



الشبكة العربية للتربية على حقوق الإنسان والمواطنة
Arab Network for Human Rights & Citizenship Education

ANHRE Forth Edition Newsletter





Contents

1. *Editorial Article ... Either, or Either, or...*
2. *Our Diversity is Enriching*
3. *Visits of Iraqi Ranking Government Officials...
Human Rights Violation in Iraq*
4. *ANHRE Highlights*
7. *Thoughts*
9. *ANHRE Corners*





Either, or, either, or.....



Once upon a time, there was a king, ruling over his kingdom with an iron hand. His people feared him as he had a reputation of oppression and he starved his people. One day, the king announced to his people that he wants to hire someone to teach his camel to talk and if this person fails to make the camel talk, the king will decapitate him. Few days later, a man applies for the job. Before he went to the palace, his friends asked him, "Are you insane? How will you teach the camel to talk? It will never learn and the king will decapitate you." The man replied saying: "either, either, either!!!"

People were surprised by his answer. They told him "you are going to face a king of no mercy and you will mock him with these words?" He replied: "I either die, and the king and the camel live, or the camel dies, then I and the king will be relieved, either the king dies, and I and the camel are relieved."

What I want to say here is that we, at ANHRE network, are also on a crossroad now after all those years of training and education on human rights. We too have to choose our destiny as that man chose a destiny based on reality. For us, we either stand up and work hard to face the many challenges, and overcome them with the experience we have built in the past three years through Equitas to strengthen our

network and create a sustainable structure which will enable us to benefit our societies, networks, and NGOs, or we remain where we are, indifferent to what will happen. We could stop planning for the future, and focus on living day by day without any strategies for future work and by depending on others. Our third option is to remain in our offices, shut our eyes, ears, close our mouths, shut our windows, and bid what we have learned good bye.

Having said that, I would like to declare that the first TOT phase has been concluded. It was a very useful and fruitful workshop and attendants reported that they would consider it as a model program. Furthermore, the last TOT workshop was conducted for Iraqi NGOs marking the end of a program implemented in utmost accuracy and professionalism by Equitas, which carried participants many steps ahead.

The question remains, do we stop here? Or will we exert more efforts to advance and continue the process while asking ourselves what do we want for the future? The answer to these questions is left to the members of ANHRE network, to be considered seriously and honestly by them.

Editor Chief

**Mohamad Al Jubouri – Human Rights
Protection Institution
Baghdad - Iraq**



Our Diversity is Enriching



There is no doubt that practical experience is way better than other experiences. We always talk about our rights and obligations and think that we believe in all what we say; that we are ready to sacrifice for it.

However, life experiences force us to re-discover ourselves, to practice what we believe in and put it to tests to verify our sincerity. We stand to think about the validity of our ideas and our flexibility in their development. I underwent a test as a result of my participation in one of the special international training courses on human rights education where 123 people from 65 states participated in it (this means 65 different cultures). At the beginning, I was just an observer, as my first concern was how to deal with people who are different in culture and religion. I strongly believe that difference is complementarity and harmony in the first place. I don't know where did this come from but may be it is our human nature that forces us to fear everything that is different until we get used to it, and then it becomes part of us.

In history text books, I read about Nepal, East European countries and Asia. I have also watched many documentaries about the continent of Africa. I knew about it then, but it always seemed far away and separated from my life and reality. During the aforementioned workshop, I met people from all those areas, completely different in color, culture and language. The general atmosphere at the workshop encouraged me to integrate with them in various ways in our day-to-day life; starting with our morning chats over breakfast, agreements and disagreements, working in groups during

sessions, in addition to city tours, visiting museums, buying gifts, sharing concern and longing for our families back home. So, although our color, background, behaviour, and language were different, our human values and feelings were the same; for me it was beyond my expectations.

This was evident through our responses to some situations. I remember for example, a story one of our friends from Africa told us while on her wheel chair. It was her story with HIV and the belief in her country that if an HIV positive male rapes a little girl, he will be cured from AIDS. As she was talking, I looked at the other colleagues listening to her and found their eyes filled with tears. After she was done with her story, everybody rushed towards her to hug her in compassion. Everybody spoke about the need to protect girls who could encounter such a thing, and the discussion was extended to talk about practices which violate human rights in some states and cultures. I was not busy in discussions as I was busy thinking that we all, with no exception and in spite of our external differences and various affiliations, share the desire to live in dignity, safety, and freedom. Regardless of our cultures and orientation, we share our sensitivity to problems that touch upon human rights. The major common thing between us, is being humans, and our diversity is only a strength exactly as a piece of mosaics; pieces of various shapes and colors which form a complete human vision reflecting our successes, ambitions, sadnesses, and our consciousness.

