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Dedication



We dedicate this first newsletter of the MHRD Alumni to Associate Professor Dr. Danielle Celermajer, who is the founding director of the Asia Pacific Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation programme. This is a humble recognition of Dany's contribution for building the MHRD Community.

MHRD

A New Generation of Human Rights Defenders

Niaz Ahmed and Hassan Nasir Mirbahar

MHRD Alumni is an emerging forum of graduates/students of the Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (Asia Pacific). MHRD is Asia Pacific's premier regional degree in human rights and democratisation offered by the University of Sydney, in conjunction with Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia), Kathmandu School of Law (Nepal), Mahidol University (Thailand) and the University of Colombo (Sri Lanka). This Unique degree offers students the opportunity to study both at the internationally renowned University of Sydney and one of the four selected universities in the Asia Pacific with particular expertise in human rights and democratisation.

The aim of the programme is to develop the capacity of advocates working in the field of human rights and democratisation in the Asia Pacific region so that they may be better equipped to advocate for, promote awareness of and encourage respect for human rights and democratic principles, both across the region and within their local communities.

MHRD Alumni is a payback initiative by the beneficiaries of the programme to further the objectives of this degree as envisaged by the partner universities. The aim of the Alumni Association is to build a network of human rights and democratisation practitioners as well as academics from the Asia Pacific region. MHRD Alumni envisages itself to grow as a vibrant global organisation representing human rights and democratisation defenders, researchers and practitioners.



Sydney: Students of Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation and Masters in Human Rights at the cultural evening-2010

So far three cohorts of the programme with over 75 students have either completed this degree or are close to graduating. With arrival of 4th cohort in Sydney in July 2013, the total strength of MHRD community will expand to over 100 students and graduates.

MHRD Alumni on the World Map



The MHRD graduates are out in the field of human rights and democratisation, working with a number of national, international, inter-governmental, government, national human rights institutions, parliaments and private organisations. They are committed to causes of human rights and democracy in a variety of capacities. Some are involved in campaigns, others are building capacities of communities and institutions. Some have even gone further in pursuing their research and academic careers by taking up fellowships, doctoral scholarships and teaching careers. MHRD alumni members are serving in variety of senior level positions including heading the regional or country programmes, portfolios or offices. MHRD community's careers and contributions are vibrant and ever expanding.

Useful links:

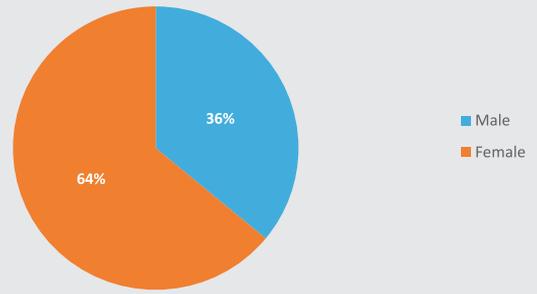
http://sydney.edu.au/arts/human_rights_democratisation/
http://sydney.edu.au/arts/human_rights_democratisation/alumni/

Niaz Ahmed is MHRD graduate from the first cohort of 2010-11. He works as Deputy Country Director of Pakistan for a Berlin based international non-governmental organisation, Democracy Reporting International. He is Coordinator (volunteer) of the MHRD Alumni and represents MHRD Alumni at Global Campus Alumni of EU supported regional masters programmes in human rights and democratisation.

