



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

DTP Alumni Workshop on Business and Human Rights Network Building

Concept Note and Outline

Bangkok, Thailand
12-14 December 2024

Summary:

The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) will organise a three-day workshop with some of the alumni of its human rights training programs over the last 30 years together with DTP partners – AIPP and MFA - and a small number of key Business and Human Rights (BHR) experts. The purpose of the workshop is to:

1. Reflect on DTP BHR training and civil society BHR advocacy in Asia and the Pacific.
2. Map DTP alumni connections to civil society networks and movements that have been working to advance BHR in the region if any.
3. Connect Asian and Pacific DTP alumni to East Asian CSOs working on regional BHR
4. Analyse the potential value, purpose and role of a new regional DTP alumni network in supporting civil society BHR advocacy.
5. Potentially establish a steering group and identifying next steps for a regional DTP alumni BHR network.

DTP is an independent NGO based in Sydney, Australia. DTP has developed and delivered human rights and advocacy training programs in the Asia-Pacific region and Indigenous Australia for over [34 years](#). These programs include DTP's Annual Human Rights and Peoples' Diplomacy Training Program, the longest running human rights capacity building course in the Asia-Pacific region. DTP has also delivered over 150 thematic and country-based programs for Asia-Pacific NGO/CSO leaders and HRDs.

Over more than 30 years, DTP has made a significant contribution to regional human rights. DTP's programs are organised with local and regional partners in human rights movements, and with DTP alumni. DTP's training methodology is participatory. Since 2004, DTP has developed and delivered programs on the following priority themes:

- Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)
- The Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- The Rights of Migrant Workers
- Human Rights and Business
- Children's Rights

In addition, it has developed programs on:

- Human Rights, the SDGs and Climate Change in the Pacific
- Myanmar
- With Diaspora Communities

DTP has a strong track record training BHR in Asia. From 2006-2011, DTP ran a dedicated BHR program and integrated BHR into its programs on migrant workers' and Indigenous Peoples' rights, including training participants working on disability, gender and LGBTQIA+. More recent BHR programs have responded to a strong interest in climate justice, just transition, responsible investment and sustainable finance. Over 600 participants have attended at least one of these programs.

DTP recognises that the 3,500 plus alumni of DTP courses over the last 34 years contain a potentially powerful network of individuals and organisations committed to promoting and protecting human rights in response to these challenges.

DTP recognises the current context is very challenging for human rights defenders and human rights movements.

Workshop Participants:

DTP will consult with key partners and alumni in inviting/selecting participants. In selecting participants, we have taken the following criteria in account:

- Knowledgeable about BHR frameworks and issues in the region
- Involvement in BHR policy advocacy or corporative accountability campaigning in the region
- Potential interest in building/supporting DTP BHR alumni network.

In addition, overall, the 20-30 participants should reflect gender balance.

Workshop Location:

The workshop will be held at the Ambassador Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand.

Steering Committee/Organisational Arrangements:

The project is guided by a small Steering Committee consisting of representatives from DTP's alumni and partners in the region. They will provide advice on the selection of alumni, the content and focus of the gathering and workshop, and assist with its organisation, facilitation and follow-up activities.

Outcomes:

1. Strong understanding of the role that DTP BHR training has played in increasing knowledge and capacity to advocate for business respect for human rights
2. Increased awareness of civil society networks and movements working on BHR advancement
3. Strengthened connections between DTP alumni and East Asian civil society to create opportunities for wider regional BHR advocacy reflecting regional trade and investment
4. Potentially establishing a new DTP alumni regional BHR network to improve awareness of and advocate more effectively for common BHR issues in the region

Background and Rationale:

Since 1990 DTP has worked with partners to develop and deliver capacity building programs for human rights defenders and their movements in Asia and the Pacific. In the context of decreasing civil society space, growing inequality, and increased impunity, DTP seeks to invest in DTP alumni networks, including to contribute these civil society movements in Asia.

DTP's work is developed in partnership with its alumni and partners. DTP's focus has been on developing and delivering training programs. Now with over 3500 alumni DTP wants to learn how it can better support its alumni, and support their contribution to human rights movements regionally and nationally.

In 2023, DTP held two regional alumni workshops (in Fiji and Thailand) to reflect on the impact of DTP's human rights capacity and network building programs, discuss the current needs and priorities for human rights advocacy capacity building in the region and how DTP could effectively support the development of DTP alumni networks, and support DTP alumni in their work for human rights. The Asian workshop brought together 28 alumni, from the first program in 1990 through to the most recent program in 2023. One of the key recommendations from the workshop was to increase DTP's investment in national / regional DTP alumni networks and to do this through bringing DTP alumni together more regularly at national and regional level and to explore the establishment of a DTP Business and Human Rights Alumni Network. This workshop is in response to this recommendation.

Business continues to impact peoples and communities human rights negatively across the region. Asia is the manufacturing centre of the global economy. Its garment, electronics and other manufacturing industries produce much of the world's goods. Moreover, Asia produces some of the most important agriculture commodities, such as fish, rice, palm oil and rubber. Migrant workers often work in factories, on vessels and in plantations. They are highly vulnerable and can experience human rights abuses in their migration journeys and the workplace. Sometimes they travel with their families and they can also be subject to human rights violations. Asian economies are also continuing to grow rapidly. The energy, transport and other infrastructure projects they require to promote and sustain economic development can impact human rights adversely. Land is often acquired without consultation or consent of the existing owners, particularly Indigenous Peoples. Resettlement often destroys traditional livelihoods and cultures and increases poverty levels and social exclusion. Companies can also impact other vulnerable groups in these and other contexts, such as children and persons living with disability. East Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan are some of the biggest investors in and traders with the region, and employers of migrant workers. In strengthening corporate accountability movements, it is increasingly important to understand financial sector roles and supply chain maps to identify the most effective or new advocacy strategies.

Program Partners

Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) is a regional network of non-government organizations (NGOs), associations and trade unions of migrant workers, and individual advocates in Asia who are committed to protect and promote the rights and welfare of migrant workers. MFA acts as a facilitator, a regional communication and coordination point between member-organizations and advocates, forging concerted action to address discriminatory laws and policies, violence against women migrants, unjust living conditions, unemployment in the homeland and other issues affecting migrant workers.

The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) is a regional organization committed to the cause of promoting and defending Indigenous Peoples' rights and human rights and articulating issues of relevance to Indigenous peoples.