop For Developing Human Rights Cities

Half a century ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights formulated ideas, which belong to all of humanity. Out of the UDHR has grown a vast body of laws, norms, expectations, and some major international agreements, by which most governments of the world have, in some way, pledged their commitment to the realization of human rights for their peoples. Human rights have become a value in the sense that even the violators find it in their interest at times to proclaim their devotion to the cause of human rights.

The UDHR has taken increasingly concrete forms: a growing body of human rights instruments, i.e., a body of laws, regulations, codes whose existence and legitimacy is attested to in principle by intergovernmental instruments. The decades since the UDHR have spawned an ever larger body of international treaties, covenants, agreements, constant additions and refinements to Human Rights norms and regulations, not to mention an expanding sector of Human Rights Education: workshops, trainings, seminars, 'animations', curricula etc. in formal and informal settings. There is thus a potential culture-in-the-making, crystallized around a construct (the UDHR) that identified human beings on the basis of their right to a categorical set of basic life conditions which signatory states are obligated to protect and promote. Thus, the idea of Human Rights and much of their specific content have become 'real'. They are an intrinsic part of the new paradigm of the world. Like gravity, relativity, representative democracy they belong to the order of thoughts, which once thought, can no longer be completely 'un-thought', despite repeated attempts to repress them.

In practice, governments may or may not apply the conventions they signed. There may be active, even massive and prolonged, violations of human rights at all levels. Many States that ratified Human Rights instruments have violated their own commitments and obligations. Many states that in principle are committed to the implementation of human rights, are finding that the demands of the global economy are interfering with their resolve. Up till now, structural adjustment policies have affected countries that are described as having " weak human rights traditions". In reality, no one is immune from the deadening effects of international trading policies that consider human rights an "expensive luxury," that 'efficiency' may require us to abandon. Based on past history, we should anticipate that there would be ever more determined attempts to reverse course even in those countries where human rights seem most ingrained.

Human Rights are here to stay. Social activists everywhere do have at their disposal an interlocking net of international agreements including the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

To date, all countries have ratified at least one, and two third have ratified most covenants and conventions. UN Member States undertake an obligation to adjust their national laws to conform with international human rights norms and standards, and to implement and enforce civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights of all women, men, youth and children as equal citizens of the state. Ratified or not, international agreements create a space for activism.

In the word of Kofi Annan, "Human societies are being challenged to ensure, that the human rights acquired on paper over the past fifty years will truly be available to all, that " *equality, freedom and justice, (--the promotion and implementation of human rights--)* will be 'globalized', as well as the economy"

In the words of Jose Manuel Banderes it will mean "*making these rights palpable ensure their universal inscription in human daily lives*", societies anchored 'in the ground of human rights', rather than merely 'respecting' human rights. Humanity's only safeguard in the globalized world will be the commitment to human rights' universality and interconnectedness, "*protected by the daily integration of human rights in all areas of life, all sectors of society.*"

For a full-fledged Human Rights culture to arise, human rights must 'inhabit' all human cultures.

This requires:

- Conscious awareness of their existence on the part of all men, women, children
- A desire that human rights be part of their daily lives
- A full acknowledgement of the universal, indivisible and interconnected nature of all human rights

but also

- Conscious awareness on the part of all of the existence of the international instruments
- Practical implementation of the necessary solidarities between the various groups in which communities are segmented

Knowing Claiming And Securing Our Right To Be Human

Human beings and their rights as reflected by the Human Rights instruments are not all that different from human beings and their life conditions as described in the multitude of human cultures for which we have records. In fact, the idea of Human Rights is rooted in a 'natural', widespread quest for dignified, free access to the basic necessities of life, expressed in a multitude of small gestures and habits, in stories and legends, as well as in religious and political documents.

Human cultures are enormously diverse. All cultures contain one or another belief or practice that others consider strange or repellent, but ultimately there is a core of common recognizable definitions of a good person. When people complain of having been mistreated, when they say that this just isn't the way to treat a person, we generally 'know' just what they mean.

There may be times when we disagree about the seriousness of a matter we may dismiss a complaint as odd or incomprehensible. And yet, we can and do 'understand' what their needs and requests mean, provided we are willing to stop and listen, and ask a few questions. We may still disagree on various practical grounds about the seriousness or even the nature of their problem, but up to a point a modicum of moral imagination will allow us to 'imagine' different hierarchies of

value. All cultures have a concept of "needing to walk in another's shoes before dismissing their needs." A person's dignity, the right to 'belong', justice, fairness, are considered valuable objectives for society to protect.

It has long been assumed that the basic needs of life are 'provided for' by nature, the Earth, God, etc., i.e., that these basic goods belong to all. Even in the midst of competition and inequalities, there have been persisting visions of the way things used to be and still ought to be—visions of an earth where no one goes without food, without clothing, without shelter, without the support of friends. Paul Lauren ('98) has shown that there is a continuous thread of affirmations of certain inalienable rights that unquestionably belong to human beings, rights to the extent that as the Songhai put it, "no one should ever have to beg for them."

"Generosity and caring for those in need (often summarized under the heading of 'widows and orphans'); giving bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty and hospitality to the wandering stranger; honesty; truthfulness; an ability to work with others; an ability to 'be a friend', a basic sense of fairness; a constructive attitude toward life in society; all these are Virtues ... By a similar token, one of the contributions of anthropological studies has been to remind us of the myriad ways in which cultures, through education and ritual, have endeavored to give socially relevant roles or work to their members, including in many cases those which 'modern' culture stigmatizes as deviant, disabled or insane." (Mado Spiegler)

Universal Exclusion – The vicious Cycle of Humiliation

Thus, we have shared intuitions about 'humanity'. However, we must also look at the disturbing fact that these visions of 'natural rights' are matched by dichotomies: distinctions between in-groups (the real human beings, 'us') whose needs and contributions we acknowledge and protect; and on the other hand out-groups, (the 'others', 'they'), whose needs may be invisible at best, or 'secondary', or 'justified but impractical'. At worst their needs are brutally violated, their contributions go unrecognized, no matter how essential they may be to the survival of the society as a whole.

Up to a point a modicum of moral imagination will allow us to 'imagine' different hierarchies of value i.e., to recognize the human in the other person. But 'up to a point' can be a profound modifier. So profound that people who saved each other's life in an emergency are not allowed greeting each other on the street the next day. Children, who were best friends when they were small, are told one day, that it is no longer appropriate for the friendship to continue.

"All cultures are in rough agreement as to what a real human being is like, and how to train children to acquire the virtues that make one 'really human'; all cultures also seem to have agreed on the concept that unfortunately there are 'some' people out there, variously defined, with whom the standard does not apply. We all know what it means to be human, and to be treated like a human being... we all know when the life imposed on us is so inhuman that as the European saying goes 'we wouldn't even treat the devil like that'. Yet we find everywhere the temptation to treat the ones we define as 'others' as if they were devils"- (Mado Spiegler)

Cultures differ in the way they explain this 'misfortune', precisely how the world got divided and whom to blame for it? Many stories of origins blame The Woman for having triggered the original disaster in some way. But the principle of exclusion itself is always the same "in hierarchical systems where injustice is justice and people trade equality for survival." (Shulamith Koenig)

Unjust -- inhuman -- social systems are rooted in this basic ambivalence: On one hand, the old intuition of humanity of basic human needs, a prehistory of 'human rights' as it were. On the other hand, an equally old urge to 'belong by excluding' whose practical effect has been to persistently allow the existence of social systems that violate the very values/virtues which supposedly define humanity. The most violating institutions (slavery, holocausts) as well as all the more detailed violations of specific 'human rights' have rested on the existence within the group itself of implicit hierarchies in the importance attributed to different people and their needs/rights.

Human history is the record of human persistence in its struggle to achieve human futures free from the violations of basic human rights belonging to all as a birthright. The struggles for social justice, (i.e., 'human rights' struggles, for basic needs, for freedom, for the right to participate as equals in decisions that determine their lives) have been and remain multiple and varied. A multitude of social processes have been generated, whereby issues are resolved and fundamental change is created – in communities large or small, and in a number of different contexts. In a myriad different situations, people have identified, and successfully claimed what we would now call their human rights.

Under a variety of circumstances human beings have experienced empowerment and initiated processes that led to fundamental - if not always sustained - transformations of society. This record of persistence in the defense of people's 'human rights' is weakened by the fact that human beings historically have bought their own 'rights' at the cost of those of others thus continuing the vicious cycle of humiliation.

My Neighbors' Material Needs Are My Spiritual
Needs - proverb

Remarkably, there is also a more or less uninterrupted 'tradition', a vast delta of streams of individuals and communities, *claiming full humanity for themselves and for others*. These streams are rarely very far below the surface, although they do go underground, and they move very slowly at times. Throughout history, the times when an economic system reaches its limit are times of resurgence of those streams, times of openness to social transformation, a testimony to the resiliency of the dream.

