

“Council of Europe, National Human Rights Institutions, Equality Bodies and Ombudsman Offices Promoting Equality and Social Inclusion”

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**The activity of the Azerbaijani Ombudsman in the field
of Human Rights Education**

The Azerbaijani Ombudsman’s activities are regulated under the Constitutional Law which has important role in the field of human rights protection and promotion in Azerbaijan.

Having a constitutional status, this Constitutional Law prevails over other legislative acts. According to the Constitutional Law, Ombudsman is an independent and obeys only the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, according to this Law Ombudsman enjoys of invariability and immunity, any interference with the activities of the Ombudsman by any governmental or municipal body or official is inadmissible.

I would like to mention that on 27 October, 2006, the Azerbaijani Ombudsman Office has been accredited with the highest “A” status by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). This status is determined in accordance with the Paris Principles on independent activities of the NHRIs and empowers the Ombudsman Office of Azerbaijan to better extend its international cooperation, to participate independently in the UN HRC activities, to deliver statements and suggestions, to prepare in the preparing process of State Reports to be submitted to the UN Treaty bodies, also to prepare parallel and alternative reports, and to monitor the implementation of those treaties.

I would like to mention that Azerbaijani Ombudsman has brought many innovations and best practices to the society by her innovative approach and initiatives in the field of human rights.

In a modern world, the legal education of population, development of their legal thinking and culture is one of significant incentives in building of democratic-legal government and civil society process.

I should note important steps have been taken towards development of education, normative legal basis was improved in this regard in the Republic of Azerbaijan last years.

The State Strategy on Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 24 October, 2013 reflects that one of the main duties of the education system is to bring up citizens and persons who respect principles of democracy, national traditions as well as human rights and freedoms.

Human Rights education of persons not only working or studying in the field of law, but also in different spheres is very important for the development of the society.

Human Rights education should not only aim to train experts, but also should support bringing up of persons who can freely participate in the society, should be means for learning the capacities by those persons in order to enable them to participate in decision making process regarding social, economic and cultural policies. Thus, inclusion of human rights into the education system is very important.

Raising awareness, legal knowledge, and improvement of thinking and culture of people is one the main directions of the Commissioner's activity, enlightenment work were carried out in this regard.

Human rights education which is one of the main directions of the activity of the Commissioner in the field of human rights is being developed in universities and secondary schools.

On the initiative of the Commissioner, "Human Rights" as well as "Introduction to Gender" is being taught at universities as separate subjects, new generation of lawyers, social workers and specialised psychologists are being trained. Moreover, Department of UNESCO on Human Rights" was created, scientific approach is being applied to human rights by training of professionals in this field among both bachelors and masters degree students.

National Program for Action to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan (NAP) identified new directions as well as important obligations before the local executive bodies through opening new stage either in protection of human rights or awareness raising on human rights.

Titling the separate Chapter IV of the NAP "educational, scientific analytical and enlightenment activities in the area of human rights" is an obvious attention of the state to this question. In the abovementioned Chapter, the issues on organization of the study of the requirements of the CAT and its OP by officials of law enforcement and other relevant agencies, as well as lawyers and representatives of non-governmental organizations with expertise in law, preparation of training manuals on human rights in the line with the "Enlightenment of human rights" and "Education for Human Rights" proclaimed

by the UN General Assembly, the Global program on human rights education of the UN OHCHR and the UNESCO Decades “Education for Sustainable Development”, continuation of conducting competitions, exhibitions and other activities on the human rights among pupils and students in the educational establishments, continuation of hierarchical education system on child rights in the secondary schools, continuation of work on preparation, publication and dissemination of education and visual aids, booklets and posters on human rights, improvement of scientific research work on human rights and freedoms at higher education and research institutions, with purpose of proper coordination of activities concerned, the establishment of specialized human rights centers (school of human rights, house of human rights, etc.) or networks on order to improve effectiveness of education in the field of human rights, conduct of awareness activities in order to develop a proper culture of law, prevent discrimination, promote a culture of peace and tolerance and national and spiritual values of our people, also of awareness raising activities involving explanation of the national legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan on access to information and securing effective access to information, and other issues were reflected in the program and their implementation is underway.

The events conducted traditionally at the initiative of the Ombudsman, such as the “18th June -Day of Human Rights” between 18 May and 18 June, Month of Peace, between 21 August-21 September dedicated to the 21st September – International Day of Peace, and the Month of Child Rights between 20-October-20 November conducted on the eve of 20th anniversary of the adoption of the CRC. Within those months, given recommendations aimed at conducting related events for local and central executive bodies, civil society members, including NGOs and media, increasing attention to human rights and their promotion and awareness, ensure the sustainability of such a national plan based on legal awareness for the next years can be underlined as one of the best practices due to immovability and effectiveness in the human rights education field.

Additionally, during the days on human rights, events conducted for public institutions, also for NGOs and media, international organizations, with participation of members of vulnerable groups aim at advocating of human rights culture in society.

From the perspective of human rights and legal education, one of our best practices is the program on “hierarchical education system on child rights”.

Provisions of the National Action Plan on protection of Human Rights of 2006, as well as of the National Program for Action on Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan since of 2011, also programs on “Enlightenment of human rights” and “Education for Human Rights” proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, the UNESCO Decades “Education for Sustainable Development”, and also the program “hierarchical education system on child rights” of the Ombudsman Office conducted jointly with the Ministry of Education in the secondary schools shall be widely implemented.

It should be noted more than 100 schools have been involved in the project has being implemented each year since the academic year 2009-2010, more than

6350 students were awarded a certificate by the Commissioner, more than 500 teachers and directors received thank you letters.

This interactive education program, from one hand aims at building human rights culture and from other hand at realization of human rights in the school environment. Simultaneously, this highly evaluated practice facilitates establishment of child rights centers and preparation of related educational manuals which create the Azerbaijan model of specific legal education on child rights.

The Commissioner as a person dealing with protection of violated human rights, pays more attention to the training of the personal specialized in human rights. From this perspective, specific short-term human rights education network was created in the Ombudsman Office.

Thus, every year, students of the law and international relations faculties from the Universities of Baku State, Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Western University, Qafqaz University, and students of various classes of the international relations and regional studies from the Baku Slavic University and European Studies and International relations from the State University of Languages have internship with the Ombudsman Office and this process will be continued.

Every year, with purpose of increasing effectiveness of the legal awareness activities, educational tools of various topics of human rights are published under the editorship of the Ombudsman and are disseminated among society successfully. At present time, until today 165 different educational tools on human rights are published in Ombudsman Office and 26 tools of foreign origin were translated from English into Azeri language.

According to the programs of the Academy of Public Administration under President of the Republic of Azerbaijan teaching good governance, as well as the re-training of civil servants, Azerbaijan Labour and Social Affairs Academy, Police Academy training experts for law enforcement bodies, Academy of Justice, Training Center of General Prosecutor's Office, education centers for training experts in military and others as well as work plan of Ombudsman, series of seminars are organized for young trainees, persons involved to specialisation, judges, and civil servants which contribute to promotion of human rights culture.

Human rights education and legal awareness raising activities by the Ombudsman are underway.

Thanks for your attention!