

Education International Background paper

Prepared by Sneh Aurora, consultant on human rights education



HUMAN RIGHTS AND VALUES IN EDUCATION



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A. INTRODUCTION

Human rights education lies at the heart of all efforts to develop a culture of human rights and a society that embraces dignity, inclusion, and equality. Human rights education contributes to social cohesion, democracy, conflict prevention and resolution, and understanding of diversity. It is a means to develop societies where the human rights of all are respected, protected and fulfilled. The provision of human rights education is a legal obligation on States under international human rights law, and one which is essential for the enjoyment of all other rights in a pluralistic democracy.

This paper provides context and background for the *Education International Baltic Symposium on Human Rights and Values in Education* from 7 to 8 June 2016 in Riga, Latvia, and is structured in two parts. The first part explores what we mean by human rights education. It presents the normative basis for human rights education, including laws, standards and policies on education for human rights and democratic citizenship at international and regional levels.

The second part examines the implications and application of human rights education, or a rights based approach to education, in principle and practice, focusing on the following specific areas:

- a) teacher training, professional development and support,
- b) teaching and learning practices and processes,
- c) inclusive curriculums, and
- d) a whole school approach to human rights.

The appendices include a list of key international and regional institutions and organizations that have developed and implemented policies and programmes for human rights education, and the Education International resolution on the promotion and protection of standards and values in the world.

B. UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The full realisation of human rights requires all human beings to be aware of their and other people's rights and of the means to ensure their protection. This is the task of human rights education which builds knowledge, skills and attitudes prompting behavior that upholds human rights.

Navi Pillay, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights¹

Human rights protect the dignity and freedom of every human being. States are required under international law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, and therefore must ensure that education is aimed at strengthening the enjoyment of human rights and the full development of the human personality.² There is a growing agreement amongst members of the international community that human rights education plays a fundamental role in the realization of all human rights. Human rights education is a lifelong learning process aimed at fostering:

- *Knowledge and skills* — learning about human rights standards and mechanisms, as well as acquiring the skills to put them into practice in daily life;
- *Values and attitudes* — developing values and reinforcing attitudes which uphold human rights;
- *Behaviour and action* — encouraging action to defend and promote human rights.³

Human rights education is described as education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights. Human rights education is not just about equipping learners with knowledge

of human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, it is also empowering them to take action to defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law.⁴ Human rights education is therefore all forms of education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim to empower learners to contribute to the building and defense of a universal culture of human rights in society.

At the individual and community level, human rights education facilitates the development of knowledge, personal and social skills; increases appreciation and understanding of differences and diversity; builds mutual respect for human dignity and shared values; encourages dialogue and promotes non-violence in the resolution of problems and disputes, with respect for each other's rights; and combats all forms of discrimination and violence, including bullying and harassment.

At the societal level, human rights education contributes to and fosters the establishment of sustainable and participative forms of democracy based on respect for human rights and good governance. Human rights education is therefore an ongoing investment for societies that value human rights principles such as respect, non-discrimination,

participation, and the rule of law.

The term “human rights education” is often used in a broad sense to also include “education for democratic citizenship”, “peace education”, “global citizenship education”, and “education for mutual respect and understanding”, which are all based on internationally agreed human rights standards. These concepts are seen as closely interconnected and mutually supportive, differing in focus and scope, rather than in goals and practices.

There is consensus that human rights education encompasses three aspects:⁵

- (a) Learning **about human rights**, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection;
- (b) Learning **through human rights**, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners; ensuring that the context and the way learning is organised and imparted is consistent with human rights values (e.g. participation, inclusion, freedom of thought and expression, etc.), recognizing that the process of learning is as important as the content of the learning;
- (c) Learning **for human rights**, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.

Human rights education has to be learned through experience, **through** being exposed to human rights in practice. This means that the **how** and the **where** human rights education is taking place must also reflect human rights values; the context and the methodology must be organized such that dignity, respect and equity are an inherent part of practice.

By its very definition the process of human rights education is context specific, based on needs and realities of the target group. Human rights education is a participative and adaptable approach. While the underlying human rights principles will be the same, the actual practice or process of human rights education will likely vary in different contexts.

The role of teachers, both individually and collectively, in the design, delivery and impact of human rights education cannot be underestimated. Teachers are critical facilitators of learning, and crucial to transmitting and fostering social values, such as democracy, equality, cultural understanding and respect of each persons’ fundamental rights and freedoms.

C. REAFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION⁶

International and regional frameworks and standards say that human rights education is central to the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and encourage the development of sustainable national strategies and programmes in human rights education.

