

**Human Rights Education (HRE) / Awareness in Schools – Training of Trainers**

**Beni Suef Governorate**

October 27-31, 2024

**Executive Summary**

The Cultural Rights Committee at the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) held dialogue and awareness raising sessions on Human Rights in Schools for teachers and social workers from October 27-28, 2024. The dialogue sessions were followed by educational workshops for students, which were held from October 29-31, 2024.

This activity is part of the Council's Cultural Rights Committee's 2024 work plan, under the supervision of Ms. Samira Louka, Chairperson of the Committee. It is also part of the National Council for Human Rights' work plan for the project to support the National Council for Human Rights in cooperation with the European Union, and within the framework of cooperation between the National Council for Human Rights and the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (the General Union of Egyptian School Students). The goal is to combine efforts to optimally prepare new generations by raising awareness of human rights values through HRE and Positive Education Principles in Schools. This is the fourth event, following those held in Alexandria, Minya, and Ismailia.

The opening ceremony was attended by Mr. Ahmed Moussa, Head of the Student Unions at the Ministry of Education, and Mr. Hani Antar, representative of the Ministry of Education in Beni Suef, in the presence of Dr. Rabie Mohamed, Director General of Executive Affairs.

**The objective of the activity:**

- To raise awareness of human rights values and positive education principles in schools among teachers, social workers, and students.
- To prepare new generations with an awareness of human rights values, both in terms of knowledge and practice.

## **Activity Summary**

### **1. Dialogue/HRE Sessions for Teachers and Social Workers**

Dialogue sessions on "Human Rights Awareness in Schools" were held for teachers and social workers on October 27-28, 2024, with the attendance of 25 teachers and social workers from Beni Suef Governorate.

#### **The sessions covered the following topics:**

##### **Day One**

- An introduction to the council, its establishment, objectives, and composition.
- An introduction to human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (meaning, characteristics, principles and values, international law, and basic instruments).
- An introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with participants divided into working groups to summarize and present the Convention.
- A presentation on the concept of positive education and its objectives, explaining the points of convergence between positive education and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

##### **Day Two**

- A brief presentation on Day One by two participants.
- A session on classroom behavioral problems for children aged 6-12 and how to address them.
- A presentation on the "Games for Human Rights Guide," issued by the Equitas Foundation, which the Council participated in reviewing according to the Egyptian context. It also included how to use it, the most important values it conveys, and an explanation of how to implement the activities.
- Participants were introduced to the elements of developing an action plan for future workshops.

As explained, participants carried out practical activities to raise awareness of human rights. They were divided into working groups, with each group assigned to implement one activity.

## **2. Educational Workshops for Students**

- Educational workshops on human rights were held for students, with the participation of 154 students (81 female students and 73 male students) from primary schools in Beni Suef Governorate, from October 29-31, 2024.
- The workshops were implemented by teachers and social workers over three days, divided into groups (two groups working in parallel each day).
- The groups engaged students in games aimed at instilling human rights values, emphasizing the importance of inclusion and cooperation, and instilling values of trust and acceptance of others.

The content and management of the workshops were presented by the Council's Cultural Rights Committee Ms. Mai Hamdy and Mr. Bakhit Al-Wahi, both accredited by Equitas, in collaboration with Mr. Ahmed Moussa, Head of the Student Unions.

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## **Human Rights Education (HRE) Training of Trainers Missions – NCHR Cultural Rights Committee**

### **1. Human Rights Awareness Sessions and Human Rights Education (HRE) in Schools – Damietta Governorate (Feb 17–21, 2025)**

As part of the Cultural Rights Committee’s ongoing efforts in schools, the NCHR conducted human rights education sessions in Damietta from February 17–21, 2025, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the General Union of Students.

#### **1. Sessions for Teachers and Social Workers (Feb 17–18):**

25 participants from different education departments attended two days of interactive training focused on:

- NCHR’s mandate and human rights fundamentals.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and positive discipline.
- The “Play It Fair!” toolkit by Equitas (contextualized for Egypt).
- Participatory teaching methods and managing student behavioral challenges.
- Designing practical workshops and future action plans.

#### **2. Student Awareness Workshops (Feb 19–21):**

152 primary students took part in educational activities led by the trained teachers under NCHR supervision. The Workshops promoted inclusion, non-discrimination, anti-bullying, rights of persons with disabilities, and the role of NCHR.

