

INTRODUCTION TO THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS' WORK IN NEPAL



THE DANISH INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

After receiving an invitation from the Danish Embassy in Kathmandu, the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) started its engagement in Nepal in 1996. The first activity carried out by DIHR was an analysis of the Nepalese criminal justice system in 1997. The findings led to a sequence of Access to Justice initiatives targeted at strengthening the capacity and cooperation of human rights actors in Nepal in order to improve both the reporting and monitoring of human rights violations. In the same vein, DIHR supported the setting-up of the Nepali National Human Rights Commission, and Nepali partners from the justice system and civil society formed part of DIHR's cross-regional Juvenile Justice programme.

OVERVIEW OF DIHRS PROJECTS IN NEPAL IN THE PAST 15 YEARS

A. THE NATIONAL PRISONERS LEGAL AID PROJECT

Purpose: To help establish a framework for a sustainable nation-wide criminal legal aid system in Nepal with the focus on offering legal aid service to indigent prisoners awaiting trial, supporting fair trial proceedings and striving to improve the conditions of prisoners in general.

Project description: In 1997 DIHR and the Center for Legal Research and Resource development (CeLRRd) jointly conducted a nationwide survey and needs-assessment study among prisoners. To provide the service effectively, five regional legal aid centers have been established. CeLRRd has won Supreme Court cases of great importance in the areas of provision of legal aid and other aspects of the protection of liberty and security of the person.

Partner: The Center for Legal Research and Resource development (CeLRRd) is a Nepalese NGO involved in research, resource and action programmes on human rights in Nepal.

Project period: 1997-2006



B. STRENGTHENING OF DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING MATERIAL ON CHILD LABOUR

Purpose: To create awareness about the rights of the child, DIHR engaged in a partnership with the local NGO Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) on the drafting of relevant teaching materials.

Project description: The INSEC teaching materials were unique as they applied an action-oriented approach targeting local stakeholders in local areas where forced child labour in agriculture was particularly prevailing. It thus supported concrete assistance to children. While the DIHR engagement ended with the completion of the teaching materials, a small project support was awarded to INSEC to enable in-service training in 2000-01. DIHR has also assisted with the build-up of the internal information, documentation and monitoring facilities in INSEC.

Partner: Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) is a local human rights organization.

Project period: 1997-1999

C. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Purpose: To develop the capacity of the Human Rights Commission of Nepal to deal with human rights violations through four pillars, namely: Corporate Development, Administration and Management; Monitoring, Complaints and Investigation; Advocacy, Research and Policy; and Education and Information.

Project description: DIHR was responsible for ensuring the provision of expertise, material assistance and institutional support to meet the overall objective of establishing an independent and efficient Human Rights Commission in Nepal.

Partner: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is a statutory body established by the Human Rights Commission Act (1997) with the objective to ensure “effective enforcement



as well as protection and promotion of human rights". The Chairperson and four members of the NHRC were appointed in May 2000.

Project period: 2002-2005

D. PARTNERSHIP WITH KATHMANDU SCHOOL OF LAW ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Purpose: To contribute to the development and the fulfillment of the relevant legal provisions on Juvenile Justice in Nepal with reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. DIHR sought to contribute to the strengthening of the institutional capacities of our partners in Nepal in order to achieve sector wide coordination and by procuring the needs of children and juveniles in conflict with the law, promote their access to justice with due respect for their special situation.

Project description: Kathmandu School of Law (KSoL) was identified as the Nepalese partner as part of the DIHR's Juvenile Justice cross-regional (Nepal, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Denmark) and cross-sectorial (judiciary, government, parliament, civil society, social and criminal law enforcement including both preventive and reactive stages) approach. KSoL has organized a network consisting of key stakeholders and the network has pursued law reform, facilitated education in juvenile justice at university level, undertaken research activities, and procured the development of diversion mechanisms applicable to the Nepalese society and legal system.

Partner: KSoL was established as a non-profit, pioneer Law College in 2000 running LL.M. courses and five-year LL.B. courses as an alternative to the traditional legal education curriculum available in Nepal.

Project period: 2003-2005



E. ASSISTING THE NEPALESE JUDICIARY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION

Purpose: DIHR assisted the Nepalese Judiciary with the development of a five-year strategic Plan of action in cooperation with The Royal Danish Embassy's Human Rights and Good Governance Programme in Nepal.

Project description: The project was undertaken to meet the Nepalese Supreme Court's request for support to development of a five-year strategic plan of actions and reforms in the Judiciary. The final operational plan was targeted at strengthening the management system of the court and streamlining efforts to foster efficient human resources whilst promoting accessibility to justice and strengthening the court system's relation to other actors in the justice sector.

Partner: In this project DIHR supplied consultancy for the Human Rights and Good Governance Programme (HUGOU)

Project period: 2003

F. STRENGTHENING POST-GRADUATE HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN NEPAL AND SOUTH ASIA

Purpose: To strengthen legal and human rights education in Nepal and the South Asian region by supporting networking activities, knowledge sharing and the development of specialized courses in Economic, Social and Cultural rights.

