

PART 12: A GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES PROGRAM TOWARDS SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Knowing, claiming and securing our right to be human

.Instilling in communities a sense of ownership of human rights
as a way of life

Enhancing democracy, peace, security and social justice

Strengthening the infrastructure

for human, social and economic development

Human Right Cities – a practical way to learn and chart the future of humanity

In order to create an infrastructure for the learning/acting process in the communities, PDHRE is engaged in training trainers and facilitating seminars, workshops and dialogue at the grassroots level in the context of people's evident desire for social justice and democracy. PDHRE is guided by the core belief that through human rights learning, everyone can be a mentor and a monitor and take control over their lives. To achieve its vision and mission in a practical way, PDHRE has been facilitating the development of Human Rights Cities around the world.

What are human rights cities? I imagine living in a society where all citizens have made a pledge to build a community based on equality and nondiscrimination; --where all women and men are actively participating in the decisions that affect their daily lives guided by the human rights framework; where people have consciously internalized the holistic vision of human rights to overcome fear and impoverishment, a society that provides human security, access to food, housing, education, healthcare and work at livable wages, sharing these resources with all citizens-- not as a gift, but as a realization of human rights. A Human Rights city is a practical viable model that demonstrates that living in such a society is possible!

PDHRE, People's Movement for Human Rights Learning, with the initial support of The United Nations Foundation and UNDP facilitating the development of human rights cities - cities as microcosms of the world.

In these Human Rights Cities, the entire social and political system, including the local authorities, public officials, local organizations and civil society groups join to plan and implement a learning and dialogue process in the city inhabitant to conduct their services, devise practical solutions and plan the future of the city future guided by the human rights framework.

Problem-solving and decision-making take place with the full participation of the community, women and men alike, as they evaluate the laws, policies, resources and relationships in the city and become the custodians of their future.

Ten human rights cities are in development. More will be developed in the coming years as communities decide to join this process. These cities will make available to humanity a rich experience of how to use universal values of justice and dignity in the implementation of economic, social and human development. The human rights cities will offer the narrative and practical solutions in a world where three billion people earn less than two dollars a day, where two billion people live in cities, where three billion people are under the age of 25 in dire need of a support system that offers them hope. Regional Learning Institutions for human rights learning are working to bring together young community leaders who will be developing a new vocation: they will be human rights educators at the community level. Essentially, the human rights framework provides limitless encouragement both to leaders and to citizens wherever they are and whatever problems they struggle to overcome to maintain their dignity and claim their human rights. As the human rights cities movement grows the cities will become a source of tremendous energy that will radiate hope and practical answers for social and economic transformation and for societal development where the human being is at the center of society.

PDHRE, the executing agency, works to develop and implement the Human Rights Cities Programme by, for, and with the inhabitants of the city and the local authorities to:

- **Instill a sense of ownership of human rights as a way of life, leading to action for the realization of all human rights in the city, to benefit all its inhabitants: women, men, youth and children**
- **Enhance actions that promote democracy as a delivery system of human rights in order to achieve sustainable development, peace, economic, human security, and social justice.**
- **Capacity building to strengthen activities that ensure community development and accountability guided by the comprehensive human rights framework. Individuals and groups taking part in the action.**
- **Become a beacon of light for communities all around the world to witness practical ways the human rights framework can make every citizen a creative partner of sustainable change**

The city, its institutions, and its residents, as a complex social economic and political entity, become a model for citizen's participation in their development. This process leads to the mapping and analysis of causes and symptoms of violations such poverty and the designing of ways to achieve well being in their city.

Appropriate conflict resolution is an inevitable consequence of the learning process as women and men work to secure the sustainability of their community as a viable, creative, caring society.

MOVING POWER TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Two billion people live in cities today. Within 15 to 20 years, that number is predicted to reach four billion. Cities are microcosms of states and carry all the burdens, struggles, concerns and hopes for well-being of their inhabitants that states do. They carry the search for a life free from fear and want. People all over the world yearn to belong in dignity to these often alien large communities, yet there is no inherent knowledge of how to live with one another, with the multitudes of peoples and issues one has not known before. People need to know the promise of human rights for food, education, housing, healthcare, and work at livable wages. They need to own human rights, claim and realize them.

