



# Human Rights

Education Institute of Burma

**Annual Report** 2012

The map of Myanmar is divided into the following regions, each with a distinct color:

- Kachin State (Yellow)
- Sagaing Division (Purple)
- Chin State (Pink)
- Mandalay Division (Blue)
- Rakhine State (Light Green)
- Magway Division (Light Blue)
- Shan State (Light Orange)
- Kayah State (Light Green)
- Bago Division (Light Green)
- Ayeyarwaddy Division (Light Purple)
- Yangon Division (Light Purple)
- Mon State (Light Orange)
- Kayin State (Light Purple)
- Tanintharyi Division (Teal)

Four inset photographs illustrate educational activities:

- Top-left: A group of students sitting on the floor in a circle, engaged in a discussion or activity.
- Top-right: A group of students posing for a group photo in a classroom.
- Middle-right: A student presenting to a group of students seated on the floor.
- Bottom-left: A group of students holding up a large poster or project they have completed.
- Bottom: A large group of students in school uniforms posing for a group photo in a classroom.



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## HREIB

The Human Rights Education Institute of Burma is a nongovernmental organization that facilitates a broad range of human rights training and advocacy programs for grassroots organizations and community leaders. We are dedicated to building a peaceful, democratic and just society where the people of Burma possess a critical human rights consciousness and are empowered to initiate rights-based solutions to social problems. HREIB is a registered foundation with administrative offices in Thailand and Burma.





Workshops



Multimedia



Capacity Building



Trainings



Community Outreach



Community Events



Advocacy



Networking

## Letter from the Director

After twelve years of working in exile, HREIB has in 2012 officially moved its operations inside Burma. The transition represents a huge step forward that would have been hard to foresee even a few years ago. It's been a truly transformative year, full of milestones both exciting and challenging. The new terrain paved by recent reforms is being explored by civil society organizations such as ours with both anticipation and caution.

In May 2012, we formally set up our first two Human Rights Education training centers in Yangon and Mandalay. After over a decade of conducting human rights education activities from Thailand, it is with excitement that I've witnessed our trainers and participants at the centers engaging freely in animated dialogue about human rights issues; witnessed hundreds turn out to participate in the first International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia celebrated in Yangon; witnessed our partners working side-by-side to voice their concerns about the state of rights and democracy with politicians and authorities. The transition process has been encouraging and daunting - fraught with questions and surprises that are to be expected as we begin moving back in untested waters.

There are still many challenges ahead. The country's five decades of authoritarian rule are not distant memories - the people of Burma take in the new air of freedom with varying levels of mistrust. There are still repressive laws being used to keep human rights defenders and activists behind bars for exercising their freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. Human rights abuses such as land grabbing and other development-related violations are carried out extensively. Hostility and abuse toward ethnic and religious minorities has worsened as sectarian violence spreads throughout the country and ethnic groups remain persecuted by the government military. There is still uncertainty. There is still fear.

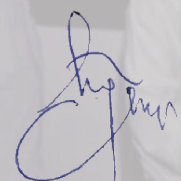
Whatever the challenges that lay ahead, HREIB is committed to its tradition of providing human rights education to all the people of Burma, regardless of race, religion, social status, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity. We believe that human rights education is vital for building a strong foundation of respect for the diversity that exists in Burma. Countries in transition require a strong human rights program to help move along the road toward genuine, sustainable democracy and human rights.

Many human rights defenders have sacrificed their lives and their freedoms for restoring democracy and human rights in our motherland. Because of their struggle, there is now hope. Human rights education must be for all, and the people of Burma must join in to change the country for the better.

Since moving back, I have met up with former training participants from our courses over the past twelve years who are now working in Burma as activists, community organizers, educators, and human rights defenders. Each year, this network continues to grow. Now, as the organization makes its final steps back inside the country, we do so together, openly and at home.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to all of the staff and trainers of HREIB who every day work tirelessly to fulfill our vision of building a culture of human rights in Burma. Working together, we strongly believe that Burma will one day be a country where diversity is respected and human rights are in place for all.

Aung Myo Min reunites with family in Yangon



In solidarity,  
Aung Myo Min

# Part 1

# The Organization



In 2012, both HREIB and Burma have undergone a significant period of transition. Witnessing the reforms taking place in Burma during 2011 led HREIB to reassess its operational structure. The human rights education program which was previously structured as a collection of field trainer teams operating along Burma's border areas was redesigned through the establishment of the two HRE Training Centers in Yangon and Mandalay. In July 2012, Executive Director Aung Myo Min returned to Burma for the first time after 24 years in exile, a milestone that is indicative of the significant changes underway which are requiring civil society to adjust and adapt while navigating the new terrain.

