

Documentary: Human rights education and the AHRC's Folk School

Please see the video presentation produced by the Asian Human Rights Commission: AHRCVID-007-2013, 18 July 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaGNbKT4VV4&feature=youtu.be>

The AHRC's Folk School for human rights defenders in Asia was initiated 14 years ago. Since then regular sessions have been held, providing opportunities for human rights defenders from various Asian countries to come together and discuss the problems they face in their respective countries, and to develop better methodologies for providing their services to their communities.

The AHRC's Folk School was developed around the ideas of the folk school movement in Denmark. The folk school is a unique Danish idea that was initiated by one of the foremost Danish thinkers and community organisers, N.F.S Grundvig.

The starting point of education is the situation of the learner; the concrete current problems faced by those undergoing education, either directly, or as advocates working with persons directly affected. In the shared analysis of the causes and consequences of these concrete problems, the transfer of information about or references to the relevant universal and regional human rights documents, mechanisms and bodies will be understood and seen to be relevant and practically applicable.

The process of human rights education, as of all human rights work in general, must be a participatory and dialogical process. This is commensurate with the goal of "achieving human rights", which is, ultimately, to achieve a human society where each person, child, woman, man will have all possible access to the channels of communication and participation in the society/ community in which he/she lives, and will enjoy the material and spiritual sustenance needed to participate in the matters that directly or indirectly affect his/her life in society, without fear of discrimination or violence.

An essential component of human rights education is the perspective of action. The knowledge gained through human rights education must result in perceiving the relevance of human rights concepts and principles in the struggle for a humane and just society, as well as in the inspiration to undertake some form of action to promote and enhance these rights. This involves thinking out solutions to the problems that initiated the learning process, and the development of strategies and tactics to bring about change. It also entails acquiring information about other groups or individuals already engaged in action regarding the issue under discussion, leading to exchange and collaboration.

In addition, training to acquire specific skills for different kinds of action, such as documentation of human rights abuses, advocacy campaigns on specific issues, lobby work, writing and spreading urgent appeals, direct intervention, peace and reconciliation work, should be separately organised and/or facilitated.

In this short video documentary the AHRC presents the development of its Folk School and its achievements.

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