

**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Human Dimension Conference, Warsaw, Poland, 30 September – 8 October 2010
NGO Youth for Human Rights International
Presentation by Mary Shuttleworth (Ed.D.)**

Human Dimension Committee Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to address the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Discrimination was the law when I was born and raised in apartheid South Africa. As a young child I saw firsthand the devastating effects of discrimination and lack of the most basic human rights. As a teenager I had the privilege to travel through many European countries. During those travels I witnessed discrimination and realized that discrimination was not limited to apartheid or my country. Discrimination is a global issue.

Working toward a pluralist democracy with more than one center of power, there is no place for discrimination. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) sets out basic human rights as a sound foundation. In 1948 the United Nations called upon all member countries “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.”

Youth for Human Rights International (YHRI) was started because surveys showed that people in countries around the world including Europe, did not know about the UDHR or what their human rights are. The purpose of YHRI to teach youth about human rights, specifically the UDHR.

Since 2001 our NGO has researched and developed human rights education materials. We have grown and expanded because of the support of like-minded individuals, groups and organizations. Because of this support we have been able to see how easy it is to teach those 30 human rights. We have learned that most people, once they know that they have human rights want to know what those human rights are and realize that with human rights comes responsibility as set out in article #29 of the UDHR.

As an NGO we have faced difficulties mainly due to opposition from those with vested interests who thrive in a cesspool of discrimination and ignorance. As stated by the UN in 1948, government support is needed to realize the goals of human rights education.

I urge the OSCE countries to mandate human rights education. The mandate would give the legal structure to muzzle instigators of discrimination and facilitate obtaining resources for human rights education.

As this is the first part of the human dimension review conference I urge you to expedite the implementation of human rights education by mandating human rights education in all educational institutions throughout Europe thus raising the bar on human rights and ultimately facilitating peace and stability.

Thank you!