



DIPLOMACY TRAINING PROGRAM

AFFILIATED WITH THE FACULTY OF LAW & JUSTICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
A training program for peoples of the Asia-Pacific region

Building Resilience for Human Rights and Democracy Movements

Sharing Lessons and Building Collaboration in Capacity Building

Brief Concept Note for Workshop – Bangkok – May 27-29 (TBC)

1. Proposal:

A Workshop with representatives of human rights and democracy organisations/ movements in Asia and DTP alumni/trainers with to reflect on the lessons from approaches to capacity building on advocacy for human rights, and to develop collaboration in response to the closing civil society spaces and rise in authoritarianism.

2. Summary

Human rights and democracy are interlinked in so many ways, including in the aspirations of people and their movements for dignity and justice. Training and capacity building is one of the most important ways that these movements for human rights and democracy invest in their resilience and regeneration.

As democracy and human rights movements in Asia face increasingly authoritarian governments and growing restrictions on civil society space, there is value in sharing experience and lessons learned in human rights training and capacity building, and in developing collaboration between movements so that strategies and limited resources have most impact.

This workshop will bring together some of those who have been most closely involved in training and capacity building on human rights advocacy/education and in Asia.

It will provide an opportunity to share current activities and strategies, to share lessons learned and different strategies, and to discuss future priorities and plans in knowledge and skills building in a way that can increase cooperation/coordination and complementarity in meeting the challenges of the region.

3. Brief Background

Last year marked the 75th Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 30th Anniversary of the Bangkok NGO Declaration and the subsequent Vienna Declaration on Human Rights and the 25th Anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, recognising the critical role that they play – and the legitimacy of their work.

Over the last 30 years, human rights movements have developed to organise and focus action on those most denied their rights. Movements and networks have grown on women's human rights, the rights of migrant workers, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, of persons with a disability, and of LGBT+ individuals and communities.

There are also movements focused on particular human rights issues – the death penalty, torture, and “disappearances”, corruption, free elections and corporate accountability, and the environment. There are also organisations and networks focused on democracy.

Academic study of human rights has grown, with undergraduate and master’s programs now available in Asia, and networks of academic specialists in human rights have been established.

These diverse movements for human rights are indicative of the multiple challenges to human rights, and the richness of human rights movements in the region. Simultaneously there is a risk that the necessary focus on specific challenges may have resulted in a “siloing” of human rights advocacy, and a weakening of knowledge, understanding, support and promotion of the broader human rights framework. The broader human rights framework is important to understanding of intersectionality and the building of solidarity.

4. Key Questions

The workshop/session will explore some of the following questions:

- *After 30 years plus years of human rights education/advocacy programming, is there value in human rights training and if so, what is it?*
- *Who should be prioritised for human rights education/advocacy training?*
- *What is the role of human rights training in building movements/next generation of leaders?*
- *How can human rights training be used to strengthen solidarity and linkages between different movements?*
- *What models of training/capacity building are currently being invested in by different movements?*
- *Are there models of capacity building/training within different movements that have proved particularly effective? Mentoring? Alumni Networks?*
- *What are the key knowledge and skills areas for human rights capacity building in Asia?*
- *What is the role of universities/master’s programs?*
- *Is there methodology that can be used to measure impact/guide programs?*
- *How can collaboration be built among those investing in developing and delivering human rights training/training for human rights defenders?*
- *What are the options for building collaboration in capacity building/ensuring complementarity of strategies and initiatives*

5. Workshop Participants

- Representatives of key regional movements – FA/MFA/AIPP/APWLD/ANFREL
- Experienced practitioners/trainers including DTP alumni

6. Workshop Outcomes

The project/workshop will aim to have the following outcomes:

- A mapping/background paper/survey
- Greater shared knowledge of who is involved in developing and delivering human rights/democracy capacity building in Asia
- Sharing of methodologies and approaches/lessons learned
- Valuable reflections on the range of approaches to capacity building on human rights/advocacy/democracy
- Increased networking/collaboration between those involved in human rights / democracy advocacy training in Asia, including possible establishment of steering/coordination group to facilitate continuing collaboration
- Steps towards more impactful and strategic capacity building in support of human rights and democracy in Asia in response to rise of authoritarianism and other risks,

7. [Background on The Diplomacy Training Program \(DTP\)](#)

Since its establishment in 1990, DTP has pioneered the concept of “peoples’ diplomacy”, recognising the role of committed individuals working for human rights and justice across Asia and the Pacific. DTP’s work in support of human rights movements and courageous individuals has won awards in Australia and internationally.

DTP’s 3500 plus alumni include a former Foreign Minister/Cabinet Ministers, ambassadors, serving and former human rights commissioners and thousands of individuals working on a diverse range of human rights issues in virtually every country in Asia and the Pacific. DTP alumni are working to promote shared values of human dignity, often in very difficult circumstances. They work on a diverse range of urgent and long-term human rights challenges. DTP alumni have decades of experience and have valuable insights.

DTP works with its alumni and a network of partners in human rights movements to develop and deliver programs to build knowledge, skills and networks of human rights defenders. DTP’s partners include Asian Forum on Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) – and more recently Asia Democracy Network (ADN) and the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies at Mahidol University, Bangkok.