Human rights education for the next generation

More than 400 students took part in an event in Senegal to raise awareness about human rights, particularly children’s rights, and to fight against school violence.

OHCHR, the UN Information Centre and Amnesty International launched a project called La Petite Journée des droits de l’homme (The Small Human Rights Journey) in the elementary school of the Hydrobase, a poor and excluded zone of the community of Saint Louis in Senegal. The students prepared artistic and pedagogical representations of human rights. A wall of tolerance, representing all human rights issues discussed, was drawn by the students inside the school compound as a symbol that the school, including its teachers, families, the community and local authorities, fully support human rights.

OHCHR and Amnesty International held sessions on human rights education. OHCHR also led educational activities in the West Africa College in Dakar to increase students’ awareness of Human Rights.
The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the leading UN entity on human rights. It has a unique mandate, provided by the General Assembly, to promote and protect all human rights for all people. The United Nations human rights programme aims to make the protection of human rights a reality in the lives of people everywhere. As the entity in charge of implementing the programme, the Office plays a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of the three pillars of the United Nations - peace and security, human rights and development.

OHCHR provides assistance, such as technical expertise and capacity development, to support the implementation of international human rights standards on the ground. It assists governments, which bear the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights, to fulfil their obligations, supports individuals to claim their rights and speaks out objectively on human rights violations.

OHCHR is part of the United Nations Secretariat and has its headquarters in Geneva and an office in New York. OHCHR’s staff is based in 64 countries, in regional and country/stand-alone offices, United Nations peace missions or political offices and in United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs).

Method

The Office’s work encompasses three broad areas: human rights standard-setting, monitoring and supporting the implementation of human rights obligations by States. Substantive and technical support is provided to the various UN human rights bodies as they undertake their standard-setting and monitoring duties. Knowledge and awareness of all human rights, whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social, are deepened and the capacity of rights-holders and duty-bearers are strengthened through applied thematic research and analysis, methodology, development and training. International human rights experts are also deployed to field offices and other missions, including in circumstances of crisis, to work with countries seeking to meet their human rights obligations.

The work of the Office is based on the OHCHR Management Plan (OMP), which seeks to implement the Human Rights Programme of the Secretary-General’s Strategic Framework. By aligning the Office with a common set of results and tying in the various components of OHCHR’s mandate, the OMP plays an important role in enhancing the Office’s effectiveness in implementing the Strategic Framework, increasing synergies and ensuring the best possible use of available resources.

The current OMP covers the period 2014-2017 and sets out six thematic priorities with related results. Achievements realized under these thematic priorities in 2014 are summarized in the printed version of the report and are listed in full under the corresponding field presence or division in the CD version. The OMP for 2014-2017 also identifies eight global management outputs (GMOs) to improve efficiency.
within the Office. Achievements in this area are elaborated in the Management chapter at page 50.

Supporting the human rights bodies and mechanisms

The Human Rights Council, comprising 47 Member States of the United Nations which are elected by the General Assembly for fixed terms, is given substantive and technical support by the Office in its work, including its regular and special sessions, organizational meetings and meetings of its subsidiary bodies. Stakeholder meetings, special events, discussions and expert panels are also organized and supported by OHCHR.

OHCHR supports the Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The second cycle of the UPR continued in 2014 and 42 States had their human rights records reviewed by the Working Group, which benefited from the background documentation that was prepared by the Office to facilitate the review. The Office also develops UPR training modules, briefs States and other stakeholders on the UPR mechanism and provides technical assistance to States to strengthen national processes to engage with the UPR and other human rights mechanisms and to follow-up on their recommendations.

The Office provides substantive and technical assistance to independent human rights experts, known as special procedures mandate-holders, who are appointed by the Council and mandated to report and advise on human rights issues and situations from a thematic or country-specific perspective. As of the end of 2014, there were 53 special procedures; 39 of which are dedicated to thematic issues and 14 of which are dedicated to country situations. Among these 53 mandates, six are working groups composed of five members. The Office provides thematic, fact-finding, policy, legal and methodological expertise, research, analysis and documentation and assists with logistical and administrative matters. With the support of OHCHR, special procedures undertake country visits; act on individual cases and concerns of a broader, structural nature by sending communications to States and others; conduct thematic studies and convene expert consultations; contribute to the development of international human rights standards; engage in advocacy; raise public awareness; and provide advice for technical cooperation. Special procedures report annually to the Human Rights Council. The majority of the mandates also report to the General Assembly.

In addition, the Office provides support to the 10 human rights treaty bodies. The treaty bodies are
committees of independent experts that consider the progress made and challenges faced by countries in implementing the obligations of the international human rights treaties they have ratified. Most of these committees consider individual complaints of violations of treaty provisions. The results of their deliberations contribute to a rich and dynamic body of jurisprudence on international human rights law.

Developing human rights guidance, offering advice and strengthening capacity

The Office maps emerging trends in human rights and identifies lessons learned from human rights work carried out at headquarters and in the field. Based on these trends, the Office produces guidance and capacity-strengthening tools, such as methodologies and training materials, which translate international human rights law into practical approaches and procedures to be used by the UN and other actors. Providing advice, training, support and outreach to multiple stakeholders, including Member States, individuals, civil society and regional and national human rights institutions, are integral parts of the Office’s approach to implementing the High Commissioner’s mandate.