While such a vacuum encourages some people to try and grab as much as they can for themselves, just as often men and women rise up and declare that this is a chance to start from scratch and get it right this time: justice and equality for all!

Whenever such an episode occurs, we find a striving for equality between men and women, young and old, teachers and learners; a yearning for a social system where the needs of all will be assured: food, housing, education, support in ill-health; a yearning for a social system where all will participate in decision-making, for worldwide harmony between genders and races; a yearning to beat swords into ploughshares.

Again and again, a perception that all of humanity needed to change was translated into the building of local communities structured around these 'human rights' values, the cultivation of

'human rights' virtues. Human Rights Cities continue this tradition. Human Rights Norms and standards, universal indivisible and interconnected constitute the present form of this age old dream

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Although the context and nature of human rights are conditioned by the social, traditional and cultural forces that inform different societies, concern for the modern form of human rights has become universal. Each violation of human rights, wherever it occurs, is considered a threat to the welfare and dignity of the mankind. Thus, unless human rights are made the focal point in good governance no progress is either possible or sustainable as no amount of economic development can be sustained without a baseline of respect for human rights framework.

Adherence to the Human Rights framework is an imperative for sustainable human social and economic development. This require the learning about human rights paying attention to three dimensions, each of them indispensable.

1. Human rights built on the four pillars of

Laws * Policies * Resources; * Relationships

2. Their implementation rests on the principles of

Accountability * Reciprocity, * Participation * Continuous education

3. Continuous Human Rights Education Will -(Richard Claude)

Enhance knowledge	Develop critical understanding
Clarify values	Promote solidarity
Change attitudes	Alter behavior or practices

The concept of the HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES was launched by PDHRE in 1997.

It represents a systematic attempt to coordinate these three dimensions.

The Concept of the Human Rights Cities, Step by Step.

What Does It Mean To Be A Human Rights City?

A Human Rights City is one in which all its members, from policy makers to ordinary citizens, learn about and adhere to human rights obligations. Relating international human rights norms to their own immediate and practical concerns, they join and make a commitment to initiate a community-wide dialogue for the purpose of developing the guidelines of their Human Rights City. All organizations, public and private, join to monitor violations and implementation of human rights at all levels of the society. They develop the methodology to ensure that all decisions, laws, policies, resource allocation and relationships are bound by human rights norms and standards at all levels of the decision-making and problem-solving process. They ensure that human rights serve as guiding principles by which the community develops its future plans and institutions.

How Can We Create A Human Rights City?

Step 1

Local and highly committed activists need to identify all civil society organizations, solidarity groups, governmental and UN agencies, and all other institutions concerned with the social and economic issues vital to the community, such as:

Children, culture, development, differently abled, education, environment, food, health, housing, migrant workers, peace, poverty alleviation, refugees, security, water, women, work.

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

Step 2

a. Call for a meeting of representatives of groups and institutions mentioned above, to: Establish a Steering Committee, which will oversee and facilitate the program, inclusive and representative of all sectors of the community.

b. Schedule learning and planning sessions in which all Committee members will participate. At these "learning meetings," Committee members will articulate their concerns and be the concepts and principles of a Human Rights Framework as it relates to their specific issues. At these sessions the challenges and opportunities available to government agencies and institutions, ordinary citizens and community activists will be highlighted to enable the participants to use the powerful space for action made available by human rights norms and standards. Discussions will involve the systemic analysis and examination of causes and effects of human rights violations in the community. As part of this learning process members of the Committee will work together to develop a common vision for their Human Rights City.

c. Collectively design a plan of action, assign the preparation of materials (oral and written), and design a delivery system and extension services to reach members of all constituencies to create a learning multiplier effect. Educators and the media will be summoned to work in close collaboration with the Committee to enhance and enrich the viability of the development of the Human Rights City.

In effect, the established Steering Committee develops a "training of trainers" program with, by, and for their constituencies. Members of the Committee develop a learning process and a dialogue with their constituencies introducing the discourse of human rights as related to their needs and aspirations. They share learning and action experiences by developing a comprehensive human rights education extension service, comprised of local and international human rights resource persons, educators, lawyers, and activists, available to support the Steering Committee in its work responding to the self-defined needs and requests of the community. They can organize special human rights training sessions for parliamentarians, municipal workers, law enforcement, the judiciary, business people, teachers, health care and social workers, and government officials in order that all state and non-state actors understand and uphold their obligations and commitments to human rights.

Step 3

As the dialogues, discourse, learning and debating spread around the community, each citizen will be requested to play a part in effective human rights advocacy in the community. Each will be asked to:

Become a human rights "educator," bringing human rights into everyday discourse in the family and community. Just as parents can bring human rights into their homes and teach their children about the dignity of themselves and of all people, 'lay' educators can insert human rights into all community dialogue, reaffirming the connection between human rights and justice for all.

Become a human right "monitor." Aware of their government's human rights obligations, people will develop sensitivity to human rights, and will be able to look at their life and development with a human rights perspective. They will be asked to monitor violations of human rights in the community, as well as progress towards human rights implementation.

Become a human rights "documenter." Effective human rights advocacy requires careful documentation. In communities where illiteracy is a problem, a local "recorder" can be appointed to whom citizens can come and document the human rights violations as well as any progress towards implementation, which they have observed and monitored.

Members of the community will be encouraged to bring creativity into these processes, using testimony, community and city hall meetings, street theater, and informal community discussions. The results of monitoring and documentation can then be collected and shared to ensure the inclusion of the full and holistic spectrum of the community's individual and collective human rights needs and to provide a systemic analysis of human rights violations. Vital to human rights advocacy is the creation of mechanisms for accountability.

Step 4

For a community to become a Sustainable Human Rights City, citizens must participate in the decisions that determine their lives and ensure that all institutions which service the community become "human rights institutions," abiding fully by human rights norms and standards. The process of learning, monitoring, documenting, etc., will lead to the development of the immediate and long-term action plans to achieve this goal.

The above detailed steps will weave the infrastructure for a democracy that delivers human rights, a "human rights democracy," through: participation, reciprocity, accountability and transparency in the following way:

Community members will:

Examine existing law, work to amend local and national laws, and lobby for new laws and Statutes to promote and protect human rights.

Ensure that all local and national policies are formulated and implemented consistent with the human rights framework.

Study existing development budgets and consider the formulation by the community of Alternative Budgets in line with their needs and aspirations.

This will enable the community to voice and document its development priorities and request reallocation of available resources and the creation of new resources.

All of the above will lead to:

Strengthening, changing, and developing newly defined relationships in the community to promote and protect equality of women, men, youth and children, and to build relationships based on equality between women and men, ethnic groups, religious groups, and others, and with their elected bodies, local and national. An integral part of these programs and activities are the actions to create and oversee a fully comprehensive community development plan.

Enabling citizens to get fully involved in the decisions that determine their lives creates Sustainable Human Rights Cities. These are communities in which the sources of power are international human rights instruments, leading to a commitment by governments and local authorities, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, regulators and community leaders to implement and enforce civil, cultural, economic, political, and social human rights for every woman, man, youth and child.

The plan may include:

-A community preparing a *"human rights charter."* Individual communities can also collaborate with each other in developing a Universal Charter for Human Rights Cities.

-A human rights *"strategic plan"* addressing all actors -- state and non-state -- affecting human rights from the community, national and international levels. "Human Rights Citizens" insisting that their governing and law enforcement institutions abide by the plan, implement and enforce it to achieve sustainable human, social and economic development.

-A *community human rights court*, the development of mechanisms of checks and balances, and appointment of a human rights ombudsperson and a local human rights education program committee.

As community members themselves define what their human rights community is all about, they become agents of social change, contributing in the words of Nelson Mandela, to *"a new political culture based on human rights."*

On-going Programs Of Human Rights Education

In the process of developing a Human Rights City, human rights education is imperative to enable community members to learn, monitor and take actions that will weave a human rights way of life and bring about economic and social change necessary for sustainable development. (The vital role of human rights education to sustainability was emphasized in the Plan of Action of the Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995 - 2004, adopted by the UN General Assembly.)

Aim at creating the understanding that:

- Every injustice is a human rights violation
- The attainment of social and economic justice is the fulfillment and protection of human rights
- All human rights are equally worthy of protection and no one human right can violate another and all conflicts must be solved the human rights way.

Guided by human rights norms and standards, ordinary people will be able to investigate and define solutions to problems they themselves have helped identify: poverty, unemployment, violence against women, malnutrition, marginalization, and illiteracy, to mention only a few. As part of their responsibility, community members will take responsibility for the immediate prevention of human rights violations in their midst and call for the enforcement of all human rights norms and standards.

