



ANNUAL REPORT

2011

Human Rights Education Institute of Burma



Contents

Human Rights Education Institute of Burma



Pg.3

A Message from the Director



Pg.6

Organizational Developments



Pg.8

HREIB in 2011: An Overview



Pg.14

Claiming Space: The Achievements and Impacts of 2011



Pg.20

Looking Back, Looking Forward: Challenges, Lessons, and Moving into 2012



A Message from the Director

Another year has passed at the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma, bringing with it more changes than ever before. 2011 has seen a surge of reforms taking place inside Burma—the release of political prisoners, the election of National League for Democracy members to parliament, and the establishment of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, among others. After decades spent under authoritarian rule, the people of Burma have begun to glimpse the light at the end of a long and dark tunnel. These recent developments are as important in raising hope as they are in affecting international policy.

However, although the changes are encouraging, as activists and human rights defenders we are not yet convinced of their longevity or sustainability at the grassroots level. While new laws supporting the protection of rights have been enacted, others that uphold the tradition of repression and restrictions of freedom endure. As a community, we at once welcome the positive indicators of reform while at the same time remaining extremely cautious, ever-aware of the dangers of moving forward carelessly in haste.

For more than a decade, HREIB has been working for the protection and promotion of human rights in Burma. Through our experiences in human rights education, we have learned that changing leaders at the top of a community or nation does not automatically ensure the endorsement of human rights values such as universality and non-discrimination. For the principles of human rights to be upheld for all members of a society, there must be a change within each and every citizen—an awareness built on the ideals of not only respect for rights, but also responsibilities.

Reforms are only the very first steps toward democracy and a culture of human rights—a long road remains ahead to reaching our goal of a Burmese nation in which the people are empowered to promote their rights without fear or discrimination. HREIB is strongly committed to the work that lies ahead, as we continue to expand our network of trainers and advocates working for justice, peace, and equality.

During trainings, we educate participants on the concept of transformation of the three H's—transformation of the Head, of the Heart, and of the Hands. As an organization, our evolution adheres to this belief as well. Knowledge transformation is important for raising awareness of human rights issues, but changing attitudes and behaviors are also essential pieces of the process.

In the coming years, HREIB will surely face challenges, both external and internal, as we negotiate with and adapt to the shifting landscape. Yet, we will be moving forward well-prepared for what may come—with over a decade of experience, vast flexibility operating in an unpredictable region, and a stalwart commitment to human rights.

I would like to express my gratitude to our partners, network organizations, and donors who accompany us in this challenging and exciting work.

In solidarity
Aung Myo Min,
Executive Director
HREIB

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Aung Myo Min'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'A' and 'M'.





Because a rights culture is the right culture



Organizational Developments

1 Restructuring for 2012

In December 2011, HREIB's Deputy Director and Office Manager conducted a two week monitoring and evaluation visit inside Burma. They met with field team leaders in Rangoon and Mawlaymine and interviewed 21 former training participants. In addition to evaluating the activities, they met with leaders from a dozen local and international organizations to assess the operational environment for NGOs inside Burma. Civil society organizations expressed optimism based on the government's recent reforms, suggesting there is an emerging opportunity for CSOs to work on human rights.

The findings of the monitoring visit were presented at the strategic planning meeting, which resulted in a shift in HREIB's 2012 strategy, from working through a network of field teams to organizing more structured courses inside Burma. In 2012 HREIB will design new modules for a series human rights workshops with targeted professional groups (lawyers, journalists, NGO workers, etc.) in Rangoon and Mandalay. Senior trainers will organize two 5-day workshops per month, twenty-four workshops total, in each location beginning in June. Over the course of 2012, HREIB will evaluate the model as part of a longer-term strategic planning process geared toward gradually shifting more activities inside Burma. The project assessment will include a thorough examination of the risks and limitations that moving inside may pose.

2 Staff Capacity Building

HREIB regularly provides staff with opportunities to take part in professional development activities. In 2011, staff attended trainings and workshops to gain more knowledge about international human rights mechanisms and to improve their facilitation, documentation, and administration skills.

HREIB's Child Rights Program Coordinator attended a round-table discussion on violence against children in the Philippines. The discussion centered on the causes, manifestations and appropriate responses to VAC, as well as national and regional advocacy opportunities.

