

HRS Concept Note: Academia

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Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	2
Definition of Academia	2
Role of Academia in the NHRS	2
OBJECTIVES AND THEORY OF CHANGE FOR ACADEMIA.....	3
ALIGNMENT WITH DIHR'S MANDATE AND STRATEGY	4
DIHR's Mandate	4
DIHR'S International Strategy.....	5
DIHR'S Comparative Advantages	6
ROLE AND CORE HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS	7
DIHR'S CONCEPTS FOR WORKING WITH ACADEMIA.....	9
DIHR work in partnership with academia.....	9
A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO WORKING WITH ACADEMIA.....	10
Prime model and academia.....	11
CURRENT THEMES AND PRESSING ISSUES	12
STRATEGIC PARTNERS.....	12
HRS Toolbox – Academia	13
ANNEXES.....	14
ANNEX A: Theory of Change for DIHR work with Academia	15
ANNEX B: World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action (2010-2014) on human rights education.....	16

INTRODUCTION

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) has been engaged in partnerships with academic institutions and individuals for more than two decades. Some of these partnerships are still on-going – e.g. with the Chaire UNESCO in Benin¹ – and new partnerships have been established, e.g. with the Arab Master programme in Beirut² and the two law faculties of the Dagon University and the East Yangon University in Myanmar.³ DIHR partners include universities and other higher education institutions, as well as research centres both in Denmark and beyond. DIHR international work also relies on the academic networks in which the DIHR research department and its researchers participate to carry out and strengthen its work with academia.

The concept note presents the rationale and framework for how DIHR works with academia in its international programmes, outlining the overall goals, the guiding principles and approaches that characterise DIHR partnership with academia. The concept note furthermore explains the alignment of international academia programmes with DIHR international strategy, and applied underlying concepts. It focuses on international programmes targeting or involving academia in partner countries. This work is carried out by the DIHR’s international department, with the assistance of the DIHR’s research department and the DIHR’s library. The purpose of the concept note is to offer an overall frame that may assist DIHR experts, researchers and project managers in building partnerships and designing programmes and projects with academia.

The concept note is supplemented by a method document outlining a concrete and well-established method use by DIHR in several programmes: the designing and carrying out research projects in partnership.⁴

Definition of Academia

Definitions of academia encompass higher education⁵ and research institutions, the individuals enrolled in or working for these institutions and the activities they engage in. For the purpose of this concept note, DIHR defines therefore academia as:

The environment or community concerned with the pursuit of research, education, and scholarship, including institutions such as universities and research institutions, as well as individuals such as faculty, researchers, and students, engaging in activities such as teaching, training, learning, researching, publishing, collecting, and disseminating knowledge and information.

Role of Academia in the NHRS

One of the overall objectives of the institute’s international work is to support the creation of an effective and sustainable national human rights system (NHRS) in DIHR priority countries, with a particular focus on enhancing state institutions’ capacity as duty bearers and their ability to drive human

¹ See below Box #5.

² Global Campus AR. MA. programme: <https://arma-isp.usj.edu.lb/>.

³ See below Box #6.

⁴ See HRS Toolbox, Method document under Academia, 2018.

⁵ According to the UN, “Higher education is all education taking place at the post-secondary level in universities or other establishments approved by the State authorities, including institutions for the training and certification of professionals such as teachers, social workers, medical and legal personnel”, in: World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action, OHCHR and UNESCO, 2012, HR/PUB/12/3, p. 4.

rights change within this system. We understand a NHRS as a system in which the state effectively respects, protects and fulfils the human rights of everyone and where non-state actors, such as civil society, academia and the business sector respect and promote human rights. The main components of the NHRS can be defined as frameworks, actors and processes. The notion of system underlines that human rights promotion and protection entails continuous processes of interaction and communication between a complex whole of state and non-state actors within a given legal and policy framework.⁶

Academia, is at once a rights-holder and a duty-bearer in the NHRS. Academic institutions and researchers must in principle be granted academic freedom. The state must ensure the autonomy of the academic institutions, which in turn must, together with the state, protect academic independence and freedom of its members. The main rights holders are the individuals engaged in higher education and research activities.

Academia, and even more directly state universities, are also duty bearers in the NHRS. Academia provides education for students, training for professionals, and produces independent knowledge that must be disseminated to a larger audience. All actions and operations carried out within higher education and research must do so in accordance with human rights standards, including the principles underpinning the UN human rights conventions: non-discrimination, accountability of duty-bearers and transparency.⁷

OBJECTIVES AND THEORY OF CHANGE FOR ACADEMIA

Academia is a key actor in any NHRS. Academia creates or contributes to creating a conducive environment for the respect, protection and promotion of human rights.

