

# Human Rights Education for Israeli-Palestinians

ARAB ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**T**he Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) is one of the longest operating human rights organizations in Israel. Since its establishment in 1988, the HRA views its role as an organization that promotes the human rights of the members of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel and protects their rights from the grave, multipronged violations they have been facing since 1948.

## Activities

HRA translated this vision into distinct programs: *Human Rights Education and Community Outreach* and *International Advocacy* for awareness-raising, and *Research and Reporting* as tool for the protection and promotion of minority rights. HRA undertakes several activities under each program:

1. Human Rights Education and Community Outreach: HRA offers local semester-long courses, secondary school and university student forums, Human Rights Day celebration, lectures and workshops, and community outreach through training and other activities. The department in HRA in charge of human rights education has the most wide-reaching program of its kind in all of Israel. In 2005, close to 16,000 individuals benefited from these activities. Furthermore, from 2005 HRA bridged the disconnect between civil society and the community through a more intensified community outreach approach. It therefore increased the reach to target groups through more community activities than ever before.
2. International Advocacy (IA): Through ad-

vocacy tours, network participation, conferences, roundtable discussions, reports, delegation visits and educational tours, the HRA keeps the international community abreast of the developments concerning the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. In 2005, HRA strengthened coordination with international networks, particularly with the EuroMed Non-Governmental Platform for the EuroMed Civil Forums and the EuroMed Human Rights Network. HRA believes that by tabling the Palestinian Arab minority's human rights issues in the international agenda, it influences the international discourse towards a more rights-based approach concerning Israel.

3. Research and Reporting (R&R): Through field interviews and office research, a media archive, advocacy events and substantive reports containing research on relevant issues, R&R – HRA's independent human rights monitoring body – works to prevent human rights violations against the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel and to promote ownership of human rights principles within this community. In 2005, HRA increased the distribution of the reports to different institutions,

thereby boosting its visibility.

HRA increased its visibility within the community through these interlinked programs, while the community's visibility also increased internationally. As HRA develops and grows, the Palestinian Arab minority community develops and grows as well.

### **Human rights education and community outreach**

There is a general education deficit among the Palestinian Arab minority citizens. Palestinian Arab students in Israel are educated in a school system entirely separate from the Jewish majority, and biased budget allocations and curriculums translate into fewer facilities and opportunities for the Palestinian Arab students than those for Jewish students. This reality should not come as a surprise.

The general civics curriculum, although designed for both Jewish and Arab pupils, emphasizes the Jewish identity of the State. Accordingly, building consciousness among the students has to go beyond the information passed on by this general civics curriculum. HRA envisioned a program to build such awareness. The Human Rights Education and Community Outreach department believes that young Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel need to know about international standards of human rights in order to evaluate their position as minority citizens and establish a civil society that deals with their situation within the framework of internationally acknowledged standards and means.

To these ends, HRA works to disseminate human rights education among various sectors of the Palestinian Arab society in Israel with the goal of building a society that is conscious of human rights. This education is founded on the belief that the knowledge of one's rights is the primary tool for their defence and support. The department also works to strengthen the spirit

of acceptance, understanding and respect, as well as civic responsibility among these sectors in order to prepare them for the task of building a society based on belief in human rights. HRA's human rights education program is the largest of its kind in both the Arab and Jewish communities in Israel.

Student facilitators, who are trained by the HRA, carry out the activities. The project team of HRA developed the teaching material being used, which reflects HRA's extensive experience in human rights education. HRA published in 2006 *Dalil – The Arabic Teachers' Guide to Human Rights Education*, the first teaching manual written in Arabic and focusing on the special needs of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel.

### **Program reorganization**

2005 saw the first year of merger of HRA's general Human and Civil Rights Education Program (HCRE) and the Women's Human Rights Project (WHRP) into the Education and Community Outreach department. Following the merger, women's rights became intrinsic to all aspects of the program, making all of the department's activities and publications gender-sensitive.

The overall objective of HRA's work with the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel is to contribute to the formation of a generation that:

- Is aware of its identity as a national minority and of the socio-political issues related to this status
- Internalizes the concept of human rights – that everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that this thinking will pass on to the entire community
- Uses the arguments and tools provided by international law to stand up for its rights and a more just society.

In order to reach this goal, the department's activities aimed at conveying a culture of respect

for the principles of human dignity and fundamental freedoms and the importance of the equality and participation of Palestinian Arab women citizens of Israel in social and public life. HRA's education department takes an inclusive approach to women's rights and discusses them as an integral part of human rights.