The recently adopted [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) set as a target for States (Goal 4.7): “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

In 1993 the [World Conference on Human Rights](#) in Vienna reaffirmed human rights education, training and public information as essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.⁷ In 1994 the United Nations General Assembly declared the [UN Decade for Human Rights Education](#) (1995-2004)⁸ and urged all UN member states to promote “training dissemination and information aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights”. As a result, governments have put greater effort into promoting human rights education, mainly through state education programmes. This commitment has been demonstrated in a number of plans and programmes developed and implemented by the United Nations.

Building on the achievements of the UN Decade, in 2004 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the [World Programme for Human Right Education](#)⁹ to further the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors and at all levels. The aim was to promote a common understanding of basic principles and methodologies of human rights education, to provide a concrete framework for action, and to strengthen partnerships and cooperation from the international level to the local communities. It is a significant milestone in the framework for human rights education policy and implementation.

In 2012, the UN Secretary-General launched the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) rallying a broad spectrum of world leaders and advocates to deliver on the promise of Education for All. Among the three priority areas of the initiative was the need to foster global citizenship. “Education must be transformative, cultivating respect for the world and each other. It should provide children with the understanding they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century”, said Ban Ki-moon.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

Every individual and every organ of society ... shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms.

Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Since the proclamation of the [*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*](#) in 1948, the international community has come to recognize and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms through a vast body of international human rights law. Among these rights, the right to education provides an entry point to the enjoyment of all human rights. It includes human rights education, the right to learn about those rights, and the ways and means to protect and promote them in our societies.¹⁰

a. Conventions, Covenants and Treaties

The right to a public education that promotes human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for the content of specific treaties can be found in multiple international conventions and treaties, which form part of international law and impose obligations on States to ensure enjoyment of human rights, including the right to education and specifically human rights education.¹¹

For example,

- Under the [*International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*](#) (1966) State parties recognize the “right of everyone to education”, and agree that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.” (Article 13)
- State parties to the [*International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*](#) (1965) “undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups.” (Article 7)
- Under the [*Convention on the Rights of the Child*](#) (1989), State parties “agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; (c) The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.” (Article 29(1))
- States parties to the [*International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*](#) (2006) “recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to... the full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity...” (Article 24). Under this Convention, State parties also undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to raise awareness within society regarding persons with disabilities, to foster respect for the rights and

dignity of persons with disabilities, and to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities. Such measures to include fostering at all levels of the education system, including in all children, an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities. (Article 8)

- Under the [*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*](#) (1979), States “should take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal right with men in the field of education.” (Article 10)

b. Declarations, General Comments and Recommendations

The obligation of States to ensure human rights education as an inherent component of the right to education has been developed and expressed in a number of declarations, comments, opinions, frameworks and standards developed by experts and committees of the United Nations. These so called ‘soft law’ sources give a strong indication that States must ensure enjoyment of human rights education.

General comments of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have given content to the right to education, and have read quality education (a component of one of the four “essential features” of the right to education) to include human rights education.¹² The Committee on the Rights of the Child also has issued general comments that further explains that the right to education includes a right to quality education and in particular human rights education.¹³

It is the responsibility of States to ensure that young people and adults have access to quality education. There

should be equal opportunity and access to all levels of education, and equal participation and opportunities within education. No one should be disadvantaged due to perceived differences, including those based upon gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, cultural or economic background, disability or personal characteristics.¹⁴ The rights of all people must be recognized equally. The non-discrimination principle does not prevent the taking of special measures to reduce or eliminate discrimination.¹⁵ Addressing discrimination may require changes in legislation, administration and resource allocation, as well as educational measures to change attitudes.¹⁶

Every child has a right to an education that should provide the child with life skills, strengthen the child’s capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights, and promote a culture which is infused by appropriate human rights values. The Committee has called on states to ensure inclusive education, which means it must be child-centered, child-friendly and empowering, and that educational processes be based upon the very principles it enunciates. The goal of education is to empower the child by developing his or her competencies, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence.¹⁷

The principles of inclusion and non-discrimination should be applied to curriculum content, educational processes, the pedagogical methods and the environment within which education takes place. An inclusive learning environment includes not only a spirit of shared understanding through dialogue and a respect for difference, but also a physically inclusive environment that ensures access and safe spaces for learning for all.¹⁸

Attention should be placed on issues relating to gender (as well as

issues relating to other marginalized, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups), and, in particular, issues relating to stereotyping and impediments to participation in education for such students and education personnel. For example, gender discrimination can be reinforced by practices such as a curriculum which is inconsistent with the principles of gender equality, by arrangements which limit the benefits girls can obtain from the educational opportunities offered, and by unsafe or unfriendly environments which discourage girls' participation. Such discriminatory practices are in direct contradiction with the requirements that education be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.¹⁹

The [UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training](#) is the first international instrument devoted specifically to the issue and a significant milestone in the UN framework for human rights education.

Everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education and training ... Human rights education and training is essential for the promotion of universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the principles of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.²⁰

The Declaration encourages a higher level of commitment among

States to implement systematic and comprehensive programmes on human rights education and training within all educational sectors – formal, informal and non-formal. While States have the main responsibility “to promote and ensure human rights education and training”²¹, the Declaration recognizes that “various other actors in society, including ... educational institutions, the media, families, local communities, civil society organizations, human rights defenders and the private sector, have an important role to play in promoting and providing human rights education and training.”²²

The Declaration can be a valuable tool for advocacy and awareness raising to support human rights education initiatives. It also offers support to educators and policy makers by providing a framework for implementation and assessment of national policies and priorities in the light of international standards, as well as providing support and legitimacy to human rights education programming and activities.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN EUROPE

There is an overwhelming need for effective human rights education in Europe. At the 2009 Forum on Human Rights Education with and by Young People, Living, Learning, Acting for Human Rights, the situation of young people in Europe was presented as one of “precariousness and instability, which seriously hampers equality of opportunities for many young people to play a meaningful part in society ... human rights, especially social rights and freedom from discrimination, sound like empty words, if not false promises”. The forum participants, concerned with equality of opportunity and discrimination, agreed that,

Human rights education must systematically mainstream

*gender awareness and gender equality perspectives. Additionally, it must include an intercultural learning dimension... We expect the Council of Europe to ... mainstream minority issues throughout its human rights education programmes, including gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, ability and sexual-orientation issues.*²³

European inter-governmental institutions, as well as other human rights organizations and actors, also play an important role in the development of policy and provision of support and guidance in the implementation of human rights education and training. These bodies have a mandate which encompasses education, including human rights education and education for democratic citizenship, as a fundamental pillar of society.

a. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

For the member states of the Council of Europe, human rights are more than just moral assertions: human rights are part of their legal framework, and should therefore be an integral part of young people's education.²⁴

In 2010, the Council of Europe developed the [*Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*](#) which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers.²⁵ The Charter is an important reference point for all of Europe and provides a common framework, a focus and catalyst for action by member states to implement democratic citizenship and human rights education, disseminate good practice and raise standards

throughout Europe and beyond. It is intended to guide member states in the framing of their policies, legislation and practice, with the aim of "providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education."²⁶

The Charter sets out objectives and principles for human rights education and recommends action in the fields of monitoring, evaluation and research. It calls on member states to include education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in the curricula for formal education at pre-primary, primary and secondary school level, and for vocational education and training. The Charter also calls on member states to ensure ongoing training and development for education professionals, youth leaders and trainers in the principles and methodologies of human rights education in order to ensure sustainable and effective delivery of human rights education.²⁷

b. Human Rights Education and emerging issues in Europe

In a number of countries, there has been a marked increase in attacks on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, some of which have been fatal. Hate speech rooted in hostility to ethnic, religious and cultural diversity is being expressed ever more openly, not only by extremist groups but also by politicians from across the political spectrum and on social media. Such rhetoric fuels discrimination towards and social exclusion of ethnic and religious minorities, which is a growing challenge to countries in Europe making immediate and resolute action by governments and state authorities all the more urgent.²⁸ Balancing security with fundamental rights, integration, religious freedom, respect for diversity, and security (both physically and online), are current issues

that need to be addressed. There is data²⁹ that shows that on average, every second Roma had been discriminated against at least once over the past year.³⁰ Also, 40% of Muslims stopped by the police believed that this was specifically due to their minority or migrant status.³¹ And preliminary findings of a project on the inclusion and participation of migrants and their descendants in the European Union, indicate shortfalls in measures to encourage the participation of migrants and their descendants in labour markets, in public life and in society.³²

“As Europe confronts the greatest migrant crisis since the Second World War, the elimination of racial discrimination is a priority like never before,” said Michael O’Flaherty, Director of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). “Our continent needs to eradicate every vestige of exclusion and marginalisation of the outsider if it is to rise to the challenge. The international treaties to combat racism provide the necessary roadmap.”³³