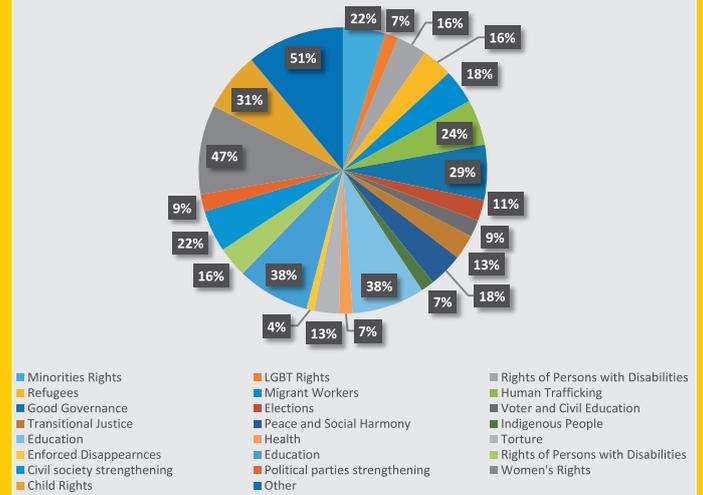
Hassan Nasir Mirbahar is MHRD graduate from the second cohort of 2011-12. He is working as freelance consultant with various national and international organisations in Pakistan. His latest work involved enhancing women's participation in Pakistan's general elections held in May 2013 under a UN Women programme.

Alumni At A Glance

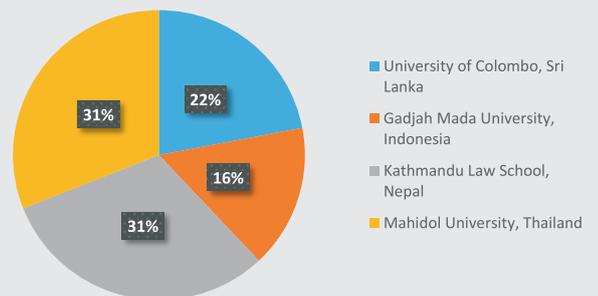
Gender Profile - MHRD Alumni



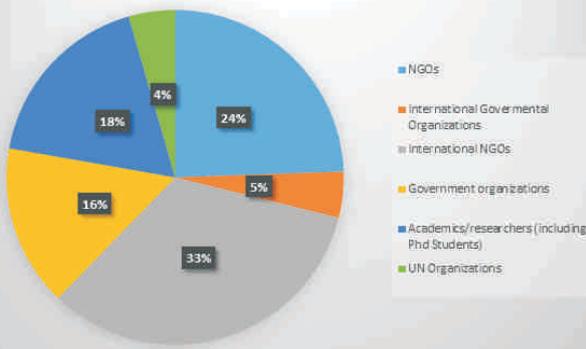
Alumni Members - Areas of Specialization



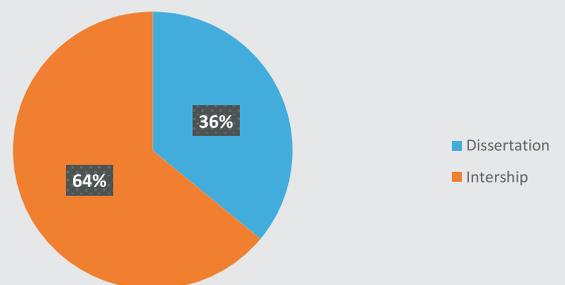
Second Semester Destinations



Employment Industries



Alumni Member- Second Semester Track



These graphics are based on the responses provided by 45 alumni members who participated in a survey conducted for the MHRD database.

MHRD Alumni Goes Global: The Global Campus Alumni Launched

Laura McManus



Global Campus Alumni Representatives at a Roundtable on Inter-cultural Human Rights in Venice

Three years ago in the crisp afternoon of a warm winters day, I walked up a sweeping sandstone staircase into the MacLaurin Hall. As I entered the room, second only in historic grandeur to the Great Hall itself, I became a part of something, something much bigger than even the commanding presence of our surroundings. Peering through the beautifully large arch windows down to the immaculate lawns of the Quadrangle below, the hum of cautious, gentle chatter steadily grew into unkempt excitement. Saris and kurta shalwars whirled around, longyis glided past, and an *Áo Dài* wizzed by. As magical as it was, this was no Harry Potter—the first cohort of the Asia Pacific Masters of Human Rights and Democratisation (MHRD) programme embarked upon the University of Sydney.

