



Human Rights Office

International Institute Maria Ausiliatrice - IIMA

NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2019

Introduction

In 2019, IIMA carried out various activities in accordance with the following Pillars of Action: Advocacy, Training and Capacity Building, and Communication.

Pillars of Action

1 – **Advocacy**: we provide UN experts and Member States representatives with relevant and reliable information on how human rights are being implemented at the local level, including denunciation of violations. IIMA Human Rights Office carries out this action in close collaboration with local members. Moreover, we provide local human rights defenders, including educators and youth, with the possibility to participate in relevant UN meetings and to advocate for their own rights.

2 – **Training and Capacity Building**: we organize training courses, in Geneva and at the local level, to make Human Rights Defenders aware of the UN international mechanisms and procedures intended to protect human rights.

3 – **Communication**: we disseminate information in order to raise awareness of human rights at the national level.

Within the above-mentioned pillars of action, we work in synergy with other NGOs and Institutions in order to bring major issues to the attention of the international community and to identify top priorities for the human rights agenda.

The pillars of action are further defined below, and include their relationship to the strategic objectives of the organization.

2019 Activities

Pillar of Action	2019 Activities
	<p>➤ Objective 1: IIMA enables local actors, including children and young people, to express their views on the implementation of their human rights and share best practices throughout the world in order to support Governments in complying with their international human rights obligations.</p>
Advocacy	Universal Periodic Review (UPR) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produced reports for human rights defenders in the field



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on the UPR sessions of Chile, Vietnam, Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Italy, El Salvador, Bolivia, Angola, Madagascar and Slovenia.

- Issued **joint submissions** at the UPR of Italy, El Salvador, Angola, Madagascar, Spain, Lesotho, Kenya, United States of America and Honduras.
- Carried out lobbying, by producing and disseminating **Advocacy position papers** prior to the UPR session of Italy, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.
- Participated in advocacy and follow up **meetings with President of the Italian Inter-Ministerial Human Rights Committee**, in the framework of the UPR of Italy.
- Delivered **oral statements** during the 37th, 38th and 39th sessions of the Human Rights Council Item 6, pertaining to the UPR of Mexico, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, respectively.
- Co-sponsored **two oral statements** during the Human Rights Council Item 6 General Debate, pertaining to the UPR.
- Prepared **UPR questionnaires and consultations** with human rights defenders in Austria, Lebanon, Myanmar and Rwanda in order to submit UPR submissions for these countries in 2020.

HRC and Treaty Bodies Participation

- Participated in the **Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies sessions** for the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Committee Against Torture (CAT), the Committee on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

Human Rights Council (HRC)

- Produced and/or co-sponsored **twelve additional oral statements** at the 40th, 41st and 42nd HRC sessions on various themes, including migration, climate change, the rights of women, the right to development, the rights of indigenous people, the rights of youth, and violence



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against children.

- Promoted a **HRC resolution on Youth and Human Rights**, by assisting Member States in drafting and negotiating the text of HRC resolution 41/13 adopted in June 2019 at the 41st session of the HRC.
- Organized a **side event** titled “**Promoting a Safe and Empowering Environment for all Children and Youth – best practices for child and youth protection and participation through human rights education**” during the 42nd session of the HRC (September 2019), in collaboration with VIDES International and the Permanent Mission of Italy. Co-sponsored by sixteen States, the event was supported by Misesan Cara - Mission Support from Ireland. The panel featured H.E. Evan García, Ambassador of the Philippines to the UN in Geneva; Mary Josephine Isabella Antony Raj, Representative of IIMA India and Coordinator of the National Development Forum in India; Guillermo Gutierrez Mercado, Coordinator and human rights educator in an IIMA school in Uruguay; Valerie Philpott, Representative of Misesan Cara; and Professor Philip Jaffé, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. A video message from S. Abinaya and Kotteswaran Dhanasekran, two Indian children/youth participating in the children’s parliaments, was shared during the event. Elena Ippoliti, Human Rights Education and Training, OHCHR, was the moderator. ¹
- Co-sponsored a **side event** titled “**Climate Change: It is Happening Here, it is Happening Now. Fighting climate change through international solidarity**”, held during the 41st session of the HRC (June 2019). Ms. Norayma Angel, IIMA representative and currently the Coordinator of the Office of Human Rights of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Ayacucho in Amazonas, Venezuela, shared about her contribution to a social environmental diagnosis. Published in 2017 as part of the work implemented by the Network of Indigenous Defenders of Human and Environmental Rights, the study refers to the challenges and obstacles faced by indigenous people in accessing natural resources.²