The success of human rights cities could inform the world to move power to human rights, giving us solutions for the future and possibly a new political culture based on human rights. It is from the human rights cities that meaningful analysis and real change will emerge. 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. These cities were self-selected on the basis of a demonstrated widespread commitment to human rights learning among a range of civil society actors and of past success with other projects in these countries.

THE VISION

A world whose six billion inhabitants - including youth and children - know and claim their human rights, and learn, reflect on and act to achieve civil, cultural, economic, political and social justice for all

- ★ Rosario, Argentina (one million)
- ★ Thies, Senegal (300,000)
- ★ Nagpur, India (2.8 million)
- ★ **Kati, Timbuktu, Kayes, and Silkass, Mali (total - 200,000)**
- ★ **Abra Indigenous Municipality, the Philippines (250,000)**
- ★ Nima -Mamobi, Bongo and Walewale , Ghana (Total -150,000)
- ★ Graz, Austria (750,000)
- ★ **Mogale, South Africa (224,000)**
- ★ **Porto Alegre, several local communities , Brazil (One million)**
- ★ **Edmonton, Alberta , Canada (750,000)**

New communities soon to be initiated by local groups in Chile, Kenya -Krogocho, Bosnia - Bihac, and Rwanda.

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 all humanity.

As a pioneer for over a decade of human rights education for social transformation with a strong focus on the core values of equality between women and men and non discrimination, PDHRE has been asked repeatedly to institutionalize the PDHRE method to enable wider audiences to benefit from its holistic approach and adapt it to local conditions. The Human Right Cities Program is a result of this effort to further the understanding of human rights as a way of life.

PROPOSED GUIDELINES TO CREATE A HUMAN RIGHTS CITY

Step 1:

Create a steering committee with representation from all sectors of society and in which groups working on the following will be included: children, culture, development, education, environment, food, health, housing, migrant workers, peace, poverty alleviation, refugees, security, water, women, and work.

Step 2:

Schedule learning and planning sessions for the steering committee in which all members participate to collectively design a plan of action and develop a common vision for their Human Rights City.

Educators and the media are summoned to work in close collaboration with the Committee.

The Steering Committee develops a "training of trainers" program with, by and for their constituencies, parliamentarians, municipal workers, law enforcement officers, the judiciary, business people, teachers, health care providers, 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:

Citizens are requested to play a part in human rights advocacy in the community to become mentors, monitors and documenters. They will be encouraged to give testimonies and participate in community and city hall meetings, street theater and informal community discussions.

Step 4:

Monitoring and documenting leads to the development of immediate and long-term plans for the city. In the process, participants examine local and national laws and policies to see that their formulation and implementation are consistent with the human rights framework. They develop alternative budgets in consultation with local economists, and they work to change and develop new relationships in the community, based on equality between women and men, the police and ethnic, religious and marginalized groups, and become fully involved in the decision-making process in the City.

These steps lead to building communities, in which the sources of power are 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. As the number of human rights cities increase, they may develop

A human rights charter, and A community human rights court

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CONSOLIDATION OF EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES

While each of the cities has taken locally driven measures to formulate its own priorities, the overall program has been formulated in more general terms, as outlined in the following objectives and activities. Examples from the past experiences or future plans of existing Human Rights Cities are given below.

TASK

To create, develop and disseminate information resources on human rights and undertake awareness and education programs with stakeholders and masses.

Activities: Advocacy and lobbying, sensitization of journalists, communicators and artists and active partnerships with the media. Efforts should focus on reviewing and influencing the laws, policies, resource allocations and relationships in the city on the basis of human rights.

Examples from Existing Human Rights Cities

In Kati, Mali, a multi-sectarian Steering Committee, with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners, NGOs, and the UNDP, has carried out a study on «The Malian Perception of the Culture of Peace and Human Rights». The Human Rights Cities in Mali plan to conduct research in order to enhance and anchor the concepts of human rights in Africa.

In **Dinajpur, Bangladesh**, an exhaustive survey of local conditions, initiatives, actors, hopes for and difficulties with human rights was conducted to understand and analyze public opinion and document human rights violations. Undertaken in collaboration with Community Development Association, 1,000 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 employees, lawyers, housewives, students, indigenous people and farmers. (The community did not continue these activities now on hold.)