In those 'early days' everything (even the law school!) was new and being tested. We heard accounts that seemed like fables of human rights academics, studying similar regional programmes on other distant continents. It was comforting and inspiring to think that one was not just entwined with a regional movement, but contributing in some way to a larger global movement. Just like the civil society organisations we critiqued, strength was found in numbers.

While the online discussions, group lectures and mentoring partnerships between the regional MHRD programmes remained only myth for our first generation, I am honoured to report that the Global Campus and Global Campus Alumni Association will be a reality for the next streams of all MHRD students.

This January four alumni representatives from different regional campuses met at the home of the Global Campus, the European Inter- University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, in Lido, Venice. This meeting was one of the first practical steps in realising the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Global Campus signed a year earlier. The MoU, among other things, mandates for the strengthening of the regional alumni associations and their integration with the Global Campus.

Representing the Asia Pacific, and along with alumni from South America and the Southern Caucuses, the Global Campus Alumni Association was launched. The event coincided with the European Master's Alumni's

(E.MAlumni) annual Career Day and General Assembly so that we, the visiting regional representatives could get an opportunity to be exposed to and participate in the E.MAlumni events. Like many other regional Alumni Associations, the Asia Pacific group is in early stages of operation. To see how an established association operates, and the activities they implement has been a great boost to the future successes of the Regional Alumni Associations.

Global Campus Alumni Association is a network of six Alumni Associations of EU supported regional Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation across the five continents. This network is supported by the European Inter- University Centre (EIUC) which has set up the Global Campus of Master's Programmes and Diplomas in Human Rights and Democratisation of all these programmes. One of the key mandates of GC among others is to support the development of joint alumni association of all the regional masters programmes.

The first meeting of the Global Campus Alumni Association was day of debates as we tried to make sense of how such an expansive network would operate. The value of the MHRD programmes really lies in the activities that we all do after graduation in the capacity of academics, activists, lawyers or businessmen and women. Our talents and careers may differ, but we are all bound by common understanding that human rights prevail. The Global Campus Alumni Association must capture this knowledge and spirit to build a worldwide community of human rights defenders. We must strive to be visible and valuable not only to our members but the communities at large.

The first objective of the Global Campus Alumni Association is to build the capacity of the regional alumni groups, so they can successfully feed into the global process. Creating an online platform for sharing best practices, job listings and linking those on the ground to those in the offices will be an innate next step. The rest, however, is up to you - you the hundred or so MHRD alumni that can make use of this platform to advance human rights and democratisation wherever you may be in the world. Your input and participation will be crucial to ensure the success of the Global Campus Alumni Association and to build a valuable network of global human rights defenders.

For more information:

<http://www.eiuc.org>

<http://www.eiuc.org/education/global-campus-regional-masters.html>

Laura McManus is MHRD graduate from 2010-2011. With a particular interest in the green economy, Laura co-founded the environmental and social entrepreneur venture, Banners to Bags which aims to minimise the use of plastic bags in Kathmandu. She participated as MHRD Asia Pacific representative in the launching of GC Alumni in Venice in January 2013.

Sharing the Experience of the E.MA Alumni Board 2012/2014

It's been a very exciting first year, defined by a flurry of activity, since the E.MA Alumni Association elected a new Board on 12 July 2012. Given the dispersed nature, the Board has regular meetings via Skype to exchange ideas on ongoing and forthcoming projects and coordinate activities.

From the very first day, the President and Vice-President agreed on establishing a Bi-Presidency model based on mutual support, strong cooperation and open dialog. The Board decided also to adopt a horizontal model of internal organisation: all Board members are responsible and active for what they do and coordinate with others in a self-responsible way. The Bi-Presidency operates as a central coordinating role of the Board action but is not its leading authority and within the Board there is an emphasis on consensus decision making.

