



international association for

religious freedom
belief with integrity

SACC

South Asia Coordinating Council

HRE

Human Rights Education

Continuation Project in India

for period

August 2008 to July 2010

by

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Introduction

Account of foregoing HRE Project

Project implementation started August 2005
Completed successfully August 2007
Proposal: Two-year extension of the project in India

Majority lacks understanding of freedom of religion and belief as a basic human right guaranteed in:

- national Constitution
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (DEIDRB).

Project Objectives

- Creation of awareness of UDHR and DEIDRB.
- Realization of the right of religious freedom through understanding and respect for humanity and religious belief and practices.
- Mutual respect among the participants of different faiths and understanding of different points of view.
- Understanding of concerns of religious discrimination and intolerance in the framework of human rights.
- Exploring ways of promoting religious harmony and tolerance in the society. Establishing religious harmony, peace and understanding in the society.
- Nurturing a culture of human rights in general and rights pertaining to religious freedom and dignity in particular.

Rationale

- Need to create awareness of the precious right of freedom of religion and belief among the masses.
- Project uniqueness: designed for a systematic and effective learning and understanding of the human right of freedom of religion and belief *at community level*.

Implementation

Field implementation through long-time IARF associates, all previously involved in promotion of interfaith understanding and religious freedom at community level.

By December 2006, project implemented in Nagpur, Kolkata, Vizag, Chennai, Delhi, Tirunelveli, Mysore, Shillong, Mumbai, Madurai and Kerala.

Total learning workshops conducted in India (project inception August 2005 to end August 2007): **55**, with **2,250** participants.

- Language of instruction: English, but workshop materials produced in vernaculars.
- Literate/educated participants preferred since reading and writing exercises involved in feedback and evaluation.
- To ensure young adult participation, workshops held in colleges. College youth chosen as target due to enthusiasm, receptive nature and availability. Staff and management participated.
- Some workshops also organized for mixed age groups from the communities.
- Gender and religion balance ensured, group size 35 to 50.
- Some workshops for adult men and women from the grassroots community organizations.

Learning material

- Three short films depicting instances and issues of denial and violation of human rights, dubbed into other languages (Hindi, Bengali and Tamil).
- Facilitators / trainers manual with guidelines for organizing and conducting workshops
- Handouts for discussions and group exercises during workshops.

Methodology: Practical activities, interactions and discussions, viewing of films, group exercises, presentations

Facilitators: Necessary training as project facilitators in their own areas, five-day program at Kolkata August 2005.

The facilitator was responsible for selecting the target community - either with the help of his/her IARF member group, or through his contacts - and for balancing participation by religion and gender. Around 25% of the trainees in India belonged to Muslim communities. There was considerable interest from Muslim youth, for example in Thenkasi, TamilNadu, where religious clashes had been quite frequent. Around 50 *madrassa* students attended the two-day HRE under the leadership of their *imam* and *madrassa* principal. It helped both communities to examine carefully the prejudice that exists between them, so that recently both Hindu and Muslim participants have become very active in the process of building trust.

Result: Eighteen facilitators from different parts of India (from the North eastern State of Meghalaya to Tirunelveli in the southern end) trained, drawn from diverse professional fields and religious backgrounds.

Trainers were recruited by their faith, inter-religious back grounds, their educational qualifications, and their acceptance in the community as peace-loving leaders. They were suggested by the member groups, who are active in interfaith / inter-religious activities locally and nationally.

Trainees were selected by the trainer through field visits before organizing a program. Mostly s/he would meet the local religious leadership - especially both Hindu and Muslim community leaders – and share the details of the program, to remove any suspicion in their minds and convince them about the importance of harmony in society, and what longer-term impacts the training has had elsewhere.

Some workshops had exclusive groups of social workers, field activists, teachers, law students and animators who worked closely with the grassroots communities and have immense potential to take the human rights education deep into the communities. Such impact groups would be targeted in the continuation project.