DIHR wants to strengthen the role of academia in building a strong National Human Rights System (NHRS)⁸. This includes:

- To contribute to the overall provision of research-based knowledge on human rights in order to inform the public debates, the policies and legislation and hereby ensure a better implementation of human rights at domestic level;
- To provide research documenting, analysing, discussing, and evaluating human rights related topics;
- To provide information, advice and criticism to other actors in the NHRS, contributing to a better understanding of the role of each actors on their own and in cooperation with other domestic, regional and international human rights actors;
- To raise awareness and educate students on human rights, contributing to the building of new generations of well-trained human rights professionals.

More specifically, the Institute seeks to contribute to the:

- Development of research and creation of a critical mass of research-based knowledge about human rights at domestic level;

⁶ See the Concept note on National Human Rights Systems (NHRS), HRS Toolbox, 2016.

⁷ See below on human rights based approach.

⁸ See the Concept note on National Human Rights Systems (NHRS), HRS Toolbox, 2016. See also below: Role of academia in the NHRS.

- Participating in the development of research-based human rights training for human rights professionals (judges, lawyers, police officers, civil servants, social workers, teachers, academics, etc.);
- Strengthening the interactions between academia and the other actors of the NHRS, such as the NHRI, the legislative, justice and law enforcement administration, business and civil society.

Partnerships with academia provide access to higher education institutions where human rights professionals are being educated. Mainstreaming human rights in the curriculum of law, political sciences or sociology studies contributes to the sensitising and training of future legal practitioners, civil servants and public managers, which should lead to a better understanding human rights obligations, issues and challenges within the public human rights infrastructure. Moreover, it helps develop and maintain contact with university staff (professors, senior and junior researchers, associate professors and other teachers), who often play a role advising, formally or not, all actors of the NHRS (through consultations, formal hearing, etc.). Partnership with other disciplines, such as humanities, art, media or health, participate in raising human rights awareness in higher education overall and in various sectors of society.

Partnerships with academia gives an opportunity to support research projects that are relevant to future activities in the country and the results of which can be disseminated to other actors of the NHRS. Supporting research also contributes to the improvement of the quality of the teaching.⁹ Finally, partnerships with academia may participate in setting out a new research agenda in a given context.

Finally, working with academia is an entry point in countries where political will concerning human rights, or specific human rights issues, is halting or lacking. In this situation, creating a research and teaching space where discussion about human rights is possible and engaging in human rights discussion in a scientific way, can open opportunity for broader political and public debates on human rights issues. In contexts where human rights contestation is sometime predominant, the academia can help understand and debate this contestation.

The HRS Department's theory of change for academia is illustrated in Annex A.

ALIGNMENT WITH DIHR'S MANDATE AND STRATEGY

DIHR's Mandate

DIHR promotes and protects human rights as recognised through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the nine core UN human rights instruments, the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights. The Institute contributes to the implementation of human rights in Denmark and abroad.¹⁰ It is mandated by law to engage in research, analysis, and provision of advice,¹¹

⁹ The synergy between research and teaching is at the core of the university capacity development component of DIHR Myanmar programme, see: Denmark-Myanmar Country Programme 2016 – 2020, Thematic Programme: Peace, Rule of Law and Human Rights (<http://myanmar.um.dk/en/danida-en/danida-in-burma/human-rights-and-democracy/>).

¹⁰ Act on the Danish Institute for Human Rights – Denmark's National Human Rights Institution, Act No. 553 of 18 June 2012, "DIHR Founding Act", section 2.2 (available on DIHR website: www.humanrights.dk), section 2.

¹¹ DIHR Founding Act, section 2.2.

as well as promote and implement education in human rights.¹² All these activities are part of our NHRI functions as set out in the UN Paris principles.¹³



DIHR as an academic institution

DIHR researchers contribute to DIHR national mandate (NHRI mandate) and international programming and project work. Researchers produce scientific publications (peer-reviewed books and articles in international and domestic journals) as well as publications for a larger audience (books, short comments for newspapers, blog posts, etc.). They teach at universities, supervise research (master and PhD level), produce analyses to inform the work of DIHR and partners, participate in advisory work for public authorities in Denmark and abroad, and engage in public debate on human rights. In addition, DIHR researchers are involved in numerous research and other networks in Denmark, in Europe and globally. Finally, the DIHR hosts its own human rights library. The library offers access to e-resources, reference books and journals on international and European human rights policy and law.