TASK

To promote people's organizations and institutions and build their capacities to negotiate with the market and the state to ensure the fulfillment of their social, economic, civic, political and cultural rights.

Activities: This community mobilization includes, inter alia, studies of public policies in order to correct them, developing lobbying activities, training in formulating participatory alternative budgets and special focus on programs based on needs assessments conducted locally (e.g., concerning migrant workers, judiciary, health/education workers, city managers and the environment).

Examples from Existing Human Rights Cities:

In **Rosario, Argentina**, citizens have prepared a participatory budget for the City Council. Planned activities in Rosario include: continuous training of the Coordinating City Council with discussions among the different social sectors; workshops for multiplying agents (police officers, teachers, health officers, magistrates, lawyers, etc.) to modify their institutional and personal practices; regular working breakfasts; organizing children's attendance to City Council sessions and simulated sessions in at least half of the city's schools.

In **Thies, Senegal**, 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 4,500 children they had identified, then went to the Mayor's office to request that more schoolrooms 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. They also provided training and small loans for small businesses.

Eighty unmarried young women, who had never left their homes before, joined sewing and crocheting classes and have created a small cooperative group where they sell their products.

Women and men in several neighborhoods, learning about health as a human right, worked together to clean up the mountains of garbage, established norms for garbage disposal and informed the community accordingly. They also called on the Mayor's office to assume responsibility for garbage collection. Committees of citizens facilitate contact between city officials and average citizens, and exchanges are organized between the mayor, government officials, police forces and average citizens.

In **Dinajpur, Bangladesh**, Citizen's Committees are planned in all the wards of Dinajpur Municipal Corporation with particular attention to women, children, youth, indigenous people and the cross-sections of civil society- doctors, teachers, legal professionals and community leaders. A Jail Supervision Committee and other committees along with Civil Society Initiatives would be consulted to set guidelines and to reach a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in areas of concerns. Legal aid support to women has been established through the Community Human Rights Court. Dinajpur's program for slum development includes: establishing a pre-primary school; addressing housing rights, water/power supplies, sanitation, primary health care, income generation for the poor; establishing a school for street children and a special awareness program for the informal labor sector labor on their rights, trade unions, employment contracts and working hours.

TASK

To further develop training methodology and pedagogy for human rights education for social transformation.

Activities: Such methodology and pedagogy includes technical training in conflict mediation and facilitation, training of personnel including police officers, health officials, lawyers and other professionals who can become multiplying agents for human rights through their specialized services.

Examples from Existing Human Rights Cities:

-In **Rosario, Argentina**, Human Rights Training Workshops and a seminar with 60 principals of the Teachers' Training Colleges were held. Future plans include training in conflict mediation and seminars and workshops for multiplying agents (police officers, teachers, health officers, magistrates, lawyers, etc.) to develop human rights educational actions.

-In **Thies, Senegal**, workshops are planned for law enforcement officials, prison guards, and prison inhabitants; training for interested public school teachers and students to establish youth groups in Thies neighborhoods; training for facilitators and other participants to begin projects in their communities; monthly community workshops to find ways of remedying existing violations and establishing concrete actions. The initiative involves combined training and feedback sessions at least once every two months to allow facilitators to talk about the difficulties and successes they have experienced.

-In **Dinajpur, Bangladesh**, plans include popular education/campaign materials for educators, monitors, advocates and the masses; issue-based training materials/modules; framework of co-operation with District Law and Order Committee, introducing basic Human Rights Education at primary and secondary level of education; formation of women's groups in all the wards of Dinajpur; and community-based action workshops.

-In **Bucay, Philippines**, activities include orientation workshops on human rights education for officials, leaders of indigenous communities, community organizations and youth; learning seminars on documentation and research for human rights; on policy design and development; for women on reproductive health; on economic, social and cultural rights for human rights educators from municipalities in Abra other than Bucay. Also included are HRE through sports and games, and through arts and crafts; and a self-help community development program on communication and information technology.