### Target Groups

The community activities address a wide variety of target groups within the Palestinian Arab community in Israel, most importantly:

- Male and female Palestinian Arab secondary school students aged 13-18 years
- Male and female university students (through the student forum and the facilitator training program)
- Secondary school teachers working in the Arab education sector
- Inhabitants of the unrecognized villages (through special events such as Human Rights Days)
- Existing women's groups
- Interested members of the Palestinian Arab community and beyond (through lectures, workshops, educational tours).

*Masrah al-Haq*, the human rights theatre project for children targets Arabic-speaking children aged 5-12 years.

### Program highlights

HRA holds a number of activities under the reorganized program of the education department. The activities consist of the following:

#### 1) *Facilitator Training – eight facilitators*

Objectives: i) To teach international human rights norms and instruments; ii) To train on pedagogies for imparting this information to secondary school students.

The Education and Community Outreach

department recruits university students as facilitators, offering them training and teaching experience in the field of human rights. In 2006, seventy university students applied to the department and eight students were selected. Facilitator training is a structured activity that goes on throughout the year and involves a commitment of six hours per week. The Program Director and Coordinator conduct the training – a process of over fifteen sessions, each session running for six hours.

The key topics covered in the training are as follows:

- Understanding human rights, international human rights covenants, the monitoring method for human rights violations, international mechanisms for the defense of human rights, civil and political rights, social and economic rights, cultural rights, women's rights as human rights
- Minority rights and human rights in Israel
- The collective rights of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel and specific issues such as identity, refugees, unrecognized villages, land issues, freedom of expression; and
- Building trust among group members, educational environment and instructing methods, skills in leadership and participation, making decisions and designing work plans.

#### 2) *High School Forums – sixteen forums/ three hundred fifty-nine students*

Objectives: i) To provide a space for secondary school students to realize (under the Convention on the Rights of the Child) their “freedom to seek, receive and impart ideas and information” about human rights; ii) To encourage leadership among secondary school students.

High School Forums have been the department's most far-reaching activities – not only do they involve secondary school students that coordinate thematic activities, they also reach

out to entire neighborhoods and communities through their activities. A facilitator chooses between twenty to thirty secondary school students, according to specific criteria concerning students' attitudes toward community activities, to run an HRA-directed forum in their school or community. The facilitator explains to the secondary school students the purpose of the programs inside and outside the schools and trains them by teaching human rights issues, student rights, leadership know-how, and counselling skills.

The students meet as often as five times a month and, together with a facilitator, plan out new activities for their community/school, or discuss how to make existing activities more sustainable. As a result of the forums, the department holds between twelve to sixteen activities every month. The activities, all of which include some aspect of human rights, reach geriatric centers and the mentally and visually challenged, involve theatre, movies and concerts, and oftentimes engage an entire community of an unrecognized village in the Naqab in a day packed with activities.

### ***3. Community Activities – two thousand five hundred ninety five persons***

Objectives: i) To strengthen the link between NGOs and the community; ii) To build a sense of ownership of human rights among the Palestinian Arab minority.

Some of the activities include,

- Town of Maker (Galilee) – special evening for the commemoration of al-Nakba by screening 'Sons of Shatila,' a human rights day for the local secondary school as well as programs for kids from a school with special needs
- 'Akka – special bazaar for paintings on al-Nakba
- Tura'an – program for women's rights
- Nazareth – the painting of murals by one hundred twenty children whose parents are imprisoned
- In the unrecognized villages of Arab IlNa'im

and Husseiniya - program on refugees and the right of return including film screenings, a program on the October events of 2000, and screening of a related film called 'Lamma Zafouk.'

### ***4. Teacher Training – Three fifty-six-hour courses/one hundred thirty teachers***

Objectives: i) To multiply the impact of human rights education by providing teachers themselves with relevant teaching materials and pedagogical skills; ii) To keep teachers up to par with human rights instructional skills.

The Ministry of Education has accredited this training activity. It covers all human rights issues, practical methods of incorporating human rights into daily studies, conflict resolution in schools, and education's role in promoting human rights.

### ***5. Community Campaigns***

Objective: To strengthen the link between NGOs and the community – local and international.

Students involved in HRA programs/forums participate in this activity. The department raised 25,000 NIS (New Israeli Sheqel) for victims of the Asian tsunami in coordination with the Red Cross Representative in Israel. It also organized educational and environmental campaigns, and money donation campaigns for the reconstruction of the Nazareth cultural centre in coordination with local secondary school forums.

