

# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION FOR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS HELD IN BEREA, 23<sup>RD</sup> – 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009.

## 1. Summary Of the Report

In May 2009 Human Rights programme, held a two-day human rights youth workshop which attracted approximately 45 delegates from different youth organizations in Berea. The workshop was intended to provide an opportunity to educate and raise awareness among young people about human rights, the Bill of Rights in the constitution, and to examine human rights issues and challenges of particular relevance to young people. A key aim of the day was to identify strategies young people could use to address human rights issues in their respective communities.

This report includes:

- background on how the forum structure and program was developed;
- an overview of forum proceedings and findings;
- information about young people's understanding about human rights gathered from questionnaires;
- delegates' feedback on their experience.

Approximately 45 young people representing youth organizations in Berea participated in the 2 days. Details of participating delegates are available as an Annexure to this report. The workshop itself incorporated a 2 days' program of keynote speakers, presentations, breakout sessions introducing key human rights, and afternoon group discussions.

## 2. Introduction of TRC and its programmes;

TRC is an ecumenical resource centre working for justice, peace and participatory development. It is celebrating its 30 years operating in Lesotho. Through its human rights programme it educates the multitudes of Basotho on human rights, focusing on the plight of the most marginalized. TRC is also a group of people committed to work for the three elements namely, justice, peace and participatory development in response to the gospel and in face of oppression based on race, class, sex, ideology, or political persuasion.

## 3. Background on youth education on human rights

Whereas Lesotho has relatively conducted elections since independence, democracy in Lesotho has yielded very little in the area of Human Rights. Mainstreaming of the Rights of specialized groups such as youth, women and the disabled has still not been of great concern.

The role of young people in this political confusion has been considerably negative. Ambiguous as their role may have been, they have been subject of misuse, exploitation and/or abuse by those in leadership, which ultimately obscured or clouded the ideal role of young people in the democratization process. Youth therefore have not been able to understand that they are the potential agents of the human rights discourse. This has been largely because of lack of knowledge on human rights specifically, and generally the responsibilities of the Government towards the fulfillment of these rights. It is apparent therefore from the above background that there was an urgent need to raise human rights awareness among young people. Additionally, the workshop therefore sought to "skill up" these young people, so that they can develop the confidence and the ability to become advocates for community awareness and systemic change.

## 4. Participant's expectations

Participants were asked to brainstorm the expectations they have had about the workshop and *the modus operandi* (general mode of operation) of the workshop. That was a good exercise to assess how much knowledge, if any, participants already had on human rights. Their response was:

- after this workshop I hope to know what are human rights
- where do they come from?

- Why do we have them?
- Why are they specifically important to me as a young person?
- How can I assist when human rights are being violated in Lesotho?
- What are the responsibilities of the government as far as human rights are concerned?
- How do we go forward after this workshop?

### **5. Workshop Objectives:**

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- . be a youth driven and facilitated day;
- raise awareness of human rights generally and the *Bill of Rights and Responsibilities* specifically;
- to equip young people with knowledge on socio-economic and cultural rights as an ideal route to good governance.
- hear from young people about their human rights issues and their ideas about the practical application of the constitutional rights in their lives. (including those rights not mentioned under the bill of rights).
- consider potential ongoing mechanisms for young people to be engaged in human rights discussions and matters relating to the constitution.

One of the key objectives of the workshop was to ensure that it was a youth-driven event, both in its planning and delivery. To ensure this objectives was met, the Human Rights Officer sought the assistance of the secretary of Lesotho Youth Federation(LYFE) because of the his organisation's undisputed reputation in dealing with youth affairs on daily basis. His roles in this event included informing young people's engagement at the workshop and guiding delegates on their arrival and registration. He was the rappoteur during group presentations and discussions.

### **6. Workshop Program**

The workshop program was a full day of speakers, interactive sessions and group discussions split into four sessions as detailed below. The program was designed to:

- Provide delegates with an introduction to human rights and the justiciability of socio-economic rights in Lesotho;
- Raise key human rights issues of concern to young people; and
- identify challenges and explore strategies to address these issues within their local communities.

#### **Day One**

The workshop was opened with a prayer, followed by registration and introduction of the participants and the organizations they represent. Then Mr. Thuso Ramabolu officially opened the workshop on behalf of TRC and filed the apology of the Director who could not make it to the workshop. The objectives were outlined by the HRO and participants were requested to say what they expected to gain out of that workshop. A welcome speech was made by the Berea Youth officer on behalf of the Ministry Of youth, sports, gender and recreation. He thanked delegates for having accepted the invitation to attend and TRC for the knowledge it had brought in the Berea district.