HREIB's Administration Officer and Co-Field Coordinator attended an Office Management Course organized by the International Rescue Committee. Participants learned how to formulate and introduce office rules, draft personnel policies, implement work place management activities, and develop roles and responsibilities for administrative staff. The Co-Field Coordinator also participated in an online distance course, "Monitoring and Evaluation in the NGO Sector," facilitated by the Boston-based NGO Human Rights Education Associates (HREA). The course taught students how to develop specific tools to measure the impact of their organization's projects. Since attending the course, the coordinator has begun preparing monitoring and evaluation guidelines for other staff.





HREIB in 2011: An Overview

The people of Burma are being denied their human rights ... I will be a voice for the voiceless.

- Gum Hka, Kachin State, Intensive Human Rights Course Participant

1 Trainings

HREIB's learner-centered, participatory trainings are at the center of our work. In 2011, our trainers continued their work raising awareness on human rights issues and expanding the network of human rights defenders throughout the region. Trainings that took place in 2011 included a six-week Intensive Human Rights Course, a Human Rights Based Approach to Development Seminar, a Training of Trainers, and numerous thematic courses on issues such as LGBT rights, child rights, women's rights, labor rights, and migrant rights.

The Training of Trainers [ToT], HREIB's flagship initiative, provides participants with a strong foundation in international human rights law, facilitation, and community organizing. In 2011, HREIB trained 24 new trainers. Upon returning to their communities, they conducted discussions, events, and workshops reaching over 2,000 people. In 2012, these trainers will play an important role in HREIB's organizational restructuring, serving as on-call facilitators during the trainings held inside Burma.

2 Forums and Discussions

As an informal counterpart to the trainings, HREIB hosts frequent small scale discussion forums for community members interested in exploring human rights issues. The intimate setting allows participants to share their questions and experiences openly with one another. As a result, these forums provide a valuable opportunity to explore sensitive and complex issues, such as sexual health, violence against women, and gender identity.



3 Community Events

In 2011, HREIB organized many community events to introduce human rights topics to the general public through entertaining and inclusive means. Many of the events are held on international days of awareness, such as World AIDS Day, Universal Children's Day, Anti-Child Trafficking Day, International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO), and Red Hand Day to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Activities include theater performances, fashion shows, parades, singing contests, poetry recitals, quizzes and games, question and answer sessions, and speeches by special guests. These interactive approaches elicit greater audience participation which in turn increases community awareness.



4 Advocacy Missions

In 2011, HREIB initiated an international advocacy project aimed at the Burmese government's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. HREIB organized a national consultation workshop to introduce members of community-based organizations to the UN CRC and child rights monitoring and reporting procedures. During the workshop participants established a working group, the Child Rights Forum on Burma, to draft a shadow report to submit to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for its review of Burma. In June 2011, two delegates from the CR Forum on Burma attended the CRC's pre-session working group meeting in Geneva to present the findings.



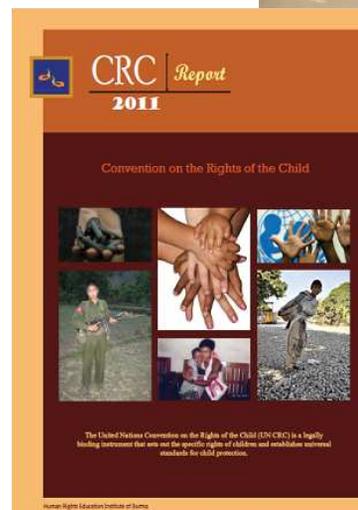
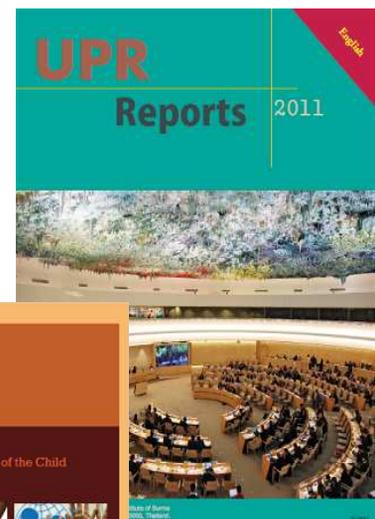
During the reporting period HREIB also continued its Universal Periodic Review advocacy project and published the UPR Report. After submitting a joint report for Burma's UPR, members of the Burma Forum on the UPR (BF-UPR), including HREIB's director, travelled to Geneva for the review held in January 2011 and the UN HRC follow-up held in June. At both assemblies they conducted targeted advocacy meetings which received attention from the OHCHR, UN member states, and the media.