By: Arwa El-Burai – Media Committee Coordinator (Cairo – Egypt)



Visits of Iraqi High Ranking Government Officials..

Human Rights Violations in Iraq



One day, I was heading to work in the area of Al Karrada as usual. I finished what I needed to do successfully despite the dusty weather in Baghdad, keeping my suit clean and elegant. I took a taxi in order to go from Al Rosafa to my office in Al Karkh, which meant crossing the bridge between the two areas where the most beautiful works of art sculptures are located (the Iraqi statue of liberty) for the deceased artist Jawad Salim. I was busy looking at the sculpture, when the driver stopped half way and apologized that he will not be able to take me where I wanted and I had to walk on foot to reach my destination. I mumbled to myself saying, it is ok to walk the bridge and enjoy looking at Tigris River in springtime when water is abundant.

Again, despite the dusty weather, I walked almost 3 kilometers before reaching the office. I had a cup of tea before a meeting I had then I wanted to head back home, resuming the walking marathon I started earlier. When I was in the street, I noticed people walking around uneasy, roads were blocked, and crowds of people were walking in all directions trying to find open roads and hoping to take any kind of public transportation they can find. I walked along with them; elderly people, women, students, teachers, sick people, disabled, young girls, children, men carrying what they could buy from Baghdad markets in heavy weight to their wives who are awaiting. Perhaps they could drop what they are carrying, but they bought it for dear money because of prices'

increase. We passed many areas, crossing roads, seeing jammed cars with drivers outside chatting to each other and the passersby. It seems they have been like this for a long time now. Some were even having snacks for lunch, while there were elderly women sitting on sidewalks for a rest, as they can no longer take part in such long walks. This happens often and they had enough of it. Each time a high ranking official visits the city, the people suffer; no open roads, no work, and no going home on time. It would have been better if the government announces a day off in such occasions and save the people!

I was glad I was carrying my personal camera with me. I took some pictures as I walked few more kilometers with aching feet. I passed the Zawra'a General Park where I saw children with their mothers sitting on the ground waiting the road to reopen so they can go back home. Hundreds of other cars were still blocking the streets just waiting; hundreds of cars parked over the bridge between Karkh and Rusafa in addition to security forces all over.

Does our esteemed visitor today, regardless of his identity or origin, and regardless of the purpose of his visit, know that he was the cause of exhausting hundreds of thousands of Baghdadis with his visit? Does he realize that he violated the rights of those people who had to walk no less than 8 kilometers to go back home? Or was not this mentioned on the agenda? Surely, this person does not know, as he himself does not treat his people that way, so imagine how he will treat people who reach out for him.



When will the Iraqi government stop the massive human rights violations against the people of Iraq who became like boxing bags, only ready to receive beating silently; even if they spoke, no one will hear them.

The only category who survived the walking marathone today was motorbikers who managed to drive through the blockage until the end. Regardless of my profession as a journalist or a human rights activist, I felt bad with what happened today. The problem is that its not only today, but the same thing occurs whenever a visitor is in Baghdad. I would like to propose a number of solutions to this problem:

The Iraqi government must announce a day off so the guest can move around freely in Baghdad and visit whatever he wants to see from the historical ruins, which are about to become only ruins as a result of neglect. The Iraqi government can also distribute invitation cards to this national marathon and distribute prizes on winners. Or, they can add another item on the PDS cards which is running shoes to be used in such occasions.

Some may consider that article is about an incident a day, as criticism to the government, but I wish that government would consider it

as such and actually take some action to prevent this from happening again. The government creates this calamity and it is the duty of the government to solve it, as it will only damage the relation, and the image of the government. The citizens are frequently deprived from their rights, needs and their feeling of belonging to this state and many want to leave Iraq because of this pressure, but to where!



Note: this article represents the views of the writer only, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the newsletter by any means.

By: Majeda Mohamad – Al Bayareq Center for Research

Baghdad - Iraq



ANHRE Highlights

Idris Al Shafi – Morocco

Introduction to the organisation

Name: Regional Organisation for the Development of West

The organization was established on 19 November 2006 in Sidi Yehya West of Morocco. The goal of the organization is to promote democracy and human rights culture, targeting the youth in marginalized areas and education institutions. The organization also aims at empowering women and encouraging the women's participation in the development process.

