

II. WHAT IS HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

... [E]very individual and every organ of society ... shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms...

Preamble, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1. Introducing human rights education

No single definition for human rights education will serve the many ways in which people young and old come to understand, practise and value their rights and respect the rights of others. The Council of Europe's Human Rights Education Youth Programme defines human rights education as:

...educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity, in conjunction with programmes such as those promoting intercultural learning, participation and empowerment of minorities.

The telling phrase in this definition is "in conjunction", for human rights education is rarely undertaken outside of a specific context, ideally based on the needs, preferences, abilities and desires of the learners.

The key to defining human rights education is its purpose, for no matter what the methodology or context, its aim is always the development of a culture of human rights. The essential elements of such a culture can provide general objectives for human rights education:

- $\,\blacksquare\,\,$ to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- to value human dignity and develop individual self-respect and respect for others
- to develop attitudes and behaviours that will lead to respect for the rights of others
- to ensure genuine gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres
- to promote respect, understanding and appreciation of diversity, particularly towards different national, ethnic, religious, linguistic and other minorities and communities
- to empower people towards more active citizenship
- to promote democracy, development, social justice, communal harmony, solidarity and friendship among people and nations
- to further the activities of international institutions aimed at the creation of a culture of peace, based upon universal values of human rights, international understanding, tolerance and nonviolence.

Human rights education for children

Childhood is the ideal time to begin lifelong learning about and for human rights. And the far reaching objectives of general human rights education can be interpreted to fit the world of the young child in more concrete terms of personal experience in the community, in the family and in the personal relationships the child encounters everyday with adults and other children. Human rights learning seeks to foster feelings of confidence and social tolerance, the fundamental bases for the whole culture of human rights:

■ to value self and others





- to recognize and respect human rights in everyday life
- to understand one's own basic rights and be able to articulate them
- to appreciate and respect differences
- to acquire attitudes to address conflicts in non-violent ways that respect the rights of others
- to develop children's confidence in their ability to take action and their skills to defend and promote human rights.

Although they are at the beginning of their formal education, children possess a wealth of knowledge about their world and the people in it. As far as possible, human rights learning should connect with and enlighten what children already know. For example, although they may not use words like *justice*, *equality* or *discrimination*, by the age of seven or eight most children have a strong sense of what is 'fair'.

Knowledge, skills and attitudes

Knowledge: Learning about human rights:

What type of knowledge do children need to understand human rights in their daily lives? What skills and attitudes do they need to develop and sustain a real-life culture of human rights? COMPASITO seeks to answer these questions in both the background information it provides for facilitators and the activities it recommends for children's human right learning. Together they form a holistic approach that includes learning *about* human rights, learning *for* human rights and learning *in* human rights.

Although knowledge *about* human rights necessarily varies with the maturity and capacity of the child, in general it includes these essential concepts:

- Human rights provide standards of behaviour in the family, in school, in the community and in the wider world;
- Human rights standards are universal, although there may be different ways of interpreting and experiencing them;
- Every child has human rights and also the responsibility to respect the rights of others. These
 include the right for protection, provisions and the right to participation, such as to express
 opinions in matters that concern oneself. These rights are set down in the **Convention of the**Rights of the Child;
- Other international documents also exist to implement the protection of human rights, such as the **United Nations Declarations on Human Rights** (UDHR) and the **European Convention on Human Rights** (ECHR).

Skills: learning for human rights:

Children need to acquire the skills that will enable them to participate in a democracy and contribute to building a culture of human rights. Skills *for* human rights include:

- Active listening and communication: being able to listen to different points of view, to express one's own opinions and evaluate both;
- Critical thinking: distinguishing between fact and opinion, being aware of prejudices and preconceptions, recognising forms of manipulation;
- Cooperating in group work and addressing conflict positively;
- Consensus building;
- Participating democratically in activities with peers;
- Expressing oneself with self-confidence;
- Problem solving.





Attitudes: Learning in human rights:

Human rights are not just legal documents that bind states. They are also principles for how children and all people should live together. Yet because they are intangibles principally expressed through the actions they inform, human rights values and attitudes are both the most difficult and the most long-lasting form of human rights education. Children learn as much or more from unspoken examples as they do from overt lessons, and they have a keen sense of hypocrisy. It is incumbent on everyone who works with children to model the human rights values they wish to impart.