#### **Methodology:**

Experiential learning through games and discussions helped students internalize values like respect, empathy, and cooperation. This hands-on approach emphasized self-discovery and positive behavior over traditional lectures.

#### **Supervision & Participation:**

- Led by Ms. Mai Hamdy and Mr. Bakhit Omar from the Cultural Rights Committee, accredited from Equitas.
- With support from Mr. Ahmed Moussa (Ministry of Education), Mr. Alaa Nashid, Mr. Yasser Mahmoud (Deputy Education Minister in Damietta), and Dr. Enas Abdel Khaleq, who praised the use of play as a powerful behavioral tool.

Trained participants will continue implementing awareness sessions and reporting back to the NCHR.

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## **Analytical Reading of the National Human Rights Strategy (NHRS) (Dec 30, 2024)**

On December 30, 2024, the NCHR's Cultural Rights Committee participated in a public seminar titled "Analytical Reading of the National Human Rights Strategy" at the Hanager Cultural Center, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture's Theater Sector. The event was part of the monthly Hanager Cultural Forum, attracting a broad and diverse audience.

### **Key Speakers:**

- Mr. Ezzat Ibrahim, Ms. Samira Louka, and Counselor Essam Shiha (NCHR Members)
- Dr. Suzanne Al-Qalini (former Dean of Arts, Ain Shams University)
- Dr. Ashraf Abdel Rahman (Art Critic, Academy of Arts)
- Moderator: Dr. Nahed Abdel Hamid
- Ms. Mai Hamdy (Cultural Rights Committee) also attended.

### **Topics Covered:**

- Condemnation of human rights violations in Palestine, especially in light of Human Rights Day.
- Human rights as a benchmark for societal progress.
- The strategy as an authentic Egyptian initiative aimed at holistic social development.
- Evolution of human rights in Egypt and their constitutional basis in the 2014 Constitution.
- The strategic role of the Permanent Higher Committee for Human Rights (headed by the Foreign Minister) in launching the national strategy with civil society participation.

### **Media & Cultural Rights:**

- NCHR's awareness efforts via TV, school/teacher training, and public outreach.
- Drama's role in raising awareness and even prompting legal reform.
- Importance of the Media and Human Rights Conference (Dec 2024) and ongoing cooperation with journalist unions.
- Women's and Children's Rights:
- The strategy's focus on combatting marginalization of women and child-related issues.
- Support initiatives led by the National Council for Women.

### **Art as a Vehicle for Rights:**

- Emphasis on Egypt's soft power and cultural heritage.
- The arts as a means to raise awareness, critique social issues, and stimulate reform.

- Artistic expression seen as both a right and a method for advancing broader human rights goals.

Closing Highlight:

Musical performance by the Shomou' Ensemble, led by artist Said Osman, added a cultural touch to the evening.

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## **Dialogue Between NCHR President and Sociology Students from Helwan University (March 6, 2025)**

As part of the NCHR's ongoing university engagement and human rights awareness program, Ambassador Moushira Khattab met with sociology students from Helwan University's Faculty of Arts at the Council's headquarters on March 6, 2025. The dialogue was held in the presence of Ms. Iman Nasry (Head of the Sociology Department) and several NCHR researchers.

### **Key Highlights:**

- Students expressed interest in understanding rights, duties, and promoting justice and equality in society.
- Reproductive health rights were discussed, with emphasis on the non-absolute nature of the right to procreate and challenges such as child marriage in rural areas.
- Ambassador Khattab stressed the state's responsibility in upholding human rights, linking rule of law, citizenship, and education as core pillars.
- Students reviewed principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including equality, freedom, dignity, peace, and protection from fear and want.
- The UDHR's historical context and its foundational role in international human rights law were explained, along with follow-up treaties like the ICCPR.
- Ambassador Khattab referenced current violations of international law in Palestine, including forced displacement.
- Students were encouraged to research and read the UDHR and ICCPR, in preparation for a follow-up discussion.
- Mr. Nasry urged students to act as human rights ambassadors, grow their capacities, and spread awareness within their communities.
- Ms. Mai Hamdy (Cultural Rights Committee) emphasized positive parenting, awareness among families and teachers, and youth perseverance.
- Ms. Nagwa Ibrahim (Legislative Affairs Committee) highlighted the central societal role of sociology students as future leaders.
- Mr. Bakhit Omar (Cultural Rights Committee) reiterated NCHR's focus on youth, encouraging further reading and family-level awareness dissemination.