DIHR'S International Strategy

According to Strategic priority 1 of the DIHR international strategy (2017-20), DIHR cooperates with public authorities that play a role in the protection and promotion of human rights in their respective countries. The international strategy states that the interventions and partnership will focus on NHRIs, state institutions with a cross-cutting human rights mandate as well as justice system actors. By providing organisational, interactional and human rights expertise to these state actors, DIHR seeks to support the development of effective and sustainable national human rights systems.¹⁴



While academia is not directly mentioned as a partner in the Institute's international strategy, there are good strategic reasons for this engagement. DIHR international work builds on the combination of four assets: legitimacy, local approach, research capacity and proven track record.¹⁵

Working with academia in partner countries is linked to all four areas, and as such DIHR has an on-going strategic interest in supporting research on human rights as well as education and training of human rights professionals through higher education, reflected in the institute's more than twenty years of working in this field.¹⁶

¹² DIHR Founding Act, section 2.5.

¹³ Principles relating to the status and functioning of national institutions for protection and promotion of human rights, "Paris principles" adopted at an international workshop in Paris October 1991 and endorsed by the Commission on Human Rights in March 1992 (resolution 1992/54) and by the General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/48/134 of 20 December 1993.

¹⁴ DIHR international strategy (2017-2020), p. 8-9 (available on DIHR website: www.humanrights.dk).

¹⁵ Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Human rights as drivers of change. A presentation of our international work*, 2017.

¹⁶ DIHR has had long-standing partnerships for almost two decades with both the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the Chaire UNESCO on Democracy and Human Rights in Benin. In addition, DIHR has been engaged in cooperation with researchers, universities and higher education and research institutions in West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and

Identifying good partners in academia has always been part of DIHR's international work both as a component of programmes on its own (developing research, teaching, and outreach capacities) and as a way of identifying and attracting domestic resources to projects in partner countries. In addition, working with academia has been a point of entry for long-time partnerships with a variety of actors of the NHRS in various contexts, for instance in China, in Niger and more recently in Myanmar. In this respect, partnerships with academia may also have indirect effect for other DIHR project work in a country or a region.



Partnership with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in China

Working together for almost two decades, CASS is DIHR's longest standing partner in China. In the government administrative structure, CASS is part of the State Council, which is the executive body implementing policies adopted by the National People's Congress and the Communist Party Political Bureau. As an organ directly referring to the State Council CASS is part of government, but at the same time it has an independent status as a public institution engaged in academic social science research. CASS is regarded as the most influential research institution in the fields of social sciences in China.

The focus of the CASS-DIHR partnership has since the beginning been criminal justice reform and activities include joint research and editing of publications, production of legislative recommendations, organising international seminars and implementation of training seminars in China for law enforcement personnel at different levels.

Key outcomes of this long-standing cooperation include legislative recommendations for the revision of the Criminal Procedure Law (CPL), which led to improved due process rights for suspects and accused persons in non-political cases and opening up for greater use of non-custodial measures.

DIHR'S Comparative Advantages

The DIHR's comparative advantage when working with academia in international projects and programmes build on four elements:

- **DIHR's core research capacity:** even though it is not a university, DIHR is a research institution where senior and junior researchers, including PhD students, participate in research programmes and projects, publish articles and books at academic publishing houses, teach at all levels at university as well as supervise MA and PhD students. DIHR and its researchers are member of a large range of academic networks and programmes that include universities and research institutions from all around the world.¹⁷ The DIHR library supports this research effort. This is quite a unique situation among NHRIs.
- **Strong synergies between research and the other departments of the Institute:** DIHR research staff is deeply involved in advising Danish authorities, monitoring the human rights situation in

Senegal), in East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda), in Asia (Nepal, China, Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar) and in the MENA region (Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon). In addition, DIHR has also had long-standing partnership with higher education institutions which train police, judges and civil servants, as for instance the Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de la Magistrature (judges and Administration school) in Niger and Burkina Faso or the Police school in Nepal.

¹⁷ For instance: the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI), the European Inter-University Centre (EIUC) and the Global Campus, the Danish Network of Human Rights Research, as well as many specialised human rights research networks.

Denmark as well as working with DIHR international projects at global, regional and domestic level.