Project description: At a course in 2003, the content of the Master Programme on human rights at Kathmandu School of Law (KSoL) was discussed and participants from India, Bangladesh and Nepal exchanged experiences and identified concrete needs and wants in relation to future cooperation on human rights education. A strategy for the establishment of a forum of university institutions in South Asia teaching human rights was agreed upon, consequently leading to the setting up of the South Asian Law Schools' Forum for Human Rights (SALS Forum). The forum aims to foster an environment for active participation of law students and teachers



in building common human rights jurisprudence in the region and to promote exchange of ideas and experiences among South Asian law schools and similar institutions in matters of legal and human rights education. DIHR also supports KSoL in its efforts to develop and implement an annual three week residential school for students from the South Asian region on 'Economic, Social and Development Rights' with a view to promote the understanding of social, economical and cultural rights and a focus on marginalised groups among students and teachers.

Partner: Kathmandu School of Law (KSoL) was established as a non-profit, pioneer Law College in 2000 running LL.M. courses and five-year LL.B. courses as an alternative to the traditional legal education curriculum available in Nepal.

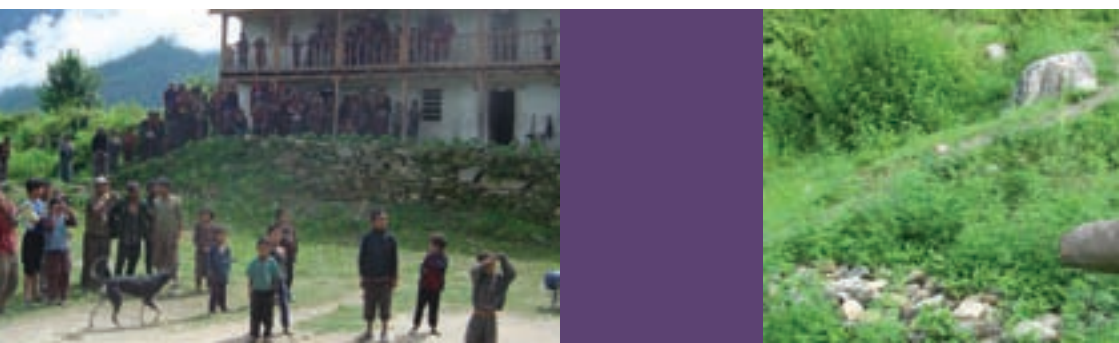
Project period: 2003-2011

G. PEACE PROJECT

Purpose: To contribute to sustainable peace by supporting an analysis of the conflict in Nepal as well as training and capacity building of young leaders, journalists and local conflict resolutions experts.

Project description: The project was initiated with Kathmandu School of Law (KSoL) in September 2004 as a response to the growing crisis in Nepal following the Maoist insurgency and an increasingly weakened state. In 2005 an orientation programme for 120 high school students on "the role of civic education in conflict transformation and peace building" was held. Another programme focused on journalists and students of journalism and their role in peace building. The media can have a crucial impact through the presentation of more peace friendly coverage, news and stories.

The programme Motivation of Youths from Different Walks of Life for Peace and Democracy aimed to motivate and activate youths through civic education for their participation in conflict transformation and peace building. The programme covered aspects of philosophy and science, democratic values, electoral system and leadership development, and human rights concepts. Moreover a comprehensive research on the causes, intensity and impact of the insurgency was initiated in 2005.



Partner: Kathmandu School of Law (KSoL) was established as a non-profit, pioneer Law College in 2000 running LL.M. courses and five-year LL.B. courses as an alternative to the traditional legal education curriculum available in Nepal.

Project period: 2004-2006

H. NEPALESE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Purpose: Despite of a wide spanned human rights community in Nepal, the community was lacking systematization of experiences and coordination. This project aimed to meet this need through capacity building and education of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).

Project description: The project focused on the urgent need to identify and analyze the human rights efforts in Nepal. Two HRDs worked from Denmark, and a single HRD worked independently out of India. The HRDs in Denmark had the international contact and benefit of experiences and dissemination of information, while the HRD in India was able to work in close cooperation with the human rights community in Nepal. However, the project also supported three additional HRDs.

The HRD operating independently from India prepared articles on the human rights situation in Nepal on the basis of analyses of human rights values and principles and their importance for strengthening democracy and development. The HRD also reported on the role of civil society organizations, the international community, the National Human Rights Commission, and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in this process. The HRD also arranged and spoke at informative meetings in India and internationally, in order to enhance the knowledge of the human rights situation in Nepal.

The HRDs stationed in Denmark also prepared articles, and arranged and spoke on information meetings and seminars in Denmark and within Europe.

Partner: Human Rights Defenders from DIHR collaborated with Human Rights Defenders in both India and Nepal.

Project period: 2005-2007



THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
STRANDGADE 56
DK-1401 COPENHAGEN K
PHONE +45 32 69 88 88
CENTER@HUMANRIGHTS.DK
WWW.HUMANRIGHTS.DK



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