Attitudes to be learned in human rights include:

- Respect for self and others;
- A sense of responsibility for one's own actions;
- Curiosity, an open mind and an appreciation of diversity;
- Empathy and solidarity with others and a commitment to support those whose human rights are denied;
- A sense of human dignity, of self-worth and of others' worth, irrespective of social, cultural, linguistic or religious differences;
- A sense of justice and social responsibility to see that everyone is treated justly;
- The desire to contribute to the betterment of the school or community;
- The confidence to promote human rights both locally and globally.

Methodologies for human rights education

Because participatory methodologies assume that everyone has the right to an opinion and respects individual differences, they have proven especially effective for human rights education. Going beyond factual content to include skills, attitudes, values and action requires an educational structure that is 'horizontal' rather than 'hierarchical'. Its democratic structure engages each individual and empowers her or him to think and interpret independently. It encourages critical analysis of real-life situations and can lead to thoughtful and appropriate action to promote and protect human rights. In other words, to be effective, human rights education must provide children with a supportive framework where the rights of every individual child are respected.

The methodologies described below are used in a great variety of learning environments, both formal and non-formal, with a limitless number of topics. However, they have in common certain features that make them especially appropriate for people of all ages to learn about human rights:

- Respect for children's experience and recognition of a variety of points of view;
- Promotion of personal enrichment, self-esteem, and respect for the individual child;
- Empowerment of children to define what they want to know and to seek information for themselves;
- Active engagement of all children in their own learning with a minimum of passive listening;
- Encouragement of non-hierarchical, democratic, collaborative learning environments;
- Encouragement of reflection, analysis, and critical thinking;
- Engagement of subjective and emotional responses, as well as cognitive learning;
- Encouragement of behavioral and attitudinal change;
- Emphasis on skill building and practical application of learning;
- Recognition of the importance of humor, fun, and creative play for learning.

The activities in COMPASITO combine a variety of methods and techniques with these characteristics. Facilitators should always be aware that some methods may be inappropriate for some groups of





mixed cultural backgrounds or special needs (e.g. physical contact, graphic arts) or require unfamiliar or unavailable resources (e.g. access to Internet or library resources). Every activity should be approached with the expectation that the facilitators will adapt the methodologies to meet the needs of the children and the cultural and social environment in which they live.

Non-formal education

Many of the choices and adaptations a facilitator makes depends on the makeup of the group, the age of the children, the skills of the facilitator and the context in which they live and work. An important consideration is whether the setting for human rights education is formal, non-formal or informal.

Formal education refers to the structured education system that runs from primary to tertiary education, and can also include specialised programmes for technical and professional training. The main actors are schools and a range of higher education institutions. The Universal Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child mandate that all children should have at least an elementary formal education.

Non-formal education refers to any intentional, voluntary and planned programme of personal and social education that aims to convey and practise values and develop a wide range of skills and competencies for democratic life. Non-formal education for children might include out-of-school activities, extra-curricular activities in schools, summer camps and leisure centres. Non-formal education emphasises a participative approach to learning.

Informal education refers to the unintentional lifelong process whereby everyone acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (e.g. family, neighbours, library, mass media, work, play).

Formal, non-formal and informal education are complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of a lifelong learning process. The activities in COMPASITO have been designed to be flexible enough for use in all such contexts: in the school, in children's organisations, in youth clubs, in summer camps in settings of social work and in the family.

Introducing human rights education in work with children

Just as human rights are a part of everyone's daily life experience, so human rights education should be integrated into children's ongoing learning. COMPASITO is not intended or recommended as a 'course' on human rights, but as a resource for raising children's awareness and understanding of human rights in the context of their lives. Look for opportunities to relate human rights to what is happening in the school, the community and the group of children you work with: a conflict on the playground, negative attitudes toward minorities or sexist exclusion of girls from certain activities. On the other hand, avoid approaching human rights only from the perspective of violations. Emphasize that we enjoy some human rights every day.

One primary aim of human rights education is action on behalf of human rights. Encourage and develop children's ability to take appropriate and meaningful action to address human rights issues. For children this action may be between individuals, such as resolving conflicts within the group or the family, perhaps changing behaviour toward siblings. Action may also take place in the wider community, such as organizing a celebration for International Human Rights Day or putting on an exhibiting of human rights-related artwork. The younger the children, the more they will rely on the facilitator's support in initiating and executing more complex projects.





The right to human rights education

Education in human rights is itself a fundamental human right and also a responsibility: the Preamble to the UDHR exhorts "every individual and every organ of society" to "strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms." Article 26.2 of the UDHR states that –

Education shall be directed ... to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (ICCPR) declares that a government "may not stand in the way of people learning about [their rights]."