The strategy shift has served as the first main step in the organization's move inside. Over the course of the year, the training centers conducted a total of twenty-four 5-day human rights trainings, 12 at each center, along with a number of community events and other human rights related activities. The major highlights from the past year have arrived in the form of discovery—discovering what space is available and secure for discussing human rights; discovering the level of interest and passion for human rights education among Burmese civil society; and discovering the innovation with which training participants have taken initiative to spread HRE throughout their communities.

A monitoring trip conducted at the end of the year made it clear that the 2012 shift in strategy was both timely and necessary. HREIB has established itself as an important actor for the promotion of human rights both in relation to other civil society actors and international partners with a presence in the country as well as increasingly in relation to government representatives. There has been a significant increase in opportunities for partnerships, advocacy, and networking as interest in HREIB's work among potential participants and partners continues to grow. The arrival of new opportunities is also saddled with the challenges of strategic decision-making on the direction of the organization's programs and resources in the years to come.

Colors Rainbow (CR), HREIB's LGBT Rights program, has also proven to be a timely and effective pioneering force in Burma's rapidly growing LGBT Rights movement. Over the year CR has focused on strengthening networking among LGBT groups across the country while preparing for the program's relocation inside Burma during the first quarter of 2013.

Although the recent reforms suggest positive change is underway, many restrictions remain with regard to conducting human rights education openly. To minimize risks and provide a better safeguard for participants and staff, the organization elected to operate inside Burma under the name Equality Myanmar (EM).

In the coming year we will continue to explore the options of registering as a Burmese NGO. Currently, we are focusing on building solidarity networks with other local organizations and government stakeholders to provide participants with the safest possible environment for holding open dialogues on the current human rights context.

### Our vision

HREIB envisions a peaceful, tolerant, and democratic society built on respect for dignity and human rights for all in Burma.

### Our mission

HREIB's mission is to empower the people of Burma through human rights education to engage in social transformation and promote a culture of human rights.

### Our objectives

- To promote the inclusion of a human rights perspective in Burmese organizations' activities and methodologies
- To engender widespread awareness of domestic and international avenues for reporting human rights violations
- To support communities' initiation of rights-based solutions to social problems
- To increase public discourse on human rights through the production and distribution of language-accessible educational materials and multimedia resources

## Core Values

HREIB subscribes to a human rights based approach which integrates the norms and principles of the international human rights system into all aspects of the organization's work, objectives, and methodology. The principles are defined as: inalienability, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights; empowerment and participation; equality and non-discrimination; and accountability.

### *Promoting a human rights perspective*

In 2012 HREIB continued to promote and advocate a human rights based approach to LGBT, child and women's rights as well as peace and conflict issues. Fostering a human rights consciousness in Burma is at the heart of HREIB's programming. Providing a human rights perspective for local situations and applying international standards to a grassroots context continues to be a driving force in accomplishing our mission.

### *Raising widespread awareness*

By opening regional offices in Yangon and Mandalay, HREIB has been able to bring human rights values and principles to a wider audience. Increased training sessions, media and communication initiatives, advocacy efforts, network expansion, and community events significantly contributed to HREIB's mission to empower the people of Burma through human rights education.

### *Supporting communities' initiation of rights-based solutions*

The newly available space has increased HREIB's access to target groups and ability to provide stronger support for communities seeking resolutions to human rights violations. Through our training initiatives HREIB encourages community youth and leaders to promote rights-based solutions to local conflicts. A wide variety of tools are used to provide education, guidance, and support for such solutions, which are then passed along to community members and applied to relevant concerns.

### *Increasing public discourse*

HREIB was able to host numerous community events openly for the first time in Burma. Days such as the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO), the International Day of Peace, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women were celebrated with speakers and presentations that touched on pressing human rights related issues. Open discussion and participant interaction provided space for attendees to share their opinions and questions and to enhance their knowledge of human rights, which they went to share with their communities and peers. Informed public discourse will play a crucial role in Burma's reform process. HREIB is dedicated to raising awareness among the general public by increasing education opportunities and encouraging the public's sharing of and discussion on important local issues.