- **Capacities in linking human rights research and practice:** through a close cooperation between research and international work, DIHR is able to support academic partners to bridge the gap that exists in many countries between the often very theoretical knowledge that is taught at universities and the practice of human rights work at national as well as supra-national level. In many countries, DIHR's involvement with several public actors of the NHRS creates opportunities to develop and support outreach activities by academia as well as strengthen the quality and extent of the human rights knowledge of both public actors and civil society.
- **Long standing focus on human rights education:** DIHR has long standing experience with developing and implementing human rights education (HRE) in Denmark, in partner countries and through global networks.¹⁸ In line with the focus of the second phase of the World programme for human rights education on HRE in higher education,¹⁹ it is one of the priorities of the Institute's HRE programme to work with higher education institutions and have NHRIs in general engage more in this type of strategic collaboration.²⁰



DIHR Human Rights Education Toolbox

The DIHR Human Rights Education Toolbox to contribute to the creation of a universal culture of human rights by strengthening educational planning and implementation of human rights education to build and reinforce people's knowledge, skills and attitudes. The HRE toolbox provides a structured and systematic approach based on the background knowledge of participants, with clear objectives, and where human rights-based principles are reflected in the content as well as in the methodologies applied. There exists versions of the Toolbox in English and Spanish (2013), Arabic (2014), French (2016) and Russian and Belarussian (2017). DIHR uses the HRE toolbox for courses and for building the capacity of partners, such as in Afghanistan, Albania, China and Nepal. It has been distributed to human rights actors from Ethiopia, Iceland, South Sudan, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ROLE AND CORE HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

The central human right standard linked to the work of academia is academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) protects the right to education and prescribes that "higher education should be made accessible to all on the basis of their capacity".²¹ Even if article 13 does not mention academic freedom, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) deals with academic freedom in General Comment No. 13

¹⁸ See for instance, the NHRI network on human rights education (information available on DIHR website at <https://www.humanrights.dk/projects/nhri-network-human-rights-education>).

¹⁹ World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action, OHCHR and UNESCO, 2012, HR/PUB/12/3. See below on "Core human rights standards and issues".

²⁰ Decara, Cecilia (ed.), *Guide to a strategic approach to human rights education*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2017 (available on DIHR website at <https://www.humanrights.dk/publications/guide-strategic-approach-human-rights-education>).

²¹ ICESCR, Art. 13. 2 (c).

where a subheading is specifically dedicated to “academic freedom and institutional autonomy”.²² The point of departure of GC 13 is that it specifies “the right to education can only be enjoyed if accompanied by the academic freedom of staff and students”.²³ The Committee defines academic freedom as the freedom “to pursue, develop and transmit knowledge and ideas, through research, teaching, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation or writing”.²⁴ Academic freedom is therefore closely linked to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and the prohibition of discrimination. In GC 13, the CESCR also delineated between academic freedom for individuals, versus the academic freedom of institutions manifested through their autonomy.²⁵

The other relevant standard is set by the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel from 1997 (“The 1997 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation”)²⁶. Even though the 1997 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation is not legally binding, member states do have an international political obligation to follow reporting mechanisms and follow-up procedures put in place by such soft law instruments. For example, the 8th session of the joint committee of ILO/UNESCO members met in 2001 to assess, amongst other things, allegations brought by member state teacher’s associations on academic freedom grounds. These allegations ranged from illegal termination of teachers with anti-government views to government refusal to negotiate teachers’ salaries.²⁷

Human rights education (HRE) is central to the human rights action of the United Nations. In 2004, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing) to advance the implementation of HRE programmes in all sectors.²⁸ In 2010, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted the plan of action for the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.²⁹ This second phase of the programme focuses on HRE in higher education and human rights training for civil servants, law enforcement officials and the military. Concerning HRE in higher education, the plan of action recalls the need to apply a human rights based approach to education and highlight five areas where action should be taken: 1. Policies and related implementation measures; 2. Teaching and learning processes and tools; 3. Research; 4. The learning environment; and 5. Education and professional development of higher education teaching personnel.³⁰

The World programme for human rights education highlights the link existing between HRE in higher education and research. It underlines the role of higher education institutions in developing “new knowledge and advance critical reflection in the area of human rights, which in turn inform policies and

²² CESR General comment No. 13, 1999 (E/C.12/1999/10), para. 38-40.

²³ *Ibid*, para. 38.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ *Ibid*, para. 19.

²⁶ See also the User Guide made by ILO and UNESCO in 2008: ILO and UNESCO, *The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) A User Guide*, ILO/UNESCO, 2008 (“ILO/UNESCO 2008 User guide”).

²⁷ Beiter, K. D., *The Protection of the Right to Education by International Law: Including a Systematic Analysis of Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*, Coll. International Studies in Human Rights, Vol. 82. Leiden & Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006.