#### **Morning Session 1 – Introduction to Human Rights and the Bill of Rights in the Lesotho Constitution**

Master of ceremonies, Mr. Ramabolu introduced and provided context to the day with preliminary questions asking participants about their knowledge on human rights and by presenting some of the comments made by delegates in their questionnaires. He further discussed the aims of the day, introducing the Human Rights and Responsibilities, their historical background and highlighting the important role played by young people in the realisation of

human rights. In the historical background, Mr Ramabolu made reference to all the major world events which shaped the human rights in the struggle for dignity, freedom and equality. He alluded to how the turmoil and atrocities of the Second World War and the struggle of colonial nations for independence prompted the countries of the world to create a forum to deal with some war's consequences and of course to prevent the recurrence of such appalling events<sup>1</sup>.

He continued to briefly deal with the UDHR (United Declaration on Human Rights) which has inspired a large number of subsequent human rights instruments referred to as the *International Bill of Rights*<sup>2</sup>. Chapter II of the Lesotho constitution also received special attention, whereupon the officer dissected the chapter by elaborating each and every right and the limitations therein. One of the ways the officer has sought to educate about the civil and political rights within Chapter II of the constitution was to group them into four key themes of Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity.

### **Morning Session 2 – Socio-economic Rights and their Justifiability in Lesotho.**

Mr. Maqakachane (legal officer) referred to the development of the polarization of human rights into generations. He began by indicating the inclusive approach to human rights by the UDHR that these rights whether civil and political or socio-economic, were all regarded as fundamental human rights. But due to divergent views of the west and capitalist, on the one hand, and east and socialist, on the other, and other ideologies, it became difficult to forge a single approach to realization of all rights, hence the division of human rights into civil and political (ICCPR) and socio-economic (ICESCR) in 1966. He then traversed the African continent, to indicate the inclusive approach by the African Charter, which does not dichotomise these rights into generations.

He indicated that owing to certain arguments relating to the immediate enforcement by the states of the socio-economic rights ( they are programmatic, they are difficult and expensive to enforce, they need state participation to be enjoyed by the people, courts do not have skills to decide on them as they are policy loaded, etc) these rights in some states were said to be non-justiciable, that is, one could not go to court to enforce their non-fulfilment or infringement.

then ventured specifically into the position of these rights in Lesotho making reference to the sections of the constitution, whereby they are labeled principles of state policy which cannot be enforced in a court of law in Lesotho.

He concluded by saying that the approach by other countries in their constitution is to make these rights justiciable (eg RSA). Further, he indicated that socio-economic and civil and political rights are interconnected, interdependent, and interrelated. He then suggested, finally, that the Lesotho constitution, need to be amended to recognize these rights as justiciable, but the courts to take into account the state resources and economic capacity of Lesotho in deciding individual cases.

**Question and discussions**, this part was characterized by an intensive exploration of a range of questions, which aroused an interesting robust debate about the presentations made since morning.

### **Afternoon Session 3- Group Discussions**

In session 3, participants were divided into four groups to discuss a thematic overview of the rights contained in the constitution. The session content is summarized below;

1. *Freedom* – group members were presented with a short case study scenario and asked to discuss in smaller groups what human rights issues they identify within it. In this exercise, the

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<sup>1</sup> This forum was the United Nations.

<sup>2</sup> These instruments include International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

scenario related to new legislation banning headwear at public schools in an effort to crack down on gang related bullying and “anti-social” behaviour.

2. *Respect* – the facilitator provided the group with a range of statements with the potential to contain human rights “dilemmas” for participants. Delegates were asked to say whether they “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” and to explain why they so respond.

3. *Equality* – group members were given ‘identity slips’ detailing the discrimination of the women, youth and homosexuals, and given a moment to consider their role.

4. *Dignity* – group members were asked to read a newspaper article from the “Public Eye” newspaper and to identify the human rights issues within the story, with a specific focus on rights relating to dignity.

The afternoon session was broken into a number of sections. First, the participants were asked to identify what human rights issues each scenario raised, and to discuss which of these human rights are covered in the Bill of Rights and which are not. Second, delegates broke into smaller working groups to brainstorm a range of issues in relation to the examples, identify which of these invoked rights covered or not covered by the constitution, and then to contemplate what action could be taken locally in a human rights framework to address a selection of the issues. Representatives from each group presented a brief report to the whole house, focusing on the issues they had discussed and action ideas they had recommended.