Other Advocacy activities

¹ For more detailed information, please refer to: <http://www.iimageneva.org/promoting-a-safe-and-empowering-environment-for-all-children-and-youth/>

² For more detailed information, please refer to: <http://www.iimageneva.org/side-event-climate-change-it-is-happening-here-it-is-happening-now/>



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- Organized meetings with Permanent Missions and UN experts in preparation for the side events and other interventions in the framework of the Human Rights Council.
- Participated in the **Social Forum 2019** (October 2019), particularly the panel on “Human Rights Education for youth and by youth: experiences from different regions and the way forward,” through the **intervention of Guillermo Gutierrez Mercado, a representative of IIMA and VIDES Uruguay**. He presented a human rights program carried out with youth deprived of liberty as well as the voluntary program “Aprendizaje-Servicio”, carried out with his students in Montevideo, highlighting how human rights education is an essential tool for reducing social fragmentation and exclusion.³

Research-based reports

- **Contribution to the publication “Education as a Driver to Integral Growth and Peace – Ethical Reflection on the Right to Education”**, with six case studies based on best practices carried out by IIMA members in Colombia, Cambodia, Spain, Philippines, India and South Africa. The publication was presented by the Permanent Mission of the Holy See and the *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation during a side event held in November 2019, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁴
- **Disseminated relevant data stemming from the compilation of activities carried out by IIMA member around the world in addressing migrants and refugees.** The compilation was translated in French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese.

- **Objective 2:** IIMA reinforces the use of the defense mechanisms for the rights of children and youth among both IIMA educators and society at large.

Training and Capacity

- **Provided training sessions in Geneva for 10 youth**

³ For more detailed information, please refer to: <http://www.iimageneva.org/the-promotion-and-protection-of-the-rights-of-children-and-youth-through-education/>

⁴ For more detailed information, please refer to: <http://www.iimageneva.org/iimas-contribution-to-the-publication-education-as-a-driver-to-integral-growth-and-peace-ethical-reflection-on-the-right-to-education/>



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Building

activists who worked in the IIMA Human Rights Office.

- **Provided training sessions in Geneva for 6 human rights defenders, especially education coordinators and young activists**, who operate at the local level to raise awareness on Human Rights and the UN mechanisms for the protection of these rights.
- **Contributed to a Workshop in Hong Kong for 30 participants from Asia**, focusing on “UN Human Rights mechanisms”.
- **Contributed to Workshops for 2’442 participants, including 2’092 children and youth, in the Philippines**, focusing on “Active Citizenship and Human Rights”
- **Provided a training for 24 IIMA local members in Myanmar**, focusing on Human Rights Education.

- **Objective 3:** IIMA shares advocacy tools as well as other human rights-based materials with local human rights defenders and international organizations.

Communication & Fundraising

- **Participated in various NGO working groups and platforms such as the Right to Education, the Right to Development and Solidarity, the Catholic NGO Forum, the International Catholic Center of Geneva, and the Global Partners Forum – Faith Action for Children on the Move.**
- **Update and development of IIMA website in English and Italian.**
- **Disseminated information** through the IIMA website (www.iimageneva.org) in order to raise awareness of human rights at the national and international levels. Twelve (12) web articles were produced in English and Italian in 2019. Information on IIMA’s activities was also posted on Facebook and Twitter.
- Produced the **booklet on “Promoting a Safe and Empowering Environment for All Children and Youth – Best Practices for Child and Youth Protection and Participation through human Rights Education.”**⁵

⁵ For more detailed information, please refer to: <http://www.iimageneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Rapport-IIMA-final.pdf>



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- **Submitted a funding application** for a project on Child and Youth participation through human rights education.
- **Annual and Project narrative and financial reporting.**