In order to combat the further spread of prejudice, human rights education and training that reaches out to all age groups and professions is vital. “In the current situation, reaffirming our commitment to the values and principles of tolerance, equality and non-discrimination is crucial,” said Michael Link, Director of OSCE/ODIHR. “...This has to be accompanied by a particular emphasis on awareness-raising and other educational initiatives aimed at countering racist messages and promoting mutual understanding.”³⁴

Another group that faces discrimination and exclusion in Europe are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex (LGBTI) people. Evidence recently published in a report by FRA³⁵ reveals that some professionals in the education, healthcare and law enforcement sectors

have ‘simply primitive’ views of LGBTI people.³⁶ The report also reveals that in most European Union Member States, objective information about sexual orientation and gender identity is not part of school curricula. Such occurrences have a negative impact as they prevent professionals from performing their tasks appropriately. As a result, LGBTI people are unable to enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms under EU law on an equal footing with others.

Public officials and other professionals in education, healthcare and law enforcement, are entrusted with the duty to ensure that everyone’s fundamental rights are protected and promoted. Noting the support among professionals for EU policies and legislation as a driver for advancing the rights of LGBTI people (including the European Commission’s List of Actions to advance LGBTI equality³⁷), the FRA report calls on government authorities and policy makers, as well as professional associations of teachers, doctors and police to act on these findings to better protect and promote the rights of LGBTI people.³⁸

Also highlighted is the need for enhanced coordination, cooperation and exchange of information between and amongst national and European institutions and organizations (including national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, and trade unions) and regional and local authorities, in order to effectively tackle current issues of discrimination and social exclusion, and develop a socially cohesive society based on the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.³⁹

D. A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

This part of the paper introduces basic principles of a rights based approach, and outlines how these principles are applied to the field of education. It goes on to examine key areas of education within a rights based framework, and offers examples of good practice. Human rights education by its very nature, promotes a rights based approach that includes learning **about, through** and **for** human rights.

1. WHAT IS A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH?

A human rights based approach is a conceptual framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede progress.⁴⁰ When applied to education it is synonymous with human rights education.

The human rights principles that inform a rights based approach include:⁴¹

- **Universality and inalienability:** Human rights are universal and inalienable. They are the entitlement of all people everywhere in the world. An individual cannot voluntarily give them up. Nor can others take them away.
- **Indivisibility:** Human rights are indivisible. Whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social, they are all inherent to the dignity of every person. Consequently, they all have equal status as rights and cannot be ranked in a hierarchy.
- **Interdependence and interrelatedness:** The realization of one right often depends, wholly or in part, on the realization of others. For example, realization of the right to health may depend on realization of the right to information. Equally, the realization of the right to work may depend on the right to education.
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** All individuals are equal as human beings, and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each person, are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind. A rights based approach requires a particular focus on addressing discrimination and inequality. Safeguards need to be included in development instruments to protect the rights and well-being of marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- **Participation and inclusion:** Every person is entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development, through which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be enjoyed. This means that people should have the opportunity, capacity and competencies to participate in decision making processes that have an impact on their lives.
- **Empowerment:** Process by which people's capabilities to demand and use their human rights grow. They are empowered through the development of competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to claim their rights rather than simply wait for policies, legislation or the provision of services.
- **Accountability and respect for the rule of law:** A rights based approach

seeks to raise levels of accountability by identifying 'rights holders' and corresponding 'duty bearers' and to enhance the capacities of those duty bearers to meet their obligations. In addition to governments, a wide range of other actors should also carry responsibilities for the realization of human rights, including individuals, local organizations and authorities, the private sector, the media, donors, development partners and international institutions.

2. APPLYING A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

A rights-based approach can significantly add value to the processes and goals of education:⁴²

- ***It promotes social cohesion, integration and stability:*** A rights based approach encourages the development of school environments where children feel included and their views valued. It can promote understanding of other cultures and peoples, contribute to intercultural dialogue and respect for the richness of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the right to participate in cultural life. It can also foster understanding of diversity and differences, based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, cultural or economic background, disability or personal characteristics. In this way, it can serve to strengthen social cohesion.
- ***It builds respect for peace and non-violent conflict resolution:*** Schools and communities must create learning environments that eliminate all forms of physical, sexual or humiliating punishment by adults and challenge all forms of bullying and aggression among students. The lessons children learn from school-based experiences in this regard can have far-reaching consequences for the wider society.
- ***It contributes to positive social transformation:*** A rights based approach to education that embodies human rights education empowers young people and other stakeholders to become active participants in their communities (at local, national and global levels). It fosters the development of knowledge, competencies and positive attitudes of individuals, motivating them to take action for the realization of their rights and the rights of others. Thus human rights education is a major building block in efforts to achieve social transformation towards rights-respecting societies, democracy and social justice. It also results in improved and long term realization of human rights.
- ***It produces better outcomes for economic development:*** A rights based approach to education is consistent with the broader agenda of governments to produce an economically viable workforce. Measures to promote universal access to education and overcome discrimination against girls, children with disabilities, working children, children in rural communities, and minority and indigenous children and children of vulnerable groups will serve to widen the economic base of society, thus strengthening a country's economic capability.

