

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAMME

WHAT IS THE RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAMME?

The Rights Education Action Programme (REAP) is a 10 year-long international human rights education initiative led by Amnesty International Norway. REAP is implemented by Amnesty International in Israel, Malaysia, Moldova, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey. After assessing local needs, REAP project partners select specific human rights topics relevant to their target groups and to the human rights context of the country. At the core of REAP is the training of human rights education “multipliers” – individuals who, through their roles or positions in society, are able to influence a larger audience or groups of people. Through REAP, project partners create positive human rights impacts and contribute to Amnesty International’s aim to build a human rights culture worldwide.

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REAP has worked with practitioners in schools, colleges, and universities to integrate human rights education into



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Young women participate in Day for Darfur in Rabat, Morocco.

the curriculum and into extra-curricular activities. By training teachers as multipliers, REAP has made the classroom a forum for human rights education. REAP has also worked with counsellors, librarians, administrative staff, and people working in education training centres to raise awareness of how human rights issues affect their work. Amnesty International has also made significant progress in putting

REAP initiatives into action and integrating human rights into education by partnering with central and local governments. Implementing REAP in the formal education sector has created opportunities for curriculum development and innovation in human rights education resources, and has helped build a comprehensive approach to increasing awareness of human rights and to empowering people of all ages.





'Before I learned about the Amnesty International programme, I hadn't used human rights in my educational activities. Now I conduct human rights classes, actions, workshops, and elective courses.'

REAP project partner, Russia

WORKING WITH CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Key to success in human rights education in formal education has been the formation of partnerships with relevant government bodies, particularly ministries of education. These partnerships have enabled Amnesty International to work with schools and educators at the national level. REAP partners regularly held meetings and press conferences with their ministries of education to gain support for REAP initiatives, and this has resulted in valuable alliances with local education departments, which supported and promoted REAP training programmes.

In December 2004, Amnesty International Moldova signed a partnership agreement with the Moldovan Ministry of Education for the development of human rights education materials and teacher training. Amnesty International Moldova regards this as the most important achievement for REAP work in classrooms. In the Chisinau municipality, the partnership agreement between Amnesty International Moldova and the

local department of education led to greater numbers of human rights education training sessions for teachers in schools at the regional level. REAP also fosters human rights school clubs in Moldova, and has opened five local resource centres for youth to support their activities.

Amnesty International Morocco worked with the Ministry of National Education and regional education and training academies to develop the skills of teachers and facilitators of human rights clubs for schools. Four hundred teachers and administration staff were trained as multipliers, who then set up committees to ensure sustainability, particularly for staff training. REAP participants in all 16 regional academies of education in Morocco have also created human rights clubs, which strengthen human rights education in the classroom.

TRAINING EDUCATORS

One of REAP's main activities is working with and training teachers and other staff as human rights education multipliers. This

'We were working with teachers on general human rights issues, raising awareness about human rights values, to make teachers experience this culture of human rights, so they were able to integrate these principles, these values, in their day-to-day lives.'

Lilia Savciuc, Amnesty International Moldova



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has shown the most significant and sustainable results, especially in countries where suspicion of and resistance to human rights activism prevails. An example of REAP's most successful work with multipliers is the training of teachers in Russia. Here, teachers were provided with basic, then intermediate level training, then an advanced course for trainers as a follow-up. This approach offered continued support to the teachers in their work, and ensured sustainability. As a result, these multipliers showed a high level of personal motivation and interest in integrating human rights in schools, including teaching the subject in an interactive and participatory manner. With instruction and support from their teachers, students, too, were responsive, volunteering their time to stand up for human rights, in many cases for the first time. Pupils have initiated their own activities, such as writing letters to government, and becoming involved with Amnesty International demonstrations and actions. Trained multipliers also developed extra-curricular activities to engage students further outside of the classroom, which has had an impact on the wider community.

Amnesty International Moldova trains teachers as well as social workers, librarians and specialists from local departments of education. REAP work began in schools by training 20 teachers as multipliers; they have in turn educated 166 teachers on using human rights materials in the curriculum. Day workshops were held concentrating on specific human rights topics or how to set up human rights clubs. Participants were encouraged to develop their own methodologies for human rights education for their students in weekly thematic workshops, and for students to become active on these issues outside of the classroom.

INNOVATION IN LEARNING RESOURCES

REAP has adapted to local needs and situations by developing human rights education resources which address concerns specific to the country or area. For example, REAP work in Morocco coincided with a change in the law to allow rehabilitation rights for victims of human

Above: A human rights teacher training session in Russia.

Left: Schoolchildren in Moldova participate in a lesson using human rights education materials developed by REAP.

'I overcame my fear and applied to the Government of Murmansk Region with a letter describing the problems of our settlement. As a result, the authorities established a dental office in the school building and examined all children... Our apartments became warmer due to improvements in heat supply services. And a wider range of goods and products were available in our shops.'

REAP Participant, Russia

rights violations. Human rights education initiatives led by Amnesty International Morocco adapted to these legal changes by integrating the issues into training sessions in schools and social activities for pupils. To keep up with an ever-changing environment, Amnesty International Morocco convenes working groups of multipliers with expertise in human rights education who together create diverse educational resources. Meanwhile, partnerships between government and local organizations have led to the development of Amnesty International Morocco's new website, which is dedicated to making resources and materials widely accessible and to furthering human rights education.

In Moldova, a course called "I have the right to know my rights" was developed together with trainers and teachers in a participatory manner, then piloted with students to gain their input into the final materials. Resources developed for the course include a guide for teachers, an exercise book for students and a human rights resource book. In 2009, this course was highlighted in *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: a Compendium of Good Practice*, a resource for teachers and education policy makers.

REAP project partners have adapted and translated materials compiled by human rights organizations for use in schools. Through creating and using a diverse range of education materials, REAP has made significant contributions to national curriculums and has engaged many students in an understanding of, and involvement in, human rights.

'Joining the Amnesty International Human Rights Education programme motivated me directly and contributed to the way I act and to my interest in [human rights] issues.'

REAP participant, Morocco



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Students at Moscow State University read Amnesty International reports at the launch of an Amnesty International campaign in Russia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REAP

- **Develop partnerships with ministries of education and other authorities to ensure the full effect of human rights education initiatives.** Alliances with education authorities ensure access to national school systems and educators, and promote and facilitate the mainstreaming of human rights into the formal education sector. An integrated curriculum increases outreach capacity, and creates multiple and lasting effects.
- **Create strong and diverse teacher training programmes and support systems to strengthen the multiplying effect of teachers' work.** Whether doing follow-up training for multipliers, or opening resource centres for young people running human rights clubs or other initiatives, it is important to build on the foundations of

previous work and establish continuity of support to ensure sustainability and greater impact.

- **Adapt human rights education resources to your country or area by addressing relevant issues and using participatory methodologies.** Innovation in course and training materials development keeps participants engaged, and allows multipliers to deepen the meaning of their work with local people by relating human rights education to their everyday lives.



Amnesty International is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion – funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

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