A major success of both the CRC and UPR advocacy missions was establishing strong collaborative ties between the participating regional groups. The projects demonstrated a high level of support among CSOs for coordinated lobbying efforts, while strengthening their ability to engage with the international human rights system.

Both the CRC and the UPR reports are available in English and Burmese. Copies can be downloaded here:

http://books.hreib.com/index.php/item/crc-report?category_id=12

http://books.hreib.com/index.php/item/compilation-of-all-reports-of-burmamyanmar-to-the-upr-session-2011?category_id=12



5 Multimedia

2011 saw the growth of HREIB's Audio/Visual Unit with the production of multimedia resources including TV episodes, songs, music videos, magazines, posters, and cartoon animations. These tools help convey complex human rights issues in accessible and engaging formats. By producing the materials in Burmese, we are able fill a void in Burma's limited media landscape. HREIB's A/V team undertook many new projects this year; most notably, two new television initiatives—Human Rights Education TV (HRE TV) and Rainbow TV (as part of the LGBT program).

The A/V Unit filmed 24 episodes of HRE TV over the course of the year, on topics such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Gender Roles, and Child Trafficking. Twelve episodes have already aired on the Democratic Voice of Burma's TV channel.

Rainbow TV, an hour long program that covers news, interviews, and stories relevant to the LGBT movement, is produced bi-monthly and distributed on the Colours Rainbow website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. HREIB's LGBT program also produces a monthly magazine, Rainbow Colours, and a corresponding website, www.colorsrainbow.com, dedicated to covering LGBT issues. One thousand copies of each magazine issue are printed and distributed in Thailand and Burma. The website has received over 3,000 visitors.

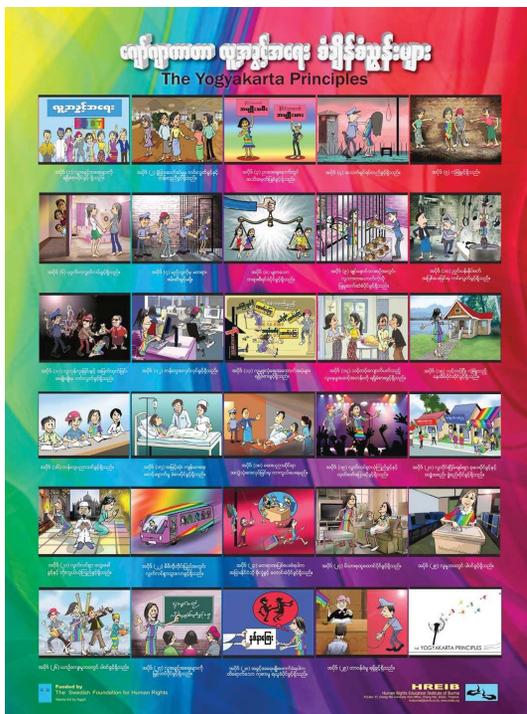


HRE TV episodes can be viewed here:
http://video.hreib.com/videos.php?cat=16&sort=most_recent&time=all_time&seo_cat_name=

Rainbow TV episodes can be viewed here:
<http://tvnews.colorsrainbow.com>

Multimedia Output

- 24 HRE TV episodes
- 3 Rainbow TV episodes
- 4 Volumes of Rainbow Colours Magazine
- 3 documentaries
- 5 campaign videos
- 1 activity documentation video
- 3 traditional dance performance videos
- 2 children's theater performance videos
- 4 music videos
- 3 animated TV spots
- 1 subtitled documentary
- Yogyakarta Principles Poster
- ECHO News Letter, distributed to migrants in Mizoram State
- 527 radios distributed



6 Networking

HREIB collaborates with national, regional, and international partners to strengthen the human rights and democracy movements in Burma and around the world. Networks increase the strength and visibility of advocacy campaigns, while building a foundation for sharing resources and capacity among partner organizations. HREIB has partnered with organizations in facilitating trainings and workshops, writing reports, HRV documentation, and advocacy efforts.