²⁸ General Assembly resolution 59/113 A.

²⁹ World programme for human rights education, 2010, A/HRC/15/28 and HRC resolution 15/1 of 30 September 2010. See also: World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action, OHCHR and UNESCO, 2012, HR/PUB/12/3 (document use for reference in this concept note).

³⁰ World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action, OHCHR and UNESCO, 2012, HR/PUB/12/3, p. 4-5. See also ANNEX B.

practices in human rights and in human rights education. Through an assessment of existing experiences and comparative studies, research can support the identification and dissemination of good practices as well as the development of innovative methodologies and tools based on those practices; research can also guide lesson-learning and evaluation exercises".³¹ This approach is central to DIHR's work with academia.³²

Finally, working with academia is, to some extent, linked to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which seeks to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. This SDG underlines the need to improve access to education at all levels particularly for women and girls.



West Africa Research project on Women and Divorce

The research project on the situation of women during divorce was anchored for two years with the Institute for Human Rights and Peace (IHRP) at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal. The IHRP had the regional purpose and outreach necessary for this project which gathered researchers from Benin, Burkina, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The objective of the project was to document and analyse the problems encountered by women at the dissolution of marriage and to explore the legal and non-legal solutions that would ensure a better protection of rights in the family context. The purpose of the project was also to build the capacities of the team of researchers in terms of research project design, methodology and the conducting of a well-documented and objective study.

The project included a publication in French and in Danish. National reports were presented in Mali, Niger and Senegal.

DIHR'S CONCEPTS FOR WORKING WITH ACADEMIA

Over the years DIHR has entered into several partnerships with universities, teaching programmes and researchers in many partner countries.³³ No specific approach for working with academia has yet been developed but several DIHR concepts are applied to DIHR work with academia, especially a human rights based approach (HRBA)³⁴ to working with partners as well as the partnership concept that DIHR applies with all its partners, public and private³⁵.

DIHR work in partnership with academia

When working with university partners, the partnership approach means that the partner institutions, more specifically the university management and leadership, are in the driving seat of the cooperation. In practice, interventions are therefore elaborated in close cooperation and discussion with key persons within the partner institution in order to meet their needs and aspirations in term of substance knowledge and capacity building of teachers, researchers and librarians.

³¹ Idem p. 5 and p. 25.

³² See for instance DIHR Myanmar programme, note 9.

³³ See above note 16.

³⁴ See DIHR HRBA Policy, HRS toolbox, DIHR Policies and approaches, 2016.

³⁵ See DIHR Partnership concept, HRS toolbox, DIHR Policies and approaches, 2016.

In the same way, albeit on a different level, research partners in programmes and projects are the primary drivers in designing and carrying out their research project, while DIHR's intervention is focusing on sparring and supervision at all stages of the project as well as final editing and publication at the end of the project.

The partnership approach requires the involvement of both DIHR internal project managers and researchers in order to secure that institutional capacity building as well as substantial and methodological human rights issues are equally part of the on-going discussion. In this respect, DIHR must establish relevant contacts to both administrative and academic resources in the partner institutions in order to secure both the commitment of the teaching and research staff and the support from the administration.



The Chaire UNESCO in Benin

The Chaire UNESCO on human rights and democracy (Chaire UNESCO des droits de la personne humaine et de la démocratie) is a partner of DIHR since 2000. The Chaire is placed at the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin. The main areas of the partnership between the Chaire UNESCO and DIHR have been:

- Organization of an annual regional human rights course for human rights actors
- Scientific cooperation with DIHR's research department through guest researcher programme organised by DIHR in cooperation with the Danish Fellowship Centre, a regional research project on family law and human rights, organisation of seminars and a conference, and publications of research reports and books;
- Human rights documentation centre (financial support and selection of publications)

The DIHR partnership approach is closely linked to the human rights based approach.