3. A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

International and regional frameworks and standards, as well as results of programme implementation and evaluation studies, have identified key areas where human rights education or a rights based approach is needed in order to achieve the goals of quality education for all:

a. Teacher training, professional development and support

Pre-service and in-service teacher education and training is central to equipping teachers with the knowledge and competencies to integrate a rights-based approach in the classroom. Such training should be an entitlement for all teachers to support their understanding and use of human rights education or participatory methodologies in their teaching practice in order to promote equality, diversity and respect and to enhance the learning experience.

Human rights education should be practical, systematic and integrated into regular professional training in order to maximize its impact and sustainability. Such human rights training should itself use participatory methods. Professionals should therefore be equipped with the required human rights education competencies enabling them to interact with children and young people in a manner that respects their rights, dignity and self respect.⁴³

Human rights education trainings should be offered not only to teachers, but also to other educational staff, youth leaders educational administrators and others involved in education.⁴⁴ Relevant capacity building training on human rights

education should also be made available to government authorities and officials. Governments and employers should support learning opportunities provided by trade unions and other institutions.

b. Teaching and learning practices and processes

Every child has the right to receive an education of good quality which in turn requires a focus on the quality of the learning environment, of teaching and learning processes and materials.⁴⁵ Teaching and learning processes must be learner-centered, practical (relating human rights values and principles to participants' real life experiences), participatory and inclusive, and take place in a learning environment that respect the human rights of all participants.

Human rights education should take place in environments that are safe, child and youth-friendly, non-discriminatory and democratic in atmosphere. Educators should demonstrate a motivation for and an understanding of human rights in lesson content and delivery. Instruction and learning processes should motivate students and encourage their interest in and commitment to human rights. Cooperation should be facilitated and encouraged amongst schools, parents, communities, including non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, local government agencies, higher education institutions, trade unions, media and businesses.

c. An inclusive curriculum

States should include education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in the curricula for formal education at pre-primary, primary and secondary school level as well as in general and vocational education and

training. Support should also be provided for regular reviews and updates of such curricula to ensure their relevance and encourage sustainability.⁴⁶

The curricula (whether school based or for professional development of education personnel) should aim to improve learners' core competencies - including dimensions of knowledge and understanding, attitudes, values and skills -based on human rights standards and principles. The school curricula should reflect the aims and values of education as articulated in international standards, including understanding and knowledge of human rights appropriate to age, background and context of learners,⁴⁷ and this may require a fundamental and systematic revision of the curricula, textbooks and other teaching materials and technologies, as well as school policies.⁴⁸ Though often the curriculum is the first to be developed or reviewed using a rights based framework, it is not the only means by which human rights learning takes place in schools – learning about human rights also happens when human rights standard are implemented in practice.⁴⁹

d. Whole school approach to human rights

A whole school (or holistic) approach to human rights ensures that all components and processes of education – including curricula, materials, extracurricular activities, teaching methodologies, training, school policies, school governance structures, opportunities for participation, school environment, programme planning and implementation – reflect human rights values and principles, and are conducive to learning and experiencing human rights in an environment where all school community members feel respected and valued. The educational experience of young people should instill in them

concepts of equality, inclusion and respect for diversity, as well as concepts of democratic environment and sound governance through active participation. It is putting into practice the concept of education **about, through** and **for** human rights.



E. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

To stimulate discussion at the upcoming Symposium, we invite you to consider the following questions in your particular context:

- 1) *What does 'inclusive education' mean in your context? What are the barriers to this that you see in your context? What is the impact this is having on your school/ on teacher motivation/ on student learning? How can these barriers be overcome?*
- 2) *How would you describe your union policies on human rights education or rights based approach to education?*
- 3) *Considering areas such as: teacher training, availability of and access to resources and materials, government commitment and policies, formal education structure, curriculum, prevailing attitudes, and financial resources, what obstacle/ challenges do you see in the implementation/ application of the international and regional frameworks outlined in this background paper? How might these challenges be addressed?*
- 4) *Do you have an example of good practice from your context/ country that exemplifies the kind of impact that human rights education can have?*
- 5) *Do you have any practical tools, strategies, or resources on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education which aim to foster a more inclusive school environment that you wish to share with other symposium participants?*



ENDNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 26.
3. See OHCHR Human Rights Education page: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/HREducationTrainingIndex.aspx>.
4. United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education, Plan of Action First Phase, page 3. See also Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010), Article 2.
5. United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), Article 2.2.
6. For more detail, see Council of Europe, *Compass*, Chapter 1 Introduction to Human Rights Education (2002). Also see the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/HREducationTrainingIndex.aspx>.
7. Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), Part I, para. 33 and Part II, para. 80.
8. UN General Assembly resolution 49/184 (23 December 1994).
9. UN General Assembly resolution 59/113 A (10 December 2004).
10. See Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO, OHCHR, *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice* (2009).
11. Of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany and the United States, all have ratified all the treaties mentioned below, except for the United States which has ratified CERD, and signed the ICESCR, CRC, CRPD and CEDAW.
12. See General Comment No. 13 (1999) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to education, paras. 6(b) and 50. See also the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education to the Commission on Human Rights (1999), para. 50. The four essential features of the right to education are: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Quality education is considered to be a component of 'acceptability'.
13. See Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education and General Comment No. 5 (2003) on the general measures of implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.
14. See Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 2. See also General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education, paras. 10-11.
15. See General Comment No. 5 (2003) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on general measures of implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, para. 30.

16. See General Comment No. 5 (2003) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on general measures of implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, para. 12.
17. General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education, para. 2.
18. See General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education, para. 19.
19. See General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, para. 10 on the interpretation of Article 29(1) of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.
20. United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), Article 1.1 and Article 1.2.
21. United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), Article 7.
22. United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), Article 10.
23. Report of the Forum on Human Rights Education with and by Young People, Living, Learning, Acting for Human Rights, Budapest, October 2009.
24. See website of the Council of Europe at <https://www.coe.int/en/>.
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26. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010), Article 5(a).
27. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010), Article 5(h).
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32. Speech of Thomas Schwarz, Deputy Head of Department, Communication and Outreach, European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), at the conference *Council of Europe and the role of National Human Rights Institutions, Equality bodies and Ombudsman offices in promoting equality and social inclusion* on 10-11 December 2015 in Helsinki.
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44. General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, para. 18 and Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Article 9.
45. See Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 29(1), and General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education, para. 22.
46. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010), Article 6.
47. General Comment No. 5 (2003) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on general measures of implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, para. 68.
48. See General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education, para. 18.
49. General Comment No. 5 (2003) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on general measures of implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, para. 68.



APPENDIX 1

INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH A MANDATE TO PROMOTE EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

UNESCO

Since its creation in 1945, the mission of the [*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*](#) (UNESCO) mission has been to contribute to the building of peace, lasting development and intercultural dialogue, with education as one of its principal activities to achieve this aim. Within the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, UNESCO is committed to a holistic and humanistic vision of quality education worldwide, the realization of everyone's right to education and the belief that education plays a fundamental role in human, social and economic development.

UNESCO focuses on enhancing inclusive equitable access to relevant quality education that develops knowledge and competencies in areas such as global citizenship and sustainable development, human rights and gender equality, health and HIV and AIDS, as well as technical and vocational skills development.

UNESCO has a key role in the Education for All movement, and is entrusted to lead Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) - *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* - through the Education 2030 Framework for Action which recognizes that governments have the primary responsibility for successful implementation, follow-up and review and that country-led action can drive change,

supported by effective multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing.

OHCHR

The [*Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*](#) (OHCHR) supports the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the implementation of their mandate, which is to promote and protect the effective enjoyment of human rights worldwide, and to mainstream human rights in the UN system. The work of the OHCHR has three main dimensions: standard-setting, human rights monitoring, and supporting implementation of human rights on the ground. Amongst its other activities, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is mandated to provide overall coordination of all UN education and public information programmes in the field of human rights, including human rights education. Through its Methodology, Education and Training Unit, the OHCHR works to promote human rights education by:

- Supporting national and local capacities for human rights education through provision of technical expertise and guidance to States, and working with national human rights institutions and other UN actors;
- Developing trainings and making them publically available online;
- Developing educational resources and analytical tools; and

- Globally coordinating the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

The OHCHR recently published *The Right to Human Rights Education*, a compilation of provisions of international and regional instruments and documents on human rights education. It also maintains an extensive database of human rights education materials and resources, including information about institutions and organizations offering human rights education and training programmes.