National Networks

- Burma Forum on the Universal Periodic Review
- Child Rights Forum of Burma
- Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND – Burma)
- Burma Against Child Trafficking (Burma ACT)
- Burmese LGBT Network

Regional Networks

- CRC Asia
- Asia Against Child Trafficking (Asia ACTS)
- Asian South-Pacific Bureau of Adult education (ASPBAE)
- Asia Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia)
- Regional Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Southeast Asia Popular Communications Program (SEAPCP)
- Komas (Malaysian-based organization that focuses on using media to raise awareness about rights issues)

International Networks

- NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Geneva Call
- Child Soldiers International
- Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
- International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)

2011 Activities by Theme					
	Training	Forum/Discussion	Community Event	Skills Workshop	Other
Human Rights	525	725	833	8	6
Child Rights	319	91	1700	6	4
LGBT Rights	291	588	667	8	0
Women's Rights	126	659	699	0	0
Other	0	10	0	18	0
Total	1261	2073	3899	40	10



HREIB

Mission & Objectives

Mission

To empower people of Burma through human rights education to engage in social transformation and to promote a culture of human rights for all.

Objectives

The people of Burma possess a critical human rights consciousness.

Political and social space exists for individuals to take action to promote dignity and well-being.

Communities within Burma initiate rights-based solutions to social problems.

Results

People are aware of their rights

People conceive of their problems in terms of rights

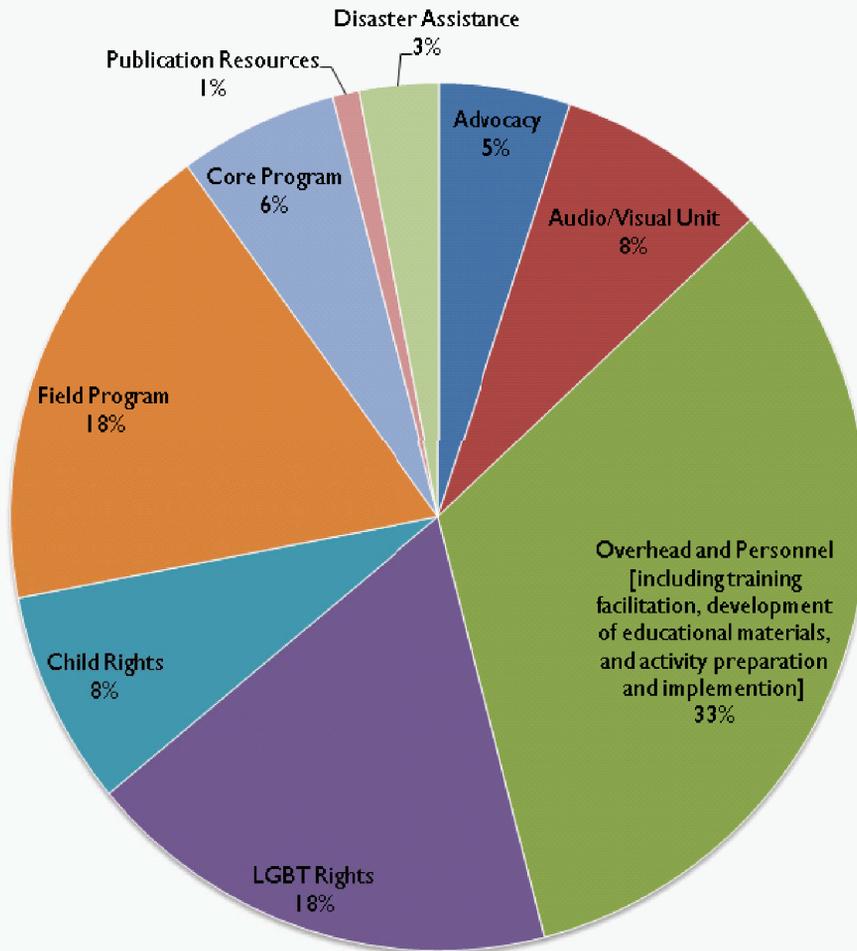
Authorities recognize human rights

People recognize the rights of others

Individuals propose and lead community action to solve problems

Community organizations adopt transformative rights-based activities

2011 Budget by Activity



Total Budget: 641,683.64 USD



Claiming Space:

The Achievements and Impacts of 2011

The following cases illustrate the scope of HREIB's activities and the pathways that link our projects to our mission. Each training, discussion, performance, or report is an individual step forward; together, they represent the movement toward promoting a culture of human rights throughout Burma. More than ever before, the people of Burma are able to claim ownership of the tools required to carve out space for their voices and their rights. Change is underway. Constructing a foundation of empowerment and respect for human rights is increasingly possible, and increasingly vital.

I want Karenni youth to be able to communicate with people all over the world. When I return to my community, I plan to include information about human rights in my English classes. Students will learn about human rights in school and will be encouraged to learn more on their own; they will conduct human rights advocacy for Karenni people in the future.