In order to ensure consistency and a structured approach to activities, the Board delivered its initial working plan in September 2012. Amongst the general strategic lines three main objectives are asserted: a) To promote and reinforce contacts between E.MA Alumni both at a professional and social level; b) To support the activities of the EIUC and the Global Campus; c) To promote human rights and democracy in Europe and throughout the world.

To achieve these objectives the Board identified three main areas of activities: Community building, institutional strengthening and enhanced cooperation with EIUC, E.MA and the Global Campus (GC) of Regional Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation. These areas of activities will be implemented through working groups and projects.

Working Groups include among others:

- Communication strategy: to widen the outreach of E.MA Alumni communication in the Association and beyond;
- Fundraising & Development: to strengthen the

Association's finances and develop its potential for implementing projects and actions;

Projects are ad-hoc actions to implement a specific idea and include:

- Annual theme, serving as the topic focus that the Association will consider in realising its projects and ideas.
- Career Service for registered alumni, that includes access to job, internship and education boards and the E.MA Alumni Career Development Resource List.
- E.MA Arrivals, seeking that E.MA graduates welcome E.MA students in their second semester university destinations

E.MA Career Day to relive the E.MA experience, to reconnect with former colleagues and to refresh our thinking on what's going on in our field!

- E.MA Hubs, meeting points for our graduates, ideally led by an E.MA Ambassador.
- E.MA Alumni In The Field, to increase the visibility of E.MA, by sharing a short video of 60-90 seconds
- E.MA Activism Prize awarded to the E.MA graduate that the class identified as the one who demonstrated more solidarity, social openness and activist spirit.
- E.MA Alumni Web-Star to the E.MA Alumni that more than others contribute to the active and dynamic life of our community in the virtual space.

E.MA Alumni is the Alumni Association of European Masters of Arts in Human Rights and Democratisation. MHRD Alumni and E.MA Alumni cooperate with each other bilaterally and as members of Global Campus Alumni.

For more information:
<http://www.emalumniassociation.org>

MHRD Alumni Initiates Debate on Human Rights at KSL

MHRD graduate, Ravi Parkash Vyas (2011-12) arranged a speech competition in connection with the International Human Rights Day 2012 at Kathmandu School of Law, Nepal. This initiative, supported by the MHRD Alumni Association involved 90 students of the KSL, debating why celebrating International Human Rights Day was important and what did it mean for those who celebrate it. The competition was conducted in four rounds. First round involved 90 students and out of them 40 were selected for the second round. In the second round, 15 of the 40 participants made their way to the final round.

The fourth and final round of the competition was timed to coincide with the Annual Day celebrations of KSL. In this five winners of the third round participated and all of them shared the final prize. They included:

1. Pratima Gawali and Praposa K.C.
2. Suhang Nemang and Pujan Sapkota
3. Pratistha Bhandari



Mike Hayes, coordinator for MHRD Mahidol, attended one of the four rounds of the competition as he was visiting KSL around that time. "The event was very successful as it not only provided an opportunity to speak up in public but it also profiled Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation Programme in front of the young generation of students" said Ravi Parkash Vyas.

“How” and “Why” of Burma's Democratisation

Nyi Nyi Kyaw

Introduction

This article is just a modest effort to critique Burma/Myanmar's democratisation which is happening currently. Arguably why a country democratises has been the most important question in contemporary political science especially since the end of Second World War. With a largely unexpected and widely applauded turn of democratisation in Myanmar since 2011, two questions have arisen. The first one is 'Why' and the second 'How'. 'Why' was raised in the first few months when onlookers were amazed at the changes later replaced with 'How' when they became convinced that Myanmar had genuinely changed. With the increasing dominance of 'How' in debates nowadays, the other question of 'Why' has been largely missing. In my opinion, without a clear understanding of power relations, i.e. the heart of political science, from which Myanmar's democratisation originates, 'How' debates will lack a significant dimension because original power configurations have not vanished from the scene. Though they may play a less important or obvious role now compared to 1990s and 2000s, they have a lasting influence on the way current and future changes take place because Myanmar's political scene was dominated by the military in one way or another for more than four decades. Democratisation does not tend to be completed in a few months or years, especially in a country such as Myanmar.