THE COMMUNITY WORKS WITH ITS ELECTED AUTHORITIES

To ensure that the institutions that govern the community become human rights institutions. Specifically, local and national governments, the judiciary, police, financial and industrial institutions and regulators must fulfill their obligations to prevent human rights violations and promote the realization of human rights for all.

Developing a Human Rights City is an ongoing, vital, and dynamic process, which, by perpetually building on itself, weaves a human rights culture.

In the following pages we are proud to bring the stories of seven cities, each is at a different stage of development...-- guided by their elected steering committees, each in a differently innovative way...-- to move their city to become a human rights city!

You can learn about their creativity, energy and commitment and about the plans, action and surveys, which they have developed to make their city a human rights city!

HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES IN DEVELOPMENT

- I. ROSARIO, Argentina -The first Human Right City! -population one million
-Being facilitated by Instituto de Genero y Desarrollo
and PDHRE.

On June 30th 1997, more than 100 people including NGOs representing women's, children's, labor, disabled, and indigenous groups, other community activists, and the academic and religious communities, gathered with members of the Rosario Municipality for a special meeting at City Hall organized by the advising council of the Women's Department of the City of Rosario.

They signed a proclamation of their "commitment to build a human rights community in Rosario. Such a community must promote, among women and men that live in the city, respect for human rights, equity and peace, activities which are inscribed in the Framework of the UN Decade For Human Rights Education, 1995-2004."

Recently, following the lead of Nagpur, a meeting of 100 people proclaimed "Rosario, a Human Rights Sensitive City".

Rosario's historic proclamation highlights the opportunities available to ordinary citizens and community activists to use the powerful space for action made available by human rights norms, standards and instruments that the Government of Argentina had ratified.

A Citizens' Committee was established in which all sectors of society are represented. Committee members are attending ongoing human rights seminars...-- learning which they share with their constituencies. These include a wide range of activities to promote specific economic and social change. The committee has started to analyze and examine the interconnectedness of human rights violations and realization in the city and has initiated various neighborhood dialogues about social and economic justice and good governance within a human rights framework.

A designated sub-committee is continuously examining governmental obligations and commitments under international law, and defining various solutions to problems in Rosario of poverty, unemployment, violence against women, malnutrition, marginalization, education, police brutality, gay and lesbian issues, and the relationship with the business and industrial community. A volunteer group, comprised of human rights experts, educators, lawyers, and members of the media is available to support the committee in its work, responding to the self-defined needs and requests of the community.

The guiding principles of this process, are: accountability, participation, reciprocity, transparency and a commitment to eradicate poverty (identified as a human rights violation in the UNDP 1999 Human Development Report) by attending to human needs such as food, health, housing, education and work at livable wages. The committee is holding on-going training of trainers programs with, by and for, municipal workers, police, judges, business people, teachers and health care workers. They are devising creative forms of monitoring and advocacy such as testimonies, city hall meetings, street theater, and community discussions.

It is expected that they will lobby for amending local and national laws, and for an allocation of financial resources that ensures the on-going city development plan will meet the needs of the community.

Work with the police has been particularly rewarding. It is reflected in ongoing human rights training which have taken place in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 and have become a mainstay-training program for the police in the region of Santa Fe where Rosario is its capital. As a result of

the trainings, the police are engaged in a dialogue with local gay, lesbian and transvestite groups to stop the discrimination against them, and to collaborate in human rights education in the neighborhoods.

After Training Session with police cadets, who came from the entire region of Santa Fe, The director of the Police Academy in concluding his remarks said:

The is not other option but human rights

As the educational process progresses the committee will attend to developing a "strategic plan" that will address all actors, state and non-state, affecting human rights violations and realizations in the City. They may develop a human rights court and mechanisms of checks and balances, as well as a human rights ombudsperson office.

Shadow report. In the year 2000, a new and broader way of approaching monitoring duties was introduced. The people of Rosario were asked to collaborate in the preparation of a chapter of the Argentina Shadow Report, on Political and Civil Rights. Those involved had to learn about the Covenant, analyze General Comments, and document its relevance to the City of Rosario. They have exercised their citizenship trough the following up of the commitments Argentina made in the international arena. In this way, the process linked the local, national and international spheres. One representative of the "Human Rights City" went to Geneva to present the report.

***Human Rights Education
with primary school children in the Toba and Ludueña
neighborhood.***

A group of young people had maintained close contacts and worked in the neighborhood for about four years. The community organization is sustained by a group of 'self-organized mothers'. Groups of children from vulnerable situations, many of them with relatives in jail, originally all boys, with girls joining afterwards, meet once a week, with continuous conversations between meetings. A flexible and permeable attitude is being cultivated to adapt to the concrete demands and needs of the group. Many of the originally planned activities had to be re-thought and re-designed when it became clear that most of the boys lacked the oral and written fluency to deal with abstract materials, leading to body-based activities, dynamic corporeal games, and the creation of a base of trust and empathy. The work's impact was vastly increased by group work.

Other activities in 2000 included: Monthly meetings of the Human Rights Community Steering Committee, 12 sessions of Movie-Debate starting with *The Salt of the Earth* (a US movie, originally banned in the US, addressing ethnic, national, gender and class discrimination. The issue of Censorship was discussed while learning about the 10 people who were involved in producing the movie were jailed for five years.) And: Human Rights Seminar for Police High Officials, Human Rights education program with the Tuba Indigenous Community, Human Rights Seminar for Municipality officials.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND PLAN OF ACTION

The steering committee, promoting this initiative since 1997, with many other human rights groups and organizations in the region, is working to promote the respect for economic, social and cultural human rights. One of the major challenges is to impose the human rights framework on NAFTA. Members of the steering committee participated in the Porto Alegre World Social Forum, in February 2001. They brought back to Rosario the enthusiasm of human rights activists in Porto Alegre for a stronger participation of the local community in shaping the municipal budget. These experience lead to the preparation of a plan of action that promotes the creation of community spaces for the debate:

-Education of Human rights in a fully comprehensive holistic way.

The present challenges are to promote participation in the local decision making process, and to linking this participation with monitoring activities. Continuing human rights activities in the neighborhoods is expected to enhance this process.

Disseminating Human rights educational materials and organize learning activities was the first step. The second step, involves monitoring actions for the purpose of analyzing how The Government of Argentina fulfills its obligations. Specially, how the funds of the local budget are distributed, and how this distribution respects the need to promote gender, ethnic, racial, economic and social equality, including positive actions to achieve equality. The third step will call on organization for participation in the decision making process. During the years 2001 and 2002, all activities will consider these perspectives.

A strong promotion of social citizenship will include seminars about the indivisibility and universality of human rights. The Interconnectedness of Political Civil, Economic Social and Cultural Human Rights are some of the concerns. A gender approach will permeate the learning and training process. A special Commission will study the local budget, analyzing the direct benefit to women and men in the community and investigating if social, ethnic and gender equality is respected in the allocation of resources. Hearings with the local authorities to discuss the findings of the Commission will be held.

The Axial points for the debate are:

-**The** transformation of a reduced civil and political citizenship to an inclusive social citizenship...-- incorporating, in the debate: discrimination and domination mechanisms; the interconnectedness of all human rights to overcome the evil division of human rights in categories with different hierarchies and the importance of implementing human rights mechanisms. And more; Citizenship Vs. Charity; the access to food, housing, education, healthcare and work at livable wages...--sharing these resources, not a gift but the full realization of their human rights and learning how to monitor international instruments at the local level. Very often, international regulations are seen very far away from the local arena.

-**The** connection between international human rights treaties and the exercise of these rights at the community level is a requisite for the implementation of human rights .In this connection discussions will be held on free trade agreements and its economic impact, i.e. Human security or segmented security? --To developing a holistic concept of human security.

-**Developing** participatory municipal budgets: working to devise a process of monitoring the budget and combining it with the decision-making process; examining the percentage of the municipal budget -from 10% to 15%- that is not previously committed to enhance the fulfillment of economic and social concerns of the people of the city of Rosario.

II THIES, Senegal

- Being facilitated by TOSTAN AND PDHRE , -
population 250,000

TOSTAN, the facilitator of the human rights City was initially developed in the 1980s as a non-formal basic education program taught in local languages using the African oral traditions of songs, poems, theater, and music. The curriculum included reading, writing and math plus modules in problem solving, health and hygiene, financial and material management, leadership and group dynamics, and the conduct of feasibility studies. In 1994, additional modules were created in women's health and early childhood development. Based on a human rights framework. The outstanding success of that approach in instilling confidence and changing behavior has led TOSTAN in recent years to emphasize human rights in its program of non-formal education and to the development of a human rights city in Thies, Senegal.