A Human Rights Based Approach to working with Academia

In its projects and programmes, DIHR promotes the HRBA as a practical means by which to facilitate the application of human rights in planning, consultation, decision-making and delivery of services. DIHR applies five HRBA principles at all phases of the project cycle:

1. Application of international human rights standards;
2. Empowerment to demand and to supply human rights effectively;
3. Participation of relevant actors in their own development;
4. Non-discrimination;
5. Accountability of duty-bearers.³⁶

As far as human rights education is concerned, a HRBA to education includes “both ‘human rights through education’, ensuring that all the components and processes of education—including curricula,

³⁶ See DIHR HRBA Policy, HRS toolbox, DIHR Policies and approaches, 2016.

materials, methods and training—are conducive to the learning of human rights, and ‘human rights in education’, ensuring that the human rights of all members of the education community are respected”.³⁷

As far as *research* partnership and cooperation are concerned, a HRBA should be applied in connection with the design, structures and execution of research projects (and programmes). This implies a. o.:

- The research project should be relevant to understanding and improving the human rights situation in a given context, based on the implementation of the relevant human rights standards. It should also look into how to develop the capacities of rights holders and duty bearers (raising-awareness, improving avenues for claims and redress, mainstreaming general or specific human rights issues in day to day work, etc.)
- The design, structures and execution of the research project should be carried out with inclusive and participatory methods and based on transparent guidelines concerning appointment of researchers, establishment of steering structures, attribution of grants, dissemination of results, etc. For instance, the research project should include the participation of relevant stake-holders at all phases of its realisation in order to secure ownership (among researchers, within the community concerned, etc.) and the on-going relevance of the project;
- Mechanisms for accountability of the academic structures and the researchers should be included in the design of the research project.

PRIME model and academia

The PRIME model can guide decision and development processes by clarifying who does what and how at a specific point in time. In principle, all decision and development processes follow the same five elements: P - policy making; R - making rules and regulations; I - implementing; M – monitoring; and E - evaluation. DIHR uses the PRIME model among other things to analyse the capacity of the institutions and processes that are supposed to promote and protect human rights. The PRIME model can create a holistic understanding of the problem at hand – across the five elements, and – importantly – the interaction between them.

Academia plays a role in documenting and analysing the human rights situation in a country. Research can serve as a baseline for future monitoring and evaluation of a human rights intervention. Through research projects, dissemination and outreach, academia interact with several actors of the NHRS at various level of the PRIME model. For instance, research can inform policy and law reform as well as a more effective implementation of human rights by the state. Finally, in developing contexts, academia can play a vital role in producing relevant and well-documented knowledge that is a paramount for the application of the PRIME model.

³⁷ World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action, OHCHR and UNESCO, 2012, HR/PUB/12/3, p. 4. See also ANNEX B.

CURRENT THEMES AND PRESSING ISSUES

The situation of academia varies very much depending on academic and political tradition in the country, cultural views on universities as well as the place given to academia in the construction of the state and of the national identity. If in most contexts academia is a prestigious institution, in a few other contexts, it is seen as a dead-end in terms of employability, career, or economical future. It is important to understand and relate to these different contexts and what they imply in terms of partnership with institutions and individuals.

Universities and other academic partners in developing context face challenges of independence and of resources. In some contexts, universities are seen by the government as a political actor where political opposition is regrouping and gathering support among students. Students' activism and demonstration can be seen as a threat to the government. For this reason, universities may be oppressed, underfinanced, neglected or just ignored by the political power in place. In other context, the situation may be quite the opposite: universities may be one of the driving forces to implement the government's ideologies and are part of the state political apparatus with no place for independent research.

Moreover, universities and other higher education institutions focus on education and training of students. In the partner countries where the DIHR works, research is often not a priority for the academic institutions, their staff or the government. Ensuring that courses are taught and exams are being carried out is, in these contexts, a major challenge in itself and all the resources are mobilised for this very purpose.

As far as DIHR work with academia is concerned, it can be sometime difficult for the Institute to maintain long term partnerships with faculty staff that may be offered prestigious positions in academia, government or in the private sector. Identifying the right academic and administrative partner is therefore crucial for DIHR.

Strategic partners

Strategic partners of DIHR are regional human rights programmes and networks, university research centres with a regional outreach as well as Danish universities. DIHR international work also relies on the academic networks in which DIHR research department and researchers participate. In 2018, DIHR is involved in two kinds of partnerships with academia: regional programmes (Chaire UNESCO and AR. MA) and domestic capacity development programmes (Myanmar). In addition, several international projects also include high level education institutions, such as schools of administration, magistrates or police, as well as academics.



The Myanmar programme

As part of a large Myanmar programme contract signed with the Embassy of Denmark in Yangon, DIHR is involved in a four-year capacity building programme involving the law faculties of Dagon University and East Yangon University in Myanmar. DIHR, and a team of international academics, will support the law faculty staff at the two universities in identifying topical issues, designing research questions and projects, making use of relevant methodologies and methods, carrying out research, writing and disseminating academic publications. The idea is to provide Myanmar law faculty staff with the required tools that will enable them to develop their own research that is relevant for their context. The law faculty staff will also be trained in innovative and participatory teaching methods, which will help them move away from the rote learning they have been used to. As part of DIHR's work with academia, the programme is also supporting the creation of Human Rights Resource Centres at both universities. These Centres are located in the central libraries in order to provide students from the entire university with quality resources on human rights and human rights related issues. Lastly, and in line with the work of academia as an actor of NHRS, the programme is building Legal Information Centres where students will provide the communities around the universities with information regarding their legal disputes.