- Gerrad, English and Computer Teacher, Karenni State

1 Human Rights Response to Community Needs

Nine participants attended this year's six-week Intensive Human Rights Course. The course targets emerging youth activists from Burma with a goal of enabling them to build a culture of human rights and democracy upon returning to their respective communities. Before the training, HREIB administered a pre-test for prospective participants. Their answers indicated that most had limited knowledge of human rights. One applicant said she didn't understand how rights could bring about change in Burma. During the training, she came to understand the role human rights could play in Burma's development, and expressed hope that more people in Burma could have the opportunity to learn about their rights.

One participant from the course, upon returning to his community in Kachin State, conducted a two-day human rights workshop with members of a local political party. He addressed the ongoing conflict between the government armed forces and the Kachin Independence Army using HREIB's training resources. As a result of the workshop, the participants have planned to include human rights as a part of their political platform.

Another graduate of the course facilitated a discussion on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) with members of his community in Tanintharyi Division. The discussion focused on Article



7 of the UDHR, which maintains that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of property, because in his community there have been several land disputes involving the local government. After the discussion, participants planned an advocacy campaign on land rights using the UDHR.

2 Colours Rainbow

HREIB conducted multiple trainings for members of the LGBT community from Burma. While attending the trainings, participants are able to openly discuss their sexuality, often for the first time. Following the trainings, many participants decided to come out publicly; three shared their coming out stories in HREIB's Rainbow Colours Magazine.

Komyo, a young man from Rangoon, attended one of HREIB's LGBT rights trainings in Chiang Mai. Previously, he held the belief that homosexuality was a sickness or mental illness which could be fixed or treated. In an interview in Rainbow Magazine he explains how the training taught him to accept his sexual orientation and ultimately come out to his family and friends. He discusses the difficulties and insecurities that result from living in the closet, and how he realized that coming out publicly would allow him to act as a role model for the younger LGBT community.

A participant from HREIB's transgender training, Sara, gave an interview in Rainbow Colours where she discusses how learning about dignity and LGBT rights at the training instilled in her a sense of self-worth. Afterward, she had confidence to do the interview because of her newfound pride and a desire to support fellow transgendered people. Sara is currently very active in organizing LGBT

group discussions and meetings in Bangkok with other LGBT migrants from Burma.

HREIB's LGBT program has had a significant impact on increasing public awareness of LGBT rights. Volume 11 of *Rainbow Colours* features an article written by a straight woman from Burma whose sister, a lesbian woman, attended an HREIB Lesbian rights training. The author had originally been very disapproving of her sister's sexual orientation. She visited her sister during the HREIB training and started helping out with training logistics. Having the chance to meet other lesbians and hear their stories provided her with an understanding of LGBT rights, shifting her opinion of the LGBT community and her sister. In the article she discusses the need for communication and understanding between LGBT and non-LGBT communities.

3 Child Rights

Thirty children attended HREIB's Human Rights Young Advocates Training. One child who participated in the training commented: "Even though I had heard about child rights before this training I didn't really know what they were. Now, I understand what child rights are and know the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I also learned the differences between rights that are aimed at adults and those that are specifically for children. I understand why children are so vulnerable to being trafficked in this community. Finally, I learned that children have rights and responsibilities." Since the training, participants have become involved in leadership activities in their communities. Ten have joined United ACT, a youth theater group trained by HREIB. The troupe performed for an audience of over two thousand people in Mae Sot on the Day Against Child Trafficking and has acted in many of HREIB's music videos and TV episodes.

HREIB's field team in Rangoon facilitated Child Rights Workshops to introduce local children to the idea that they are rights holders, a concept many were not aware of prior to the workshops. Facilitators used artwork and other creative activities to help the children share their experiences and discuss what human rights meant to them. One participant said that after he attended the workshop he began to notice many instances of child labor in Rangoon, at restaurants and on the streets.

Sometimes at school our teacher is wrong and we know that she is wrong, but we can't say anything. At school the teachers shout at us when we ask questions and we are afraid of them. But during the [HREIB] workshop I was encouraged ask questions and share what I thought.

- Child Rights Workshop Participant



4 Child Rights Trainings with Soldiers

HREIB's Child Rights Coordinator facilitated trainings with soldiers from Mon, Karen, and Karenni ethnic regions. 66 people attended the trainings — 46 soldiers, 9 members of political factions, 7 community leaders, 2 women leaders, 1 youth, and 1 CBO representative. Participants learned about international treaties and mechanisms related to the use of child soldiers and children affected by armed conflict. They studied how to recognize human rights violations and speak out against them.