Steps towards developing a sustainable human rights city in Thies Senegal started in 1998 with ten villages declaring themselves "Human Rights Villages". Years of intensive, holistic learning about human rights, in these villages, lead to abandoning the practice of female genital cutting (FGC) and to the now famous *Malicounda Declaration* - A Declaration to stop the practice of FGC.) Since 1998, more than 280 villages have declared themselves "Human Rights Villages" as part of the FGC Declaration. One of the early effects of the process had women claiming: "Land is a Human Right" and obtaining parcels of land to grow crops of their choice.

The first phase of developing the city of Thies as a human rights City was initiated in early 1999, involving eleven neighborhoods from the 56 in the city. Facilitators were selected from each of the neighborhoods to participate in a training program on human rights and community organizing. This has resulted in numerous activities being undertaken in each of the neighborhoods to assess the immediate human rights needs of its members. Highlights of such activities include:

Children between the ages of nine and eighteen, upon learning about education as a human right, realized that many of their friends did not go to school because they were not registered at birth. In response, they created small teams that went from house to house in the eleven neighborhoods, retrieved the necessary information and registered the 2,745 children they had identified. Next, a committee of these young activists went to the Mayor's office to request that more school rooms to be made available for these children.

Neighborhood members acting on the belief that work is a human right, identified the extreme poverty of widows in their community and pooled funds to buy sewing machines and millet grinders for these women , together with training and small loans to open their own small businesses. Four education and vocational centers have been opened for several hundred young women who had not attended school. Each center has a small store where cloth, food, and crafts made by these young women are sold (proceeds go to the maker of the item). As part of their learning about rights and responsibilities, each of the young women attending the "schools" has to pay 300 CFA to become a "bone fide" student.

Women and men in several of the neighborhoods learning about health as a human right joined hands to clean up the mountains of garbage and established norms for garbage disposal and informed the community accordingly. They also called on the Mayor's office to assume responsibility for garbage collection.

The facilitators call periodic meetings for neighborhood dwellers to identify various human rights violations in the community and discuss what actions to take. This has led to groups of men and women intervening in families regarding inheritance issues and violence against women.

Now in its second year, an additional 26 neighborhoods have been included in the human rights city programs, bringing it to a total of 37 neighborhoods. Activities are underway to transforming individuals, families and communities through the TOSTAN human rights approach. Fully two-thirds of the neighborhoods of Senegal's second largest city are committed to empowering and bringing about social transformation in the lives of men, women and children.

PROGRAM GOALS ARE :

- The** understanding of the philosophy and principles of Human Rights and their corresponding responsibilities.
- The** understanding of the importance of 7 major international instruments related to human rights.
- The** mastery of the contents of all these instruments including reaching agreements and taking action to stop violations of Human Rights in the neighborhood and city impacting all segments of the population.
- The** organization of functional committees to analyze problems and initiate projects to solve them, respecting the Human Rights of all members.
- The** application of the concepts in daily life, with people attempting to align their mentalities and behavior more closely to Human Rights ideals.

To reach these goals, numerous learning sessions are being held in the neighborhoods followed by support to neighborhoods as the people themselves develop and implement action plans in the context of the human rights framework.

To initiate the second year program, community activists contacted local authorities to share the program with them. Many meetings were held with several NGOs, the Police, the Governor of Thies, and the local authorities from the Rural Council and the Mayor's office. Project coordinators visited many neighborhoods to make the selection of the additional ones. After numerous meetings with the heads of neighborhoods, women's groups, sports associations and more, twenty-six neighborhoods were selected. Facilitators were selected and trained in several intensive sessions drawing from the experience in the 11 neighborhoods. Volunteers from the 11 neighborhoods are working with them..

After the training, facilitators and project coordinators met with representative groups from each of the 26 neighborhoods to explain the program and answer questions. Pilot committees were formed in each neighborhood and lists of participants were established for the human rights training. Although there are official lists of participants, it was made clear that all people are welcome to attend the class meetings. As is usual in Senegal, most of the social mobilization meetings began late, but this in no way hampered the enthusiastic response. Two communities presented initial challenges. In both Payenne and Darou Salam, before they received clarification, local power brokers viewed the Human Rights program as a threat. At the introductory meetings in both neighborhoods, the coordinator explained the non-political nature of human rights training and the concerns dissipated.

This preliminary phase ended by the facilitators and coordinators discussing issues of mutual concern and the impact of the preparatory phase. They noted the readiness of the selected communities to begin the Human Rights training.

The program was started with Facilitators in each neighborhood asking the participants to develop a collective vision for the community challenging them to identify the role of education in contributing to meet objectives to reach that vision. They discussed each participant's own responsibility, the need to respect human dignity and the need for sustainable development for the benefit of all. The international instruments for Human Rights are being studied at present.

Participants are also learning techniques for discussion and mediation. The average attendance at each neighborhood class has been about 50 residents who form the core of the group. Sometimes, as many as 100 people, show up for a meeting. There is sustained, active interest in the program in all 26 neighborhoods. Local religious leaders including priests and Imams who have publicly declared that Human Rights are consistent with their understanding of religion have attended several class meetings. In one community, the Marabout recommended to his son that he become a member of a steering committee. That son is now an active participant. While stressing the non-sectarian nature of Human Rights-based activities,

During a meeting in Ngenthe Serere, twenty-two children between the ages of 8-15 presented a short play based on a child's right to peace and security. The interest and involvement of adolescents in Human Rights training is exceptional and an exciting trend. The youngsters are actively listening, discussing and proposing ideas; they are participating along with adults in group activities and generating projects of their own.

As an example of the immediate impact of the training, a group in Thially and another in Abattoir had a longstanding -five-year- dispute. After a discussion of conflict resolution and human rights they were able to solve the problem; it no longer exists. Other example of problem solving occurred in the Dioung neighborhood. Lacking skills in the conduct of meetings, a sports association initially reported difficulty in attracting participants. Through Human Rights training, they have learned how to conduct meetings; their programs are now well attended. In that same neighborhood, a group of women concluded that attendance at their meetings would be enhanced by tea-debates. They now serve tea to their attentive audiences.

The need for developing income-generating small business projects has been a persistently expressed theme in the Human Rights in the neighborhoods. Believing that "human freedom must go hand in hand with economic freedom." (Amartya Sen). Several villages requested our assistance for their proposed income generating project -- As human right! For that purpose small loans, totaling \$US 35.00 per person, to groups of at least eight persons, have been awarded in thirty-one localities. Loans have been repaid every eight months at a 95% success rate. The fund was capitalized at approximately US \$10,700 two years ago. The return to beneficiaries is calculated at \$12,800. Funds from profits are being expended on projects including health, food, clothing and the raising of small animals.

On December 9, the human rights city participants joined to mark the fifty-second anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Over 1000 people were in attendance. One woman who had participated in the training explained to the hushed crowd how much change she has noticed in her neighborhood.

She emphasized all the new activity being generated to identify and start up revenue-generating projects despite the absence of funding.

The activities now scheduled in Thies include:

- Ongoing** training in the neighborhoods.
- The** further development of Action plans and its implementation .
- A** three month media and neighborhood campaign on human rights.
- City-wide** march for human rights in June and an evaluation of program

III. NAGPUR, India

-Being facilitated by YUVA and PDHRE, -population 2.8 million

In December 1999, the city of Nagpur, India was inaugurated as a Human Rights Sensitive City by PDHRE's local partner, YUVA, in association with other local NGOs, CBOs, municipal officials, the office of the Mayor, lawyers groups, representatives from academia, business and various other professions and stake holders. Several in-depth training and dialogues followed the inauguration, which was heralded throughout the city with posters at major road intersections, with environmentalists, educators, economists, women's organizations and local youth groups. Each session concentrated on the practical challenges of making Nagpur a human rights sensitive city. The three-day event concluded with a Rally led by some of the poorest slum communities in the city, and a city-wide one day meeting of women organizations who came together to reaffirm the commitment made and to join in defining the needs for the realization of human rights. A citizen's committee has now been formed to follow processes and methodologies similar to those being undertaken in Rosario.

Why Nagpur?

The continuous degradation and dismal performance of the human rights record especially in urban centers can be attributed to the stresses of urbanization. Urban settlements have become the primary centers for the struggles for development. On the threshold of the next millennium, one observes the creation of a new urban world wherein old cities are bursting and new ones are being created at an unprecedented speed. And old and new ones are growing to size that defy the imagination. At the dawn of the next century, half the humanity will live and work in the cities and towns, while the other half will increasingly rely on these urban centers, which can least, afford to take care of them. Cities and towns are seriously affected by grave development problems like overcrowding; environmental degradation due to excessive production and consumption leading to pollution of air, water, solid and liquid wastes; social disruption; under employment; and poor housing; infrastructure and services. Most of the violations of human rights owe their origin to these issues.

