

WORKSHOP
“Human Rights and You”
with People’s Movement for Human Rights Learning
16 March 2011, New York



Following an introduction of the host and partner organizations, participants were invited to take turns reading the 30 articles of the short version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that were projected on the wall. GVI President Alisa Clarke then outlined to the group the nature of human rights in terms of being universal, indivisible and inter-dependent; the core value of non-discrimination; and the obligations and duties arising from human rights, mainly for governments, to respect, protect and fulfill them. Shulamith Koenig, President of PDHRE, further emphasized human rights as a way of belonging in dignity in community with others, and the need to be vigilant of those situations when equality and dignity are exchanged for survival.

Robert Kesten of PDHRE noted that human rights as a framework can be integrated in the workplace, including those of NGOs and business, in addition to those of governments. He asserted that governments will always be more effective when they strengthen protection of human rights and do not weaken them in the name of human or national security. He then led the participants in small group exercises promoting dialogue on the following questions, being mindful of the distinction between symptoms and causes:

- When did you first experience a human rights violation?
- When did you first experience realization of your human rights?

Reporting back



Robert encouraged the group to broaden the mindset of what a human rights organization is so

that organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, as well as workers such as nurses, farmers, teachers and others are all human rights workers, in contributing to realizing the UDHR.

The groups reported back to the plenary, describing their experiences and what they had done, or wished they had done.

Among the experiences shared were the following:

- Being aware of the human right to life during the nuclear freeze movement (Article 3)
- Facing the stereotypes of being Chinese while growing up (Article 2)
- Organizational dysfunctions at work (Article 23)
- Being ill-treated by brothers in the name of play as a child (Article 5)
- Being threatened with dismissal at work for attending a Catholic mass (Article 18)
- Sense of disrespect for having a different nationality from everyone else in her building (Article 15)
- Having her opinions “shot down” by professors at school (Article 19)
- Being wrongly expelled from school at 12 years old (Article 8)
- Enjoying the right of freedom of movement (Article 13)
- Enjoying the human right to education (Article 26)

Declarations



In the next segment, Dr Joni Carley of Global Vision Institute (GVI) handed out sheets and invited participants to individually record their responses to the questions:

1. What change will it take to reach the next level of dignity for you and those around you?
2. What will you commit to?
3. What would support you best in fulfilling your commitment?

Participants then declared their commitments out loud in the plenary group and these were simultaneously shared live for posting on the GVI website Ning forum (atwww.globalvisioninstitute.org). The declarations included:

- I declare to treat others with respect and act in a conscious manner that is not only about self promotion (Anonymous)
- I declare to speak out against injustice (Chi L.)

- I declare to familiarized myself with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights articles and to utilize them (Anonymous)
- I will listen and have an open mind with no judgment (Lorna B.)
- I declare to be tolerant to those with different opinions from my own (Elena E.)
- Do the best (Noema C.)
- I declare to acknowledge and accept every human as they are and to eradicate judgment (Adero D.)
- I declare that I will not laugh or be amused when boys are being mean to girls at a young age at in the name of “play” or “war games.” (Anonymous)
- I declare that I will do my best so that everyone has the right to their dignity their independence, and the assurance of their human rights (Leonor P.)
- I declare to do my best to appreciate the dignity of everyone that I meet (Jesse H.)

Wrapping up



PDHRE urged the integration of the UDHR in the workplace, school or other organization or institution as part of their personal declarations. In wrapping up Shulamith Koenig asked participants to share what human rights as a way of life meant to them. Alisa Clarke invited the group to see the integration of human rights as a process, to use the sheets of declarations as reminders, and to consider posting their progress on the GVI website as well as in a possible follow-up meeting in a few months.