## Part 2

# The Programs



## a. General Human Rights Education

Our general human rights education program introduces people from Burma to core human rights concepts in order to empower them to spread awareness in their work and communities and to take active roles in the improvement of the local HR situation. We aim to enhance Burmese peoples' understanding of the links between human rights and development and enable people to conceive of their problems in terms of rights.

*"At first, we couldn't clarify what we were doing and why. We only knew that the actions done by the government are wrong and we had to be against them. Now, we have a tool (Rights Based Approach) which we can use. And so we are starting to see the broad and big picture."*

— Training Participant (NGO Sector)

The 2012 program was initiated with a refresher course held for eleven senior trainers in order to implement the shift from a network of field teams to a center-based program. During the course, the trainers reviewed core human rights principles, followed by sessions on the history of human rights, women's rights, child rights, and community organizing concepts. They covered the participatory learning framework and a variety of facilitation tools, and the senior trainers designed modules for the 5-day sector trainings to be held at the centers.

Participants discussed some of the challenges of working inside Burma. They looked at new methods for addressing culturally sensitive issues, and shared ideas about how to respond to weighty and complex questions. During the last module of the course, participants learned more about developing tools for monitoring and evaluation, which have since helped them measure the impact of the center-based trainings and provided insight into what changes need to be implemented in the upcoming years.

HREIB also held an Intensive Training of Trainers (ToT) in July with eleven participants from CSOs in Burma running various training programs. The ToT was designed to increase participants' capacity to incorporate a rights-based perspective in their organization's work and trainings.

### **Sector Trainings in Yangon and Mandalay Center**

In 2012 we conducted twenty-four trainings and four community events in Yangon and Mandalay under the general Human Rights Education Program. The five-day trainings were designed to target six different sectors, including NGO workers; youth; women; LGBT activists;

political activists; and teachers. In bringing together sector-based participants, the trainings have provided strong opportunities for networking and collaboration on future activities. A total of 421 participants attended the trainings, 203 male and 218 female.

The establishment of the two training centers has allowed HREIB to strengthen its impact and visibility. The centers received a consistent amount of training applicants, and HREIB trainers began receiving numerous requests to support different projects, including serving as resource persons; advising new trainers; assisting with community organizing projects; and mentoring small youth groups.

*"The five day training has given participants the platform to share with each other about who is doing what, and what are the inspiring and motivational issues that they can learn from each other. At the same time, it has been a place where youth from different backgrounds and experiences can share their opinions on the country's current political and socio-economic issues. Disagreement and debates among the participants have brought an extra learning process beyond training based issues."*

— Ko Aung, Yangon Trainer,  
on the first 5-day Youth Training

Based on their feedback, many participants chose to attend the trainings because while they were familiar with human rights terminology, they lacked an understanding of the concepts' meanings and how to apply them.

The fear that in the past has accompanied discussions of human rights has only recently been tempered, but the atmosphere was markedly changed from past years. Participants noted that they felt safe attending the trainings and felt free to discuss the concepts whether at HREIB or on their own.

*"Once I entered into the training room, I felt safe and warm. I became good friends with students from other universities and also with the trainer team. What I want to say is that we as participants have the responsibility to share to our organizations about what we have learned here. If not us, who else can share?"*

— Training Participant (Youth Sector)



Anchoring the program at the two centers has given HREIB an opportunity for closer cooperation with target groups and communities through a number of follow-up activities, such as community discussions; presentations at workplaces; organizing meetings; and curriculum development.

While the training centers are based in cities, HREIB was able to support the travel costs of participants from rural areas. People living in rural areas in Burma face a greater prevalence of human rights violations while having less access to HR information or training opportunities. Participants felt that having mixed training groups, both urban and rural, strengthened discussions and action planning, as rural participants have more hands on experience dealing with HRV while local participants have more experience dealing with authorities and more formal structures. The two groups were able to share experiences, resources, and collaborate on follow-up as travel allowed. Many have expressed desire to develop a more long term and formalized exchange.

At one of the NGO sector trainings facilitated in Mandalay, a participant from a small town in Kachin State discussed the human rights abuses that occur in her village. One of the issues she mentioned was the use of a two-acre lot next to her home as a provisional garbage dump. The



accumulation of plastic and trash had led to an outbreak of disease among the villagers living in close proximity to the dump. She explained that the local government's waste management workers were responsible for dumping the community's trash in the lot. The neighbors couldn't afford to clean up the area themselves, nor did they receive support when they contacted the village leader.