Though the processes and patterns of democratic changes are equally interesting, this article will only focus on “why”. It must be first and foremost stated that Myanmar's democratisation has received undue praise by the international community which is largely politicised in many ways. Another very important fact is that Myanmar is not a democracy yet, even according to the minimal standard of free and fair elections, except the by-elections in 2011 which saw Daw Aung San Suu Kyi join the parliament as a member. In other words, Myanmar is a democratising country.

The current ruling regime headed by President Thein Sein just came out of a military apparatus which ruled Myanmar since 1988. This regime came to power with winning in the 2008 elections which was discredited by the international community as neither fair nor free. However, the Thein Sein administration later got some sort of 'legitimacy' through various political reforms, the most prominent being the release of the Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her later participation in the parliamentary politics as an MP after the by-elections; cease-fire negotiations with various armed ethnic insurgent groups and loosened controls over the press. On the other hand, many seemingly insurmountable challenges such as the war in Kachin State, the Rohingya issue, and amendment of the 2008 Constitution in current operation still prevail.

Why

Before embarking on explaining why Myanmar democratised from 2011 onwards, it is worth noting that the process has caught many by surprise. Some would even claim that it was both unexpected and unprecedented. I would argue instead that it was both premeditated and calculated.

For theoretical parsimony, it is usually argued that democratisation is brought about by three major causes, though with many overlaps and mixes: popular revolution from within; import from outside mainly through a war; and negotiated or compromised change between the ruling regime and the opposition. Myanmar's democratisation is an anomaly because it was not caused by any of these three factors. It is common knowledge that an in-country revolution or a war waged by an external power such as the United States did not lead to Myanmar's democratisation. Whether it came out of a political compromise or negotiation between the ruling regime and the opposition might be a bit difficult to ascertain for many onlookers. However, if we look in detail at the step-by-step democratisation of Myanmar by the preceding military regime, we can say fairly confidently that it was not a compromise either. That Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party later re-registered after an important private meeting between the Nobel Laureate and President Thein Sein and contested the by-elections in 2011 for a little over 40 parliamentary seats might be viewed as a compromise; however, we must not lose sight of the real fact that the referendum of 2008 which approved the current Constitution and the general elections of 2011 which enabled the Union Solidarity and Development Party to win a majority of the votes and parliamentary seats were neither free nor fair. In frank opinion, just a minor compromise was offered by President Thein Sein to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after his Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and the military had largely dominated the political scene. Then the opposition led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi seemed to be out of options under an extreme political repression for more than two decades and had to accept that minor offer.

In another stream of literature, there are two main causes of democratisation in a polity which was previously illiberal or authoritarian – structural and personal or rational. Structural causes include class problems, economic hardships, splits in the ruling regimes, international pressures, etc. On the other hand, personal reasons such as the preceding dictator's own desire for change, the previously ruling regime's rational calculation, etc. Despite the fact that both had affected Myanmar's history of democratisation, I would argue here that ex-dictator Senior General Than Shwe and his military corps' rational calculation was the most important cause which has led to Myanmar's honeymoon period of democratisation.

In other words, Myanmar's democratisation was a set-up by the preceding regime in order to ward off any untoward hams

toward the ex-junta and prolong the military's involved dominance in Myanmar's parliamentary politics. The previous military dictatorship had been preparing for this so-called Myanmar democratisation for so many years with their announced Seven-Step Roadmap to ensure that everything is in order when the country opens up and no harm befalls them. Evidently, the 2008 Constitution was written and passed without genuine popular approval, in various constitutional provisions for an automatic granting of a quarter of the parliamentary seats to the military and for a de jure military take-over of power in instances of emergencies and chaos, and in blatant built-in legal obstacles which shall make any future efforts to significantly amend the Constitution almost impossible, to mention just a few important facts. The sheer fact that the notorious military dictator Than Shwe and his comrades are now free and forgotten by most of the people in Myanmar and elsewhere itself is evidence of how so-called democratisation of Myanmar has been stage-managed by the preceding regime. Also missing is transitional justice, even if it is just aimed at social memories and reconciliation, is not being broached by any parties in the current political arena, with the exception of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar Tomás Ojea Quintana.