People who do not know their rights are more vulnerable to having them abused and often lack the language and conceptual framework to effectively advocate for them. All the more reason for introducing human rights education to children!

Growing consensus around the world recognizes education for, about and in human rights as essential to a quality education. It can contribute to the building of free, just and peaceful societies. Human rights education is also increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses.

Human rights education and other educational fields

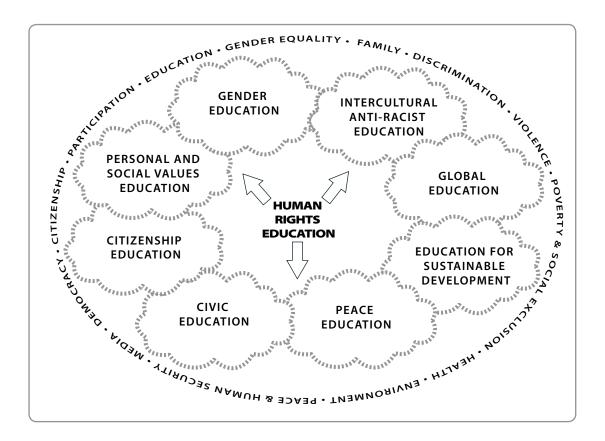
COMPASITO is structured around thirteen human rights-related themes, each of which relates directly to one or more concrete human rights (See CHAPTER V., P. 213, for a discussion of these themes):

- Citizenship
- Democracy
- Discrimination
- Education and leisure
- Environment
- Family and alternative care
- Gender equality
- Health and welfare
- Media and Internet
- Participation
- Peace and human security
- Poverty and social exclusion
- Violence

None of these themes is more important than another. Indeed, they are so interrelated that addressing any one of them provides a common link with any other. This is a direct consequence of the fact that human rights are **indivisible**, **interdependent** and interrelated: they cannot be treated in isolation, because all are connected to one another in various ways.

The diagram below provides one illustration of this interdependence. The issues in the outer circle blend into one another, just as the educational spheres in the central circle merge together. Even the distinction between **first, second and third generation rights** are not clear-cut. Education, for example, is traditionally classed as a second generation right, but education is just as necessary for participation (first generation right) as it for sustainable development (a third generation right). Accordingly, the following analysis should be seen as just one description among many, but it should help to illustrate the ways in which the various themes are relevant to many of the current educational fields and how these fields overlap with one another.





2. Human rights education in an international context

...democracy is not fixed and immutable, but rather that it must be built and rebuilt every day in every society.

The Dakar Framework for Action

Human rights education has emerged as one of the most important means for developing a human rights culture. Although since 1948 human rights legislation has been increasingly elaborated on at both the international and European levels, and most human rights documents endorse human rights education, the potential of human rights education has so far remained unrealised. Insufficient political will, lack of resources and inadequate teaching materials have limited the effectiveness of human rights education. However, the development of human rights-related non-governmental organisations in the last decades and the democratic transition in dozen s of countries in Central and Eastern Europe have given the human rights education movement a vital impetus. International organisations have played an essential role in developing more effective and consistent human rights education strategies at the national level.

United Nations

United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education

In December 1994 the UN General Assembly proclaimed 1995-2004 the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. The official recommendation recognizes human rights education as key for





the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for the fostering of mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. It calls on all states and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and the rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non-formal settings.¹

As a follow-up to the Decade in December 2004 the UN General Assembly proclaimed a World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing). Building on the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, this worldwide programme seeks to help make human rights a reality in every community. The Action Plan of the World Programme for 2005-2007 focuses on the primary and secondary education systems and proposes concrete strategies and practical ideas for implementing human rights education on national level.²

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) links environmental development and human rights education, emphasizing that education is essential for people to have the skills and capacities they need to address environment and development issues.³

CyberSchoolbus: A special UN project for children

CyberSchoolBus is a global web-based teaching and learning project of the United Nations that aims to engage children in human rights issues. The CyberSchoolBus collects inspiring stories of classes or schools defending and promoting human rights in their own communities, neighbourhoods and cities. These stories become part of a global atlas of student actions compiled and published on the Internet by the UN CyberSchoolBus.

UNESCO

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, had a key role in the development, implementation and evaluation of the projects foreseen during the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. Bearing in mind that learning should focus on the acquisition of values, attitudes and skills required to meet the emerging challenges of contemporary societies, UNESCO contributes to the development of national strategies in human rights education, develops learning materials and works on advocacy and networking. UNESCO continues to have a key role in the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing).