She asked the facilitators for advice in handling the case, and they suggested she and her neighbors photograph the area and the government workers' dumping trash there; write a letter explaining the situation and noting cause and effect (illness, poor land quality, etc.) with signatures from the families living in the area; to send all documentation to the Moe Nyin Township office, the waste management officials, and local police, along with a copy of her ID card. She followed the trainers' recommendations upon returning home. Throughout the process they continued to advise her over the phone while they discussed her concerns about producing such a public statement. A short period of time following her submission of documentation, the local government cleaner began to clear out the garbage dump.

One of the activities led at a training involved asking participants to come up with an image or symbol to represent human rights. Below are some of their responses:

*Human Rights is like the Atmosphere. It doesn't need anything to exist, and it doesn't prioritize. Everyone owns it. Human Rights is like Water. It is the most essential thing for all human beings. I want to compare Human Rights to Clothes. It covers us for our dignity as well as for our safety. Human Rights is like a Tree. It gives us enough shade and fresh air for our well-being. Human Rights is like a Book. A book can let a person know what is right and wrong. The symbol of Human Rights is a Shadow. A shadow always follow you, wherever you go and stop. I would like a Home to symbolize Human Rights, full of furniture, food supplies, and other necessities. I think human rights are like Scales. It shows justice and equality.*

## **Advocacy and Networking**

Through the establishment of the training centers, HREIB has been able to engage more regularly with its existing network and strengthen relationships with partner organizations. We have engaged in a number of joint initiatives with partner organizations through participation and facilitation of trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, and events.

The recent reforms have given way to opportunities for organizations with experience in human rights education to engage more directly with decision makers inside the country. New initiatives in 2012 were aimed at promoting government accountability and increased consultation with civil society. In cooperation with network partners, HREIB has coordinated and supported advocacy efforts that target representatives of state institutions, such as the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, and political decision makers, such as reform friendly MPs.

HREIB's advocacy program is designed to empower civil society actors to engage with local authorities in Burma and with UN agencies and international human rights advocates. HREIB has been able to focus more of its advocacy efforts on the local and national actors than was previously feasible, while remaining engaged with the international community to encourage its continuous scrutiny of the government's human rights record.

In October, HREIB attended a workshop hosted by the Myanmar People Forum, FORUM-ASIA and the Task Force on ASEAN and Burma as a Burma representative to take part in an ASEAN lobby group advocating for a people centered ASEAN. HREIB serves as a member of a working group to monitor the government's implementation of the UPR, as well as a member of a group dedicated to ensuring the accountability, transparency and continuous monitoring of the MNHRC in accordance with the Paris Principles and the enactment of its enabling law.

## **HR Community Events**

In 2012 HREIB orchestrated a large number of community events alongside its growing network of civil society organizations, activist groups, and other stakeholders. The Yangon and Mandalay training teams organized events on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and International Human Rights Day. Attendance at the four events reached over 1,450 people and was well received by all audiences.

In Yangon, the Elimination of Violence Against Women Day event held on November 25 was co-organized by sixteen other NGOs and civil society groups. It included a walk through three townships in Yangon, attended by 450 people, and an informative indoor panel discussion on the topic of women's roles and status in Burmese society, which was attended by 300 people. Members

of the media were present at the events and published several articles on the discussions held and the day's program. The event in Mandalay was attended by 400 participants and showcased a photo exhibition in addition to a human rights quiz and panel discussion.

December 10, 2012 marked the first time an open and public event was hosted to commemorate the International Human Rights day in Burma. The event in Yangon was organized and hosted by nine partner CSOs. The event's program was guided by the international theme: "My Voice Counts." It included a panel discussion with four civil society representatives and two opposition Members of Parliament. The topics covered touched on important and pressing issues in Burmese society such as women's rights, rights of people with disabilities, LGBT rights, land grabbing, and the release of political prisoners.

## **Educational Resources**

HREIB uses a range of multimedia resources to supplement the training curriculums as well as to reach wider audiences that are unable to attend trainings. Television programs, films, music CDs, cartoons, manuals, posters, and web and social networking sites are integral to the dissemination of human rights education. Past feedback and evaluations have highlighted the need for educational materials that pertain to the practical application of human rights knowledge such as documenting human rights abuses and seeking redress. As a result, the audio/visual team projects focused on these themes in 2012, which has allowed trainers to use the multimedia output as additional teaching material.