Conclusion

To sum up, this article has argued that Myanmar's democratisation was an orchestration by the preceding military regime to protect itself, at least its leaders such as Than Shwe, from future harms by opening political space bit by bit for dissidents such as NLD and other ethnic parties and groups. Various issues such as political equality among various ethnic groups of Myanmar, enormous discrimination being faced by the Rohingya, religious violence, and constitutional amendments are yet to be solved. And they do not seem to be easily solvable into the near future. Justice has not been made to various peoples and groups which tremendously suffered under the previous military regimes since the 1960s. Many other political, economic, social and cultural challenges remain. And how they will appear and how they will be solved by the current regime and the following ones are yet to be seen. However, power politics from the 1990s and 2000s behind this Myanmar's applauded democratisation must always be viewed, at least into the near future, as one of the major factors in current and future debates on the country.

Nyi Nyi Kyaw is MHRD Asia Pacific, First Batch Alumni (2010-2011). He is currently pursuing his PhD at the University of New South Wales in Canberra, Australia.

Bringing Human Rights to China for People with Disabilities

Haibin Zhou

In China, human rights and democracy is a sensitive topic to talk about. It was only after meeting my colleague as part of Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation (MHRD) that I got inspired to work as a human rights activists in line with my dream, which is helping the vulnerable persons in China.



There were many aspects of the programme that inspired me but participation in a seminar during a visit to the Australian Human Right Commission left a mark on my life. This seminar on the rights and living standards of persons with disabilities was first occasion in my life when I heard about the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its meaning. Six months later, I was interviewed by International Labor Organisation (ILO) team from Geneva and subsequently selected for a position to work on rights of persons with disabilities. .

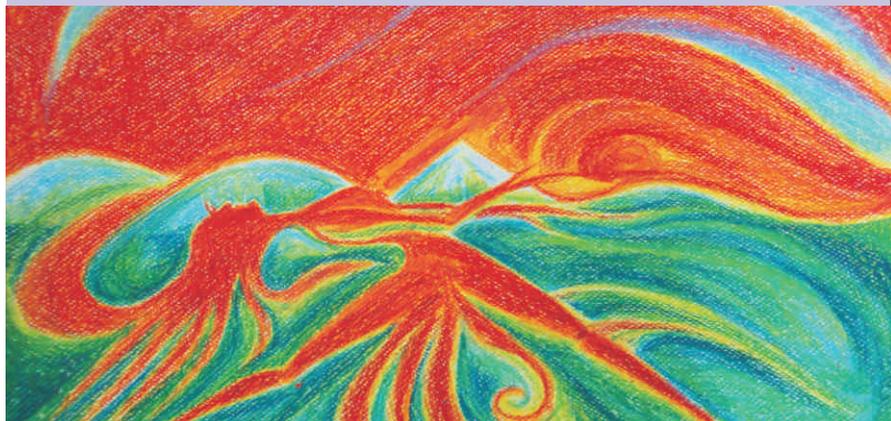
My second semester at University of Colombo in Sri Lanka, further contributed to my understanding of recent developments in the field of human rights in the region. Our visits to the Supreme Court, prisons and gaining knowledge of the politics in Sri Lanka, provided me a new lens for reflecting on the realities in my own country.