Nagpur lies in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, situated in the very heart of India; 832 kms from Mumbai by rail. Though it is an educational, administrative and cultural center of the region, it remains economically backward. With the changing economic context and thrust towards exports, its resources of rich minerals like coal, manganese, forests, orange gardens and agricultural potential have been noticed. Industrial sectors have also emerged to exploit this rich and natural resource potential. Nagpur is also becoming a major distribution center in the tertiary sector (food, domestic gas etc.). This makes Nagpur one of the faster urbanizing cities of the State of Maharashtra. The winter session of the State Legislature is also hosted Nagpur, giving the city of political importance.

The city of Nagpur is also fast growing as an important metropolitan and industrial hub of the central India. The ever-increasing problems of degradation in environment, health, but also in civic life, legal and political issues seem to have surrounded the everyday life of a common man. What used to be stray incidences of violation of/individual's human rights has become a marked feature of everyday life. Some cases do come to the limelight and get redress, while a large number of these go Un-noticed, Un-reported and Un-attended. In short, the human rights record of the city is absolutely discouraging. There must be a concerted effort on the part of the citizen to bring to the notice all such cases of violations of human rights.

In this context, the concept and implementation of a Human Rights City of Nagpur became extremely crucial and critical. A human rights city is one all of whose members, from policy makers to ordinary citizen, learn about and adhere to human rights obligations. Relating human rights norms to their immediate and practical concerns, they join to make a commitment to enter into a community- wide dialogue for the purpose of developing the guidelines of their human rights community. All organizations - public and private - join to monitor violations and implementation of human rights at all levels of the society. They develop the methodology to ensure that human rights norms and standards bind all decisions, laws, policies, resource allocation, and relationships at all levels of the decision-making and problem solving process.

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

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

Objectives

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

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

- Striving for rights of Indigenous groups on natural resources and rights of tribals for their self rule
- Resource and Support for Development.
- Urban Transformation Through Human Intervention.
- WID to WID (Women in Distress to Women in Development)
- Women in Distress to Women in development
- Empowering Youth and mobilizing them through capacity building,

ACTIONS BEING TAKEN TO DEVELOP A SENSITIVE HUMAN RIGHTS CITY

PHASE I

STEP 1

Identification of targets groups and issues in the city

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

Planning Human Rights (HR) Activists

Initial process was to list HR activist, already involved with community work through information available in print media, through known contacts, visiting university - HR departments, university libraries, advocates working on issues related to Human Rights etc. This led to Individual and group meetings to understand their levels of interest. What emerged is a group of committed people who joined to work on the concept building process. The process then moved in the form of a study groups with expert inputs coming in, leading to the formation of a core group.

Identification of stakeholders

The next critical step was identification of stakeholders and sharpening the approach on involvement of various stakeholders. Again the core group took the initiative to list down the names of all stakeholders as follows: NGO community, CBOs, HR activists, Women in development, Environmentalists, Lawyers, Doctors, Journalists, Academicians, Institutions, Corporations, Media & Press, Handicapped Children, Youth, Vendors, Slum dwellers, Unorganized sector, Organized sector, Trade unions, Bureaucrats, U.L.S Bodies, Counselors, Corporate sector, financial institute, Elected representatives, the government of Nagpur, a wide range of NGOs community and religious leaders, educators and media workers, all persons in positions of political, cultural, economic and religious leadership, women in development, as well as activists working on housing, food, health, education, development and peace issues, involving women, children and men. Youth group activists with the ability to mobilize young people throughout the country; including students as well as unemployed young people and those working in the self-employed and agricultural sector. People involved in communication; the media and traditional communicators (grits and hunter societies, chasers). Educators in the formal and nonformal sectors. Union organizers, Members of the judiciary, Health workers, especially those involved in areas of women and children's health care.

Criteria for Selection

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

- Their existing involvement in all the domains of work for social change.
- Their concerns due to their being directly affected
- Their demonstrated commitment.

- Their ability to be representative of various social and economic sectors of society (including considerations of ethnicity, age and gender) and the ability to carry this representation across the regions.
- Their ability to represent various political positions.

Half-day Dialogue

Against this background, a half-day dialogue was organized in Jun '99 to facilitate collaboration between Government organization, NGOs, CBOs, professionals, HR activists and all the stakeholders at city level and accommodate a more holistic approach. One of the rationales of this dialogue was to educate the people on the human rights and then to campaign for the safeguard of human rights. The dialogue was attended by participants representing the NGOs, CBOs, lawyers, environmental groups, people from electronic and print media, retired professionals from government and public sector undertakings, Labor unions and academic institutions.

Objectives of the dialogue

- Raise the level of awareness of human rights issues amongst groups that were not Specifically engaged in tackling problems that had resulted from rapid urbanization.
- Engage participants in a sharing within the context of human rights issues such that there was heightened awareness of the particular challenges faced and strategies adopted in dealing with the different issues and constituencies.
- Identify key issues and strategies for collaborative action on human rights issues using more holistic approach to the problems faced.
- Identify concrete follow up action plan that could be pursued at both the city and regional level such that intra-sectoral dialogue became a key way in which human rights actors addressed human rights challenges in the future; and,
- Develop a system of communications that could keep inter-sectoral dialogues open and continuous both at the local, national and regional level.

This dialogue proved to be very valuable and gave inputs to strengthen and accommodate a more holistic approach to the Human Rights Community Process.

Some of the responses from the participants during the dialogue were:

- Make efforts to bring about changes for the disabled people's easy access in all public places, issue of dignity
- Ensure human rights to basic civic amenities
- Prepared to work with small organizations and concerned government offices on the human rights to information, printing of the small booklets on basic human rights, campaign on the environmental issues, awareness on rights against the harassment at the hands of the police;
- contract labor issues in the Factories Act, imparting and disseminating information on various Acts meant for the labor, class and unorganized Labor force; lawyer's association and child rights and question of women;
- Forum of educational institutions on human rights and street theater etc.
- Mass mobilization/ Women's organization
- Traffic rules, pollution etc. and human rights
- University intervention/ NSS/ Public awareness/incentives at the local level for working on the HR issues e.g. at the worker's colony.

- Women's issues, H R rights and cadre development.
- Formal and informal training of various groups.
- Initiating H R Study circle.

At the end of the dialogue, a working group was formed, to take the process forward. Through this dialogue also emerged the idea of celebrating Human Rights Day in December 1999 on a large scale. It was also suggested that Ms. Shulamith Koenig of PDHRE would be visiting India during that period and that she could be attending the Programme.

PHASE II.

Activities of the Working Group

Working group had regular meetings once in a week or fortnight to plan for the future plan of action. These meetings with lot of ardor culminated into the plan for preparation of appeal letters and they took the responsibility of distribution of these to nearly 5000 people. Appeal letter gave the details of the 'Sustainable Human Rights Community' and the possibilities of participation and involvement' in this process. Regular meetings resulted in mass awareness campaign, sending appeal letters, preparing reading material and reaching out to people through press and media.

After the distribution of appeal letters, immediate preparation of basic human rights materials together with local activists and CBOs (community based organizations) was initiated. The material was developed in Hindi and Marathi (local languages). These materials include:

- Guide to the creation of Sustainable Human Rights Communities including details of the definition of human rights.
- Compilation of basic human rights with an emphasis on social, economic, political and civic rights.
- Subject-wise compilation like human rights & women's rights, human rights & housing, human rights & food security, human rights & youth, environment & food security were developed.

STEP 3

Identification of second level target group

By August 1999, working group was in the process of identification of second level target members. These included: Medical professionals; Youth in medical institutes; Colleges;; Student groups ; Student organizations ; Schools ; Educational offices ; Unorganized sector Local councilors ; Peoples Representative

PLANNING FOR THE HR CITY PROGRAMME CELEBRATION

Extensive planning was initiated along several lines: Content-Preparation of the environment (Wall papers, Posters, Banners, Electronic media , Slogans) Resources (Mobilization of human resources Material preparation Sponsorship) Human Rights Day Celebration Seminar with stakeholders : 'Developing Human Rights Sensitive City-Nagpur'

Keeping these objectives in mind several seminars were organized during HUMAN RIGHTS day celebration.

DAY 1 -

The Legal Profession. An opportunity was provided for 35 legal professionals to interact and collaborate with human rights activists in order to develop a further understanding of international human rights laws and forums. This also provided a platform for the professors and law students to discuss the pros and cons of the "system of governance and law", awareness in local public to register appeals or cases in the court or police station etc. The discussion included: the holistic framework of HUMAN RIGHTS, UN Mechanisms and the UN System. The lawyers pointed out that there is an urgent need to inculcate and sensitize the Judiciary and the police and lawyers through the learning and enforcement of Human Rights. They should be motivated to absorb the true meaning of Human Rights.

