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International Human Rights Education Consortium

From the Secretariat
Message Posted June, 2008

Dear IHREC members,

For those of us in North America and Europe it is the end of the academic year. For academics the end of lectures and exams allows for time for research, reading and reflection. Accordingly let me take this opportunity to reflect and recount some of the Consortium activities that have come to my attention in the last six months.

As is true for so many of our members, my year has been particularly busy. Since December I have visited members and participated in IHREC events in Sri Lanka, India, Canada, Romania, Bulgaria, Kosova, Albania, and California. The experience of working with our Consortium partners further convinces me that the pursuit of human rights education remains vital with students and activists, along with educators active in bringing the promise of the respect and understanding of human rights closer to reality.

At the end of three years of my four year term I have concluded that while much has been done by Consortium in the pursuit of human rights education there is much more to be done. This last year of my term will be dedicated to the sustainability and expansion of the IHREC. I look forward to working with our Consortium partners to continue to work for the accomplishment of our mission- the promotion of “...*education, collaboration, and research on human rights at the national, regional, and global levels.*”

Among the many successes of our cooperative efforts was a recent decision by University of Mumbai (India) to make human rights a compulsory course in all the University's colleges. The efforts of the Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE), a broad coalition of human rights educators and advocates, helped bring about this accomplishment. MIHRE was established through the Institute of Community

Organisation for Research (ICOR), an IHREC partner and member. The MIHRE's is an effort resulting from the IHREC activities in India. IHREC VP and MIHRE President, Allwyn D'Silva, was quoted in a recent Mumbai article, "*Our objective is to build a humane society in which all women, men, youth and children acknowledge, respect and enjoy human rights as well as make constant and special endeavours to promote a human rights culture.*" (See discussion below of the May 23, 2008 article of Ronita Torcato in the *Mumbai Afternoon Despatch & Courier*.)

The efforts in India by the MIHRE and our Indian partners should inspire human rights educators in our Consortium to work cooperatively to achieve our goal of bringing the human rights message to larger and broader sectors of society. The possibilities are enormous, but require the resolve and commitment of human rights educators within and out of the IHREC. The very purpose of our Consortium is to encourage cooperative efforts and I trust we will continue to look for new and creative activities to further our mission.

This year we will be honoring the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We should be ever mindful of its inspirational challenge; "*that every individual and every organ of society...shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms.*"

In that light I hope our members will be planning appropriate events to celebrate this important anniversary. If you have already made plans we would be happy to share the information with our membership. If we can provide other assistance in your celebration or activities please let us know.

Sincerely,
Ted Orlin
International Secretariat
Utica College, Utica, New York, USA

NEW CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

We want to welcome:

Janet E. Lord of Washington D.C. to the Consortium. Janet learned about the IHREC at the workshop that Bert Lockwood, Rita Maran and Ted Orlin presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) in San Francisco, California.

Contacts: lord@american.edu; jlord@bluelawllp.com

Janet co-authored: *Action and Advocacy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. (See: www.humanrightsyet.org). It is a participatory human rights education manual on the rights of persons with disabilities as set forth in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Anthony Dias, Director of Socio-legal Research at Xavier Institute of Social Research & Action, Mumbai, India – Dr. Dias’ interests include research on tribal and urban issues, as well as human rights and its interrelationship with environmental concerns including global warming. Contact: anthonyda@gmail.com

Pushpa M .Soneji, of Mumbai, India –Contacts: pushpamsoneji@yahoo.co.in
Kalpanagopal2007@yahoo.co.in

MEMBER NEWS AND EVENTS:

I am certain that much more than I am reporting has been pursued by our membership and has not been brought to the Secretariat’s attention. It would be valuable if you could forward to the Secretariat a report of your human rights education activities so that we can include notice of recent and forthcoming events in the next message, which will be sent before our annual Executive Board meeting scheduled to be held at Utica College October 10-11, 2008.

Information such as the publication of new books, lectures, awards, promotions, training programs, etc. that you feel would be of interest to Consortium members are welcomed. While the Secretariat will of course continue to post the information on the web page, it would be useful if I could include it in this message.

Below is some recent information that has been received:

Africa:

IHREC VP and treasurer, **Michael McGowan of St. Thomas University**, (Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada), will travel to Accra, Ghana to attend the learning Africa 2008 conference in late May. He has been invited to speak at one of the sessions on the subject

of Human Rights Education in the 21st Century. While in Ghana he plans to meet with a number of university officials from various countries throughout Africa on the importance of university human rights education, research, and of course the work of the IHREC.

Michael has already established contacts in Liberia, Guinea, Mali and Sierre Leone. Six of his human rights students are currently working in those countries engaged in education, development, and child soldier rehabilitation.