After one year of studying, I feel fully committed to contribute to the cause of empowering the marginalised people of my country. I myself feel empowered because I have got an opportunity to work with ILO to promote the empowerment of persons with disabilities. While working in the complex context of problems for persons with disabilities, MHRD continues to provide me tools and techniques of analysing political threats and opportunities. I try to use the same tools of locating threats and opportunities to create a normative shift through the campaign that I am part of.

My gift from the MHRD is that I will continue to encourage more young people to take up this course and choose promotion of democracy and human rights as their profession. I want to pass on the gift of MHRD experience to our future generations.

Haibin ZHOU is MHRD graduate from 2011-2012. He works as National Project Coordinator of Disability Project at International Labor Organisation Office for China and Mongolia in Beijing.

Random Reflections



This is a painting by **Vasuki Jeyasankar**, a graduate of MHRD from Sri Lanka. Vasuki is one of the prominent women rights activists and an artist promoting peace in Sri Lanka and beyond. This painting is her reflections on the white mountains of Kathmandu when she was studying her second semester at KSL in 2011.



Islamabad: Leader of the House in Senate of Pakistan Senator Muhammad Jahangir Bader speaking at the MHRD event

Pakistani Graduates make their Voices Count

“My Voice Counts” was the theme of International Human Rights Day - 2012, so was demonstrated by the five Pakistani graduates of MHRD. The event “connecting theory with practice” was organised by the MHRD Alumni in collaboration with Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO), Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and Centre for Civic Education (CCE). The event was first ever collaborative effort of MHRD Alumni and Pakistani civil society organisations who generously supported to make this happen.

The Pakistani scholars, who belonged to two cohorts of this programme presented their human rights and democratisation research on diverse and unique topics ranging from role of civil society in Pakistan's transition to democracy to Muslim marriage laws in Sri Lanka.

Speaking on the occasion, Leader of the House in Senate and Secretary General of Pakistan Peoples Party Senator Jahangir Bader congratulated the young scholars on taking the step of presenting their work in front of the audience on the human rights day. He said “democracies have to ensure human rights of its citizens; otherwise there is no way that they can survive because it is basic premise of the democracies to protect and promote human rights of its citizen”.

Niaz Ahmed, who is working with the Democracy Reporting International (DRI), while presenting his paper on role of civil society in Pakistan's transition to democracy said that the civil society in Pakistan has played major role in bringing the recent wave of democratisation in Pakistan. He stated that the civil society could not continue its role after dictator was ousted as for deepening and consolidating the democracy it was important that similar role was continued. He further said that in order to have proper fruits of democracy, the civil society and the political society has to work together. He insisted that the space created by the civil society during the lawyers' movement needs to expand from agitation to constructive role of policy formulation and advocacy.

Parvez Pirzado, who works with USAID as an Education Specialist, presented his paper on Human Rights Education in Pakistan and said that while the education policies and official documents assert the importance of

human rights education in Pakistan but there is hardly any human rights education in Pakistani curriculum. He said that for increasing respect of human rights in society, it is vital to include human rights education in Pakistani schools. He further added that as per his review of social studies and Islamic studies, there is in fact material which is against human rights. He added that based on his survey with teachers, 90% teachers said that human rights education should be incorporated in Pakistani schools whereas 10% were against it. He added that a good number of teachers believed that human rights education should be incorporated in existing subjects such Social Studies and Islamic studies.

Nimrah Zubair presented her paper on “Qazi Courts for Muslims Population in Sri Lanka”. She highlighted the positive and negative aspects of an exclusive legal provision for minority muslim population of Sri Lanka. She suggested professionalization of Qazi courts so that they could cater to the needs of those who want to take advantage of this system.

Hassan Nasir Mirbahar, sharing his research on “Conscientious objection to military service and capabilities approach”, said that around 83 countries have conscription system but a number of them do not recognise a right to conscientious objection. He added that from the capabilities approach, states have to respect an individual's conscientious decisions with respect to joining or not joining military. Sharing a case study on Turkey, he added that a lot of conscientious objectors face harsh treatment by Turkish state and they do not have legal or political recognition; hence the objector become stateless within their own state.