Mainstreaming of human rights

Under its mainstreaming mandate, the Office works to ensure the integration of a human rights-based approach into the development, humanitarian, peace and security, governance and rule of law programmes of the United Nations system. At a practical level, OHCHR advances human rights mainstreaming through its active participation in UN inter-agency bodies and activities and the High Commissioner’s participation in the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The Office advocates for policy coherence according to an approach based on respect for all human rights, with particular attention paid to those who are victims or are most vulnerable to becoming victims of human rights violations. It equally seeks to systematically inform UNCTs of recommendations emanating from the human rights mechanisms and assist in mainstreaming their follow-up into the programmes of UNCTs.

Working in countries

As of the end of 2014, OHCHR was operating or supporting 66 field presences. In-country presence is essential to identifying, highlighting and developing responses to human rights challenges in close collaboration with governments and the broader United Nations system. Responses may involve training judges, soldiers and police, helping to draft national legislation that is in line with international human rights standards and working with States on the fulfilment of their obligation to implement the recommendations issued by the human rights mechanisms, including the UPR. In many countries and regions, the Office cooperates with human rights groups, academic and research institutions and civil society organizations, including charities, advocacy groups and other NGOs, to strengthen their capacity and effectiveness. Staff are also deployed to rapidly developing humanitarian or other crises and to support fact-finding missions or commissions of inquiry into serious human rights abuses.

Staff

As of 31 December, the Office was employing 1,189 staff. Of those staff members, 474 (40 per cent) were based in the field (including 27 human rights advisers based in UNCTs), 695 (58 per cent) in Geneva and 20 (2 per cent) in New York. Additionally, OHCHR also worked with 820 human rights officers serving in 13 UN peace missions or political offices.

Structure

In addition to its headquarters in Geneva, the organization has an office at UN Headquarters in New York and as of 31 December, 13 regional offices or centres and 13 country or stand-alone offices (see map on pages 46-47). Furthermore, the Office supports the human rights components of UN peace missions or political offices and deploys human rights advisers to work with the UNCTs.

The Geneva-based headquarters has four substantive divisions: (1) the Research and Right to Development Division, which develops policy and provides guidance, tools, advice and capacity-strengthening support in relation to thematic human rights issues; (2) the Human Rights Treaties Division, which supports the treaty bodies; (3) the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, which is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Office’s work in the field; and (4) the Human Rights Council and Special Procedures Division, which provides substantive and technical support to the
How OHCHR is funded

OHCHR is partially funded from the United Nations regular budget, which provided 46 per cent of the resources expended to implement the Office’s programme of work in 2014, and partially through voluntary contributions from donors, the majority of which are Member States. The amount of regular budget funding that is allocated to OHCHR has gradually increased since 2005 when leaders attending the World Summit committed to a doubling of the resources available for the Office over five years. A total of US$173.5 million was initially allocated to OHCHR for the 2014-2015 biennium, compared with US$177.3 million in 2012-2013, US$151.6 million in 2010-2011, US$120.6 million in 2008-2009, US$83.4 million in 2006-2007 and US$67.6 million in 2004-2005. For more information, please refer to pages 75-94.

The level of voluntary funding allocated to OHCHR increased substantially over the last decade, almost tripling from US$41.2 million in 2002 to nearly US$120 million in 2008. In 2009, contributions...
dropped slightly to US$118.1 million and then sharply decreased in 2010 to US$109.4 million, before making a slight recovery in 2011 and 2012 to a level of US$111.1 million. In 2013, however, the level of voluntary funding for OHCHR reached US$121.2 million then increased in 2014 to US$123.7 million, the highest amount ever received by the Office.

The amount of unearmarked voluntary contributions has grown steadily since 2002 and reached a maximum of 56 per cent of total contributions received in 2009. While unearmarked contributions dropped slightly to 54 per cent in 2010 and again to 51 per cent in 2011, they increased to 53 per cent in 2012 and 54 per cent in 2013. In 2014, however, the proportion of unearmarked funding decreased to 47 per cent. Please refer to pages 62-74 for more information on funding and trends and challenges and pages 105-123 for the profiles of all donors in 2014.

How OHCHR spends its budget

Total expenditures in 2014, including both regular budget and voluntary contributions, increased to US$239.1 million (compared to US$219.44 million in 2013). In 2014, nearly 48 per cent of total expenditures were devoted to fieldwork, particularly capacity-strengthening projects and human rights monitoring, which were predominantly financed through voluntary contributions. Approximately 10 per cent was spent on thematic research and human rights mainstreaming, 10 per cent on supporting the human rights treaty bodies, including policymaking organs, and 12 per cent on support for the Human Rights Council and its special procedures. The remainder was devoted to programme support (6 per cent), executive direction and management, resource mobilization and outreach activities (9 per cent) and the trust funds and miscellaneous activities (5 per cent). Further information on the financial accounts for the year-end to 31 December and the breakdown of expenditures and allocation of voluntary contributions can be found on pages 75-94.
Global map of field presences

- Headquarters
- Regional offices/centres
- Country/stand-alone offices
- Human rights components of peace missions
- Human rights advisers in United Nations Country Teams

* Closed in 2014
** Human Rights Adviser deployed through the UNDG Human Rights Working Group.
*** Will close in 2015

- Reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo
- Reference to Palestine should be understood in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19