Human Rights Education Television (HRE-TV) episodes in 2012 centered on legal education, with an emphasis on the relation between international standards, constitutional and statutory guarantees, and domestic legislation. The videos are screened by trainers to illustrate thematic topics covered during relevant training sessions. The A/V Unit produced 18 episodes of HRE TV (Episodes 19 to 36) which were broadcast on the Democratic Voice of Burma TV (DVB TV) satellite channel and LiveStation online streaming and were uploaded onto the DVB and HREIB's websites, Facebook and Youtube pages.

HRE TV episodes present human rights concepts in an accessible, learner-centered format, which encourages discussion and connections between international standards and grassroots solutions. HRE TV has been an effective and essential resource for disseminating knowledge of human rights concepts to a wider Burmese audience. In HREIB's online video gallery, the HRE TV episodes have combined received over 65,000 views. The trainers featured in the videos consistently receive positive feedback from people they meet throughout Burma who have watched and enjoyed the program.

In 2012, HREIB also produced three docudramas on land rights, anti-child trafficking, and internal displacement. Three documentaries were also produced about the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO), the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), and child participation. Cartoons, posters and other educational material on human rights, child rights and women's rights were produced to strengthen our training sessions and provide visual guides for participants and community members.

HREIB video gallery: <http://video.hreib.com/>

HREIB document gallery: <http://books.hreib.com/>

## b. Peace Education

In 2012, HREIB implemented a Peace Education program in response to the ongoing fighting between the government military and Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) that has worsened over the past year in certain areas of the country. Tentative ceasefires have been continuously breached, while fighting targeting ethnic minorities in Arakan and Kachin States has displaced over 100,000 people in each region. The Peace Education program was developed as a grassroots awareness-raising initiative to promote participation of affected communities in the peace building process.

*"There were opportunities to discuss the view that young people can also take part in the process of peace making and strengthen the process. Moreover, young people earned the trust and recognition from leaders of different organizations in the state. As a result, there will be opportunities for the youth to take charge of future programs with the recognition and approval of adults in the communities."*

— A Karenni youth leader organizing the Peace Day Events

Under the program, 16 youth leaders from six conflict-affected areas—Kachin State, Mon State, Karenni State, Karen State, Shan State, and Chin State—were trained as peer educators on peace and conflict resolution. The training focused on the importance of promoting human rights in the peace building process. The youth had the opportunity to discuss the ways in which the conflict affects their lives, such as breaking up families; forcing children out of school; recruitment of child soldiers; and draining community resources.

On September 21, the youth teams held events commemorating the International Day of Peace in the six target locations. Over 1,100 people attended the events, including groups influential in the local communities such as township authorities, NLD representatives, and ethnic and religious community leaders. The youth leaders recruited local community and religious leaders to speak at the events which emphasized the message "No Rights, No Peace." The events fostered new partnerships between the youth's organizations and local groups, and empowered the youth as community leaders.

Under the Peace Education Program, many of the youth leaders used religion as a lens for addressing local diversity and community conflicts, and during the events focused on the need for building interfaith communication and understanding. Some of the groups invited local religious leaders from different faiths and ethnic groups to present speeches on the need for dialogue and collaboration across religious divides. The Chin youth leaders, who organized speeches from a Buddhist monk, Catholic Abbot, Christian priest, and an officer from the Township Religious Affairs Department, highlighted the success of their interfaith message:

*"The theme of the talks given by the religious leaders is that the existence of different religious faiths is not a problem. It is, therefore, required of local people of different religious faiths to work together identifying common views in the interest of the local people. After the ceremony, the religious leaders continued to hold heart-to-heart talks. That implied that the ceremony brought improved understanding and friendly relations between religious leaders of respective regions. They also reached an agreement that worshippers will not slander each other's religious faith, and they will prohibit such acts. Some attendees expressed their personal opinions that people of different religious faiths should work hand in hand. Also, the young people who organized the ceremony are of different ethnic groups such as Bamar, Rakhine, Khume (Chin), Aso Chin and Mara (Chin), as well as of different religious faiths."*

The program also included a ToT conducted to train fifteen teachers from the six target areas in peace education methodology. The ToT focused on concepts including the relationship between human rights and peace; the relationship between individual peace and social/political peace; the peace building process in the context of Burma; and the introduction of peace in school curriculums. The teachers discussed the chal-

lenges that exist in their communities as a result of the conflict and various actions they can take in response. Collectively, they designed modules for multiplier trainings to conduct with students and fellow teachers upon returning to their communities. In small groups, the teachers conducted thirteen 3-day multiplier trainings on peace, nonviolence, and conflict resolution, reaching a total of 289 participants.