- Scholarship for students of the Master on human rights and democracy (financial support, expertise on teaching and research)
- Transfer of human rights based approach (HRBA) expertise to the Chaire through the organization of HRBA courses conducted by the Chaire with the assistance of DIHR.

In 2018 the partnership is evolving towards developing a partnership with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), supporting the Chaire's Alumni association, and supporting the establishment of paid training courses and for proposal writing.

The regional academic programmes that DIHR is engaged in aim at training and educating professionals and try to link up with UN agencies and relevant regional organisations (through providing teachers, internships, visits). This dimension of the work of academia needs to be developed. In 2018, the Chaire UNESCO in Benin is signing a memorandum of understanding with the African Commission on Human Rights in order to strengthen the cooperation between the two institutions. In this respect, DIHR is currently interested in supporting alumni networks and website in partner countries and at regional level.

HRS Toolbox – Academia

Under the 'academia' heading, the HRS toolbox only include one methods document which describes how DIHR has been working with academia in different contexts with designing and carrying out research projects.

In addition, DIHR has supported the establishment of documentation centres at universities in order to ensure a better access to documentation and literature. This type of intervention has been linked to developing human rights teaching programmes and research cooperation in countries where access to human rights documentation and literature was non-existent or extremely limited. Building and developing the capacity of documentation centres include: training the librarians, identifying and purchasing relevant human rights documentation and literature, identifying and purchasing access to relevant e-sources and data bases, building the capacity of documentation centres and libraries in terms of internet access, computers, furniture, etc.³⁸

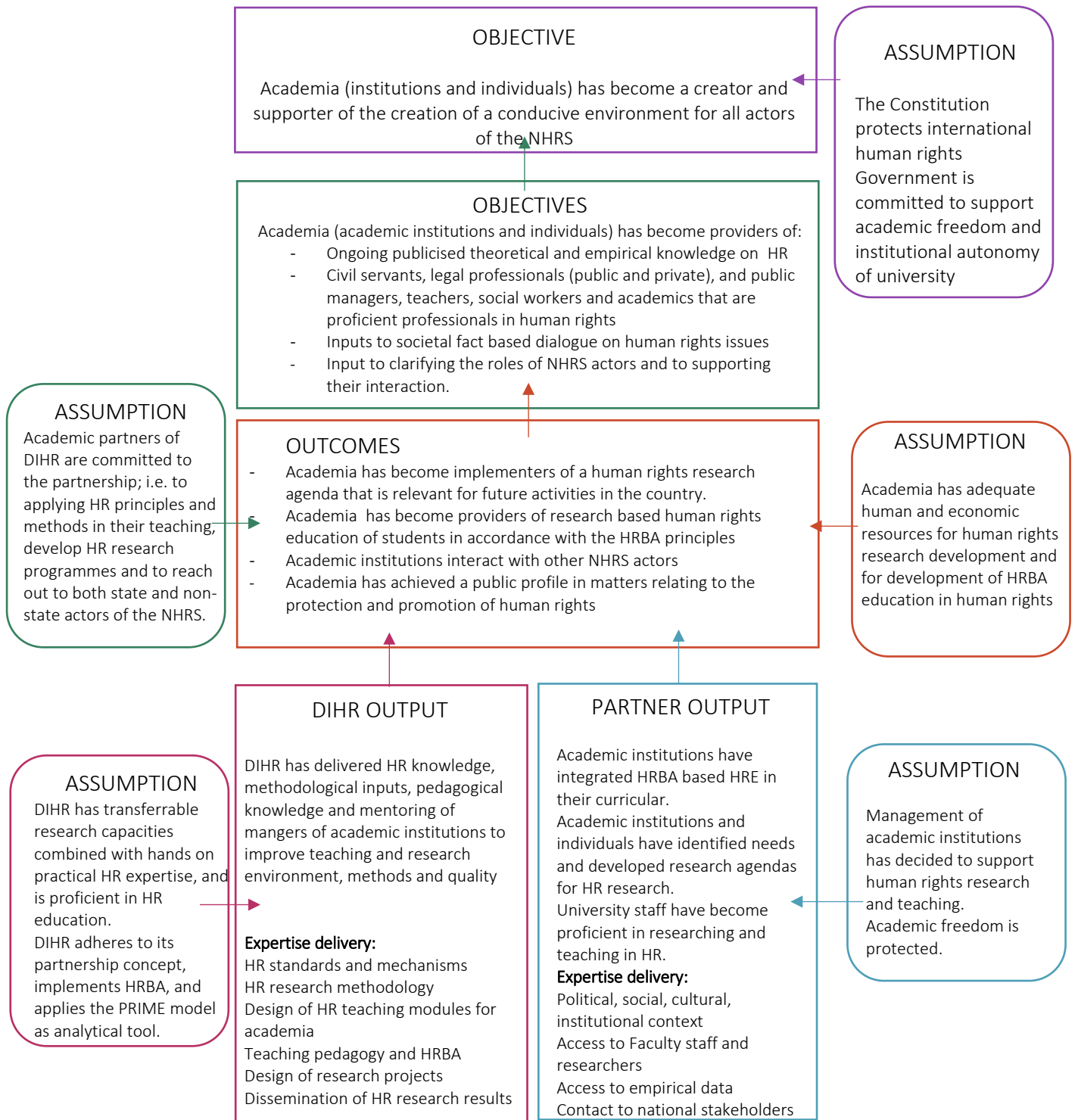
³⁸ DIHR Partnership with the Law Faculty (FSEJ) in Niamey, Niger, with the Chaire UNESCO in Benin both included the capacity building and development of their documentation centre.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Theory of Change for Academia