Speaking on the occasion, Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director Center for Civic Education, appreciated efforts of MHRD Alumni to organise the event and share academic research with practitioners. He added that such efforts could increase opportunities of the using research in practice as well. He said the practice of presenting research to audience needs to strengthen. He hoped that others will take a lead from this event and more of similar kind will be organised. He said the culture of human rights and democratisation research should be encouraged so that Pakistan has its own capacity of inquiring into the deep-rooted human rights problems. He said human rights education is necessary for creating awareness and appreciated that this government has agreed to introduce human rights curriculum in schools.

Putting Perspectives on Violence against Women in Practice

Jennifer Elms

Upon completing the MHRD programme, I returned to Canada to pursue opportunities in human rights with hopes that I may find a position related to my main interest: women's rights, specifically related to gender-based violence. My internship in Colombo, completed at the Women in Need, a leading organisation in the field of women's rights, had infused me with a passion to help women and children who are, or have been, affected by violence. Although sometimes challenging, my experience within the organisation was positive. In addition to being assigned various administrative and research tasks, I was pleased to have been given the opportunity to participate in counselling with women who had been affected by violence. Through hearing the stories of women in this setting, I was given a new and invaluable perspective into the influence of social and cultural factors completely different from my home setting, giving me a new way of understanding and respecting human rights. This learned ability to understand and respect different values and belief systems has been crucial in my position as Executive Director, specifically to the relationships I build with both colleagues and individuals affected by violence across situations and circumstances.



The management of a small not-for-profit organisation requires comprehensive knowledge of human rights and the strategies that can be utilised to protect them. I have no doubt that the research, course work, and internship completed within the MHRD programme has given me knowledge, insight and confidence in my career by providing me the opportunity to learn in a unique and stimulating setting under the supervision of a faculty that engaged and challenged my ways of thinking. During the programme, I not only learned how to utilise and develop strategies for the intervention, prevention and remedying of human rights violations, but I have attained the skills to succeed in those aims.

As I continue in my role at Western Regional Coalition to End Violence (WRCEV), I truly believe that MHRD has provided me with a solid foundation upon which I am building a career and life rooted in the prevention and intervention of human rights violations, specifically those occurring through acts of violence on a local, national and international level and I will be forever grateful for the opportunities this programme has provided me.

Jennifer Elms graduated from the 2012 MHRD cohort after completing her second semester at University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. Within two months of submitting her academic paper, Jennifer was offered a position as Executive Director at Western Regional Coalition to End Violence in Newfoundland, Canada. Please visit www.wrcev.ca for more information on WRCEV.

Bridging the Batches

Patricia Gonzales

Since the programme started, the idea of meeting people from all over the world was fascinating and as the day of our welcome session approached, the feeling started growing. From day one, I tried to learn as much as I could about their countries, especially about their traditional food.

The first session went smooth and everyone was keen to know about each other. But our real ice breaker was our theatre workshops with Peter Harris. We learnt so much about ourselves and everyone else that, as one of our participating tutors in the sessions put it - we had intimacy.

Following a tradition of welcoming people visiting, I tried to invite them to my house. I had so much pleasure having them every week.

I made good friends with many of the second MHRD batch. I also met so many great people that just got along so well and I instantly love them.

As one of my friends Parvez put it "I am a bridge" between the batches of the MHRD. That is true, I am the bridge connecting the three batches so far and ready for the fourth.

Patricia Gonzales is graduate from the first cohort of MHRD (2010-11). She recently completed her internship at Amnesty International Australia. She volunteers with different organisations.

Contact Us:

For MHRD Alumni

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For MHRD Programme

Visit: http://sydney.edu.au/arts/human_rights_democratisation/contact/

EIUC European Inter-University Centre
for Human Rights and Democratisation



The MHRD Project is partially funded by the European Union