

Human Rights Defender Releases 2011 Annual Report_RA Ministry of Education and Science

Defender's assessment of the RA Ministry of Education and Science activities in 2011

Shortcomings and problems identified

- The Ministry failed to take measures in time to establish clear legal basis for organization of competition of textbooks for comprehensive schools.
- In the result of not submitting published textbooks to necessary examination, in some cases there were editorial, spelling and printing errors in them and as a result pupils' right to proper education was violated.
- Though, each year the RA State Budget foresees financial means for assurance of heating system in educational institutions, however the problem of heating provision during winter months in many schools remain unsolved, as a result of which absence of children, who are concerned about their health and do not attend classes, is considered as unexcused. In particular, the schools (mainly in villages), where number of pupils is few (schools are funded based on the number of pupils), are not provided with necessary laboratory equipments and materials. Schools in villages were not provided with food delivery services.
- Though, the Ministry has constantly taken measures for elimination of corruption in educational institutions, however, they were not sufficient for prevention and elimination of cases of money collection in schools and corruption in the sphere of education.
- The Ministry of Education and Science provided about 365 million AMD to same 7 NGOs. The 38% of the whole amount was given to "Support to Classical Music" NGO, activities of which are mainly related to cultural issues. According to the Ministry, these organizations carried out educational work envisaged by the application.
- As a result of lack of control carried out by the Ministry, in some cases relatives and friends of school directors, who not only did not teach, but also did not attend schools were included in school staff lists, in the result of which extra money has been spent from the state budget. Despite of all these, in the applications addressed to the RA State Inspectorate of Education, only 12 cases of money collecting and 11 cases of corruption have been reported during 2011; any confirming results in the course of examination of these cases were not registered.
- According to our sources Appliance Formulation has been terminated in Universities, though it has not been terminated by any legal act, and according to the Ministry it is operating and is regulated by appropriate legal acts.

- The Ministry should present to the Staff of the RA President and National Security Council Staff for opinion (according to the RA President corresponding order) Government draft decisions on granting a delay from compulsory military service recruitment up to the end of education as draft legal acts concerning security issues. The mentioned Government draft decisions were not coordinated with National Security Council Staff and in some cases were not presented to the Staff of the RA President.
- In the result of the slow process of providing general inclusive education, the right of equal access to education of children with mental problems continued being violated.
- The Ministry failed to take appropriate measures especially in regions to raise awareness about its hotline (the Ministry's "Hotline" received 138 calls, 114 of which relating to Yerevan, and 24- relating to regional schools; total number of applications, complaints and recommendations received from citizens is 4632):

Positive Developments

- List of inclusive education schools has increased by 15, thus becoming 81 in total in the Republic.
- Implementation of the pilot program for organization of general inclusive education has been launched in Tavush region- according to the RA Government decision -with an aim of improving education of children with special educational needs.
- The Ministry carried out several programs addressing improvement of the quality of education; trainings for teachers and school directors, renovation of buildings, re-equipments, etc.
- "Chess" course was included in the 2nd grade schools' curriculum beginning from 2011-2012 academic year.
- "Healthy Lifestyle" course for 10-11 grades has been developed and approved.
- "Trafficking" theme has been included in the "Social Sciences" subject for senior classes in comprehensive schools.

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The list of the identified positive developments, gaps and shortcomings is not exhaustive.

The introduced Chapter (12) of the HRD Annual Report 2011 is available in full at http://pashtpan.am/pages/downloadPdf/file_id/539.

Summary of the HRD Annual Report 2011 Chapter 1 concerning the activities of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs will be published next.

The HRD Annual Report 2011 was developed based on the complaints received by the Staff of the Human Rights Defender, legislation analysis, trustworthy and non-disclaimed publications in press, reports of the international and local organizations as well as information received during the interviews with field specialists and human rights defenders.

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