*“Before, the participants approached issues from their point of view only. Now, they have come to understand and accept others’ views; they have come to accept that all the issues taking place in the their community are everyone’s concern; and that their sticking to racialism and religionism is harmful.”*

— A teacher ToT participant from Karen State, on the multiplier training

HREIB/EM’s training program model is designed to promote a sustainable form of awareness raising within communities. Providing key actors such youth leaders and teachers with not only information on peace and conflict resolution but also the tools to become activists and trainers themselves is the first step in creating a system for the dissemination of peace and human rights information. Upon returning to their communities, the trained youth and teachers have already begun the processes of sharing the information they learned with others. In training evaluations, all participants indicated they would use what they learned at their work and in their lives. The model of training trainers commences a ripple effect through which larger parties—the central actors in the conflict such as the government military and NSAGs—are reached.

HREIB also produced multimedia materials under the project, including a ten-song music album promoting peace and conflict resolution, around 4,000 copies of which were distributed across Burma. Two animations on peace and conflict were also produced and aired on DVB TV’s satellite channel and Livestation streaming online. HREIB translated the Be True Not Violent manual and teaching materials, an educational program on peace and non-violent communication for youth, into Burmese, Karen, and Thai.



### c. LGBT Program

2012 was a pivotal year in the development of the LGBT Rights program, Colors Rainbow. Within the shifting social and political climate, the LGBT community in Burma has been able to find a foothold for visibly advocating for LGBT rights. As HREIB Executive Director Aung Myo Min stated in a recent interview, “Last year was my first visit back to Burma after 24 years. What

To listen to the album:

- ▶ [http://www.hreib.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=765:light-doors&catid=72:audio&Itemid=416](http://www.hreib.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=765:light-doors&catid=72:audio&Itemid=416)

To view the animations:

- ▶ [http://video.hreib.com/watch\\_video.php?v=NDABR9XWKGYA](http://video.hreib.com/watch_video.php?v=NDABR9XWKGYA)
- ▶ [http://video.hreib.com/watch\\_video.php?v=SUA9KUK9XK9D](http://video.hreib.com/watch_video.php?v=SUA9KUK9XK9D)

*I noticed is that more LGBT are open and more visible on the streets. There's a little bit more acceptance than before. When I was there 24 years ago transgender women were street performers. Now they've moved from the streets to the stage. And you see transgender women walk openly on the streets without any care."*

Alongside these growing freedoms, however, arises a need for education about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) rights and for awareness-raising of how to advocate for greater respect while ensuring the community is protected. Throughout Burma, LGBT people face numerous forms of violence and harassment, particularly from police authorities exploiting their positions of power with impunity.

For an interview with HREIB's Director on the situation of LGBT activism in Burma, please see:

- ▶ <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/education-equality-burma290113>

In 2012, Colors Rainbow has focused on implementing a series of advocacy trainings and seminars designed to strengthen the network of LGBT organizations in Burma while building staff capacity. Program development has been supported by international activists from Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Belgium, and Sweden who have served as resource persons at the trainings and seminars.

Over the years of operating the LGBT Rights Program, HREIB has developed productive ties with LGBT groups in Burma and has built up relationships of trust and support. 2012 has seen this relationship grow with partner CBOs now playing an active role in the collaborative process of creating a network to promote and protect LGBT rights. By providing a forum for the LGBT community to come together and share their experiences and challenges, the program activities have established the network's staging ground.

In 2012, CR initiated a research project on the discrimination, abuse and violence that is perpetrated against transgender and gay in Burma on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The study focused on the legal sanctioning of homophobia through existing legislation such as police acts in force and Section 377 of the penal code, which effectively criminalizes homosexuality. The data collection included interviews with victims of discrimination and abuse by authorities and law enforcement in five geographical locations in Burma. The findings, which illustrate the impunity with which public officials carry out several levels of harassment and abuse against the LGBT community, will form the basis of network advocacy campaigns developed in the upcoming year. The final research report will be published in 2013.

Rays of Rainbow, HREIB's community based sexual health and LGBT rights project based along the southern Thai-Burma border, continued to grow throughout 2012. In addition to the new ties built with CBOs in Ranong, Thailand, networking with LGBT groups across the border in Kawthaung and Myeik helped stabilize the project's sustainability by reaching migrants on both sides, including those returning to Burma.