Education International

Education International (EI) is the world's largest federation of unions of teachers and other education employees, representing 32 million education employees in about 400 organisations in 171 countries. EI challenges the narrow, instrumentalist view of education as solely teaching students to become skilled employees. Instead, EI supports the concept of education that serves both the values of society at local and global levels, as well as cultural, democratic, social, economic and environmental needs. It recognizes that education is a human right and a public good in its own right, enabling people at all stages in their lives to achieve their maximum potential and to better understand themselves and their role and relationships. Education is also a key means for the transmission, analysis and application of knowledge and experience, and plays a central role in the creation of new knowledge through research and innovation.

Education International's core values include quality education as a human right, education provided and managed by public authorities and available freely to all, inclusive education and equality in education and society, and high professional status for teachers. EI advocates for quality education delivered

by trained teachers with professional standards in well-equipped and safe education premises.

The Council of Europe

The *Council of Europe* has a longstanding tradition of supporting and promoting citizenship and human rights education. In 1985, the Committee of Ministers made a recommendation to the Member States of the Council of Europe emphasizing the need for all young people to learn about human rights in schools as part of their preparation for life in a pluralistic democracy. This recommendation was reinforced in 1997 when the member States decided to "launch an initiative for education for democratic citizenship with a view to promoting citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society." The resulting project on *Education for Democratic Citizenship* played a major role in promoting and supporting the inclusion of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in school systems across Europe. In 2005, the project was given political impetus by Heads of State and Government who called for "increased efforts of the Council of Europe in the field of education aimed at ensuring access to education for all young people across Europe, improving its quality and promoting, inter alia, comprehensive human rights education".

The Council of Europe supports co-operation activities on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education through the development and adoption of reference texts, the development of political frameworks, the creation of networks and forums to facilitate exchange and mutual assistance, as well as the production of resources on democratic citizenship and human rights education. The setting up of the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education Youth Programme in 2001, and the publication and translations

of *Compass: A Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People* and also of *Compasito*, contributed further to the recognition of human rights education, in particular through non-formal education and youth work.

OSCE/ODIHR

The [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organization, with 56 participating States. The OSCE's work in human rights education takes place in the context of the OSCE commitments. Building on the 2005–2006 Project on Diversity Education in which the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) collected and analyzed information and materials on tolerance, diversity and human rights education in the public school systems, ODIHR has developed a number of resources to promote respect for diversity and mutual understanding in schools, and to assist educators working in a range of professions in training their colleagues to understand and defend human rights and to encourage societies based on the respect for human rights. OSCE field operations also develop concrete educational projects in the area of human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding, either through their own initiatives or by supporting the efforts of local and international NGOs and governments.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

In 2007 the [EU Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) (FRA) was established as an independent advisory body to help ensure that fundamental rights of people living in the European Union are protected. Based in Vienna, Austria, the FRA was established

to provide assistance and expertise on fundamental rights matters to European Union agencies and its member states when they are implementing EU law. The primary mandate of the FRA is to collect and disseminate objective, reliable and comparable data on the situation of fundamental rights in all EU countries within the scope of EU law. The FRA is also tasked with raising public awareness about fundamental rights, which include human rights as defined by the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The European Wergeland Centre

The [European Wergeland Centre](#) is a resource centre for education professionals, researchers, civil society, policymakers, parents and students. It was established in 2008 by the Council of Europe and Norway to support member states to bridge policy and practice in the field of education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding.

Activities and services of the European Wergeland Centre are offered to all 47 members of the Council of Europe, and include:

- capacity building programmes for practitioners, trainers, researchers, policy makers and the public at large;
- training for teacher trainers, teachers and other educators;
- development activities;
- conferences and networking services, including an online expert database;
- an online platform for dissemination of educational information, materials and good practices.



APPENDIX 2

RESOLUTION ON THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF STANDARDS AND VALUES IN THE WORLD

The 7th Education International (EI) World Congress meeting in Ottawa, Canada, from 21nd to 26th July 2015:

Recognizing:

