TORTURE CAN NEVER BE ACCEPTED!

PREVENTION OF URBAN VIOLENCE
A WORLD WITHOUT TORTURE

For more than 30 years DIGNITY has been working for a world without torture and other forms of organised violence. DIGNITY is a Danish human rights institute which works with rehabilitation, research and international development under one roof. Our work is global and organised in partnerships with likeminded institutions and organisations in more than 20 countries. Together we help torture survivors and their families to a better life, and we aim at preventing and eliminating the use of torture and organised violence.

Our focus areas

Rehabilitation
Our clinic in Denmark was one of the first places in the world to offer torture survivors rehabilitation. Through interdisciplinary and specialized rehabilitation we help the victim to regain a social life and strengthen his/her own quality of life as well as that of his/her family.

Prevention of torture where people are deprived of their liberty
Where people are deprived of their liberty, we seek to promote human rights and a dignified life. We monitor and document violations of human rights, and we work together with relevant organisations to reform penal systems to prevent violence, ill-treatment, torture and impunity.

Prevention of urban violence
Torture and organised violence are integral to everyday life in poor urban areas with immense social and health related consequences for ordinary people. We develop knowledge, capacities and local alliances to combat torture and organised violence, to increase human security and to create conditions were people can live without fear and threats.

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INTERSECTORAL PREVENTION OF TORTURE

Experience shows that sustainable solutions to human rights and human security call for intersectoral approaches. DIGNITY therefore builds ties between civil society and local, regional and national stakeholders from different sectors, such as the health, police, justice and the education sector. DIGNITY facilitates the ties in cooperation with local human rights NGOs. DIGNITY networks in order to create knowledge about documentation, advocacy and policy development, in order for stakeholders to play an active role in implementing human rights locally so as to improve human security.

BUILDING AN INTERSECTORAL PLATFORM

DIGNITY is supporting a research and policy centre (Center for the Prevention of Violence, CIPREVI) with the purpose of increasing access to operational knowledge about how to prevent torture and organised violence in the region. With offices in Honduras and Guatemala, CIPREVI is accessible to human rights defenders from the entire region. Invited are not only NGOs but also professionals from state institutions in the justice sector, the health sector and the development sector. Currently the centre works to expand its e-learning platform. This way the centre creates capacity building for local NGOs and professionals and supports the sharing of experiences, and it encourages research projects about suppression and violence, in order for the broader population to gain awareness of their rights. Best practices from the entire region are documented and shared with affiliated NGOs, so that they can design local solutions based on best practices and guidelines from other practitioners.

BUILDING A PEACE CULTURE IN HONDURAS

DIGNITY in collaboration with our partner organisation, ‘Center for Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and their Families’ (CPTRT), is organising an intersectoral project in the Nueva Suyapa and Villa Nueva shanty towns in Honduras. The focus is to strengthen the local communities and community based organisations to prevent violence. CPTRT works to organise the local community to build a peace culture, by improving community based organisations’ ability to participate in the creation of local interventions through advocacy. The project moreover aims to share knowledge with other national stakeholders about how such advocacy work can lead to political action and reforms aimed at preventing violence. Furthermore the project includes a research component than is to create knowledge about the extent of violence and the types of social problems it creates in Honduras. The aim is to create useful methods for the prevention of violence and the building of a peace culture in urban communities.
COMMUNITY-LED PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

DIGNITY accompanies human rights groups in their work in urban communities and seeks to learn lessons from those. In particular we support NGOs that engages in community-led prevention of torture and organised violence. Here NGOs play an important role in accompanying communities in building sustainable and violence free environments, engaging in work that increases communities’ self-protection and resilience in worlds characterized by high levels of violence and torture. Therefore our partners work with documentation and advocacy together with community organisers, they facilitate the development of new forms of solidarity, so that communities and their organisations can become better advocates for their own rights and those of survivors of torture and organised violence. DIGNITY aims to build ties between these actors and scientific communities so that these experiences are documented and taken into consideration in policy work and the global human rights work.

LOCAL PROJECT WITH PARTNER ORGANISATION IN MANILA

In the Philippines, poor young people from the slum areas or areas of armed conflict are frequently targets of torture, police violence and random arrests without trial. Since 2004 DIGNITY has worked with the Philippine organisation BALAY, consisting of dedicated and experienced human rights activists, who is advocating for the rights of torture survivors towards Filipino politicians. Since 1985 BALAY has helped young people from Manila’s slum escape the circle of drugs and violence, and instead be empowered to be ambassadors of change. Parly due to the work of BALAY torture has since 2009 been forbidden by law in the Philippines.

DOCUMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The poor are the most vulnerable when it comes to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. They have the least access to redress, rehabilitation and compensation. The structural inequalities keep them in a life of misery and fear. Documenting the torture and abuse which takes place plays a key role in improving safety and overcoming impunity so as to create sustainable political change. However, documenting torture and other forms of human rights abuses in overcrowded urban spaces is a tremendous challenge.

DOCUMENTATION OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

In collaborations with NGOs and researchers in Kenya, Bangladesh and Nepal, DIGNITY has taken upon itself to improve the documentation work. The immediate goal is to enable NGOs to document abuses under conditions with little access to legal or medical expertise. In the long run the goal is to improve the capacity of our partners to report on human rights abuses and thereby access multilateral organisations with relevant documentation and information.
FACTS ABOUT DIGNITY

→ Established in 1982.
→ 1982-2012 as Rehabilitation & Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT).
→ A self-governing institution independent of party politics.
→ Partner organisations in more than 20 countries.
→ Member of the World Health Organization WHO’s Violence Prevention Alliance.
→ Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
→ Houses the world’s largest specialist library with references to more than 30,000 documents about torture and other forms of organised violence (visit our homepage).
→ The clinic in Denmark is recognised as a specialized national centre in the treatment of severely traumatised refugees.
→ DIGNITY is represented in the UN Committee against Torture, in the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture, as well as the UN Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Torture (SPT) and in the Danish Council for Human Rights.
→ Supported by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as through grants and private donations.

Recommended DIGNITY publications:

→ Warriors or Peace Soldiers by Kold C. (2013).

info@dignityinstitute.dk
www.dignityinstitute.dk