The IHREC Executive Board has repeatedly discussed the need to seek membership in Africa. Michael's visit is consistent with our plan to further increase human rights education on the African continent.

Asia:

An International Seminar on Human Rights in Conflict Situations was held in **Colombo, Sri Lanka** from the 11th until the 13th January, 2008

The Center for the Study of Human Rights, (CSHR) of the University of Colombo organized an international seminar held at the Hotel Renuka, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

IHREC member Professor Ravindra Fernanado along with others from Sri Lanka, organized the event with participation coming from India, the USA and elsewhere. Among the speakers was the American Ambassador and prominent human rights experts.



The three day event was well attended and very productive. The participants included academics, human rights lawyers, activists and journalists. The discussions occurred during the announcement of the suspension of the ceasefire of the on-going Civil War and were pertinent in light of the violence that began to escalate during the conference proceedings. One outcome of the meeting was a decision to organize a conference dealing with the prohibition of torture to be held in the subcontinent in 2009.



NGO Meeting – Organized by **ICOR (Institute for Community Organization Research, India)** – January, 2009.

A full day workshop for Indian NGOs was held in Mumbai (January 2009). Subsequently planning meetings were held as to future human rights education meetings that will be organized.



Mumbai, India **MIHRE** WORKSHOP APRIL 11-12, 2008, ST Pius College, Goregaon.

The Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights (MIHRE) and the South Asia Desk of the IHREC organized a workshop on the “*Relevance of Human Rights*” for college students on 11-12th April, 2008 at St Pius College, Goregaon.

MIHRE Director & **IHREC Vice President Allwyn D’Silva** inaugurated the workshop which was attended by 16 human rights, journalism and social work students from St Xavier’s, Siddharth, Maharashtra College, Nirmala Niketan, Delhi University, as well as

NGO Anubhav. Ms Elizabeth Kaufman, Director of AIRC and the chief guest on the closing day gave certificates to the participants.

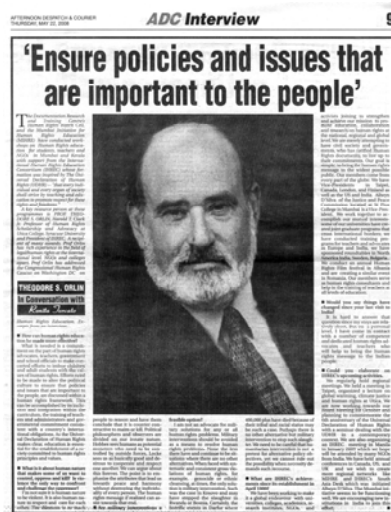
For a full report of the meeting contact ICOR: icor@mtnl.net.in .

MIHRE, which came into existence in 2003 in Mumbai, is an endeavour committed to IHREC objectives and was a direct result of IHREC activities in India. It is an active network of human rights educators that regularly meets and plans relevant human rights education activities.

IHREC Member Ronito Torcato Publishes Interview of Ted Orlin- May 22, 2009

(Mumbai) Afternoon Despatch and Courier.

The full text of the interview and the article discussed below are available by contacting the IHREC Secretariat: <http://IHREC.utica.edu> or contacting ronitatorcato@yahoo.co.in



On May 23, 2008 Ms. Torcato published another article in the *Afternoon Despatch & Courier* entitled, “Human Rights Studies to be made mandatory in city colleges.” - “*From June onwards, human Rights will be taught as a compulsory subject to students enrolled in the Arts and Sciences and commerce stream in colleges associated with the University of Mumbai....*” Prominently mentioned in the article is the leadership of IHREC VP Allwyn D’Silva and the Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE).

Europe:

Liam Gearon, IHREC VP, gives Inaugural Lecture at Roehampton College, UK.

An Inaugural lecture by IHREC Vice President, **Liam Gearon** entitled ‘*The Totalitarian Imagination: Religion, Politics and Education*’ was held the 17th of March, 2008 at Roehampton University, Roehampton, UK.

Marubi Film and Multimedia Academy, Tirana Albania, Leads Organization of Albanian Third Human Rights Film Festival 2008 (19 -23 March).

Kujtim Çashku of the **Marubi Film and Multimedia Academy, Tirana, Albania** led a coordinated effort made up of Albanian and international NGOs, international organizations, embassies and other IHREC members to host the **Third Annual Human Rights Film Festival March (19-23) 2008**. The five day event highlighted 28 films reflecting human rights issues from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and Latin America. The Festival was well attended by Albanian, members of the international community and foreign guests with several of the film makers in attendance. Ted Orlin served as Honorary President of the Festival.

Plans are now under way for the Fourth Edition of the International Human Rights Film Festival (IHRFFA). For more information about participating in the IHRFFA contact: Klesta Alikaj, klesta@ihrrffa.net and/or Kujtim Cashku kujtim@marubifilmschool.com.