Summaries of the findings of each group can be found on pages 9 and 10 below.

#### **Afternoon session 4 – Wrap-up Session**

A wrap up of the day one proceedings was done, participants were given an individual assignment to assist organizers to determine levels of understanding about human rights issues generally, as well as to identify issues of particular concern to young people:

The following assignment questions were asked:

1. Why are human rights important to you?
2. What are some human rights issues facing young people in your community?
3. What actions can be taken by the young people to minimize human rights violations in our respective communities?

#### **Day Two**

In the second day, there was a recap of the day one events by the human rights officer. Then participants submitted their individual assignments. All the responses were read out for people to understand the human rights issues of other communities. Mr Tsikoane Peshoane’s presentation was on the “practical challenges facing young people and their organizations towards enjoyment of human rights. Amongst others, he pointed to the dismal of pregnant girls from schools without dismissing the boys who impregnated them. He alluded to the fact that this is a serious gender discrimination which deserves serious attention by the youth. Youth unemployment in Lesotho and lack of access to tertiary education were mentioned by Mr. Peshoane. At the end of his presentation, he provoked a discussion among the participants asking them to point to the way forward in addressing these mentioned challenges.

#### **7. War forward to continually address human rights issues?**

At this juncture, participants showed a lot of passion to continue to address the human rights issues after gaining such knowledge and awareness. There was a general concern from the delegates that a structure be developed to continuously address the human rights issues within

the Berea district. It as resolved by the delegates that such body be constituted by representatives from the organizations present at the workshop. Such body shall be called the *Berea Youth Human Rights Committee*. The members shall arrange a meeting on monthly basis to discuss the progress of human rights issues in the respective organizations. TRC made an undertaking under the Human Rights officer that it will continually make a follow-up on the progress of this committee and give all the support necessary in combating human rights violations within the Berea District.

## **8. Workshop Findings.**

### **Key Issues**

Participants raised a number of issues in relation to each of the topic areas, with concerns being present in each of them. These key issues may be broadly grouped into the following range of concerns:

- Young peoples' experience of discrimination, not just in relation to age, but also in relation to religion, and physical ability;
- A lack of respect within the broader community and negative public perceptions about young people;
- A lack of access to services, information, support, and tertiary education.
- Young peoples' lack of knowledge and understanding about the law and their rights within it;
- Voice of the youth not being heard (dragging of the youth parliament); and
- Need for the Bill of rights to recognize other rights such as the right to education, health, and the rights of children to participate in decision making.

### **Key Actions**

There were a number of key action ideas that delegates identified to address human rights issues within their local communities. These key actions are broadly grouped as follows:

- Calls for more opportunities to be made available for youth to participate in decision making at all levels.
- Calls for various education and awareness raising strategies to promote rights within schools, council, local community, workplaces, police etc.
- Improving knowledge of and access to existing services for young people to better utilize them (this will require access to additional resources).

After a whirlwind tour of the bill of rights, delegates worked together to discuss in detail the human rights issues affecting young people today. This was done within a realm of topics that are of importance to young Basotho such as access to tertiary education, gender equality in schools, exposure to occupational diseases (*lifemeng*), family, youth unemployment and disability.

An issue raised through the workshop was young people's experiences with discrimination and the key ways it manifests. One manifestation is the prevalent lack of youth voice in Lesotho. This workshop has pushed for more opportunities to be made available for youth to participate in decision making at all levels.

Due to such a strong sentiment that young people are at the receiving end of discrimination there was a call for increased public interest in youth participation. There was also a call for increased education to promote existing youth services and the provision of access to resources which can aid youth in achieving these outcomes. Another prevalent issue amongst delegates was the need for recognition of rights such as the right to education, health etc. that are not covered in the bill of rights. The workshop was wrapped up by the Human Rights officer who reinforced the message of our responsibility as Young Basotho to take action on the human rights issues that affect our daily lives and promote these rights locally.

## **9. Conclusion**

The workshop was a fantastic 2 days in which enthusiastic and passionate Basotho youth came together to understand the human rights listed in the the Bill of Rights of the Constitution and work towards taking action to address issues raised. The delegates that attended the workshop are committed to broadening their local communities' understanding of human rights in Berea and involving themselves in action to address human rights implications affecting all young Basotho.

The workshop was then officially closed by Mr. Katleho Pefole (Programmes Manager) who emphasized the important role that all young people have in ensuring that human rights are respected and upheld, now and into the future. He reminded all delegates of their responsibilities, and urged them to put their energy and enthusiasm into action when they return to their respective communities.

