

# Educating the Youth in Uzbekistan

Humanitarian Legal Center

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**I**N 2000, Uzbek volunteers established a non-governmental organization dedicated to human rights named the Humanitarian Legal Center. It had the support of people including hundreds of young people who were eager to spread human rights awareness to the whole Bukhara region in Uzbekistan.

The Center has the main mission of fostering and strengthening a real democratic transformation in the society by promoting human rights awareness and providing assistance to victims of human rights violations.

It seeks the cooperation of different institutions to strengthen real democratic transformation in the society.

It identified several tasks to realize its mission:

- Spreading knowledge about human rights among the population of the Bukhara region;
- Carrying out monitoring and analysis of the human rights situation in the region;
- Providing legal protection and assistance to immigrant workers and other vulnerable groups (urban poor, small and medium-sized farmers);
- Prevention of human trafficking, with emphasis on prevention of women trafficking;
- Developing elements of civil society, establishing coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Campaigning for wider political and civil rights protection;
- Activating the young people and helping them to integrate to the society.

## Human Rights Monitoring and Other Activities

The Center carries out monitoring and analysis of the human rights situation in the Bukhara region. It participates in the Third Party Monitoring



(Top) Members of staff of Humanitarian Legal Center. (Left) Mr Ganiev Shukhrat, Director, Humanitarian Legal Center, before giving speech to reporters in Washington. D.C., on the issue of forced and child labor in 2019.



with the assistance of the ILO-Geneva and the World Bank on the elimination of forced and child labor in harvesting cotton.

In 2021, the Center prepared a report on the housing situation in the region that was presented to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing. On 24 February 2022, member-organizations of the Central Asia Network on the Right to Adequate Housing sent an appeal to the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with a request to take appropriate measures to ensure and implement the right to adequate housing and support the observance of human rights and freedoms recognized as the highest value.

Based on this appeal, a number of meetings were held with representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office, the Academy of Ministry of Finance and the Ombudsman of the Republic of Uzbekistan to agree on a number of initiatives in Uzbekistan together with NGOs and experts in Tashkent for the 2021-2022 period, including:

- placement of funds for needy bricklayers in banks on market conditions for a period of fifteen years;

- provision by commercial banks of mortgage loans to the population using the banks' own funds and funds allocated by the Ministry of Finance;
- mortgage loans allocated at the expense of the Ministry of Finance to be based on preferential interest rates on the loan;
- In this case, the maximum amount of the loan is set for one borrower and he is given the right to independently choose the location and area of housing;
- individuals (with a low level of income who need to improve their living conditions) are paid subsidies from the State budget to compensate for part of the down payment and/or interest on mortgage lending.

The Center also provides legal protection and assistance to immigrant workers and other vulnerable groups (urban poor, small and medium-sized farmers).

It undertakes measures to prevent human trafficking, especially those of women.

It campaigns for recognition of a wider set of political and civil rights.

As part of this direction, the Center conducts monthly trainings among target groups such as women migrants, persons with disability and minors on the topics of International law and the ratification of these documents in Uzbekistan, the feedback mechanism system and the possibilities of preventing human trafficking, especially of women.



Training for women.



Meeting with NGO activists, local authorities with the assistance of the World Bank, Nukus, December 2021.



Meeting with representatives of local authorities and NGOs, Tashkent, 2022.

It also established a coalition of NGOs in support of the development of the civil society in Bukhara region. This was the “Initiative Group - Youth for Equality” established in 2017 with Adizov Batirbek as head.



Shukhrat Ganiev, giving a monitoring report on forced and child labor, Tashkent, 2022.



Meeting of the Humanitarian Legal Center staff and representatives of international donors, Tashkent, 2022.





Meeting at the Ministry of Labor and Employment of Uzbekistan on labor rights issues, Tashkent, 2022.

## Human Rights Education

Security in the region cannot exist without the contribution of human rights education and democratic participation.

The Center has a human rights education program for the population of the Bukhara region. In the framework of a Local Initiative Project, it established a School of Human Rights Education. This project is part of the Center's strategy of improving the level of legal knowledge among young people in the regions of Uzbekistan. The school provides basic knowledge on human rights and organizes special seminars for youth, workers, farmers, etc. It recruits every three months young people who want to learn more about human rights and the international human rights instruments of the

United Nations. The young people are aged up to twenty years old, and recruited with proper respect for gender balance.

It published a practical guide to planning and conducting training activities in human rights. The publication focuses on lifelong learning for adults and youth. This guide is an example of a practice-oriented tool, applicable to all stages of



Practical guide on planning and conducting training activities on human rights.

the educational process: from planning and conducting preparatory analysis, program development to direct methods of conducting classes and their subsequent evaluation.

Continuing a long tradition of involving youth in the process of social development, the Center considers work with youth an integral part of its activities. Since 2017, the Center has been conducting a project in the region called “Youth Policy and Human Rights Education.” Under this project, the Center annually conducts seminars and trainings in various areas and regions of the country. Fifteen trainings were held in seven regions of the country for one hundred twenty participants so far.

The first event for youth leaders took place in 2017, and in 2022 a youth center and a youth foundation were established. Since then, the relationship between the Center and youth has consistently developed. The youth and their organizations are important participants and partners in determining the direction of the Center itself and its work in Uzbekistan. In the processes of democratization and overcoming conflicts in conflict-ridden regions, or in the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance, young people and their organizations could always count on the Center, while the Center itself could also count on youth.

The goal of the educational youth program as defined by the Center is “to provide young women and men with equal opportunities and knowledge to expand their horizons, improve their skills and develop skills in order to actively participate in all aspects of society.”

The program on the role of youth, youth organizations and youth policy in realizing the right to education in the field of human rights include learning about human rights and democracy. The activities of the program focus on:

- enabling and engaging young people in the full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity;
- promoting the active participation of young people in democratic processes and structures;
- creating equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of daily life;
- ensuring gender equality and preventing all forms of violence against women;

- involvement of young people in environmental protection and creation of prerequisites for sustainable development and education in this area; and
- facilitating access for all young people to information and counseling services.

The Center produced a series of “Freedom” Manuals that it uses in its educational activities:

- Basics of Human Rights Guide to Youth Leaders
- Economic and Social Rights
- Handbook of immigrant worker - Working abroad
- Human trafficking - Challenges and Strategies.

### **Future Plans**

The Center remains eager in hastening the advancement of human rights and democratization process in Bukhara region. In order to do so, the Center will

- create a support center for immigrant workers and farmers;
- publish a human rights journal for the region’s population; and
- advocate for women’s empowerment and the widening of space for the exercise of political rights.