Annex B: The World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action (2010-2014) on human rights education in higher education.

ANNEX A: Theory of Change for DIHR work with Academia



ANNEX B: World programme for human rights education. Second Phase. Plan of Action (2010-2014) on human rights education in higher education

(Source: OHCHR and UNESCO, 2012, HR/PUB/12/3, p. 4-5. See also more detailed strategies at p. 17-29)

Human rights education in higher education

Higher education is all education taking place at the post-secondary level in universities or other establishments approved by the State authorities, including institutions for the training and certification of professionals such as teachers, social workers, medical and legal personnel.

In this context, human rights education promotes a holistic, rights-based approach to education that includes both “human rights through education,” ensuring that all the components and processes of education—including curricula, materials, methods and training—are conducive to the learning of human rights, and “human rights in education,” ensuring that the human rights of all members of the education community are respected.

The effective integration of this approach in higher education requires action in at least the following five areas:

1. Policies and related implementation measures. Higher educational policies—legislation, plans of action, curricula, training policies and so on—should explicitly promote human rights education and infuse human rights throughout the higher education system. Policies are to be developed in a participatory manner in cooperation with all stakeholders and fulfil a country’s international obligations to provide and promote the right to quality education. To be effective, policies need a consistent implementation strategy, including the allocation of adequate resources and the setting-up of coordination mechanisms to ensure coherence, monitoring and accountability.

2. Teaching and learning processes and tools. Introducing or improving human rights education requires a holistic approach to teaching and learning that reflects human rights values. Human rights are infused as a cross-cutting issue into all disciplines, and specific human rights courses and programmes—in particular, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary human rights programmes—are introduced. Practices and methodologies are democratic and participatory. Materials and textbooks promote human rights values. Relevant support and resources are in place.

3. Research. Higher education institutions develop new knowledge and advance critical reflection in the area of human rights, which in turn inform policies and practices in human rights and in human rights education. Through an assessment of existing experiences and comparative studies, research can support the identification and dissemination of good practices as well as the development of innovative

methodologies and tools based on those practices; research can also guide lesson-learning and evaluation exercises. Research can be furthered through exchanges, scholarships and fellowships.

4. The learning environment. Academic freedom informs the environment of higher education institutions, where human rights education promotes the daily practice of human rights by fostering mutual understanding, respect and responsibility. Explicit and shared policy statements protect the human rights of all actors. Teaching personnel have a mandate to pursue human rights education, and students can express their views freely, participate in academic life and have extensive opportunities for interacting with the wider community.

5. Education and professional development of higher education teaching personnel. For higher education institutions to serve as a model of human rights learning and practice, all teaching personnel and other staff need to be able to both transmit and model human rights values. Education and professional development must foster educators' knowledge about, commitment to and motivation for human rights. Furthermore, as rights-holders themselves, teaching personnel need to work and learn in a context of respect for their dignity and rights.