Environmentalists interacted with human rights activist, It was pointed out that there is a normal conflicts as to who and what should be given the preference during development planning or implementation stage: Is it the environment or the people? It was concluded that these conflicts would be solved or tackled by adopting the human rights framework.

Media. The press and media play a vital role in the dissemination of information about human rights. Media people need to have adequate knowledge of human rights issues, laws and forums. Informal I (Future discussions were planned.)

DAY 2 **Human rights conventions**

The Convention was organized specifically for the urban poor: to awake awareness, to increase Their involvement and participation as well as future steps towards the spread of this campaign in the city of Nagpur. About 700 slum dwellers involved in the housing rights, food security rights, child right and women right, unorganized daily laborers and Women organizers put forth their issues. The people responded with a few bold points regarding their problems, desired for their future and action plans. They publicly took the responsibilities to spread the knowledge of human Rights within the city.

The people enthusiastically presented their views about the human rights through Plays and Songs in local language, and took a Pledge " We will accept nothing less than Human Rights,/ We will know them and claim them/For all men, women, youth and children/ From those who speak Human Rights / But deny them to their own people".

Youth Forum

Eighty students from Medical, Engineering, Social work and law colleges participated in this Forum. The young people presented themselves as "responsible citizens of tomorrow", Their desired roles were discussed and clarified through open group discussions. They agreed to integrate Human Rights in their actions and sensitize other youth groups..

DAY 3 Stakeholders

Group discussions and presentations were arranged in order to portray their thoughts on the said subject. The workshop focused on suggesting steps to create mechanism for taking the process

forward. Participants responded in a positive manner by accepting the responsibility of information dissemination and the preparation of reading. Materials.

People's representative

In addition to the specific efforts of rule making and standard setting, as well as intergovernmental co-operation with regard to the various agenda items of human security, there is a critical need for a long term pro active development strategy, based on a multi-generational process of human rights learning. We had provided an opportunity for elected representatives of people to interact and create links with Human Rights activist in order to achieve a common level of understanding.

Success and Impact

Eight groups have been formed; a Plan of Action based on their inputs has been prepared. A wide response was received via Telephone and Letters from the local people who are affected by the violation of human rights. The State Government has committed itself to set up a State Human Rights Commission. Some groups have supported the mission of the project enthusiastically and have mobilized successfully. Several City Counselors supported the campaigners. Awareness was created with the support of local cable TV Channel.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLANS

The following Implementing Committees were established:

Housing rights committee, Childs right Committee., Women rights committee, Youth rights Committee, SC/ ST rights committee, Environmental rights committee., Food security committee, Unorganized Labor rights committee, Mobilization of other socio-economic and political actors and YUVA, Nagpur.

In addition to the above planned processes, the Human Rights City Secretariat has planned the following actions:

- Dissemination of Materials in local language
- Training of trainers
- Training for educators
- Monitors and documenters.
- Human Rights training for the 8 committees.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAYS

To raise public awareness and call attention to specific human rights issues in the city of Nagpur various celebrations were held through out the city. These were:

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Food Security Day: 17 Sept. 2000 | * Housing Rights Day: 2nd Oct. 2000 |
| * Child Rights Day: 14 Sept. 2000 | * Youth Rights Day: 12th Jan. 2001 |
| * Women's Rights Day: 8th March 2001. | * Social Justice Day: 14th April 2001. |
| * Unorganized Workers Day: 1st May, 2001. | * Environmental rights Day: 6th June. 2001 |

Future plans: Support and Solidarity in the City

Open Forums amongst the citizens

Preparation of a human rights charter for the city of Nagpur

Developing a Human Rights Citizen Forum

Establishing of a Human Rights Court in the city

Establishing a Human Rights Commission for the city of Nagpur.

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

For those who get lost in the wild, let us show them where home is
For those who are in the dark, let us enlighten them to Human Being ness!
Let us be the rays of light that make this big boat a shining beacon
And when anyone falls overboard, let's pull him or her back on board.

Let Consensus-Building be the praise song of our Black Land
Let Mutual Respect and Mutual-Aid be the praise song of our great Mali
And let Knowing-Self and Knowing-Work be our Children's instruction guideboard

The Beginning

On April 200, several thousand citizens of Kati, Mali assembled listened to the Hymn of the Human Rights City of Kati, they were marking a major point in a process that had started three years earlier. Around the idea of "Mali a Human Rights nation", pledging to human rights 'literacy' and action for women and men to claim their human rights. This process of discussion, reflection, training, and coordination involve PDHRE-International and PDHRE MALI and built on strong foundations of Mali's civil society.

The background

By all indicators, Mali ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world and faces enormous challenges. What the statistics do not provide is a systemic analysis of the causes for human rights stresses. They do not show either the clearly expressed will on the part of government and people at all levels of society for a participatory democracy that aspires to satisfy the five basic human needs: food, shelter, education, health and work at livable wages —all identified as human rights!

In 1998, the Republic of Mali was at a critical and very promising point in its history. Under the leadership of President Alpha Konaré, who came to power after Malian civil society threw off a long and oppressive military dictatorship, the government had established programs intended to further strengthen and enhance the role of civil society in participative democracy. Decentralization was moving into gear. Mali's civil society had become a major actor, on quite a unique scale, both in the restoration of democracy in 1992 after twenty years of military rule and in a process of reconciliation and peace throughout the country to end a protracted and draining war in the Northern territories. Many commentators have noted the strength of Mali's 'social capital' and associative life.

Since independence in 1956, Mali has ratified all the major human rights instruments and Conventions. This lays a foundation for implementation of a human rights framework to guide policies and regulate practices. Both government and civil society claimed a keen interest in using the Human Rights framework as a means of guiding human rights of all people as members of society. They accepted Human rights education (HRE), as an imperative to build Mali as a human rights nation.

A series of six open meetings of various constituencies were held over a period of two years and involved various constituencies. The purpose of the meetings was to:

- Allow people to broadly define human rights according to their own perception and in relation to their daily lives;
- Learn where they felt there was a need for human rights education;
- Introduce the major international human rights instruments and conventions; and
- Discuss effective ways to use a human rights framework to promote social change.

Mali is a society where oral tradition is still a live source of inspiration; narratives are accepted as a legitimate source of knowledge. Sessions with women, young people and those whose identity was still rooted in the life of the community --as opposed to government officials, educational and other professionals--relied on a discourse of personal narrative. The legitimate use of these narratives permitted all participants, regardless of their level of education and social status to exercise their authority. This was particularly meaningful when it came to making human rights relevant to daily life and identifying areas urgently in need of Human Rights protection.

"From Kuru Kan Fukan to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Mali a Human Rights Nation "

The National program to draw from the culture and historic memory of Mali was called; *"From Kuru Kan Fukan to Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Mali a Human Rights Nation"* The name Kuru Kan Fukan had come to symbolize for many people in Mali the hope of political transformation. This political Charter of 1236 is said to have defined the goals of the new political culture that speaks of Work, Justice and Freedom. In the current context, the similarities between the medieval charter and the UDHR have served as a catalyst for the activities of the human rights movement.

FROM NATIONAL PLAN TO HUMAN RIGHTS CITY

Outside events in the larger political situation, amplified the fundamental difficulty of achieving a national ambitious plan. When the Committee presented their report in February 2000 they had accomplished the following:

- Translation of the UDHR into the eleven national languages
- Revision of the action plan for Education in Human Rights and the Culture of Peace
- Realization of a study on Malian perception of human rights and the culture of peace
- Revision of the Military Code of Conduct including references to human rights
- Members of the Steering Committee visited the Human rights City of Thies to participate in a Training Seminar (also attended by members of a Sudan organization for Human Rights education involved in launching 'human rights villages' in Sudan.)
- Contacts were made with HRE activists in Burkina Faso and Niger
- Several Ministries has made written requests for Human Rights Education for their staff

In addition it became clear that the concept of energizing an entire community around the realization of human rights and human rights education was unquestionably alive.

By December of 2000, following a national HRE training session held in Bamako, the first steps were taken to launch a Human Rights City of Kati, at the request of Kati inhabitants and authorities . It was decided to organize in short order a dialogue on the concepts of Human rights, Human rights Education and the implications of being a city founded on Human rights. This dialogue, which mobilized more than 2000 persons belonging to all walks of life and representation of neighborhood associations, village chiefs, representatives of local NGO's, women, youths, old persons, disabled persons etc. was held in February 2001.

WHY KATI?