-In **Wa and Maimobi/New Town, Ghana**, workshops, seminars, conferences, street theatre, public education campaigns, publicity, media coverage, journal publication, training manual publication and research projects are planned.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES

Indicators will measure, inter alia: the implementation of specific activities related to the human rights city (e.g., decision making bodies, training, public awareness events, lobbying activities); the implementation of specific activities related to the regional learning programs (e.g., establishment of organization, development of educational strategies and programming); and monitoring and self-evaluation activities carried out locally and regionally.

TASK

To network for building alliances.

Activities: Build solidarity and alliances with other organizations, initiatives and stakeholder groups on human rights issues, for sharing of information, best practices, innovative approaches, political and lobbying efforts and human resources and expertise.

Examples from Existing Human Rights Cities:

In **Kati, Mali**, Mali-PDHRE, UNDP Mali, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Malian National Commission for UNESCO, the Canadian Embassy, and the Ministry of Justice worked with other human rights focal points to set up a small working committee to prepare a project to establish the Human Rights Cities initiative, which was then further discussed in a workshop. Beneficiaries and other partners were also involved in the entire process of the project design.

In **Wa and Maimobi/New Town, Ghana**, stakeholders included chiefs and Queen mothers, members of Parliament, men's, women's, youth and community groups. In other instances discussions involved representatives of other UN agencies or bilateral donors.

In **Rosario, Argentina**, over 100 community based groups brought together their experiences, including Mothers and Grandmothers of the May Square, Women's Rights, people with disabilities, children, ecologists, indigenous peoples, and human rights experts from the University. In 1998, the range of participating institutions and organizations was enlarged. In 1999, financial support from Ford Foundation helped to continue with the cooperative work of 12 organizations and individuals who constituted a Coordinating Council of the Human Rights City.

TASK

To research and document human rights issues.

Examples from Existing Human Rights Cities:

In **Bucay, Philippines**, the objectives are stated of enabling both government officials and citizens to undertake research and documentation on practices and shortcomings in the field of human rights, particularly gender equality and economic, social and cultural rights, in order to design and advocate for appropriate regulations and policies. Further to undertake research, documentation and publication for developing pedagogy and methodology in human rights education.

TASK

To document and promote innovation, best practices and processes on human rights for replication.

This is part of the project documents of all the human rights cities.

TASK

To advocate human rights issues.

Activities in the Human Right Cities are to be publicized throughout their country, to disseminate knowledge, increase the adoption of the human rights framework, and serve as a model for democratic life and good governance. This process will help to overcome the fact that most people for whom human rights have been ratified are not familiar with nor do they know how to use them to fulfill their hopes and aspirations for a better life. These activities, as with all of the above, will create a basis for dialogue with national level institutions in order to upstream the human rights concepts in their pragmatic realization within national policy.

ROSARIO, ARGENTINA: POPULATION 1,000,000

The First Human Rights City

Facilitated by Instituto de Genero y Desarrollo and PDHRE

On June 30th 1997, more than 100 people including NGOs representing women's and 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 respect for human rights, equity and peace, activities which are inscribed in the Framework of the UN Decade For Human Rights Education, 1995-2004. 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 has 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 practices and violations 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 relationships with the business and industrial communities. A volunteer group comprised of human rights experts, educators, lawyers, and members of the media is available to support the committee, responding to the self-defined needs and requests of the community. It is expected that they will lobby for amending local and national laws, and for an allocation of financial resources that ensures that the on-going city development plan will meet the needs of the community.

Shadow report for the Human Rights Committee

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 their relevance to the City of Rosario. They have exercised their citizenship through following up 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 and Community Activities

Disseminating HRE materials and organizing learning activities was the first step. The second step involved monitoring actions for the purpose of analyzing how the government of Argentina fulfills its obligations, specifically, how the funds of the local budget are distributed, and whether this distribution respects gender, ethnic, racial, economic and social equality. The third step will call on organizations for participation in the decision-making process.