On May 17, CR oversaw the first International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) events held openly inside Burma. Organized in five different communities, the events were collectively attended by 1,355 people, including activists, NGO workers, UN officials and media representatives. Activities were held in Yangon, Mandalay, Monywa and Kyaukpadaung, as well as in Ranong, Thailand. The events included speeches from activists and prominent Burmese LGBT people, theater presentations, music performances, and video screenings. The Yangon event received broad media coverage as a milestone in the Burmese LGBT movement's growth and part of the worldwide progress toward recognizing LGBT rights.

For coverage of the IDAHO event, please see:

- ▶ <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/burma-prepares-first-ever-public-lgbt-rights-celebration140512>
- ▶ <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/4461>

Events were also organized on November 20 in seven communities to commemorate the International Transgender Day of Remembrance, a day which is held to honor transgender people who have been victims of the abuse, harassment, and violence perpetrated against transgender people throughout the world.

In Monywa, Kyaukpadaung, Pyay and Pathein, the day was commemorated with Buddhist ceremonies attended by monks and nuns who made prayers to honor the lives of transgender people who have been victims of hate crimes around the world. Sayardaw U Zawtika, one of the monks who participated in the event at Moe-Hnyin-Tham-Boaday Monastery in Monywa, stated:

*"This is the first ever chanting and merit-making for the LGBT community in this historic monastery. We didn't know about this day before, which should have been held in the past too. Now, the door is open. We are aware of this day and we honor it because we realize that we should do so. We will strive to learn more and do more, for as Buddhists we believe that it is a good practice to not only*

*remember them but also to make merit for them. I personally will be supporting the LGBT community in their struggle for their rights and social change by informally educating government authorities as I have some influence on them as a Buddhist leader. I will also lead whenever necessary. I am very pleased with what we are doing today. We all are human beings living in diversity—we have to respect all, with no discriminations.”*

Colors Rainbow continued to produce multimedia resources including nine hour-long episodes of Colors Rainbow TV, five volumes of Colors Rainbow Magazine, and the Colors Rainbow website. The materials are the main source of Burmese-language information on LGBT news and issues and serve as entry points for networking with other local and national LGBT groups.

To view Colors Rainbow website and TV program:

- ▶ <http://www.colorsrainbow.com/>
- ▶ <http://tvnews.colorsrainbow.com/>

*“This is the first ever transgender rights event in our town, Kawthaung. When I heard about this event happening today, my first impression was to dress up, have fun and enjoy hanging out at the event like at other transgender parties—but it was totally different. I learned about the background of this event which is serious and touching because I myself am transgender. I have come to feel really strongly on this issue... I am very happy being a part of this memorial day for transgender people.”*

— Naing Oo, Kawthaung, Thanintharyi Division

### 3. Child Rights Program

2012 marked the final year of HREIB’s training and advocacy project on protecting and promoting the rights of children affected by armed conflict. The project began in 2007 as an initiative to protect children from rights violations through training and advocacy activities conducted in collaboration with Non-State Armed Group (NSAG) soldiers, community-based organizations, and the United Nations Security Council. During the project, all five targeted NSAGs with which HREIB conducted child rights trainings—NMSP, KNU, KNPP, CNF, and KIO—expressed interest in signing the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment on Children and Armed Conflict and continuing their engagement with the group with follow-up meetings.

On August 2, 2012, the KNPP/KA and the NMSP/MNLA became the first signatories of the deed, thus pledging their commitment to protect children from the effects of armed conflict; ban the recruitment of child soldiers; initiate actions to ensure measures of protection and demobilization are implemented and upheld on the ground; and monitor their success in adhering to the deed. At the deed signing in Geneva, KNPP Secretary Khu Oo Reh stated: “It is important for us to show that we are willing and able to comply with international humanitarian law. It is for this reason that in 2007, we made an initial agreement with UNICEF. But today we would like to go further in signing the Deed of Commitment of Geneva Call, and we need Geneva Call’s help to continue along this path and implement our obligations on the protection of children in our country and for our people.”

HREIB also continued its anti-child trafficking work through supervision of the Burma-ACT network’s organizational development and support of member groups’ capacity building. The network oversaw an audit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and drafted a report on Burma’s implementation progress.