The Kati area presented both problems and assets that make it a logical candidate for such an initiative. Kati is a rapidly growing urban area, which grew from market town to military base with all the problems attendant to that particular development. The Kati zone presents several emergency situations: local grassroots activists feel they will not be resolved unless solutions are developed along the axes of the interconnectedness and indivisibility of human rights.

Some of the concerns voiced were:

- A police station where the rape of young girls was routinely dealt with ‘friendly’
Compromises even when the victim or her family started out by filing suit against the Aggressors
- An unresponsive municipality regarding the inhabitants’ needs for sanitation, road maintenance or security (in emergencies, Kati has to rely on the Bamako rescue squad)
- A high percentage of disabled people lacking any kind of infrastructure to allow them to live active, mobile and fulfilled lives
- Abuses on the part of state agencies as well as private service providers (bureaucracies, bus services, merchants) combined with consumers’ inability to know their rights

Learning about the mission and goals of a human rights city the people of Kati realized that what will facilitate the institutionalization of Human Rights Education and the launching of a Kati as a Human Rights City are the following facts:

- Kati has a relatively young population: 67.5% of 44,000 inhabitants were less than 25 years old and 48% less than 15
- A population eager for education
- Numerous educational structures: community, public, private and religious). These include well-established adult education programs around a ‘Freirian’ institute of popular education
- Numerous health structures, birth centers, hospital, pharmacies as well as a respected ‘Traditional -therapeutic’ specialists
- Ethnic diversity that makes it a mirror of Mali as a whole
- A variety of religious communities, large Catholic and Muslim communities
- A high concentration of educators
- A large number of NGOS
- An enterprising spirit
- A large number of many big and small businesses
- An established local radio station
- “Animators” among neighborhood leadership, police, teachers, school parents, cab drivers, health personnel and youth (with a core of about 100 high-school students) etc.

The Human Rights City project can expect to draw upon the energies of many-pronged, exceptionally successful and proactive network of ‘Freireian’ educational programs:

- A well-established Literacy Program for Women
- The Kanaga Program of Education for Empowerment: a training program for youth, adults, educators, facilitators and activists
- University Without Walls, a program for educators and activists in non-formal learning and literacy programs to reflect on and improve their efforts in educational reform

- Movement Building, dialogues with "co-visionaries" for the purpose of building a reform movement in education throughout West Africa.
- Human Rights Education Village Programs in the area of Kati
- Many programs aimed at awareness raising for women
- Curriculum which is organized around the main themes of: *cultural identity, activism, justice and competency* work at home.
- Students who became 'Community-AIDS educators'

Impact on the Community

The founders of the human rights city in Kati believe that the schools and the adult literacy programs have an immediate and a long-lasting impact on the community and will become a mainstay in the City for forwarding human rights education at all levels of the community. All facilitators will come from the community. So will the trainers and resource people', who are available to provide input into problem-solving issues around health concerns, agriculture, financing, etc.. These people, to create greater equity in the neighborhoods or villages, are devising simple innovations. As an example, one teacher recalls " People are astonished to have children 7 or 8 years old come to them with a note pad and pencil to record information. School children are rarely seen writing outside the classroom and never in Bambara. The fact that children are asking questions [to a shopkeeper] like, 'Why do you get cloth from the Ivory Coast?' or 'Why does sugar cost 10 francs more this month?-- the implications on their thinking and acting are enormous."

Similar changes can be seen in the seven villages surrounding Kati where community development programs based on a human rights framework are being carried out. The experience is that people in the villages understand very quickly the relevance or the irrelevance of a program to their lives and concerns.

The chief facilitator of the village program –several are part of the Kati municipality, insists that the participant group in any village consist of an equal number of men and women and that all participants must commit to staying with the program for its entirety. Since the project began in 1999, villagers took action education for boys and girls, local sanitation and clean water, women's health and community health, and improvement of women's work conditions in the home and village.

Here are several quotes that illustrate the impact of human rights education at the grassroots: to show that they understand the centrality of human rights to other issues of immediate concern and relevance:

"I liked the sessions laying out human rights. These are central for me. All the other sessions are developed around the idea of human rights. If you know the rights, hygiene and health are included, are wrapped up in there". (A man from Koneguebougou, Mali)

"What we learned about human rights allowed us to reduce misunderstandings among ourselves. Before, we married women and took them as slaves. Now we understand we each have roles in the family. Women understand they are equal, especially in communication". (Older man, Koneguebougou, Mali)

"Now there are fewer problems in the homes. Now people know on what foot to

dance". (A woman, Ngaran, Mali)

"Since the program, my husband [a non-participant] is no longer violent with me. I learned not to respond to provocation from him". (A woman Ngaran)

A story from one of the villages:

One woman and her husband were both participants. When he began hitting her at home, she turned to him and said: "so, you are going to learn and say one thing in the sessions and then do the opposite at home?" Apparently he has not lifted a hand against her since.

It is clear that the idea of a Human Rights City in Kati is planted in a well-prepared ground. Through these existing groups the initiators of the Human Rights City project hoped to create a dynamic process in Kati, most importantly, creating human rights literacy as a tool towards active human rights advocacy and the integration of human rights framework in all areas of life.

A DAY OF REFLECTION FOR THE 'STRATEGIC ACTORS

By December 2000, the main actors of the program had been identified. Requests by these strategic actors themselves led to the organization of a Day of Reflection, held in February 2001. This 'Day of Reflection of Kati's brought together 211 persons, who themselves were delegated by many groups, organization and neighborhoods.

The objectives were:

- Focus on the systemic concept of Human Rights and thoroughly learn the contents of Human Rights Instruments
- Share PDHRE-Mali vision of Human Rights
- Holding four small-group workshops on needs and assets for the implementation of: human rights education and the basic principles of Human Rights monitoring
- For the people of Kati to understand the foundation of a 'Consensual City of Human rights'
- Assess the needs of the community and the potential contribution of training in Human Rights Education
- Share the initial results of work on vision, shortcomings and perspectives
- Adopt the Hymn of the Kati City of Human Rights

The main effect of the session was to confirm the initial actors' resolve and bring expressions of interest by groups and individuals.

In May 2001, a three-day training seminar organized jointly by the Kati Steering and Orientation Committee and PDHRE International trained 37 educators and activists on the Methodology of Human rights Education and facilitated the initial development of a plan of action.. Following this seminar a committee was elected to develop a short and long term plan of action.

V. DINAJPUR , BANGLADESH - POPULATION ONE MILLION
- BEING DEVELOPED BY NAGORIK UDDYOG - CITIZEN'S
INITIATIVE AND PDHRE

In December 2000, the first steps were taken towards developing a Human Rights Sensitive City in Bangladesh. The commitment grew out of three-day intensive workshop on transformative human rights education at the community level. Fifty participants NGO activists and community leaders- had come together to learn the PDHRE participatory, pedagogical-holistic method...--learning, reflecting and acting, and engaged also in spirited discussions about patriarchy and its effect as a human rights violation.

Like Mali, Bangladesh offers assets in terms of a prior sensitization to human rights. Bangladesh has ratified all the human rights treaties with very few reservations. The shadow report to CEDAW coordinated by three women's organizations is a remarkable example of the range this exercise of shadow -reporting can achieve. The Constitution includes major sections taken from human rights international law. One effect of a long tradition of radical organizing before and after independence has resulted in a great thirst for human rights education, an eagerness to take the concept to its outer limits, to stretch the envelope further.

In the first three months the organizers of the emerging Human Rights City conducted, through participatory research, a survey of the community's perceived needs in regard to social and economic human rights. 1000 people, from all sectors of society were surveyed. These were: City officials, Physicians, Political leaders, Business people, Industrialists, Journalists, Rickshaw Pullers, Cleaners, Slum dwellers, contractors, welding workers, teachers, transport owners, Government Employee, Lawyers, Transport owners, housewives, students, Indigenous people and Farmers.

We bring below the many details of the survey as we find it very instructive to all those who wish to map the human rights violations and realization in their city before developing educational and action plans.