Soldiers from all three armed groups came to recognize the importance of ensuring their policies meet international standards. For example, during the training with soldiers from the Mon National Liberation Army, participants compared their own child protection policies with the UN CRC. They found that most of their policies were already in line with international standards, but there was a lack of awareness on the ground. The leaders of the MNLA expressed interest in signing the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment and in gaining recognition and respect from the international community.

In 2011 fighting between Non-State Armed Groups and the government military reignited in many regions, underscoring the need for child protection and international standards in recruitment policies. Since the trainings took place, some soldiers who participated have been involved in ceasefire talks with the government. During those discussions the soldiers have raised key concerns about human rights violations and child rights abuses. The trainings provided soldiers from these groups with the knowledge they needed to address the promotion and protection of child rights in conflict areas at the negotiations. Moreover, the trainings informed soldiers of the government's obligations under international law.

Since the trainings, Non-State Armed Groups have approached the UN to determine how they can be removed from the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, and have released press statements avowing their commitment to uphold child rights. The Kachin Independence Organization has set up child protection mechanisms to ensure education and healthcare for children and their mothers.

5 Migrant Registration

In 2011, Thai Authorities opened a window period for undocumented migrants to register for work permits from June 15th to July 15th. In response, HREIB's Mae Sot field team, which works on labor rights issues with economic migrants and refugees from Burma, began planning trainings in cooperation with local networking partners. Twelve one-day trainings were conducted in the area, focusing on Thai labor law and the process of registering for a work permit. Over 200 migrant workers attended. The overall goal was to help as many undocumented migrant workers as possible achieve legal status through obtaining work permits. The facilitators explained the benefits of a work permit and how to address challenges such as not being given time off to apply or being outright forbidden by employers. This knowledge was then multiplied as the participants shared the information with their colleagues and coworkers in factories and on plantations. Over 500,000 migrant workers from Burma registered for work permits during the one-month window period.



6 LGBT Migrant Community

HREIB held an LGBT rights training at the Mae La refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border. Much of the discussion that took place during the training focused on the abuse that LGBT migrants were subject to and the lack of protection in place at the camp. Following the training, HREIB set up a meeting with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to discuss the security issues. The participants selected four representatives to lead the meeting with UNHCR officials.

At the meeting, they raised the safety issues in the camp and presented their recommendations for better protection based on a security guide that the group had developed at the training. They focused on the need for sensitization among the camp population and solutions to their protection concerns. As a

result, the UNHCR representatives promised to conduct awareness raising programs on gender and diversity issues. They also agreed to raise the security concerns surrounding

the prominence of LGBT-directed violence with the Thai Government and Camp Committee. They provided their hotline number in case of an emergency and will meet with the group again for the discussion of possible protection system developments in the camp.

As part of HREIB's community initiative in Thailand's southern province of Ranong, local peer educators established a community center as an education venue for MSM migrants. Throughout the year, the community center hosted 55 informal community discussions and eleven trainings on STIs and HIV/AIDS. The discussions provided participants with an opportunity to talk about their sexual experiences and learn about relevant risk behaviors. After one discussion, two participants approached the peer educator about a friend of theirs who had recently passed away from an illness they suspected was HIV/AIDS. They expressed interest in getting tested. The next day, the facilitator accompanied the two participants to the World Vision clinic to receive STI testing.

The community center provided MSM migrants with a space to read and discuss educational resources on sexual health issues. It also served as a distribution venue: 2,160 condoms, 115 tubes of lubricant, 140 HIV/AIDS pamphlets and 280 STI pamphlets were handed out at the center. The center fostered participation among migrants in various community activities including a condom promotion event, three MSM network meetings, and World AIDS Day preparations. Overall, the center established a space for

members of the MSM community to share experiences, establish connections, and provide each other with necessary support.

According to the Ranong project evaluation, over the course of the year migrants in the area who possessed knowledge of HIV/AIDS increased from 40 percent to 90 percent, while those who reported consistently using condoms increased from 5 percent to 39 percent.

7 Gender-Based Initiatives

Of the 130 community activities implemented by HREIB's field teams, 36, or 28 percent, focused on women's rights and gender equality. In Rangoon, the community organizers facilitated a Women's Empowerment Workshop. Teams in

Thailand and India led discussions on Women's Rights to give migrant women from Burma an opportunity to network, share experiences, and learn about gender issues.

