**Human Rights Friendly Schools Project 1.2**

**Amnesty International**

The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project is the first global human rights education project in schools, and embraces the vision and powers of the World Program for Human Rights Education.

The project aims to promote a culture of human rights in schools by helping school communities to integrate human rights values and principles in the main areas of school life, and to demonstrate the global impact of the human rights-friendly school curriculum.

The first pilot phase includes secondary schools from 14 countries: Benin, Ivory Coast, Denmark, Ghana, Ireland, “Palestine occupied”, Italy, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Paraguay, Poland, Senegal, and the United Kingdom.

Amnesty International's national offices help these schools integrate human rights values and principles into four key areas of school life: school participation and leadership, community relations, school curricula, extracurricular areas, and the school environment.

Schools striving to become a friend of human rights will serve as models showing, in a microcosm, that such a culture is achievable and that the tools and processes it uses to become respectful of human rights can be adapted to multiple contexts at a moderate cost.

The pilot phase of the project is a two-year process that ends in August 2011. During this time, Amnesty International's national offices will be supported in their work with partner schools to implement the project. Networking, information exchange and cooperation between participants will also be facilitated.

The project will be monitored and evaluated, and the pilot phase of the project will be consulted with key stakeholders to ensure that the successes, challenges, lessons learned and human rights impact of the project are compiled and disseminated.

Amnesty International views the Human Rights Friendly Schools project as an opportunity to help countries around the world make human rights an integral part of national education systems.

The project builds on work carried out as part of Amnesty International’s 2005 campaign on human rights education, which called on governments to mainstream human rights education into the Course of study.

**Why are human rights important for schools?**

Human rights education has become an internationally recognized method of promoting human rights locally, nationally and globally among many stakeholders. Knowledge of rights and freedoms is an essential tool to guarantee respect for rights for all.

Schools are generally considered to be the mirror of their societies and to make emerging generations as social generations and to prepare learners to become effective and prosperous members of society.

The children and young people of today are the citizens of tomorrow. The promotion of educational and human rights-based environments around the world is essential to ensure a global culture of human rights. One of the best ways to educate people on how to create a culture of human rights is to familiarize them with living in a culture of human rights in their school environment, an environment that plays a role, a very great role in the lives of the majority of children and young adults worldwide.

**What is a human rights friendly school?**

The human rights friendly school is the school that accepts human rights as principles of work and organization. It is the school that develops an environment and a society in which human rights are learned, taught, practiced, respected, defended and protected. It is the place where everyone is included and encouraged to participate regardless of their characteristic or role, and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

In short, the Friendly School of Human Rights ensures that the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination, and participation are at the heart of the learning experience and are present in all main areas of school life; it is the human rights friendly school.

The Human Rights Friendly School promotes the following:

- A general climate of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination, and participation in the whole school.

- A fully participative and democratic approach to school leadership, in which all members of the school community participate in decisions that affect them.

- Enabling students, teachers, and staff to participate in the real and equal development of school policies.

- Student participation in discussions related to change.

- The sense of participation and interdependence that fosters mutual responsibility and local and global solidarity has grown.

- Rich experiences of learning about human rights inside and outside the classroom.

The human rights education program that extends beyond the classroom and touches all aspects of school life is called a "comprehensive school program", which is a holistic program or a program based on rights. These terms show the participation of all members of the school community in creating an environment in which human rights are learned, taught, practiced, respected, defended and promoted.