SACC: A Brief Portrait

The India and Nepal Chapter Presidents are Hindus, the Bangladeshi a Muslim, the Pakistani a Christian, and the Sri Lanka President is a Buddhist monk. The Indian member groups Co-ordinator is Adv. Mohammad Shabeer Ahmad, who also served as the HRE Facilitator in Karnataka State.

The SACC chairman from 1999 to 2004 was Dr. M.A Khan, during whose period SACC took the initiative of building a mosque and temple in Gujarat state, soon after the earthquake had destroyed the lives of thousands of both faiths. With the support of the member groups, Indian youth along with selected young adults from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka visited many religious sites, and painted a mosque in TamilNadu.

The overall HRE Administrator was Mr. Zulfikhar Akram, a Muslim from Bangalore city who previously had served as the Co-ordinator of SACC for the three years since 2002. The overall HRE Facilitator in India was Mrs.Mohseena, also from Bangalore.

Impact - Learning and knowledge acquisition in workshops

Workshop discussions and interaction identified these issues:

- Inter-religious and inter-caste marriages.
- Loss of identity of tribal communities.
- Discrimination based on religion and belief in educational institutions, jobs and government policies such as reservations based on caste and religion.
- Inter-religious conflicts between different religious communities such as Muslims, Christian and Hindus.
- Discrimination within families, especially gender discrimination.
- Issues related to religious dress code, marriage, divorce, etc. (both intra and inter religious)
- The practice of untouchability, child marriage, excommunication, practices that are harmful to health.
- Government inaction at the time of communal conflicts and support for the religious majority community.
- Religious intolerance and hatred.
- Conversions and re-conversions, stereotyping, etc.

Suggested solutions:

- A human rights approach to looking at the issues and solutions.
- Creation of awareness of human right for religious freedom through the educational system, workshops, distribution of literature pertaining to it, etc.
- Interfaith dialogue for understanding and harmony.
- Understanding and knowledge of scriptures of one's own religion and other religions. Participation in the rituals, practices and festivals of different religions for better communal relations and understanding.
- Abolition of caste system and elimination of caste-based discrimination and intolerance through government policies, programmes and legislation.

What worked well / Why the project should be continued

Initial assessment of participants showed they did not know of the right to freedom of religion and belief. This was the first time they were able to express their thoughts and feelings in relation to religion and practices. They are now keen on spreading this awareness among their families and friends. They freely identified and shared the violation of human rights in the name of religion in their day-to-day lives. Discussions on violations also led to sincere attempts by participants to look for solutions. In the process they learned about different religions, beliefs and practices.

One of the most strongly impactful videos is based on the 2002 Gujarat carnage, and helped participants to realise how, instead of protecting religious minorities – in the case of India, especially Muslims – political opportunists have used divide-and-rule strategies that can lead to genocide. It emerged very clearly during the trainings that intolerance and persecution ultimately lead only to fundamentalism and fanaticism, so minorities should be carefully protected by prudent governments.

Management of educational institutions have expressed their desire to incorporate the HRE learning process of IARF as a regular feature in their institutions. The NGOs through whose collaboration some of the workshops were organized have come forward to carry on with the learning process within their constituencies. With community leaders, they support extension to more students and communities, and are offering organizing help.

SACC proposal

Considering their efficacy and impact, there is plainly a need to further expand the HRE learning process. SACC is proposing to organize 50 more learning workshops across India over the next two years, starting August 2008.

SACC is focusing a greater number of the workshops in a few selected cities in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka with a large concentration of Muslims, where the response has been found to be very encouraging. As the Bangladesh response has been quite positive, we would like to hold additional programs there.

The details of the number of workshops, places and the budget are presented in the tables below.