In my family I explained to my mom that men and women should be more equal. I told her that the washing should not only be done by the women and that my brother should help. My mother agreed and now my brother and I share our chores.

– Workshop Participant, December 2011

They discussed power dynamics between men and women in the community and in the home. The facilitator reported that the women did not have any other opportunity to share their experiences of gender discrimination. A follow-up evaluation on these activities indicated not only an increase in knowledge among participants and a shift in attitude about gender, but also demonstrated a significant rise in efforts taken to enforce gender equality in their communities.

The participants had identified several community problems related to gender inequality and discrimination, such as men taking on all leadership roles and women being expected to leave their jobs after marriage. Many participants organized discussions with women in their communities in order to share the information they learned.

One participant who led discussions in her community identified lack of work as a problem many local women faced. As a result, she implemented a project to help women apply for ID cards in order to obtain jobs.

I conducted women's discussions and workshops and explored basic needs in order to address community problems. If we found problems in those workshops, we asked for help from other organizations and asked volunteers for technical assistance.

- Workshop Participant, December 2011

8

Applying the Human Rights Based Approach to Development



Aung Aung works in Rangoon at a German NGO that focuses on poverty alleviation, emergency assistance, and food security. He attended HREIB's Human Rights Based Approach to Development Seminar with a specific desire to learn more about good practices in project management. During the sessions on transparency and accountability, he came to realize that his organization should be more open with regard to finances and budget. He decided he would speak with his supervisor when he returned to Rangoon about his concerns with the lack of transparency.

After the training, Aung Aung outlined a three-point plan to apply what he learned while at HREIB. The plan involves bringing in an outside evaluator, appointing an HRBA position on the organization's management committee, and improving monitoring through regular community meetings with stakeholders. Aung Aung plans to act as an advocate for human rights with the Project Managers on his team and the Country Director of his organization. He intends to change the human resource policies to foster more openness and transparency amongst staff.

Ma Thanda works as a project coordinator and trainer with an NGO inside Burma that promotes women and child rights. During HREIB's HRBA seminar, she applied the PANEL analysis to her organization. She concluded that accountability was limited due to the fact that the organization's leader holds the decision-making power. In terms of the NGO's programming, she found that an increased amount of cooperation between the local communities and the government would be highly beneficial. Other improvements she identified could be achieved by linking communities' needs to individuals' rights. She realized that the main issues affecting the individuals she works with concern their livelihood; thus, introducing education programs would build their capacity while also teaching them

In December 2011, HREIB held a week-long Human Rights Based Approach to Development seminar in Chiang Mai with eleven participants from CBOs and NGOs in Burma. The seminar introduced participants to theories of development, the rights associated with development, tools for analyzing and solving development related problems, and ideas for implementing rights-based programming. Alumni of the HRBA seminar have been very active upon returning to their communities, leading trainings on issues ranging from child soldiers to documentation of human rights abuses. These follow-up trainings have reached 228 participants, including students, social workers, monks, and even local police officers.

During the HRBA trainings, the community leaders in attendance are given the space and tools to reflect on the structure and practices of their organizations. Many return to their jobs with new insight on issues such as transparency, structural hierarchies, and power dynamics, with the skills to ask questions and implement change.



Looking Back, Looking Forward



HREIB staff, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Challenges, Lessons, and Moving into 2012

As HREIB has expanded the number of activities implemented inside Burma, a host of challenges have arisen accordingly. Field teams operating under the repressive government face safety concerns, as anyone involved in community development work is under the scrutiny of local government officials and informants. HREIB trainers in Mon State were forced to change the location of one of their trainings halfway through due to security risks. And while in 2011 we were able to operate child soldier trainings in Kachin and northern Shan States, the recent increase in fighting between non-state armed groups and the government military has forced HREIB to postpone future trainings in those regions until the situation improves.

Even when a secure set-up has been established, trainers often face obstacles in building trust among participants. Wary of government repercussions, they often exhibit guarded or reluctant behaviors. Some members of the Burmese LGBT community expressed doubt about the safety of attending the LGBT community awareness activities. Facilitators were able to convene discussions that addressed their concerns and allayed worries. Participants of HREIB's child soldier workshop organized Red Hand Day events inside Burma with plans to distribute child rights CDs. However, many attendees at the events declined the CDs out of fear that they were political materials. In the future, HREIB will better distinguish between sensitive and non-sensitive resource materials.