IHREC VP Reetta Toivanen (Finland) co- edits and authors: The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and the Inclusion of National Minorities,

This soon to be released book edited by Claudia Mahler, Anja Mihr and Reetta Toivanen, published by Peter Lang Verlag, (Frankfurt), is an extensive review of minority issues related to human rights education in Europe. For information as to how to order the book contact Dr. Reetta Toivanen reetta.toivanen@helsinki.fi .



IHREC Members Reetta Toivanen and Martin Scheinin- Minority Rights Conference Lovozero Russia- Fall 2007.

Albanian NGO, Human Rights in Democracy Center (HRDC) Holds Training for Staff –March 2008 , Tirana.

HRDC Director Aferdita Prroni asked Ted Orlin to assist in a two day staff training. The HRDC is very active in protecting the health rights of Albanian women and their families. The HRDC is seeking additional support from Consortium members in their pursuit to

deal with Cancer screening and other health related and human rights issues. Please feel free to contact the HRDC at: aprroni@hotmail.com .

North America:

IHREC member, **Nancy Flowers** and **Julie A. Mertus** Publish “*Local Action-Global Change- A Handbook on Women’s Human Rights*”.

Its fourteen chapters (350 pages) contain learning activities of human rights issues related to Women. It provides a more than ample guide for the teaching of Women’s human rights.

The book is available through Amazon The hardback is \$99.00.

See: http://www.amazon.com/Local-Action-Global-Change-Handbook/dp/159451514X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1211192732&sr=8-1

The paperback is \$29.95. See: http://www.amazon.com/Local-Action-Global-Change-Handbook/dp/1594515158/ref=ed_oep

W. Laurier University, Brantford, (Ontario, **Canada**) Invites IHREC President to Lecture

Andrew Robinson and his human rights students invited Ted Orlin to lecture at the Brantford campus in February 2008. “*Roles and Efforts of Local Governments and Corporations in Human Rights Work*, (February 7-8, 2008).

In attendance for a meeting of the faculty was IHREC member **Prof. Rhoda E. Howard-Hassman** of the Waterloo campus. Extensive discussion was directed on steps to expand on the human rights education effort at Laurier University.

IHREC member Dr. **Tania Reytan-Marincheshka** (Sofia, **Bulgaria**) Served as Visiting Professor for the Spring 2008 semester at Utica College (Utica, New York, **USA**).

IHREC member, **Dr. Tania Reytan-Marincheshka** served as a visiting professor of Human Rights and Government at Utica College. Tania, a member of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and lecturer at the University of Sofia and other Bulgarian institutions, taught several courses and assisted the IHREC Secretariat in a number of projects. She will also begin research for a proposed Bulgarian/English human rights dictionary.

Tania’s interest in political philosophy and human rights was further developed during her stay and culminated in a detail syllabus. She intends to bring the course offering to Sofia. She looks forward for those with similar interests to share their teaching experience in this area and well as foreign policy and human rights. Tania can be reached at: treytan26@yahoo.com

IHREC Members Present at the International Studies Association (ISA) Conference in San Francisco, California March, 2008

IHREC members **Rita Maran** (Berkeley, Cal.), **Bert Lockwood** (Cincinnati, Ohio), and **Ted Orlin** (Utica, New York) presented a panel on human rights education at the ISA Annual conference in San Francisco, 25-28 March, 2008.

IHREC Member, **Shayna Plaut**, will present a paper in Spain.

Shayna Plaut (Columbia College, Chicago Illinois) will attend the 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, *Mundos de Mujeres/ Women's World's 2008*. This is an international conference open to activists, academics and policy makers addressing the issues of women. The theme is "*New Frontiers: Dares and Changes*." For more information please see http://www.mmww08.org/index.cfm?nav_id=51. The participants in the conference are from many different parts of the world particularly Spain and North Africa.

Upcoming - IHREC EVENTS:

Mumbai, India, June 26, 2008.

(MIHRE) Teacher Training Workshop at the University of Mumbai, Kalina Campus. For more information contact ICOR icor@mtnl.net.in

Utica, New York, October 10-12, 2008.

The next **IHREC Executive Board meeting** will be held at Utica College, Utica, New York, USA. The meeting will focus on the future organization of the Consortium. The Executive Board's four year term will end in June 2009. Among the items to be discussed at the meeting will be the site of the Secretariat, the review of proposed by-laws and the composition of the new Board. Members are welcome to attend and participate in the proceedings. Contact: ihrec@utica.edu

Important Announcement

The IHREC is attempting to create an accurate data base of its members. Unfortunately the information forms posted on our webpage do not always have the correct mailing addresses. If you have not already done so, please forward to the Secretariat your correct mailing address. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.