**IARF SACC HRE Project in India for the period
AUGUST 2008 — JULY 2010**

BUDGET (Indian Rupees)

TABLE NO. 1

1 SERIES = 5 SESSIONS (Extending over two days)
SESSION DURATION = 2 – 3 HOURS

PER SERIES COST (Two Days) = Rs. 9000/-

Place	Facilitators	No. of series allotted	Nature of Target Group	Per series cost	Total
Delhi	To be decided	5	College students, Social Workers and local communities	12000	60000
Mumbai	To be decided	5	---“---	12000	60000
Shillong and North East India	Nangroi Suting, Rev.Helpme and David Biate	2	---“---	12000	24000
Kolkata	Prashantha Dasgupta, RKM and Asit Basu ,RKM	5	----“---	12000	60000
Vizag	Prof.Prakasa Rao and Prof.Bhagyalakshmi	5	-- “---	12000	60000
Nagpur	Adv.Amala Rohilla	2	--“---	12000	24000
Bangalore	To be decided	5	--“---	12000	60000
Chennai	Ramachandran	5	---“---	12000	60000
Mysore	Adv.Hemalatha and Adv.Mohammad Shabeer	6	---“---	12000	72000
Tirunelveli	Dr.Rajaram and Rev.Xavier	5	---“---	12000	60000
Kerala	Dr.Alex Phillip and Prof.Jyothiraj	5	---“---	12000	60000
TOTAL		50			600,000

TOTAL COST OF 50 SERIES ACROSS INDIA - RS. 600,000/-

TABLE NO. 2

Per series honorarium for the facilitators (including Accommodation for 2 days & Organizing expenses) = Rs. 3000/-

Place	Facilitators	No. of series allotted	Nature of Target Group	Per series honorarium	Total
Delhi	To be decided	5	College students and local communities	3000	15000
Mumbai	To be decided	2	---“---	3000	6000
Shillong and North East India	Nangroi Suting, Helpme and David Biata	5	---“---	3000	15000
Kolkata	Prashantha Dasgupta and Asit Basu	5	----“---	3000	15000

Vizag	Prakasa Rao and Bhagyalakshmi	5	-- “---	3000	15000
Nagpur	Amala Rohilla	2	---“---	3000	6000
Bangalore	To be decided	5	--“---	3000	15000
Chennai	Ramachandran	5	---“---	3000	15000
Mysore	Hemalatha and Shabeer	6	---“---	3000	18000
Tirunelveli	Rajaram and Xavier	5	---“---	3000	15000
Kerala	Alex Phillip and Jyothiraj	5	---“---	3000	15000
TOTAL		50			1,50,000

Total Honorarium for Facilitators conducting 50 Series across India – Rs. 1,50,000/-

TABLE NO. 3
Administration and travel costs

<i>Cost Head</i>	<i>Monthly cost</i>	Total for 2 years (24 months)
ADMINISTRATION		
Office Expenses (such as telephone, internet, postage, stationery, maintenance, local travel, audit) etc.	10000	240000
Salary of Project Administrator	10000	240000
Honorarium for Best Practices Advisor (BPA)		30000
Unforeseen Expenses		50000
Total Administrative costs		560000
TRAVEL		
Travel of Project Supervisors		75000
Travel of Project Administrator		30000
Travel of BPA		20000
Unforeseen Travel		25000
TOTAL		150,000

Total for administrative and travel expenses for 2 years – Rs. 7100,00/-

TABLE NO. 4
Training and retraining of trainers and facilitators

Training and Year	No. of Participants	Cost
Training of Trainers in 2007 – 2008 for three days (including travel cost)	30	100000
Training of Trainers in 2008 – 2009 for three days (including travel cost)	30	100000
TOTAL		200000

Total cost for two ToT's – Rs. 200000/-

IARF SACC HRE Project in India for the period August 2008 to July 2010 – Total Cost

Budget Heads	Cost
50 HRE Series across India	600,000
50 HRE Series – Honorarium to Facilitators	1,50,000
Administration	560,000
Travel	150,000
Training of Trainers	2,00,000
Total	1660,000

Local Donation - Cash –RS. 150000

Total Cost for 2-Year Project – Rs. 1660, 000/-

Total grant required for the 2-Year project - Rs.1660000-150000

= Rs 1510,000 /75 = Sterling £ 20,000/-