Another security concern inside Burma is the use of unsanctioned educational materials. HREIB produces a wide variety of educational resources including pamphlets, pocket books, posters, training modules, and magazines. However, human rights materials are considered illegal in Burma, and thus the production and transportation of our publications remains dangerous. Copies of the resources are brought into Burma where they are reproduced and distributed; nonetheless, the quality and quantity of materials that can be disseminated inside is severely limited. The field teams sometimes face a shortage of training materials. The demand in Burma for resources such as Colours Rainbow Magazine greatly exceeds the supply, while limited internet throughout the country prevents people from accessing the information online. Trainers operating inside have also expressed a concern about storing photos and other documentation of human rights trainings and events, which hinders activity reporting.

With regard to implementation, HREIB faced some challenges this year tied to the capacity of trainers and participants. Many of our trainers are young and at points found it difficult to conduct trainings with older participants; likewise it was hard to encourage youth involvement when there was a generation gap amongst participants. At times, HREIB conducts trainings with participants that have low literacy levels, which slows the pace of the training and limits the amount that can be covered.

The monitoring visit conducted in December 2011 included interviews with former participants to gather feedback on training content and execution. Some respondents mentioned that while they appreciated learning about the international human rights mechanisms, they did not fully understand how those rights applied in the real world or how to follow-up on human rights violations after they had been identified. In future module updates, HREIB will emphasize practical skills related to human rights violations claims and reporting.

During the interviews participants also consistently expressed a desire for further and more extensive trainings, on issues including nondiscrimination, domestic abuse, and drug addiction. They also requested more trainings at the village level and inside Burma.

I want HREIB to do more HR trainings in Burma. If you can't do the training here, continue doing more in Thailand. These people can bring the knowledge back to Burma.

—Human Rights Workshop Participant

This is an exciting time for Burma; the country has begun to undergo changes at a rapid pace after decades of stagnation. The government has recently released prominent political prisoners, entered into ceasefire negotiations with many non-state armed groups, introduced policies to increase freedom of assembly and association, and, perhaps most notably, held by-elections which resulted in Aung San Suu Kyi's appointment to parliament. During this time, it is vitally important that HREIB adapt to the changing circumstances. Many 'exiled' organizations are considering shifting their operations inside Burma in light of recent reforms. As mentioned above (see Organizational Developments), HREIB is charting a new way forward based on the space that is emerging for activities inside. Thus far in 2012, we have begun preparing for 24 human rights trainings in Rangoon and Mandalay.

Nevertheless, reforms in Burma are fresh and unproven; optimism is best tempered by caution and continued scrutiny of those in power. As we implement projects to increase our presence inside Burma, staff and partners need to be fully aware of the risks and challenges associated with moving too quickly. HREIB anticipates a long period of transition in Burma, particularly at the grassroots level where genuine reform has yet to be seen. In this upcoming period, we will adapt our programs to new opportunities while remaining committed to ensuring we reach people in the most effective way possible.



Thank you to all our 2011 donors!

2,127

people attended the Anti-Child Trafficking Day Event in Mae Sot.

46

soldiers from Non-State Armed Groups attended child rights trainings.

13

Burmese LGBT CBOs took part in the 3rd Burmese LGBT Networking meeting in May 2011.

300,000

people viewed the Universal Children's Day singing contest aired on Democratic Voice of Burma TV.

228

people inside Burma attended follow-up trainings facilitated by participants of the Human Rights Based Approach to Development Seminar.

90

percent of MSM migrants indicated they possessed knowledge of HIV/AIDS at the end of the year, compared to 40% at the beginning.

527

radios were distributed throughout Burma, as a communication medium for training participants and community organizers.

2

media outlets covered the IDAHO event in Chiang Mai —Mizzima News and The Irrawaddy.

597

Burmese migrant MSM attended peer-led discussions in Ranong.

1,000

copies of each issue of Rainbow Magazine were printed and distributed throughout Burma and Thailand.

14

CSOs took part in the National Consultation Workshop on the UN CRC.

500,000

migrant workers registered for work permits in Thailand following workshops held in Mae Sot.

24

trainings will be held inside Burma in 2012.



G.P.O Box 485
Chiang Mai, 50000
Thailand
Tel: 66(0)81-530-6331
Fax: 66(0)53-120-422
Email: hreburma@loxinfo.co.th