The event concluded with a commitment to continued collaboration and student engagement under NCHR's Human Rights Ambassadors program.

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## **Regional Meeting on Human Rights Education Guide – Arab Region**

On March 20, 2025, the NCHR participated in the first regional virtual meeting on developing a best practices guide for human rights education (HRE) in primary, preparatory, and secondary schools.

This meeting was organized by the UN Training and Documentation Centre for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region, in collaboration with the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions.

NCHR shared a briefing document outlining its efforts in curriculum review and extracurricular HRE activities. The guide aims to consolidate regional experiences to improve the integration of HRE across Arab educational systems.

### **Speech by the General Secretariat of the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions**

#### **Secretary-General: Mr. Sultan Al-Jamali**

At the beginning of the meeting, His Excellency thanked the attendees for their interaction and valuable contributions to the exchange of experiences and expertise through the submitted contributions. He noted that this meeting is the starting point for the project, which aims to develop a guide to best practices and experiences in the Arab region in the field of human rights education in primary, preparatory, and secondary schools.

He pointed to the numerous educational initiatives launched since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNESCO's global initiative to reimagine the future of education by 2050, and the efforts of the Arab Network, UNESCO, and some institutions to hold online meetings to consolidate a culture of human rights, the principles of peace and diversity, and to combat hate speech.

He mentioned one of the most recent efforts, the Regional Dialogue Forum on "The Future of Human Rights Education in the Arab Region: Towards a New Social Contract," held in Cairo on October 18-19, 2023. His Excellency reviewed some of the forum's recommendations, noting that this project falls within the framework of following up on the forum's recommendations.

### **Speech by the Director of the Training and Documentation Centre for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Dr. Abeer Al-Khraisheh**

Dr. Khraisheh welcomed the attendees and explained the goal of developing a guide that brings together various experiences in the field of human rights education in primary, preparatory, and secondary schools. She stated that the guide will be based on the contributions of ministries of education and national human rights councils and institutions.

She noted that the development of the guide comes within the framework of following up on the recommendations of the forum. This initiative also falls within the efforts to implement the World Programme for Human Rights Education in all sectors, announced by the United Nations in 2004. She emphasized that the ultimate goal is to instill a culture of human rights through well-thought-out educational programs that contribute, in the long term, to the creation of more just societies.

## **Background and Objectives**

### **Mr. Ghaffar Al-Ali, Legal Advisor to the Arab Network for Human Rights Institutions**

Mr. Ghaffar Al-Ali, Legal Advisor to the Arab Network for Human Rights Institutions, presented a brief overview of the project's terms of reference, the recommendations it relied on, the objectives, and the work plan. He emphasized that the objectives include developing a guide on best practices, in addition to enhancing cooperation between national human rights institutions. He also reviewed the steps of the action plan, which includes completing and analyzing the questionnaire, and holding a number of meetings and gatherings.

He pointed out that the Forum's recommendations No. (13) were adopted, regarding efforts to integrate human rights concepts into formal and informal educational programs and curricula, supporting the development of national strategies in the field of human rights education, establishing executive mechanisms, and allocating the necessary resources for them. This was achieved through the development of a guide for Arab countries.

Recommendation No. (15) was also adopted, regarding raising awareness among students of the values of tolerance and citizenship, combating hate speech, openness to different cultures, and dialogue among civilizations. This was achieved by activating the use of clubs and extracurricular activities to enhance the integration of human rights education.

## **Presentation of Survey Results**

Mr. Mohamed Homsy and Ms. Bushra Elias from the United Nations Training Center presented the results of the survey after compilation and analysis, including responses from the Ministries of Education and then from national human rights institutions. The survey reviewed the implemented activities and their objectives, key values, age groups, observations and challenges, results and impact, positives, and lessons learned.

Ms. Mai Hamdy delivered a presentation, explaining the Council's efforts to raise teachers and social workers' awareness of human rights and prepare them to conduct three-day workshops with students under the supervision of the Council's working team. She also discussed integrating the concept of positive parenting and linking it to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an activity that has been implemented in several governorates.