The organization achieved the following partnerships:

1. A partnership with the International Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Canada

The organization managed to do the following:

- Democratic Development Project for Youth in Marginalized areas 2007-2010

- A public TOT training workshop for 25 regional activities from 10-15 October 2008

2. Partnership with the British Embassy in Rabat:

- A project on encouraging youth participation in community work, targeting 45 young men and women (2007-2008)

- Enhancing Youth Participation in Public life by improving their understating of the public institutions function. This project targeted 46 young men and women (2008-2009)

3. A partnership with the Ministry of Family, Social Development and the Women and Family reunion association to conduct a seminar on the role of civil society in enhancing women's political participation on 18, April, 2009.

UP Coming Projects:

A training workshop on community mobilization from 5-10 November 2009 will be conducted. Currently we are finalizing the partnership contract issue with the British targeting youth in two marginalized areas.

Introducing Community Enlistment:

The idea started in the United States of America at the Center for Democracy in Minnesota University. This initiative then spread out all over the world especially in Northern Ireland and Palestine. It comprises a number of practices, which focus on giving a special meaning to citizenship, in addition to various forms of direct participation and practical planning as a basis for community development, social change, and achieving social justice.





The practice starts with the a main principle that youth are citizens, and although the idea started as an initiative for youth, the ideas and practices associated to it, are not only directed towards the youth. It could be considered as a road map for any group who wishes to take part in the democratic process. The well-implemented community work, such as the one in Europe, India, US, Canada and Africa, brings already and approved approaches to the public. It also provides clear methodologies, which will help groups to participate in advocating for public causes. Harry Boit called for accomplishing community aspiration through the group participation of people regardless of the type of the community issue in hand.

This approach aims at presenting ideas and basic skills to participants, which will enable them to engage in their community and transfer the knowledge to their local communities. It focuses on five major areas:

- Building groups
- Identifying the issues, problems and projects clearly
- Designing action plans through a peaceful approach
- Implementing action plans and working on community problems through projects
- Evaluation of the whole process



Though

Human Rights Activists in the Arab Region: Between Efficiency and the Reality of Oppression:

At the begging, I would like to note that this essay trial is not considered an article as much as a though which poses questions on the human rights activism in our Arab region, hoping that I will receive notes and comments from colleagues.

The word “efficiency” means, in addition to skills, knowledge, and experience, the ability to be creative, innovative and the ability to come up with ideas, working under hard conditions and tough reality. We consider our activists vigilant and efficient on the condition that they have the knowledge and ability.

Oppression is the control an individual has over a group’s thinking or behavior or rights without any consideration to what they think and without any fear of punishment. Oppression as we know it is not only present in out political regimes but it is also present within our social fabric: Family, groups, societies, parties...etc. (can’t we also speak of two forms of oppression,popular?)



The oppressor, by nature, and at any level, cannot tolerate having efficient people around him/her. He/she prefers followers as the efficient people are able to analyze, criticize, and create; while the followers tend to describe, give advice, and comply. At the time those efficient people are busy analyzing reality and working on improving it, the oppressor promotes for the future in order to justify the present; (the future will be better, or dangerous, but it is only imaginary. Thus, we see that the efficient move from the present time after analyzing the past goes towards the future. Based on this, the oppressor believes he/she has the power to produce problems and obstruct any solutions the activist is working on; a real machinery of suppression, destruction, and demolition of any creativity, or production. This creates great frustration for the activist.

So, what can activists do about this?

They have no choice but to face and challenge. Here we are talking about ideological and practical challenges, which will aim at analyzing and dismantling the bases of social, cultural oppression and fight its mechanisms and tools. In addition, they have to make sure that all of those tools are replaced with others that pay attention to life and creativity in an environment of freedom and acceptance of change.

If imagining the alternative situation comes usually by comparing the status quo with the experiences of others, it is worth noting that we still interact with other cultures for a century now (through colonization, and developed communication skills). In spite of that, our transitional journey from a tribal patriarchal society to a modern civil society, that values the gradual independence from traditional social roles and creating efficient individuals with no dependency or belonging to original

tribes, is not happening. We are still suffering from political oppression imbedded with tribal flavor, and social oppression embedded with a patriarchal flavor. Patriarchy is no longer performing its developmental role and it is still a school that produces dependent individuals who can only obey and imitate instead of being committed and innovative.

