

REVIEW OF FORUM OPERATIONS - VIDEO PROPOSAL

'THE RIGHT TO KNOW' HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The ten-year period from 1995 to 2004 marks the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. This Decade also marked the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998. This milestone Anniversary was celebrated worldwide to re-focus attention on the aspirational and universally accepted principles of human rights. The Decade for Human Rights Education proclaimed by the United Nations also offers people around the world the opportunity for reflection upon these Principles and to assess the importance of promoting them through formal and informal human rights education. Human rights education, in its many manifestations, is critically important in promoting an understanding of the principles of human dignity and respect enshrined in the Universal Declaration, particularly in the effort to make those principles relevant and meaningful to people all around the world.

In this context, the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions took the initiative at its Third Annual Meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia in 1998, to commemorate the Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Decade for Human Rights Education by deciding to produce a short documentary video on the role of national human rights institutions in promoting human rights, through education and promotion, within their respective countries.

Forum Members approved a two-stage project. The first stage involved the commissioning of a film crew with experience in producing human rights videos to film the proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Forum, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in September 1998. There were three objectives for this first stage

1. to gather footage to provide useful background and archival material on regional cooperation amongst national human rights institutions
2. to provide an opportunity for representatives of Forum Member institutions to meet the film crew and discuss ideas for the proposed second-stage video, and
3. to use the resulting video as an educational tool to promote the activities of the Forum.

The first stage of the project has now been completed. All Forum Members and the United Nations received a copy of the video in December 1998. The video has also been sent to relevant organisations that participated at the Third Annual Meeting and other interested parties.

The second stage of the project was the production of a 30 to 40 minute documentary style video of broadcast quality. It was proposed that the video focus on the work of Forum Member institutions and the different types of human rights issues that confront each institution. It was also proposed that the video focus on a common issue of regional concern.

Forum member institutions agreed to work with the Secretariat and film crew to determine the issues of priority to be addressed in the video and the development of a shooting schedule in their respective countries.

The Forum Secretariat has held discussions with a video documentary team concerning the development of this second stage of the project. Given the relevance of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and the common central function of Forum Member institutions to promote an understanding and awareness of human rights, the Secretariat requests that Forum Members consider the appropriateness of human rights education and promotion being the 'common issue' of regional concern to be included in the video.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The 'Right to Know' documentary video proposes to examine how countries in the Asia Pacific region with a national mechanism for human rights promotion and protection are promoting international human rights principles, law and practice at the local level.

This video documentary aims to provide this information to the viewing public (schools, community organisations, governments, universities/colleges and television audiences). The video will focus on the initiatives being undertaken by Forum Members to promote human rights within their own countries.

The video will include examples of the work undertaken by all Forum Members. The video makers will work in collaboration with each Forum Member to determine which particular project or issue to focus on. For example, the video could include a segment on how the Philippines Human Rights Commission undertakes training with villages (or Barangay) to provide information on what are human rights and how they are relevant to all people. This project also encourages villagers to develop human rights action centres to assist the Philippines Commission to monitor human rights abuses occurring at the village level.

OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the documentary is to promote an understanding of national human rights institutions in the Asia Pacific region and their role in promoting human rights education. Another important objective is to highlight how various countries in the Asia Pacific region embrace international human rights principles and how they have taken measures to give these principles practical effect.

The 'Right to Know' documentary seeks to provide decision-makers and the general public with knowledge that enhances their understanding of the complexity and diversity of human rights issues within individual countries and throughout the region. It also seeks to demonstrate the willingness of countries in the region, through their national human rights commissions, to work together in partnership and address issues of common concern through the Forum.

DISTRIBUTION

The Forum members agreed that the best medium to reach the largest possible audience with maximum potential impact was through the production and distribution of a quality video. The independent and award winning human rights filmmaker, Mr Lew Griffiths, has agreed to direct the documentary and coordinate the marketing and distribution strategy. The film will be available in English and will be offered to television stations (commercial, public and community) in all Forum countries. It is anticipated the take-up rate will be high.

In video form, it will be available to all Human Rights Commissions to distribute in whichever way they choose – to schools, tertiary institutions or to screen at public meetings.

