

## **Diplomacy Training Program**

# Jan 94 session Report

### **Summary**

The Jan 94 session was very successful. While there were lower numbers of participants this assisted the teaching program by giving more time for individual attention. DTP would like to maintain small classes wherever possible. The major constraint against this is the reduced income that results from smaller numbers of sponsorships.

The Jan 94 session also commenced the process of dividing the session into two separate courses - an Introduction to International human rights (1 week) and a 3 week Diplomacy Training Program. In future DTP will maintain this format, extending it in Jan 95 to make up two separate groups of participants.

### **Participants**

There were 21 participants from 11 countries, the largest single group coming from Bangladesh. Due to problems in Thailand (Thai government refusal to grant re-entry permits) the Burmese participants were unable to travel and so missed the session. Along with some other visa problems (caused by Australian immigration authorities as well as late applications from participants) this led to a smaller group than previous years. This was a positive development from the teaching

perspective - a smaller class, smaller groups and greater opportunities for participation.

English language was a much lesser problem this year than in previous years. All participants had good English capability.

## **Teaching**

The major innovation was the split into two separate courses.

The first week was separated into an introductory week, then the DTP main session ran for three weeks. No problems were encountered in this framework, the content of the two parts being no different to previous years. DTP can now formalise this change in order to allow a larger group into the introductory week, not all of whom will go on to do the 3 week DTP.

This will also enable DTP to be more selective in choosing participants for the DTP session, reducing numbers to 20-25. A three week intensive session will be less tiring than a four week one and could be more productive. The one week Introductory course will allow a larger number of participants into a course designed for basic needs.

A more elaborate set of NGO workshops were conducted in week 3, running parallel with the media workshops, than we have previously attempted. For the first time we had a specialist from the region, Evelyn Serrano, involved. These workshops concentrated on networking and discussing NGOs' needs.

## **Materials**

The Human Rights Defender's Manual was as popular as ever. It is steadily being improved, both in content and language. With the splitting of the January session into two component sessions DTP may find it necessary to also split the Manual into two parts as well.

The Manual remains the only comprehensive set of plain English human rights materials written for NGOs.

## **Selection**

The selection procedure is improving steadily. In previous years some problems have been experienced. This year we had only two persons who were unable to participate actively in all class discussion and role plays. They were, however, diligent and hard-working. All participants received a Certificate this year.

Selection has always posed a difficulty in that DTP allows considerable scope for local decision-making on who should go to DTP sessions. Too often, however, unsuitable choices have been made at the local level. The problem is being solved, as more NGOs have experience of a DTP session and understand its requirements, and will be assisted by reducing the numbers involved in the future 3 week DTP session.

## **Cost**

Due to smaller number of participants DTP will face a shortfall in funding for salaries during the rest of the year and so will not be able to put as much time into further development of the course as it would prefer.

### **Sponsors this year included:**

Community Aid Abroad (2)

Evangelisches Missionwerk (1)

Diakonisches Werk der EKD (5)

International Women's Development Agency (1)

Comite Contre la Faim et Pour le Developpment (2)

Australian Council of Churches (2)

2 participants raised their own funds.

There were 5 participants on reduced fees (residents in Aust or NZ)

The Jan 94 session was run less expensively than last year's session on a per capita basis. This will help DTP's financial position later in the year.



## **Evaluation**

Once more participants were enthusiastic about the course. While an evaluation (with anonymous questionnaires as well as group discussion) is held each year the limitations of this form of evaluation are becoming clearer. DTP intends to hold a special evaluation session with former participants later in 1994 or early in 1995, to take place in Asia. The cost will be at least \$15,000. At present DTP does not have sufficient funds for this purpose.

## **Workshop Convenors**

Six new faces appeared among the Workshop Convenors:

**Pierre-Michel Fontaine** (UNHCR),

**Eileen Pittaway** (Women and Human Rights, The Beijing Women's Conference, 1995)

**Andre Frankovits** (international campaigning, the politics of human rights),

**Margherita Tracanelli** (Media)

**Paul Brown** (Environment)

**Evelyn Balais-Serrano** (NGOs).

DTP regulars were available, including (in alphabetical order):

**Brian Brooks** (Negotiations)

**Jose Campino** (UN system)

**Laksiri Fernando** (Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Introduction to human rights)

**Patricia Garcia** (refugees)

**Cecilia Jimenez** (UN human rights procedures)

**Garth Nettheim** (Introductory human rights law)

**Jose Ramos-Horta** (Lobbying, oral presentation, UN system, role plays, media)

**John Scott-Murphy** (writing workshop, human rights and development, social movements, role plays)

**Tony Simpson** (UNCED)

**David Weisbrot** (Introductory international law)

## **Follow-up**

Many participants expressed their desire for follow-up sessions. The following suggestions were made:

That a regular session be held in the Pacific.

That a French language session be arranged.

That women be encouraged to attend.

DTP expressed its willingness to conduct further sessions. These could be done in the Pacific region, rather than in Australia and could also be conducted in French language if required.

John Scott-Murphy

20 June 1994