Apparently, the patriarchal system has failed recently politically, economically, culturally and in other fields. From our point of view, the activists in our region must focus on issues of women and youth. Our women have no responsibility to defend reality, and neither does the youth, who are our future and at the same time the most affected category. They are the ones who we look upon to create change and a better future.

This is not a call for revolution and abandoning the role of parenthood as much as the need to convince them with the importance of change and the inevitable change with the participation of women and youth.

There is one more issue that still needs to be discussed: if the human rights culture, as we know it, is universal, theoretically at least, does this make tyranny in our society normal too? Or does each society have its own type of tyranny? This paves the way for another question: what should be done?

This also has to be discussed at a community level involving those who are concerned with the change. However, when asking the HOW question, we have to be careful that the official and political oppressors will counterattack by saying that the human rights culture is foreign and this will result in an East-West conflict as it usually happens.

As I mentioned above, this is only an essay of thoughts and question, which are seeking guidance.



ANHRE Corners

ANHRE sets the grounds for an Active Human Rights Reality in Arabic Societies

A number of Iraqi and Arab NGOs participated in a training workshop conducted by ANHRE to build the capacity of those NGOs on managing projects to improve human rights in the Arab region.

Participants receive training from professionals in the field of capacity building to come up with a regional project based on the ideas of participants to influence the policies and government procedures which will ensure the mainstreaming of human rights and citizenship in national educational curricula at public and private schools.



The head of the capacity building committee at ANHRE, Miss Karima Bin Jalon Al Twaimi, stated that this workshop will achieve one of the strategic objectives of ANHRE, which is building the capacity of ANHRE members in managing projects. She also noted that this training workshop aims at providing all participants with skills according to their ranks at their organisations especially those in decision

making positions, which could help them make the right decisions in the coming critical periods of their projects.

The head of the Coordination Council of ANHRE in Palestine, Rifat Sabah, indicated that the importance of this workshop lies in it being a gathering of civil society organisations working in different fields within the framework of human rights and citizenship. He added that this workshop aims at producing ideas of joint projects that could be implemented regionally and enhance relationships, coordination and coordination between NGOs, not to mention building the capacity of those organisations.

Al Sabah said: “we hope that this workshop will help improve joint Arab work in terms of coordination and implementation of projects concerning environment, health, poverty, and women in addition to any other issues of importance. The exchange of experiences and information among ANHRE members will enhance their performance in influencing special policies related to legislation and national regulations, which will improve understanding of human rights and put those NGOs on the map at an international level.

One of the participants, Kawthar Rahim from Iraq, said that this workshop was good as all participants have various experiences with the wide geographic spread of ANHRE. She expects that the outputs of this workshop will be project ideas that would be translated into proposals to be submitted for funding.



Huda Azawi, a Director of one of the participating NGOs concerned with childhood in Iraq, commented saying: "This workshop is still incomplete. This was evident from the presentations, training material, and the methodology of training which did not go deep in explaining topics.

As a result, the participants were unable to get solid ideas about those topics, although this was important as ANHRE is heading towards a critical stage where projects need to be developed. Still I am hoping that we can overcome all weak points which will stand between the participants getting clear ideas and achieving the overall goal of the workshop. The trainer has excellent experience in project management and the projects proposed by participants. All the ideas are related to important issues pertaining grievances in the region, and those projects could play a crucial role in enhancing human rights education if implemented properly."

Arwa Khader from Egypt, Media committee coordinator at ANHRE said that this workshop is one of a series of training workshops which will be organized by ANHRE, all aiming at building the capacity of the members. She pointed that this workshop aimed at providing skills in identifying projects, proposal writing using the logical framework, project

implementation, in addition to writing a proposal for ANHRE. 22 ANHRE members participated in the workshop and they wanted to come up with 3 regional project proposals focusing on human rights education in the region.



Ammar Al Gharbi, a Director of an Iraqi NGO operating in the south of Iraq, emphasized that the workshop was good in general because of the various experiences presented especially that many of them have been working in the field for a long time. This was very beneficial for the participating Iraqi organizations.

It is worth mentioning that ANHRE has initiated the Arabi Campaign for Education mid 2009 in a number of Arab countries to put pressure on Arab governments to show commitment to implement what they promised in providing public and free education for the people.



A Periodical Newsletter issued by

The Arab Network for Human Rights & Citizenship Education (ANHRE)

*ANHRE Newsletter is made possible through generous funding from
the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the
International Center for Human Rights Education (Equitas)*

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