### **Major Achievements 2005**

2005 has seen innovation in the Education and Community Outreach department as part of an intensified effort to connect with the Palestinian Arab community within the educational sector and outside. This intensified effort has become a response to the unfortunate discon-

nect local NGOs experience with the Palestinian Arab minority. The “visibility campaign” continues to accompany all community outreach activities. The accomplishments in 2005 are summarized as follows,

- Increase in number of non-school activities to engage entire communities, as part of the intensified community outreach campaign
- First year of implementing the merged program, Human Rights Education and Community Outreach
- Recruitment and training of eight new student facilitators (August – October 2005)
- Pilot-use of *Dalil: The Arab Teachers' Guide to Human Rights Education* among selected secondary school teachers
- Second consecutive year of participation in “The People Speak”, an international debates initiative. The 2005 topic “The United States' and UN's role in fighting world poverty” was debated in ten schools, with participation increasing by four hundred percent over the previous year, and was a huge success
- Implemented a novice program *Jidariyat* – painting of murals in six schools focusing on child rights, the murals were painted by students for students and are a permanent fixture of the school
- Ran eighteen tours to the uprooted and unrecognized villages within the Green Line
- Directed educational and training courses focused on women and students of all ages, ran course on identity for Bedouin youth in the Naqab in coordination with the organization *Ajeek*
- In coordination with Research and Reporting, the department organized a tour of the Wall in Bethlehem in coordination with ADRID (Association for the Defence of the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel) and Badil, with the participation of secondary school and university students from the Galilee. The tour also involved a visit to Bethlehem's various refugee camps and *jidariyat* – design of murals by students on

the Wall along the theme of human rights

- Organized a two-week summer camp in the town of Raineh, entitled *Taakhie* (Brotherliness), which brought together eighty Christian and Muslim children to dialogue and discuss issues around freedom of religion and human rights.

## Vision for Future

### *Intensified approach to community outreach*

As mentioned before, the general feeling of disconnect between NGOs and the Palestinian Arab minority has prompted the Education and Community Outreach department to bridge this gap by intensifying our efforts in reaching out to the community – in education and otherwise. As a result of this thinking, the department has been implementing since 2006 a structured, monthly schedule dedicated exclusively to community activities – educational tours, training on human rights, film screenings and musical performances that emphasize Palestinian identity and basic human rights.

Together with the existing “visibility campaign,” these initiatives give the program more publicity, and thereby sustainability – the eventual goal being to create a general sense of ownership for human rights towards the betterment of the Palestinian Arab minority's socio-economic position in the State.

### *Publishing Dalil, the Human Rights Syllabus*

*Dalil* serves as the first Arabic reference book in Israel for teaching human rights in schools. The chapters of the *Dalil* are divided into six sections:

- Understanding Human Rights and Enforcement Mechanisms
- Collective Rights
- Right to Education and Work

- Right to Equality
- Freedom of Expression
- Land and Property Rights.

Final testing took place in eight secondary schools through the High School Forums, and in another five secondary schools where HRA implements its educational projects. The testing phase concluded in 2006, following which a final evaluation with internal and external stakeholders took place. The printing and distribution of *Dalil* were completed in 2006.

*Dalil* is an essential tool for outsourcing HRA's human rights education activities. Palestinian teachers across Israel and beyond can use this manual.

**Increasing Impact**

In the future, the Education team will put more emphasis on increasing the impact of its activities. This means that the HRA will work to take educational activities to the streets and to dedicate more efforts to young people who express a strong interest in human rights and community issues. The following measures will be taken:

- Increased focus on the High School Forums which are made up of pupils with a strong interest in human rights issues
- Work with more target groups through community outreach
- Increase publications in this unit (fact sheets, information booklets on events like 'Land Day')
- Long-term activity as opposed to one-time events so that the HRA is seen as a central institution for initiatives such as community activism, ownership of human rights
- Continuation of the local visibility campaign with particular focus on media outreach
- Work to introduce *Dalil* as a teaching resource in secondary schools
- Further increase the established links between the HRA's programs – in particular with the Research & Reporting department.

**Annex**

**2005 Activities**

Number of Participants			
ACTIVITY	2003	2004	2005
Facilitator Training	9	9	8
Semester-long Courses*	4,150	3,660	N/A
High School Forums	--	262	359
Teacher Training	147	90	130
One-time Events and Human Rights Days	4,590	8,140	2,660
Student Forum (Haifa University)	450	500	180
One-off Lectures and Workshops**	3,440	--	4,470
Summer Camps	1,305	920	1,025
Community Training	--	--	429
Community Activities	1,392	875	2,595
Educational Tours	610	745	1,025
The People Speak Conferences	--	600	3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,093</b>	<b>15,801</b>	<b>15,881</b>

\* No longer applicable as focus has shifted to more community based activities, while maintaining efforts in education through One-off Lectures and Workshops and Human Rights Days

\*\* In 2004 included in One-time Events and Human Rights Days