## Part 3

# Financial Info

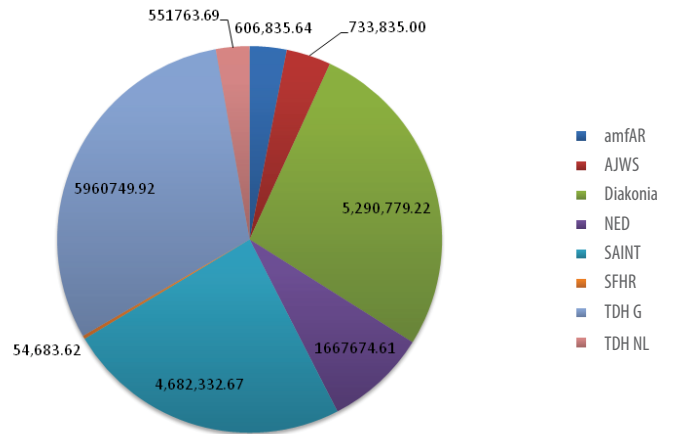


HREIB's 2012 operational budget was 19,548,654.37 Thai Baht (636,453 USD). Funding was provided by eight donor organizations covering both core funding as well as specific project activities. The following organizations served as donors in 2012:

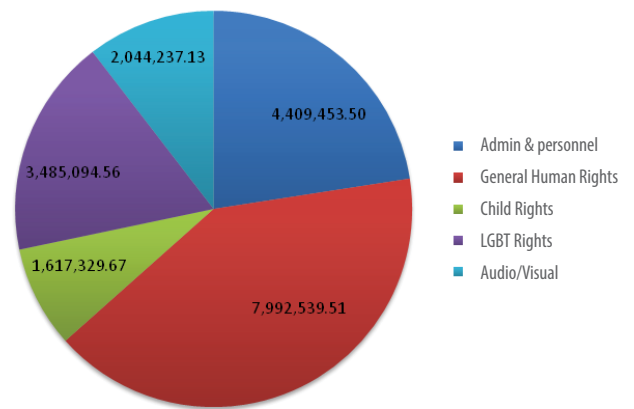
- amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research
- American Jewish Worldwide Service (AJWS)
- Diakonia
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
- Stefanus Alliance International (SAINT)
- Swedish Foundation for Human Rights
- Terre Des Hommes Germany
- Terre Des Hommes Netherlands

In 2012, HREIB's Finance Office was strengthened by the revision and updating of the organization's Finance & Accounting Manual. New content was added to reflect the transition of operations and updated organizational diagram. New positions were created in the updated structure including a new headquarters' accounting position as well as two Finance & Administrative Coordinators positions for each Burma-based office. The Finance Office conducted two monitoring and support trips of 10 and 14 days respectively to the new offices/training centers to develop their internal financial systems. Prior to these visits the two new Finance & Administrative Coordinators received formal training in the organization's accounting and financial policies and procedures at the headquarters in Chiang Mai.

Funding by Donor (in THB)



Expenditures by Program (in THB)



To view HREIB's Finance & Accounting Manual and Human Resources Policies & Procedures Manual:

▶ [http://www.hreib.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=768&Itemid=590](http://www.hreib.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=768&Itemid=590)

*\*HREIB's implementation of a transition strategy in 2012 resulted in an increase in office running and personnel costs due to the continued operations of the head office in Chiang Mai in addition to the establishment of offices and training centers in Yangon and Mandalay. During the finalization of the transition in late 2013 and early 2014, administrative and personnel running costs will be consolidated and its percentage within the overall expenditures will decrease accordingly.*



Thank You To All Our Donors in 2012!

## HREIB in Numbers

**2**

centers were established, in Yangon and Mandalay, to anchor the HR training program.

**40**

different civil society organizations participated in the International Human Rights Day event in Yangon.

**289**

teachers and students were trained in peace, nonviolence, and conflict resolution, using newly developed HREIB/EM modules.

**421**

people attended HRE trainings at our centers in Yangon and Mandalay.

**1,355**

people attended HREIB/EM's five IDAHO events.

**3,778**

copies of 'A Light in the Door,' a ten-song album promoting peace, were printed and distributed at Peace Day Events on September 21.

**7,000**

copies of Colors Rainbow Magazines and DVD copies of Rainbow TV episodes were distributed at Transgender Day of Remembrance events on November 20.

**52,745**

people visited the Colors Rainbow Website.



# HREIB

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