#### 10. Evaluation of the workshop

**1. Did the Youth Workshop meet your expectations? Why? Why not? / Na phutheho ee, e arabetse litebello tsa hau? Fana ka mabaka:**

Youth workshop has really met our expectations simply because it gave us the light on what are our fundamental human rights which we were not aware of; therefore it will be easy for us to stand for ourselves.

**2. Were the presentations easy to follow? / Na puo e entsoeng e ne e utloisiseha? :**

Yes, the presentations were easy to follow because our own language was being used and things were on our side. Additionally, the presenters were brief to the point.

**3. Was the group discussion helpful for your understanding? Na mosebeti oa lihlopha o thusitse kutloiso ea hau? :**

Yes, the group discussion was very understandable since in a group we share the opinions and things become clearer as other members may come up with things that one may not be aware of.

**4. What was the best part of the day for you? U ratile karolo e feng ea phutheho? :** All the parts were really good but the one in which we were asking questions was best for us.

**5. What part of the workshop could have been improved? Ke karolo efeng ea phutheho e lokelang ho ntlafatsoa? :**

The part in which we were allowed to freely contribute by asking questions should be improved by giving it enough time and attention. This should be so in the manner that when we ask question you write them down in order for you to remember them quickly and also to avoid repetition.

**6. What action might you take when you return to your local community to promote young peoples human rights? U ka nka mehato efeng moo u phelang ho thusa litokelo tsa bacha le mathata a bona litokelong? :**

We would hold some public gatherings and raise awareness to the youth about their rights and how they can stand for their own lives.

**7. Any other comment? U ka reng he? :**

We would like to thank TRC for the provision of information on our fundamental human rights. We would also suggest that the agency should circulate around all districts since people out there are not aware of their rights, that is to say it should

#### 11. List of participants

No	Name in full	Contacts	Organization
1	Palesa Patrilicia Molemane	59031813	NTLAMA YOUTH CLUB IN ACTION(NYCA)
2	Tlhoriso Lekatsa	62668742	ABUNDENT LIFE CENTER(IDENTITY)
3	Rose Mapeshoane	58752085	ABUNDENT LIFE CENTER(IDENTITY)

4	Ts'ioanyane S.Polilo	59001209	OYAP
5	Moitaoli Ntholeng	58065320	OYAP
6	Makamohelo Motopela	5852419	ABUNDENT LIFE CENTER (IDENTITY)
7	Makhabane Ramaseeiso	58689422	CROSS ROADS LESOTHO
8	'Maseeiso Pii	073158995 7	KICK FOR LIFE
9	Mosaba Lepogo	-	KICK FOR LIFE
10	Phomolo Mabusetša	-	KICK FOR LIFE
11	Manuela Mopesoane		KICK FOR LIFE
12	Majipi Foloko	58594721	OYAP
13	'Mamokete Khahloe	58672245	CROSS ROADS LESOTHO
14	Tankiso Tlokotsi	58545142	CROSS ROADS LESOTHO
15	Mpho Sekhutsoane	58426240	CROSS ROADS LESOTHO
16	Khalane Mamathe	58829818	CROSS ROADS LESOTHO
17	Phoolo Lebohang	58829818	CROSS ROADS LESOTHO
18	Latele Foloko	58400965	OYAP
19	Liteboho Lint'sa	58583866	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
20	'Mamoshoeane Ranthimo	58400965	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
21	'Mabatho Masupha	58401031	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
22	Thabo Thoahlane	63282326	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
23	Tau-eahae Eusebia	59067577	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
24	Mokabuo Sethotsela	59037167	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
25	Motlatsi Rankhasa	-	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER
26	Lilatolo Mat'sosa	58140809	KICK FOR LIFE
27	Mat'seliso Mat'sosa	58470153	KICK FOR LIFE
28	Mofi Ntoi	58591541	LPPA
29	Mookho Mokhothu	59093879	LPPA
30	Rethabile Mathaba	59499365	LPPA
31	Mohapi Atanase	59466297	OYAP
32	Nkoka Limakatso	63246358	IDENTITY
33	Mojabeng Matlokotsi	58554961	NYCA
34	Mpete Ramat'sella	594299123	NYCA
35	Gisson Matlanya	58136397	WAYO/FED
36	Mosala Lepogo	-	KICK FOR LIFE
37	Phomolo Mabusetša	-	KICK FOR LIFE
38	Borotho Selema	59500405	T.Y. YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER