



Empowering Change

defending Human Rights

one case at a time



ANNUAL REPORT 2014



Protecting
human rights
for over
10 years



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword | 1 |
| About GHRD | 3 |
| Bringing Injustice Into the Light: International Monitoring and Advocacy | 5 |
| People Power: Local Advocacy | 6 |
| No Abuse Goes Unnoticed: Monitoring of Everyday Human Rights Abuses | 7 |
| Access to Justice: Provision of Legal Aid | 8 |
| Accountability Above All: Election Monitoring | 9 |
| Responsible Citizenship: Human Rights Activism and Education in Europe | 11 |
| #SaveKajal | 11 |
| “Stamping out Injustice One Letter at a Time” | 11 |
| Youth in Action: Be Innovators, Make a Social Change | 12 |
| European Voluntary Service: Active Volunteer, Active Citizen | 12 |
| Fostering Change From Within | 13 |
| Train the Trainers Programme | 13 |
| Capacity-Building Programme | 13 |
| Raising Awareness | 14 |
| Research-Based Approach: LGBT Research | 15 |
| Empowering Women, Investing in Societies | 16 |
| Fight Discrimination – Equal Rights for All | 16 |
| We for Us | 16 |
| A Tribute to Human Rights Defenders | 17 |
| Getting Involved | 19 |

Foreword



By Mr. Sital

Dear friends,

By any measure, 2014 was a rough year, one marred with communal attacks, forced conversions and marriages, land grabbing and sexual violence against the South Asian minorities. Girls aged 12-14 were abducted, forcefully married and converted in Pakistan, indigenous minorities' villages attacked in Bangladesh. India and Nepal have continued to discriminate their women and children by failing to provide them with education and training, forcing mothers to sell their kids into marriages. GHRD works for these most marginalized and abused communities to make sure their voices, no matter how weak and suppressed, are heard around the world. As an organization we are happy to say that 2014 has also been a year of increased cooperation. Our networks in Bangladesh and Pakistan continued to grow in numbers and legitimacy, while our collaboration with other organizations in Europe has also advanced

its course. As a strategic plan, we continued to maintain a small staff in our headquarters in The Hague and direct all of our resources to activities in the region to ensure proper training of our partners that courageously fight abuse on a daily basis. The challenges before us are immense and continuing, yet we continue to see the small cracks in the walls that separate the minority groups in South Asia from actively pursuing their rights as citizens and human beings. GHRD believes in the power of ordinary people, like you and me, in making a difference. This is why I would like to thank all of our friends, staff, interns, volunteers and, most of all, the selfless human rights defenders for making our work possible. It is through such dedicated efforts that we have been and will continue to pursue accountability on national and international levels, and continue to empower communities to bring change from within. Due to the nature of our work and the groups that we work with, as well as due to the often-arising security concerns, we often prefer to remain out of the public eye and work behind closed doors. Yet we never compromise on human rights and passionately strive for their protection where it is most needed. I want to thank all of our contributors for believing in us and the work that we do, even when it remains behind the scenes. Without your contributions, none of our accomplishments would have been possible. We enter 2015 with a continued passion to achieve results for the most vulnerable and unrepresented. Together, we will continue to strive for the promotion and protection of minority rights.

Once again thank you,

Mr. S. Sital.





About GHRD

Vision

We envision a world where all people are treated equally and are able to freely access fundamental human rights.

Mission

We actively promote and protect the fundamental human rights of minorities and marginalised groups along with enhancing their socio-economic empowerment through education and advocacy.

WHERE?

We work in the region of the world most neglected by the international community where human rights violations are gross and systematic.

WHY?

The large majority of violent conflicts in the world today are conflicts within states and not across borders; with groups polarised across ethnic and religious divides. Ethnic, religious, sexual, socio-economic and linguistic minorities suffer discrimination and are frequently the victims of human rights abuses.

HOW?

Step 1: Human Rights Monitoring and Advocacy

Monitoring activities include:

- Coordinating investigation missions into human rights violations;
- Presentations and human rights reports based on field investigations;
- Research, and media monitoring.

Advocacy activities include:

- Press outreach;
- Petitions and urgent appeals;
- Audio-visual materials;
- Campaigns and lobbying.

Fact-Finding and Legal Assistance

Fact-finding and legal assistance programme supports and strengthens local grass roots organisations and human rights defenders working on minority rights.

Our work aims to enable emergency legal aid to GHRD's partners in case they are threatened or implicated in legal cases as a direct result of their human rights work, and to victims of religious, sexual or gender motivated crimes who are unable to register their case with the authorities or are unable to pay legal fees to pursue their case.

Step 2: Human Rights Education

We build capacity through education and enable individuals to take action. GHRD conducts both formal and informal education programmes for a variety of stakeholders in South Asia and Europe. In South Asia, GHRD trains different communities as well as its partners to build organisational capacity and improve their human rights knowledge and skills.

In Europe, the trainings are intended to educate minority groups about their human rights as well as raise awareness for the human rights violations in South Asia.

Education activities include:

- Lectures;
- Workshops;
- Film screenings;
- Trainings;
- Raising awareness events.

Capacity Building and Training

Our programmes support and strengthen local grassroots organisations and human rights defenders working on minority rights. Human rights defenders are provided with trainings in conducting independent fact-finding missions, report writing, documentation techniques, media and communications, project development, fundraising and how to advocate for legislative change through intergovernmental platforms.

Step 3: Human Rights Empowerment

We believe that through socio-economic empowerment individuals can claim their place in the society and overcome their role as victims. GHRD's projects take different approaches but always aim to improve the life circumstances of the individual and enable them to change their lives.

Activities of human rights empowerment are wide ranging and include:

- Legal assistance;
- Education;
- Community building;
- Skill and vocational training.

Bringing Injustice Into the Light: International Monitoring and Advocacy

Bringing the gross human rights violations to the attention of the national and international communities is a difficult, yet vital task. More often than not, the most vulnerable and affected communities are the ones that receive the least attention. The reasons are for this are many: intentional attempts by the societies or governments to downplay the severity of violations committed against them, being hidden away from the public eye by the lack of decent infrastructure, or simply because they constitute a minority group. It is with the generous support of our donors and partners that GHRD has been able to transcend the national borders with its advocacy activities. In 2014, GHRD has continuously involved into a dialogue with the representatives of the United Nations by submitting and discussing various cases of human rights violations, as well as participating in the UN Human Rights Committee work in Geneva and the international NGO Conference in New York hosted by UNDPI. Serving as a trustworthy and reliable source of information, GHRD has been able to make the availability of the information from the remote and rural areas and the quick processing of additional requests a cornerstone of the GHRD-UN communication in 2014. Through such continuous dialogue, the voice of the silenced minority groups in South Asia has become clearer and louder on the international arena.

Located in the Netherlands, GHRD has been increasingly involved in a political dialogue with the representatives of the Dutch political parties, Dutch embassy representatives in the countries of operation, as well as with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through such a dialogue GHRD sets out to provide the relevant stakeholders with reliable information about the plight of minority groups in South Asia and engage them into actively assisting those groups in need of international support. As a result, Dutch awareness about the everyday struggles of marginalized groups in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan has significantly increased.

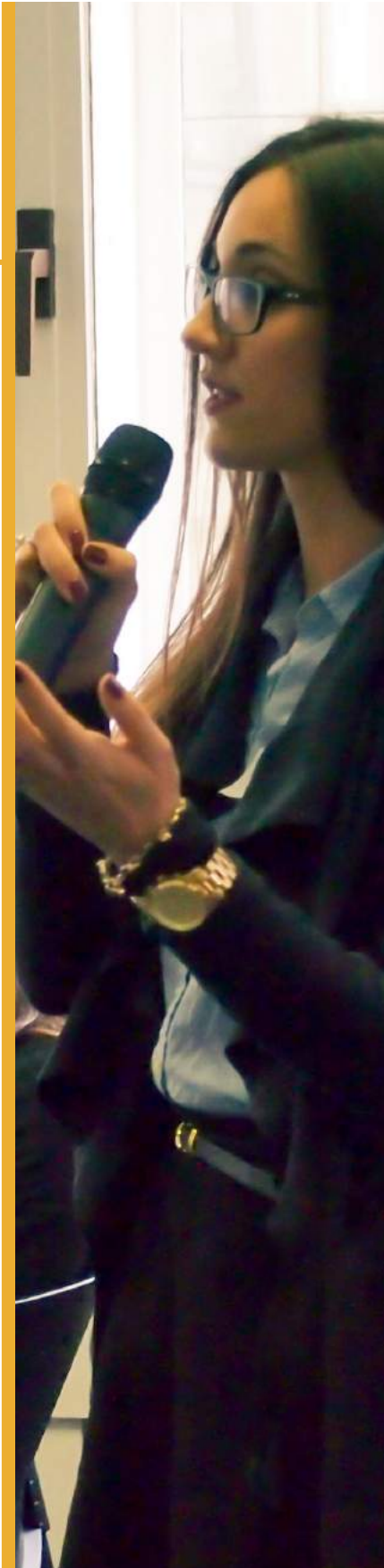


People Power:

Local Advocacy

In 2014 GHRD and its local partners have continued to address the issues of the most marginalized groups through national media, demonstrations, and strategic meetings with political and religious leaders, which is firmly rooted in our belief that real change has to come from within. GHRD's combined approach to the lobby and advocacy work is based on using the information collected during the fact-finding activities for advocacy purposes.

A cornerstone of GHRD's work in South Asia is our belief in the power of numbers. As such, GHRD has continuously utilized the national alliances, which GHRD helped establish back in 2012, in order to reach a wider audience with a unified voice against repression. In 2014, the Human Rights Alliance Bangladesh (HRAB) and the Coalition for the Rights of Minorities Pakistan (CRMP) have managed to collaborate with the National Human Rights Commissions (NHRC), the United National Development Program (UNDP), and various other international and national organizations, among other individual meetings, conferences and demonstrations. One of the biggest achievements has been our ability to channel the attention of various stakeholders into the systematic nature of the violations of minority rights in Bangladesh and Pakistan all the while exploring the future possibilities for cooperation. One of such cooperation possibilities was the use of GHRD's expertise for the initial design of the Bangladesh UNDP project focused on developing safety nets for human rights defenders. The project was later further designed and coordinated with HRAB members.



No Abuse Goes Unnoticed: Monitoring of Everyday Human Rights Abuses



Investigation of human rights violations is one of the crucial steps in increasing the access to justice for minority victims and documenting violations, which would otherwise be left in the dark. Various barriers, including language, cultural diversity, societal attitudes and geographical distance, stand in the way of international response, political and otherwise, towards gross human rights violations. GHRD's programme directed towards fact-finding and investigations of human rights violations focuses specifically on building a network of human rights activists that are educated and experienced in conducting fact-finding missions and are working with the proper documentation of violations according to the international standards on a daily basis.

As a part of that programme, GHRD assists victims of human rights violations by providing legal assistance. Victims from minority groups have the opportunity to engage with trained lawyers and human rights defenders who pursue their cases with the magistrate, and high or supreme courts. With over 78% increase in our fact-finding missions since 2012, and the establishment of partnerships with local organizations from the most vulnerable, militarized and marginalized regions in Bangladesh and Pakistan, GHRD has increased the capacity of its local partners. The implementation of the internationally recognized online platform for reporting human rights violations has contributed to GHRD's work towards our local partners' meeting internationally recognized standards of reporting.

As a result of such thorough investigations and proper and effective reporting, GHRD's partners have been recognized as trusted points of contact for many international organizations and political representatives. Cases that would otherwise go unreported got national and international attention, bringing the bigger underlying issues into focus.





Access to Justice: Provision of Legal Aid

Minorities in Bangladesh and Pakistan suffer from a wide variety of human rights abuses, such as communal attacks, land grabbing, forced conversions, sexual violence, discrimination and other forms of violence committed by the state actors, political party members, military and non-state actors. These marginalised groups often face insurmountable difficulties and lack access to justice. The reasons for this are many: financial constraints, discrimination (including the difficulty to lodge a First Investigation Report), threats, lack of information about the proper procedure and the lack of support from the community. Many lost their faith in the justice system due to state inaction in ensuring redress for the victims. The justice system fails to address and consequently disregards these systematic violations against minorities while reinforcing impunity for the alleged perpetrators. The lack of access to judicial remedies imposes a serious threat to the protection of the rights of minorities and, therefore, needs immediate attention. GHRD's Legal Assistance Programme is aimed at providing legal support to marginalised groups who are at risk due to their belief, non-belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or struggle for the protection of human rights. The legal aid initiative is a way to deliver equitable justice to minorities and promote transparency within legal institutions.

One of the successful examples of legal assistance in Bangladesh was the case of the communal attack against the scheduled cast community carried out by the Hindu minorities in Khulna district. The violent attack occurred due to inter-caste conflict; scheduled cast members are one of the most stigmatized people in Bangladesh; and are also known as the “untouchables”. The local partner that conducted the fact-finding mission approached GHRD for legal assistance. After investigating and building up the case together, GHRD was able to connect its partner and the victims with a local partner, specializing in provision of legal assistance, to provide an effective legal remedy.

An illustrative example is GHRD's achievement in the Mavi Kolhi case,¹ the community was brought together to advocate on behalf of this Pakistani girl. GHRD, together with its local partner, had conducted a fact-finding mission in relation to the case, and was about to provide legal assistance. 9 local lawyers from the Sindh area volunteered to work on this case that was being heard in the High Court. As a result of such cooperation and GHRD's international support, on December 19th 2014 Mavi was sent back home with her parents. Such a result is quite rare in the cases of abductions, forced marriages and conversions, and the success can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of all parties involved.

Accountability Above All: Election Monitoring

Along with monitoring the everyday human rights violation in the countries of operation, GHRD pays particular attention to the special circumstances in which minority rights are violated with a strategic purpose of maintaining or altering the status quo. One of such events were the 10th parliamentary elections that took place in Bangladesh. The election observation mission was executed from November 2013 to February 2014, and our partners, along with the rest of the country, witnessed one of the most violent clashes between supporters of two main political parties – Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Awami League. Hundreds were killed and injured during the attacks.

Minorities were one of the main target groups of political violence in Bangladesh. Communal attacks were carried out with the claimed intention of intimidation and prevention of the minority group members from casting ballots. The monitoring mission revealed that the elections' commission did not ensure a free, fair, meaningful, and participatory election, evidenced by the instances where minority communities were intimidated and attacked in an attempt to prevent them from casting their votes both before and during the elections.





Responsible Citizenship:

Human Rights Activism and Education in Europe

#SaveKajal

Our extensive fact-finding and monitoring of human rights violations in Pakistan in 2014 revealed an alarmingly increasing pattern of a particular abuse: abductions, forced conversions and marriages of 12-14-year old girls. Along with our lobby and advocacy activities directed at pushing the international community to use political leverage to remedy the situation, as well as providing the victims with the necessary financial means and legal support to pursue justice, GHRD launched a petition campaign to raise awareness about this abuse in Europe. The campaign gathered around 1,500 signatures in its first week, and is continuing to focus international attention on the issue of abductions, forced conversions and marriages as GHRD continues to advocate on behalf of the victims, thereby pushing the Pakistani, as well as European, political stakeholders to address the violations

“Stamping Out Injustice One Letter at a Time”

Another example of citizen activism that transcends the borders of political buildings is our campaign called “Postcards for Pakistan: Stamping out injustice, one letter at a time”. The campaign took place in the Netherlands from June 2013 until June 2014. As part of the campaign, GHRD screened the documentary, “Pakistan: A Defining Moment”, showing the plight of minorities in Pakistan, in several different universities in The Netherlands. Upon screening the documentary, participants were asked to write letters to the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom or Belief on the campaign postcards. Since its launch, the campaign managed to involve 12 screening events of the documentary. The campaign successfully engaged the Dutch youth in real human rights activism, inspiring them to take action when the rights of the people, regardless of whom they are and where they are from, are violated, while simultaneously raising awareness about the plight of minority groups in Pakistan.



Youth in Action: Be Innovators, Make a Social Change

As a part of its activities in Europe, GHRD organized a 7-day training programme in the city of Peace and Justice, The Hague. The training project brought together 25 participants from 8 different countries; Romania, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and The Netherlands. Youth workers, youth leaders, trainers and activists received training on social entrepreneurship and gained practical skills on how to utilize the building blocks of social entrepreneurship to solve social issues such as “youth unemployment and participation” and “marginalization of disadvantaged groups”. As a part of the project, participants had a chance to meet various organisations and experts in the field of social entrepreneurship.

European Voluntary Service: Active Volunteer, Active Citizen

GHRD’s location in Europe provides us with a unique opportunity to give back to the community through providing young people with an opportunity to develop a skillset necessary for their personal and professional development with the generous support of the European Commission. For 6 months in 2014, GHRD hosted one international volunteer under the European Voluntary Service (EVS) scheme:

“I am particularly glad for the opportunity to join the GHRD team as an EVS volunteer: for the chance to trying make legal terms and honourable words become action, raising awareness about human rights violations all around the world and empower the most vulnerable groups of society. To implement legal instruments and put laudable ideas into practice, whilst raising awareness about human rights around the world and standing up for the most vulnerable groups in society.”



Fostering Change From Within

Train the Trainers Programme

GHRD's capacity building and training programme was carefully designed with a team of passionate and accomplished trainers to meet the needs of the civil society and human rights defenders, made possible through the adoption of the 'train the trainers' (TOT) methodology. TOT was chosen for its multiplier effect and learning environment that enables sharing knowledge and experience. The trainings focused on increasing the knowledge of the participants in human rights investigation and reporting, advocacy and lobbying, media outreach, LGBT sensitivity, fundraising and human rights law. The Master Trainers continued with the programme and trained 222 human rights defenders from local communities in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The programme enabled human rights defenders to creatively and analytically reflect upon the situations in their communities and history through a human rights based approach. The approach was chosen based on the conviction that the fight against human rights violations needs not only competent and skilled human rights defenders with propensity to ameliorate and reform, but also requires a change in the societal mindset. Through the creation of what is called a 'pedagogy of human rights', GHRD aims at ensuring the sustainability of its efforts and future enlargement of the community of human rights defenders. The trainings attracted a lot of national attention, and were visited by various EU embassies' representatives, as well as trainers from UNDP, Transparency International and Save the Children, along with the GHRD staff.

One of the major achievements of the programme was its ability to reduce the dependency of local organisations on external training assistance and, consequently, their empowerment to become self-suffi-



cient in training current and future staff, interns and volunteers. It further created an internal resource to meet the needs of the local organisations to strengthen their knowledge and decision-making ability, shifted the attitude towards crisis situations, and helped accomplish the organisations' short- and long-term goals.

Capacity-Building Programme

GHRD's capacity-building programme was designed for aspiring human rights defenders from Bangladesh and Pakistan, who have been a backbone of our partner organisations, and wanted to use the newly acquired knowledge to bring their organisations to a different level. The tailored and interactive 3-week capacity-building programme aimed at improving the quality of human rights work in South Asia and Europe by bringing 3 out of 12 human rights defenders from the region to work alongside GHRD's staff in The Hague, the Netherlands in 2014. During their time in Europe, the human rights defenders participated in numerous trainings, networking opportunities and meetings with various political stakeholders. The programme was accompanied by the GHRD's annual EU

Lobby Tour. GHRD, together with 2 of its local partners, were invited to participate in the 16th EU-NGO Forum in Brussels, where the local human rights defenders were able to extend their NGO network in Europe and represent the issues their communities face on the European political arena.

Through working hand in hand in GHRD's headquarters, the everyday communication between local human rights defenders and GHRD staff has significantly improved, allowing for the enhancement of our work. Through our daily interaction, GHRD has been able to build stronger ties with our local partners and develop future programmes for sustainability.

One of the human rights defenders who joined the programme shared his feedback about his experience with GHRD:

“To me, the capacity building programme is an enlightening one. It has not only given me the opportunity to have the experience of multicultural working environment, but it has also forced to me to see my work from a different perspective. It was a necessary tool to evaluate my work I do more critically. The capacity-building programme also provided me with the opportunity to lobby and network, practically, with the relevant stakeholders on the international level. I learnt a lot from this programme. The partnership between GHRD and our organization has become stronger because this partnership is now not merely sharing resources, but rather working hand in hand, through exchanging ideas, experiences and each other's' views.”

Raising Awareness

Actively pursuing ones rights requires the knowledge about their existence and and your entitlement to them. Although a straightforward notion in Europe, the knowledge of human rights among the most marginalized communities in South Asia is missing. In its efforts to empower the local citizens to

act against abuse, GHRD annually organizes several awareness-raising events on and around the UN recognized thematic days, such as the International Human Rights Day on December 10th. The main goals of awareness-raising events are to increase civil society participation, empower and strengthen the self-esteem and identities of marginalised groups (particularly women and children) in society, and facilitate informal human rights education that reaches out to remote communities. Different stakeholders are brought together to share ideas and prepare a common strategy to fight discrimination. Such events include, but are not limited to rallies, demonstrations, press conferences, sport activities, etc. In 2014, our local partners from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan celebrated 27 international days across South Asia.

Not only are the International Day events used for building a knowledgeable and vibrant civil society, it is often also utilized as a way to mobilize the community to put pressure on the authorities to take necessary action to stop the abuse. An illustrative example is the celebration of the International Human Rights Day, which was used as an occasion to raise the issue of abductions, forced conversions and marriages by GHRD's partner organization in Sindh area of Pakistan. On the 8th of December (two days before the International Human Rights Day) the 4th hearing in one of such cases was supposed to take place. The day was chosen as an opportunity to address the issue through holding a press conference and a demonstration that was joined by about 100 people.

Our local partner in Nepal observed greater commitment of the watch groups and the community with the goal of reducing violence against women and promoting children's rights as a result of the international day celebrations. GHRD's partner in Bihar, India, noted a significant reduction of dropouts since the 2013's Universal Children's Day programme in the area, a result that can be partially attributed to the increased awareness about the importance of education.

Research-Based Approach: LGBT Research

“The existing traditional conservatism in Bangladesh does not allow any expression of sexual and gender plurality. Under Section 377 of the Bangladesh Penal Code, consensual same-sex practices between adults are criminalised with the maximum punishment of life imprisonment. The government of Bangladesh states that the same sex activity is not aligned with the cultural norms and traditions of the country, and refuses to decriminalize section 377. Even though Section 377 is rarely enforced, sexual and gender minorities remain mainly invisible while facing marginalisation, violence and stigmatization.”

In order to support our lobby and advocacy work on LGBT issues in Bangladesh, GHRD, together with its partner organization, Boys of Bangladesh (BOB) undertook a combined research project. The research aimed to conduct a needs analysis, examining the experience of the LGBT community in relation to the violations and social exclusion they face, the acceptance of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity within close social circles and access to networks and services for the community. The research continued throughout 2014, and has allowed both organisations to develop new ideas on how to advocate for LGBT rights in Bangladesh.

In addition to the LGBT research, GHRD has also cooperated with Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS) in their efforts to highlight the Government’s discussion to formally accept Hijras as a third gender. In November 2014 BSWS organised a Hijra Pride in collaboration with other stakeholders and GHRD’s support, accompanied by various other activities in Dhaka and other divisional cities. The activities included round-table discussions, beauty pageants, Hena festivals and human chains, aiming to create social awareness about the rights of Hijras and inspiring people to celebrate their gender diversity.



सा विरुद्ध दिवस
कार्य



Empowering Women, Investing in Societies

Fight Discrimination – Equal Rights For All

Recognizing the severe patterns of discrimination based on caste, gender and class, particularly against the poor scheduled cast women and children, and the lack of human rights education in the region, GHRD, together with our local partner Village Development Foundation (VDF), has initiated a project directed at providing women and children in the Dhanusha and Mahottari districts in Nepal with education on various topics. The training themes focus on legal literacy, existing patterns of impunity, child marriage, the practice of accusing one of witchcraft and the punishment associated with it, abortion, domestic and gender-based violence. In addition to such education, the project also enables the creation of watchdogs, groups of local citizens who monitor and act against abuse in their community.

Over the last two years, over 34 watchdog groups were set up, and have, in turn, saved over 100 children from the brutality of child marriages. The trainings and watchdogs have been effectively decreasing discrimination and establishing dialogue with local and political stakeholders, bringing issues into the light and addressing them head on.

We for Us

Over half of the women in Lalitpur, Nepal are confined to household chores, child bearing and rearing, leaving these women out of the decision-making processes. The women are illiterate and do not know their rights, suffer from domestic violence and are financially dependent on their husbands. Children face the same difficulties, including the inability to access health services and the lack of sanitary equipment. In response to this challenge, GHRD and its local partner, the Organisation for Socio-Economic Development Nepal (OSED) designed a project that educates affected women on reproductive health, sanitation and women's rights. In 2014, over 200 women are trained over the course of 12 classes, enabling them to actively pursue their rights and live healthier and more fulfilling lives as active members of their society.

In addition to women education and empowerment, the project encourages the establishment of child leadership clubs, which enable growth and development of children through leadership training. As evidenced by the numbers of graduates who go on to pursue university degrees, child clubs increase the chances of children to get into higher education and perform better.



A Tribute to Human Rights Defenders

Our work could not have been possible without the dedication and passion of our assistants, volunteers, and the brave partners that risk their lives on a daily basis to defend and empower their communities. It is their ideas, belief in the value of human rights and enduring commitment to their defence that have made the achievements of 2014 a reality. We would like to thank them for their work, and provide a few words of encouragement through their words:

Barbara Mojzes

“I am halfway through my service period at the moment with plenty of new impressions, observations and skills, for which I just cannot be thankful enough. Besides having developed professionally, I have learned a great deal about myself by learning to adapt to an international team and environment, as well as through improving my language skills and dealing with day-to-day tasks. The ability to adapt to an international team and the new environment is yet another skill I have gained during my time as a volunteer. It took me some time to get used to the Dutch lifestyle as well, but after three months of biking in The Hague, irrespective of rain, cold or even thunderstorms. I have truly come to feel like a local.”

Kamr Hussein

“Due to my educational and personal background, I have always had a strong desire to work in the humanitarian sector. Interning at the GHRD has given me the opportunity to be in a professional environment within the Humanitarian Sector for the first time.

GHRD gives the opportunity for interns to grow both professionally and personally. During my time here, I felt truly valued, and my ideas about the NGO’s development were always taken into consideration. I was never treated as an intern, but rather as a fellow Human Rights Officer. I was able to write reports, project briefs and evaluations. I have learned what it is like to truly be part of real human rights NGO, instead of attending to the tasks that interns in many other organizations tend to do.