The following activities are taking place in Rosario:

- 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, that addresses national, gender and class discrimination. The issue of Censorship was discussed when it was learned that the ten people who were involved in producing the movie were jailed for five years.
- Human Rights Seminar for Police High Officials
- Human Rights Education program with the Toba Indigenous Community
- Human Rights Seminar for Municipality officials.
- Human rights learning for Doctors and nurses and in the medical school
- Human Rights learning to be integrated in the implementation of the MDGs
- Local politicians were lobbied to create awareness about the need for a Human Rights City program, including the city mayor, the minister of government, national deputies
- Ten city council meetings were held during the year with ongoing outreach to each of and local representatives.
- The members of the 'Rosario Human Rights City' coordinating council regarding the follow up of the project. Members of the committee participated in the 2nd Human Rights International Colloquium at Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Sao Paulo
- A special meetings took place with PDHRE International, UNDP Argentina and New York and UNF representatives regarding the financial sustainability of the project; with the coordinating INSGENAR staff, The coordination committee pf Rosario Human Rights City. The Province Minister of Government and the City Mayor visited Puig School, Lola Mara Association and the people's Ombudsman Headquarters.

- A Conference on Human Rights was held at the Police Academy on its 160th anniversary. The Human Rights Commission of the Political Science School of the Rosario National University (Member of the Coordinating Committee of Rosario HR City-CC) discussed the various concepts of Human Rights, the justifiability of Human Rights and the role of the State, and also the Police and Human Rights today. Gender and violence issues were also discussed.
- Toys were collected for the Child Day annual festival at Lola Mora Association. Along with UNDP Argentina, a book collection for the Puig School new library was also organized.

And more: A 'Human Rights City Contest' was organized with the theme: Rewriting CEDAW, the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. More than 50 schools participated. The panel of judges included one member of the People's Ombudsman office, two members of INSGENAR, and one member of the Teachers Union' Human Rights Commission. The winner was a 45-student 3rd year class from the Polimodal Program of Maria Auxiliadora School of Rosario. They, rewrote Article 2 of CEDAW as follows:

ARTICLE 2 --WHAT CAN WE DO?

In the first place, we have to ask ourselves if all of us are disposed to initiate a change, because if we propose it, it will be possible. Meanwhile, to accelerate the procedure, we can start making some changes, like including these rights in our constitution and modifying some laws, throwing away the discriminatory ones and adding some new ones that we think essential to achieve our objective. That should be all.

Some Success Stories

A group of young people from the Toba and Ludueña neighborhoods 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, originally all boys, but girls joined the group later, from vulnerable situations, many of them with relatives in jail, meet once a week, with continuous conversations between meetings. A flexible attitude was cultivated to adapt to 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 physical activities, dynamic corporeal games, and the creation of a base of trust and empathy. The impact of these exercises was vastly increased by group work.

Members of the steering committee participated in the Porto Alegre World Social Forum in Brazil, 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. This experience led to the preparation of a plan of action that promotes the creation of community spaces where comprehensive human rights education can be discussed.

THE FOCAL POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- The transformation of reduced civil and political citizenship to inclusive social citizenship
- Discrimination and domination mechanisms
- The interconnectedness of all human rights
- Overcoming the division of human rights into categories with different hierarchies
Citizenship vs. charity
- Access to food, housing, education, healthcare and work at livable wages
- Sharing resources, and viewing them not as gifts but as the full realization of human rights
- Learning how to monitor international instruments at the local level. Very often, international regulations are seen as far removed from the local arena.
- 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.

A network of human right cities exists creating a support system for existing and new developing cities. Regional PDHRE offices have been created to decentralize the work of PDHRE.

Voices from the Human Rights Cities

- *"When I learned that education is a human rights I learned that I must claim my human rights, so that in dignity I can support myself and my parents when they are older."* (Child from HR City-Nagpur, India)
- *"If you know human rights, you know that health and food are included, and it makes me feel good for my family and all the people..."* (Women from HR City Thies, Senegal)
- *"What we learned about human rights allowed us to reduce misunderstandings among ourselves. Before, we married women, and looked at them as slaves. Now we understand, we each have roles in the family. Women now understand they are equal, and men agree with it."* (Man, HR City Kati, Mali)
- *"We want human rights to be discussed in the newspapers, radio and television to motivate people to take actions for human rights for all the people in the city"* (Women from HR city Rosario, Argentina)

A PLEDGE TAKEN IN CITIES:

*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 and children,
From those who speak human rights,
But deny them to their own people.
We will move power to human rights"*

Shulamith Koenig – PDHRE, Founding President