The video will be distributed to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the United Nations Children Fund and Amnesty International. Another part of the distribution strategy will be a focus on the distribution of the video in the Americas, Europe and Africa through public broadcast television and human rights film festivals.

The documentary is a collaborative project between the Forum members and is organised and coordinated by its secretariat. The secretariat will also consult with United Nations bodies and human rights non-government bodies including Amnesty International and local human rights organisations for research and footage. It is proposed that the film crew and one secretariat staff

member will travel to each of the member commissions to film and conduct interviews. Financial assistance to fund the project is being sought from potential donors.

PERSONNEL

Project management

The Secretariat of the Forum will provide the overall project management of this production. This will involve liaison and scheduling of interviews with Forum members, non-government organisations and United Nations bodies; to source funds; to control and monitor budget expenditure; research; provide expert advice; editorial input and management of the film crew; develop with the director distribution and marketing strategies; quality control; administrative arrangements including international travel, accommodation, ground transport; liaising with donors and providing reports; and ensuring that the project meets its objectives. Ms Pip Dargan, Coordinator of Projects and Programs at the Forum Secretariat, will manage the project on behalf of the Forum Secretariat. Ms Dargan's biography is below.

Pip Dargan

Pip Dargan is Coordinator at the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and has worked at the Forum since its inception in 1996. Ms Dargan has extensive experience in regional human rights project management. She has managed international human rights delegations, regional human rights training courses, communication and promotional strategies and coordinated the Forum's regional thematic human rights workshops and annual meetings held in Australia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Ms Dargan also has experience in developing and implementing technical assistance projects regionally in the good governance sector with Bangladesh, the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Prior to her position at the Forum, Ms Dargan worked at the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Ms Dargan has ten years experience in the operations of a national human rights institution, particularly in the areas of investigation and conciliation, public education and human rights policy. In 1996 she was selected by the Australian Commission to attend the 1996 Asia Young Leaders' Forum held in Shanghai, China.

Production crew

This documentary will be directed by OZIRIS Pty Ltd. OZIRIS is an independent film and video production company with a distinguished reputation for producing high quality television programs and videotapes. The company is located in Canberra, Australia. Since its establishment in 1990, the OZIRIS team has won several major awards for its work. The company specialises in social justice assignments, indigenous affairs, political, cultural and regional issues. A summary of its productions is enclosed for your information.

The two principal personnel from OZIRIS working on this documentary are Mr Lew Griffiths, Director, OZIRIS and journalist, Mr Jeremy Thompson.

Lew Griffiths

Lew Griffiths is the director of OZIRIS. He is producer/director with over twenty years experience in broadcast television production. He is a multi-skilled and highly experienced producer, editor and cinematographer and has won several industry awards, including the prestigious Walkley Award for cinematography.

Mr Griffiths has produced numerous documentaries on a wide range of issues including various humanitarian aid projects around the world. He has carried out assignments for UNICEF in the Philippines, the Australian Government's Aid Agency, AusAID in Vietnam and the Asia Pacific

Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in Indonesia. The United Nations, Geneva, commissioned his most recent assignment, in association with UNHCR.

Jeremy Thompson

Mr Thompson is a freelance journalist retained by OZIRIS as a scriptwriter. He has collaborated with Mr Griffiths on several projects and the Asia Pacific Forum's video on its regional meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Mr Thompson has twenty years of experience in news, current affairs, documentaries and as a specialist foreign affairs writer for newspapers. His assignments include documentary or feature articles during the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, on the genocide in Cambodia, documenting the effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam, and covering the reunification of Germany and the continuing impasse in Cyprus. He has extensively covered the Pacific region including the Papua New Guinea's State of Emergency, political strife in Vanuatu and the French nuclear tests.

FUNDING

The project has been costed at USD \$80,000. The Forum Secretariat has developed a funding application and will distribute this to selected donors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Forum members:

1. consider and approve the video proposal with a focus on human rights education.
2. request that the Secretariat continue to seek donor funding for this project.
3. request that the Secretariat work with individual Forum members to determine issues of priority to be addressed in the video and the development of a shooting schedule.