1. That there are dangers, including global shifts in the balance of power, which challenge, nationally and internationally, democracy, teachers and other education personnel and their trade unions; that such changes affect both the private and public sectors; that the deterioration of standards and external threats to the health of our societies rapidly become internal problems for our schools.
2. That chief among these challenges are four different, but inter-twined forces that have major impact on our societies, and that these are:
 - a. the liberalization of the world economy, accommodated and facilitated by national governments which is moving the balance of power to unelected corporations, and, thereby, undermining national sovereignty and democracy;
 - b. the lack of respect for international standards by national governments, including governments of some large and powerful nations;
 - c. geo-political shifts generated by developments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East undermining long-standing global standards for peace, justice and equality;
 - d. extremism by groups claiming to act in defense of religion or for ethnic or nationalistic reasons, noting that educational institutions, students -particularly girls - and teachers are often and increasingly the targets of terrorists and other extremists.
3. That all of these developments have an impact on values, and, that, if governments abuse their power and do not respect long-standing rules designed to promote and maintain peace, private parties are unlikely to avoid abuse and arbitrary action; that, if some countries are allowed to break the rules just because they are too powerful to be controlled, the credibility of those rules is bound to be thrown into question.
4. That there is no excuse or justification for terrorism or for bigotry or for any efforts to rob people of their basic humanity and enslave the human spirit; that, fortunately, the number of people involved in such acts remains a relative, if dangerous handful; that, although some countries where terrorism and extremism can reign with impunity, have been rendered ungovernable, its reach is not confined to a limited number of countries; that questions of values are raised by terrorism, but also by reactions to it and, that, reactions sometimes confuse extremists with a group of identifiable people, or a religion, and may imperil liberties.

5. That the global shift of power to private actors in the economy not only allows business to escape from the “civilizing” effects of the public will, but means that governments are increasingly subservient to private, special interests as well as competing for their favours; that this has distorted economic and tax policies and led to austerity; that trade and investment agreements erode national sovereignty and the public services, and, that radical shifts in production and services have undermined rights and conditions of workers and sustainable development.
6. That the visibility and appeal of accumulating wealth and material goods, distorts values and makes society more vulnerable to other threats, and, that market “values” have spilled over into the public sector, including education.

Further realizing:

7. That all of these crises of values come together in the classroom; that the legitimacy of government is undermined by lawlessness and abuse by States, thus creating cynicism about government and the public service; that extremists feed on hopelessness and desperation generated, in part, by the fact that so many have been disinherited from the global economy; that, in the circumstances, it is not surprising that young people, who have been “disrespected” and suffer from discrimination and humiliation, do not readily accept that they have a stake in values that may seem to consist only of words.
8. That the sacrifice of public and democratic values on the altar of the market, actions by lawless States, and the siren songs of extremists undermine stability and decency in society, and, that, as the common culture of values has weakened, many

young people have been creating their own reality through small networks separated from larger society.

9. That education is among the victims of these four major destructive global forces, but it also offers an alternative to cynicism and despair; that Quality Education, inspired by values, makes or can make special and invaluable contributions; among these are:
 - a. Development of capacities for creative, critical, and independent thinking and discussion;
 - b. Build abilities for listening and tolerance and serve as a ladder into the mainstream for those on the margins of society;
 - c. Contribute to real peace based on understanding and resolution of conflict, rather than silence or submission;
 - d. Provide a “safe place” for diverse groups to build relationships and understanding;
 - e. Break down prejudices and support dignity and opportunity for girls and women; and
 - f. Give new meaning and value to “citizenship education”.
10. That to carry out this mission, teachers must have an environment of respect that liberates them to exercise their professional responsibility and judgment, and, that human rights, including trade union rights, are intimately linked with other human rights, in particular, the right to education.
11. Asserts that education will only be sufficiently valued and respected when the value of teachers is recognized and appreciated, which is a major aspect of the continuing Unite for Quality Education campaign.

12. Believes that, just as terrorism and extremism have no frontiers, the forces for democracy and human enlightenment must know no borders; that the bulk of the work to build tolerance and peace will take place in the classroom, and that EI must continue to defend teachers and students subjected to violence and fear and help create a political environment that reduces risk, as well as mobilises international solidarity.
 13. While recognizing that, the integration of the world economy has strengthened the actors of the market, weakened human values and cultural diversity as expressed through education, and trade unions and other democratic forces, EI will remain vigilant and confront government actions that enable such massive shifts of power, including trade and investment agreements that lock-in privilege and undermine public decisions.
 14. Declares that the front line for educators in this global fight are in the protection of education from “performance” without values and compliance with market rules, as opposed to the promotion of professional standards and values in education, and in asserting that Education, free to make its full contribution, is a principal means to deal with the major challenges facing people across the globe and in building decent and just societies.
- and, that engagement globally by EI with other international organisations, like the International Financial Institutions and the OECD, reinforces the struggle of teachers in their home countries.
16. Will also strive for a stronger presence and role of Civil Society in all relevant UN mechanisms, including the Security Council.

In this context, EI:

15. Will continue to seek to influence the UN in the post-2015 period and process, recognising that that process can contribute to building a stronger United Nations (including specialized agencies) that is more credible and can improve global governance and respect for international standards;

Education International
Background paper

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND VALUES IN EDUCATION



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