

9 June 2005

**GET UP – STAND UP
STAND UP FOR YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS!**

**COMMUNITY LEARNING PROGRAMMES ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL RIGHTS – NAIROBI - KENYA**

SOME INITIAL THOUGHTS

INTRODUCTION

Economic, social and cultural rights violations – extreme poverty, lack of access to healthcare, water and sanitation, basic housing and education in the context of an imbalanced global financial and economic order all present enormous challenges to all entities working for social justice. Extreme poverty exists amid extreme wealth. Income inequality between the rich and poor countries as well as between the rich and poor communities within countries is the sharpest ever. Among the most deprived there is a clear cry for change.

Human rights provide a ready, moral and an authoritative framework to bring about social and economic justice that we seek. A human rights framework can be far-reaching and comprehensive in dealing with these challenges and thereby achieving dignity for all. Increasing awareness of human rights can strengthen and invigorate efforts for change as people learn what obligations and commitments their own and other governments have made to ensure the realization of human rights for all.

No where is the struggle for human rights more acute than with the poorest communities – those living in remote rural areas and those living in informal settlements in the cities.

In the case of Nairobi, Kenya, a majority of the urban population live in informal settlements. Existing data indicates that over 50% of the population in Nairobi live in the slums occupying only 1.5% of the residential space of the city. These settlements provide labour for the economy but residents are denied access to basic human rights like water, sanitation, garbage disposal, free primary school education and

healthcare. They also live in fear of eviction. They find themselves excluded and discriminated against in the decision making processes. They are the voiceless majority.

The struggle for survival and a life in dignity is a daily one faced by these residents. The will for change is strong and the energy to affect change is even more so.

If the overall human rights vision is to succeed, we need to start work with the poorest communities to shift the playing field in the struggle against poverty where the affected communities are not seen as recipients of charity but as bearers of basic human rights whose rights have been violated; shift the position of these communities from that of weakness to a position of strength, and a position of powerlessness to a position where they are empowered.

PROPOSAL

Critical in the empowerment process is the awareness and knowledge about human rights. The proposal at hand is to organise a series of community learning programmes on human rights with a specific focus on economic, social and cultural rights.

PROPOSAL OBJECTIVES

- ✚ To increase affected community awareness and knowledge about human rights , in particular economic, social and cultural rights,
- ✚ To relate existing struggles of the community (water, sanitation, housing, education, healthcare) to human rights and work with them to strengthen their call for change through use of human rights instruments;
- ✚ To equip the community members with the skills to claim their human rights and people's based advocacy.
- ✚ To engage with the Community Based Organisations other NGOs on a longer term campaign for social change.

PROPOSAL PROCESS

Following an exchange between the core partners in this project, the process is envisaged to be as follows:

1. **STAGE ONE - INITIAL DISCUSSIONS & PLANNING** – A meeting of community leaders/ potential trainers identified and invited by the leading partner (Hakijamii) to revisit programme objectives; to discuss programme contents: What would be useful for community members to learn? And who can help produce a binder of contents?; to discuss programme process: how best to provide them? Who will be involved? What is the most appropriate programme design? What is the time scale?

Duration: 1 day **Proposed Date.** 11 December 2005

2. **STAGE TWO – MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT** - For lasting impact, the project will require materials that can easily be understood by community leaders and the community as a whole.

- A cartoon series that will help community members to understand that their basic needs are basic human rights;
- A booklet (with cartoons) on “Constitution and Law made easy” which will highlight constitutional and legal provisions that refer to economic social and cultural rights and also highlight areas where there is need for legislative change;
- Posters campaign for awareness raising throughout the community;
- Community theatre – to work with existing community theatre group for performances that relate to human rights.

Duration. 5 months **January – May 2006**

3. **STAGE THREE - TRAINING OF TRAINERS** – This will bring together a group of 15-20 (?) community leaders/trainers and work through the learning programme with them. First, participants (future facilitators of the programme) themselves will learn the programme contents of the “community learning programmes” from the binder that has been developed; discuss and refine the methodology; and learn/refine facilitation skills. This training programme will also work out the “community learning programmes” to be undertaken throughout 2006 (how many, where and who will do them?)

Duration: 7 full days **Proposed Date:** March 2006

4. STAGE FOUR - COMMUNITY LEVEL PROGRAMMES

Facilitators/community leaders who actually participated in the training of trainers will themselves run a series of community learning programmes based on the contents that have been agreed and using the methodology that were discussed.

Duration: 2-3 days per community training? Timing: Throughout 2006
from June 2006

5. STAGE FIVE - EVALUATION

A meeting of the partners, trainers/facilitators, community members to discuss: what went right with the project? What went wrong? What were the results? How can we improve? What can be the follow-up – where now in terms of work for the community?

December 2006

PROPOSED FOCUS AREA

As a start the project could focus on Kibera and perhaps also Korogocho and Kiambiu. If the project works out well, to spread to other informal settlements.

PARTNERS

Hakijami, Christ the King (Kibera), Kibera Renters and Housing Organisation, Voice of Kiambiu Network, local churches and other faith-based organisations and all the NGOs working in the communities in question.

Human rights - in spite of its potential, and if it fails to practically relate to the realities and challenges of the poorest - there is a risk that human rights continue their irrelevance to a majority of the poorest population or simply become a dead body of international and national law.

It has been stated above that the struggle for human rights is most acute in these poorest communities. The future for human rights also lies with them. Given the enormous will and energy for change our best hope also lies with these communities to help us breathe meaning and life back into human rights. The people must reclaim their space and place in the human rights agenda and the only way to do so is to equip them with the knowledge, tools, skills and overall capacity to undertake these challenging tasks.