It is because of my time at the GHRD that I now look forward to working in the humanitarian sector on a more professional level.”

Karin Sternäng

“Working for GHRD has brought me to understand the possibilities but also the difficulties that lie at the heart of the work of international NGOs; the conflict of struggling to fulfil the aim and purpose of the organisation

while having to focus on fundraising and raising awareness about your organisation. GHRD is a small organisation but manages to achieve both of these tasks, much thanks to a highly committed and experienced team of inspiring people.

I would recommend the internship with GHRD to anyone with a passion for human rights, equality and marginalized groups and who's aiming at getting an insight into the work of a small but highly efficient NGO. I learned so much from working with my team at GHRD and value my experience very much, both on a professional and a personal level."

Sara Fiorentini

"Working at GHRD allowed me to understand how an NGO actually operates and, at the same time, to enjoy the atmosphere of a small team of people intensely committed to human rights and change. This internship, indeed, made me grow both professionally and personally.

I refined my knowledge of techniques and approaches to tackle sensitive human rights problems, as well as I learnt how to use a software broadly used by NGOs to monitor specific human rights violations and handle this information with care and sensitivity is requires.

At the same time, my professional experience has been enriched by the interaction with GHRD's team. I was surrounded with inspiring people; from the Human Right Officer of the Bangladesh desk, to all the other staff members and volunteers at the GHRD."

Kiran Wagle

"I had worked several years in human rights and disability rights sectors previously. Thus, an opportunity to conduct an internship in a human rights organization based in The Hague was almost a dream come true for me. I carried out the job until April 2014.

GHRD is a pioneer in protecting and promoting human rights of minorities (mainly religious and sexual minorities) in different parts of the world. It was not easy to speak for the rights of minorities in traditionally-rooted societies; however, Human Officers at the GHRD had courage to continuously work for the rights of minorities and to make these communities heard at the national and international levels. The organisation is an exceptional opportunity for those who want to learn more about real human rights work.

I was a part of Bangladesh Desk team in GHRD. I worked with the organization at a time when Bangladesh was conducting a national election. Based in The Hague, GHRD could closely work together with its partner organizations in Bangladesh to act for the protection of the minorities in Bangladesh. GHRD's well-planned events and actions could bring several achievements in promoting the rights of minorities in such a tough time. The joint work (between GHRD and its partners) was an inspiring experience in promoting minorities' rights. Together with victims, they were in the field, at national level and at European level to raise voice to protect the rights of minorities in the country. The actions designed by GHRD together with its implementing partners were able to bring a concrete vision towards an inclusive and better world for minorities. It is the need of time that such visions are well promoted and encouraged to achieve the final goal.

I am proud to be part of such team and a collective vision; a vision for developing an inclusive and welcoming community for minorities; a vision for a just society for all; a vision for participatory and equitable society for all. I am thankful for GHRD and its team for the opportunity to learn and share such vision and commitment."

Getting Involved

Global Human Rights Defence depends on the generous support of institutions and individuals to continue our work. GHRD works to report on human rights violations, to expose impunity, demand justice for the victims of human rights abuses and tell their stories. With your help, we fight for equality and justice for all.

All donations received contribute directly to our projects to:

- Investigate and expose human rights abuses;
- Put pressure on the appropriate authorities and the international community to act against abuse;
- Train and empower the affected communities to take the lead in the decisions affecting their lives and improve their livelihoods.

Whatever amount you decide to donate, rest assured your money will be put to good use.

Take a stand against human rights abuses with us. Together, we can bring real change to people's lives.

If you would like to know more about GHRD, how to support us and how to work with us, please visit our website at www.ghrd.org, or contact our office in The Hague at info@ghrd.org.

Committed to the development of human rights

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