THE OPINION POLLS

RANKING OF MOST IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN THE CITY

I PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

1. 92% The failure of the city corporation to take steps for mosquito control

2. 84% Dirty and filthy situation (drain, road, town, market- garbage disposal
3. 76% Poor Drainage and sewerage conditions
4. 68.% Not enough dustbins per need
5. 64% Heaps of Garbage everywhere
6. 53% Lack of modern sanitary system
7. 53% Untimely daytime cleaning operation
8. 52% Lack and poor maintenance of public records (birth, death, marriage ,registration)

II. PLANNED URBANIZATION

1. 61% Traffic jams due to lack of terminals, parking area etc.
2. 58.% Illegal occupation of public place and shops on the road
3. 57% Unplanned house and market construction
4. 56% No specific place for garbage disposal
5. 55% Flooding of roads and by-lanes in absence of planned drainage system

III. DEMOCRATIZATION: PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

1. 58% Non-implementation of the rules against corruption
2. 57% Absence of public auditing system open information on expenditures
3. 54% Absence of accountability and transparency of elected Chairman and Commissioners of the Municipality
4. 52% No participation by the people in budgeting, fund allocations, and prioritizing areas
5. 51% Absence of Public Watch and Pressure group to oversee crimes and irregularities by Elected Representatives

VI. PUBLIC SECURITY

1. 80% City Commissioners don't pay attention to control rates charges by doctors and private practice by public doctors
2. 62% No initiative to stop hoodlums and unsocial elements
3. 58% There is no facilities for standardization and pricing of commodities
4. 58% Commissioners play no role in fixing up lawyers' fees
5. 53% No effective steps to prevent drugs

V. CITIZENS SECURITY

1. 86% Failure to give security to citizens
2. 84% Failure to ensure quality of health service and prevent high charges by doctors
3. 83% Lack of control of food adulteration and contamination
4. 83% Failure to control drug sales, unsocial activities and prostitution
5. 70% Inability to take strong measures against terrorism
6. 76% Traffic Control failures
7. 64% Failure to help people get rid of pigs and dogs that create health problems
8. 62% Women oppression and dowry are on the rise
9. 58% Failure to increase proportionately ambulance and fire brigades
10. 57% Lack of street lights
11. 52% Failure to form people committee to resist police torture
12. 51% Failure to support people suffering the burden of false electric bills and other services

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE WEAKNESS OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND NEGLECT OF CITIZENS

1. 81% Irregular/ineffective street lighting
2. 81% Negligence to clean up drainage systems and garbage disposal
3. 80% No effort to provide parking spaces, trucks terminals and fix the rates of rickshaw fares
4. 78% No initiative to control traffic congestion terminals
5. 69% Rickshaw traffic must be licensed to fight congestion

6. 64% Not enough ambulances
7. 62% No laws against rickshaws having no license and provision to punish them
8. 61% Increase of municipal tax arbitrary
9. 60% Selling of drugs everywhere
10. 60% Digging of roads for electricity and phone lines causes public inconvenience
11. 58% No initiative to set up mobile courts to punish dishonest businessmen
12. 57% No effort to control terrorism
13. 56% No action against corruption of municipality staff
14. 56% No initiative to prevent exorbitant electricity and telephone bills
15. 52% Development work inconsistent with public needs and without public consultation
16. 52% No action to stop reckless driving by trucks, Curt etc.
17. 51% No initiative to prevent unauthorized occupants (influential) and evacuate them from public places such as playground, footpath and government land

VII. DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SPACE

1. 77% Degenerative Environment in market places affecting public health
2. 74% Lack of repair, maintenance and construction of roads, culverts, drains, dustbins, etc.
3. 60.0% Narrow road space causing jams and inconvenience
4. 57% Dearth of public toilets
5. 52% Paving of recreational opportunities besides natural places (canals, park construction)
6. 51% Lack of Children' s Park and amusement opportunities

VIII. SOCIAL SERVICES

1. 62% Lack of adequate records of birth register, death certificate and marriage register
2. 61% Establish an alternative dispute resolution through Municipal Council instead of resorting to Police Station
3. 55% Special thrust and program for slum dwellers during disasters
4. 51% Establishment of Charitable Medical Services for the Poor

Now that the survey was made a steering committee will be elected from amongst the people and the short and long term pans will be developed to meet the human rights needs of the city.

VII. GRAZ AUSTRIA

-Being developed by ETC - European Training Center and PDHR
,population one million

"GRAZ TO BECOME A COMMUNITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS CITY" -
news report

"In a session held on February 8, 2001, the Municipal, Council of the City of Graz voted to join the network of Human Rights Cities started y the International NGO, PDHRE People's Decade for Human Rights Education. Plans are to complete the transition by the year 2003,. It was decided that the City Parliament will be guided in all its deliberations by the framework of human rights, with the goal of observing all human rights norms in the daily life of the city. Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner had made a plea earlier for the Styrian capital to take this turn. This seems especially relevant in view of the place of Graz as an inter religious crossroad, a gate for migrations to Southeastern Europe. Burgermeister Alfred Stingl was particularly involved in the final decision. Coordination of activities and normative work will be performed by the "European Training Center for Human Rights and Democracy, ETC", which recently established its Main office in the Styrian capital"

On the 18th of June at a public celebration, The people of Graz will declare their city:
THE FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS CITY IN EUROPE .

VII. DEVELOPING A HUMAN RIGHTS CITY AMONG THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF ABRA

-To be implemented by PDHRE-Asia Pacific and PDHRE

The province of Abra is located in the northern part of Luzon, the biggest island in the Philippines. Abra is about 700 kilometers north of Manila, in a mountainous terrain in the Cordillera mountain ranges. Bangued is the capital of Abra and is 8 hours away by bus or car from Manila. The indigenous peoples of Abra are called Tingguian. Although modern-day Abra is now peopled by large population of lowlanders whose ancestors settled, mingled and intermarried with the Tingguian, there are still municipalities in Abra populated largely by Tingguian.

The Tingguian are an indispensable part of the history of the province and of the Cordilleras as a whole. As a fact of life of the area, it is often said that there can be no authentic account of the province that would overlook or omit their existence. This fact is well supported, this cultural community comprising more than a third of the population of Abra and well dispersed into the general populace urban and rural alike. Moreover, about two thirds of the province especially in the rural areas are occupied more densely by the Tingguian. The intervention of external forces that contributed to the accelerated integration of the Tingguian into the majority population whose ancestors had migrated into Abra is both political and religious in nature. The settling of various Christian denominations in the area by the start of the century introduced a two-pronged approach that advanced the respective philosophies into the Tingguian culture—through formal education and faith conversion.

A quarter of a century ago saw a significant effort by some concerned Tingguian aimed at cultural revival. This movement was furthered by the support of newer-generation Tingguian professionals and the cooperation of religious bodies and government agencies. This ongoing revival movement has produced the “modern day Tingguian” that most occasionally is proud and more secure of his or her cultural heritage and identity.

There is within the Tingguian culture a traditional justice system of justice that has survived cultural intervention and integration. Although it may arguably be considered that the Tingguian community justice system as well as their implementation of a common law structure may apparently differ from how similar and corollary structures in the formal government may exist, a broad range of similar principles are, however, present. Such

modern-day precepts as fairness and equity, just compensation, due process, torts and damages, family and marriage relations and even diplomatic compensation and immunity are present in the common law system and implementation of the Tingguian.

Human rights is not a novel notion to the Tingguian. Their tradition is a study of traditional human rights values system, even if some its nomenclature sounds strange to non Tingguian ears. The ongoing revival that has produced the “modern-day” Tingguian will be harnessed to develop a human rights city where their own justice system will provide the anchor for human rights values that will leave a permanent imprint their consciousness and sensibilities, handing them down from generation to generation

It is envisaged that the human rights city among the Tingguian will be fully established within a year’s time.

THE WORK GOES ON

The historic development of human rights cities responds to a need of the time 50 years of developing human rights instruments must be put to work for economic and social transformation. It seems that independent initiatives move in similar directions-- whether it is in Sri Lanka ‘s 25 year old Sarvodaya Shramadana movement; Porto Alegre’s now 12 year old practice of participatory budgeting; Gujarat now 20 year old Swaddiya movement for self-empowerment by communities that are on nobody’s map...--that the rest of the world wouldn’t miss if they disappeared; and from Barcelona: “The European Charter of Human Rights in the City”, which 64 signatory cities proclaimed their intent to create cities whose administrators and elected officials act as “shields of human rights, working in collaboration with NGOs for their defense and promotion”, their desire to “promote a culture of human rights and human responsibility”, their resolve to be “more effective guarantors of the rights proclaimed in the UDHR.”

We find a surging awareness about Human Rights’ universality, interconnectedness and indivisibility. It is essential that human Rights protecting and promoting equality, eliminates discrimination and promoted human dignity of all women men youth and children be known by all as the only guarantee of human futures. Human Rights cities move from “trickle down” human rights to “trickle up” human rights...--by, for and with the people. We believe that the development of human rights villages and cities are an imperative for sustainable human, economic and social development...--it guarantees participatory democracy and is a revolutionary expansion in the definitions of citizenship...--citizens themselves must, and will, be involved in this process. I.e. Human Rights Cities.

A pledge:

we are the human rights generation

*we will accept nothing less than human rights
we will know them and claim them
for all women, men youth a children
from those who speak human rights
but deny them to their own people*

Shulamith Koenig