

Health and Human Rights Workshop Report

Narrative Report

I. Introduction

A three-day long “Health and Human Rights” workshop was successfully completed on February 19, 2004. It was held at New Delhi, India. 35 people from different organizations and India-Burma border area participated in it and among them 15 are female participants. This training was initiated By Dr Khin Saw Win and organized by NHECWR (National Health and Education Committee Western Region. Funding expenses on traveling of Dr Khin Saw Win (from Edmonton, Canada to New Delhi) is kindly contributed by ICID (institute for Community and Institutional Development, Burma).

2. Health and Human rights workshop

Learning objectives:

1. To be able to acquire a basic understanding of the history, sources and contents of international human rights law and treaties, including the right to health.
2. To understand and explore the value and impact of linking between health and human rights
3. To understand the context of public health, especially primary health care and to be able of analyze health impacts resulting from violations of human rights
4. To have the knowledge of how health workers and people involved in health related fields can protect and respect human rights and ethics in order to promote health in the community

At the end of the workshop, you may be able to:

1. understand human rights law and principles
2. recognize and appreciate the important role of human rights in health
3. understand the reciprocal impacts of health and human rights
4. find ways and means of how health workers can improve individual and community health and well-being by protecting and promoting human rights
5. raise the awareness of the relationship between health and human rights at community, national and international level

Reference materials

All appropriate reference materials are provided. Most of them are translated in Burmese, however, there are some articles in English.

Day 1 (February 17, 2004)

- 1.1 Welcome speech by Dr Aung Kyaw Oo, and Dr Tint Swe
- 1.2 Introduction to the course by Dr Khin Saw Win
- 1.3 Self introduction - by participants
- 1.4 Introduction to international human rights law and treaties - their origin, how they are implemented and how they can be enforced
- 1.5 Phrasing of Rights
- 1.6 The links between health and human rights

The following questions were given before starting the course.

- * What is your understanding of the term human rights?
- * What do you consider to be the most important features of human rights?
- * What is health?
- * What is/are the role/s of health workers?

Topics covered in item number 1.4 and 1.5

Basic rights: UDHR

Treaties: ICCPR, ICESCR

Other human rights on specific issues: CEDAW, Convention on the rights of the child, Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or punishment, International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination

Regional Human Rights Treaties: African Charter on Human People's rights, The American Convention on Human Rights, The European Convention on the protection of human rights

How they are implemented: First stage, adoption of the treaty, second stage, consent to be bound

How they are enforced: By monitoring bodies, like UN, NGOs, AI

How they are supervised: By reporting procedure, by state complaint mechanism, by individual complaint mechanisms, involvement of independent third parties

- 1.6 Wrap up for day 1

References required: Human rights law book by Aung Myo Min - pink color book, and about UN organizations and humanitarian organizations - red color book from BLC (all in Burmese)

An article by Aung San Suu Kyi - human rights are not aliens to people of Burma (translated in Burmese)

Day 2 (February 18, 2004)

- 2.1 The right to health
- 2.2 Why health and human rights are linked to each other
- 2.3 What is public health? the definition and history
- 2.4 The origin of health concerns
- 2.5 Torture and health
- 2.6 closing comment for day 2 - by Dr Aung Kyaw Oo

Answer the following questions before we start

- * Why should health workers be committed to human rights?
- * Why do health workers fail to expose human rights violations?
- * How can health professionals engage in the promotion and protection of human rights?

References: Alma Ata Declaration, Ottawa Charter for health promotion, the Declaration of Geneva, Tokyo, the Hippocratic Oath, the UN Convention against torture, 25 questions and answers on health and human rights (by WHO), cartoon booklet on the right to health. (all in English)
Stories for role play were given for the groups

Day 3 (February 19, 2004)

- 3.1 Doctor's participation in torture, rape cases
- 3.2 HIV/AIDS and human rights (including women's reproductive rights)
- 3.3 Children confronting HIV/AIDS
- 3.4 role play and discussion
- 3.5 mini test (evaluation)
- 3.6 closing remarks and farewell

Conclusion: Health workers have the ability to protect and promote the rights to health for our people. We have 2 main responsibilities:

1. to make sure human rights are protected in health policy planning and programming
2. to document and speak out against the moral hollowness of political inaction and human rights violations.

The only crime equal to will-full inhumanity is the crime of indifference, silence and forgetting.

Workshop started at 9:00 AM and wrapped up around 5:00 PM every day.