UNESCO's work on human rights education was confirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000-2015), a new global priority programme developed at the World Education Forum in 2000. The Framework affirms the need to implement 'quality education' internationally, which is defined as going beyond the traditional school curriculum to include a human rights approach and to address new areas such as cultural diversity, multilingualism in education, peace, non-violence, sustainable development and life skills 4

UNICEF

For sixty years UNICEF has been a global force for children, and today it is present in 191 countries of the world. It works in partnership with a broad coalition of UN agencies, governments, NGOs, and local grassroots organizations to help build a world where the rights of every child are realised. UNICEF's work is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In May 2002 a special session of the UN General Assembly produced A World Fit for Children, which sets a new agenda for the world's children for the next decade. It recognizes that governments, NGOs





and children and adolescents themselves all have a key role to play to ensure that all children enjoy the rights guaranteed them in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). To this end educational programmes, materials and the learning environment itself should "reflect fully the protection and promotion of human rights and the values of peace, tolerance and gender equity."⁵

UNICEF has many programmes that contribute to furthering human rights education internationally, regionally and in individual countries. Voices of Youth is a child-friendly website of UNICEF providing information about questions related to children's life on global level and interactive games to promote children's rights. The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre develops and produces research on children's situation internationally in the belief that awareness and understanding of children's rights improves children's situation everywhere in the world.

Council of Europe

For the Member States of the Council of Europe human rights are more than just a part of their legal framework; they should be an integral part of education of children, young people and adults. Recommendation No. R (85) 7 of the Committee of Ministers on Teaching and Learning about Human Rights in Schools emphasises that all young people should learn about human rights as part of their preparation for life in a pluralistic democracy; and this approach is slowly being incorporated into different European countries and institutions.⁸

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1346 (1997) on human rights education proposes a whole range of actions for strengthening human rights education in Europe.

The Assembly further recommends that the Committee of Ministers consider human rights education as a priority for the intergovernmental work of the Council of Europe in the years to come..." ⁹

The Council of Europe works closely with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNESCO, the European Commission and other international organizations in the field of human rights education and education for democratic citizenship. For example the Council of Europe has a special role in monitoring the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-2007) at the European level. This work includes the development of a concrete framework for action and the strengthening of partnerships and cooperation between the international and grass-roots levels.

In 2007 the Council of Europe initiated a project to design a framework policy document on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education. The acceptance of such a comprehensive document will establish commitment from the member states and will make their efforts measurable. Such a progressive instrument will be a strong recognition of non-formal organizations working in the field and provide standards for a wider international environment.

Human Rights Education Youth Programme

The Human Rights Education Youth Programme was initiated in 2000 as a priority of the Youth Sector of the Council of Europe. Its main aim has been to bring human rights education into the mainstream of youth work. The first three years served the crucial function of developing educational tools and training possibilities for young people and building a network of partners in national and local level. In the second three-year period, the programme emphasized empowering young people, in particular vulnerable groups, and developing strategies to address racism, xenophobia, discrimination and genderbased violence. Since 2000 several new educational tools have been developed, various long term and advanced training courses implemented, and hundreds of pilot projects funded all over in Europe. 'Com-





PASS – a manual on human rights education with young people', an important educational resource of the Programme, has been translated into some twenty different languages since its publication in 2001. Through a cascading effect the Programme has reached hundreds of NGOs all around Europe that were supported by pilot projects offered by the European Youth Foundation. Human rights education has become key in youth work in Europe and has had fruitful effects on formal education as well. Since 2006 the Programme has also developed a special focus on intercultural dialogue as well.

Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC)

Human rights education is a key component in education for democratic citizenship, another approach to give children, youth and adults the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to play an effective role in their communities. Since 1997 the Council of Europe's Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship has developed concepts, definitions and political strategies and instituted networks to further this work. The Year of Citizenship through Education in 2005 strengthened the commitment of member states to introduce education for democratic citizenship into their educational policies. The Programme now aims to ensure sustainability by supporting these policy developments, research and good practises in teacher training and democratic governance. 'Exploring Children's Rights: lesson sequences for primary schools', a new publication of the Programme, provides concrete ideas on how to elaborate children's rights in the classroom. ¹⁰

Building a Europe for and with Children

Building a Europe for and with Children (2006-2008) is a programme of the Council that aims to help decision makers and stakeholders establish national strategies and policies to guarantee an integrated approach to promoting children's rights and protecting children from various forms of violence. Under the auspices of the Programme, the Council is revising its existing legal frameworks and instruments and is setting up new standards to better ensure children's rights in Europe. It is also initiating communication campaigns and education and training programmes to help governments and NGOs develop more effective child policies.

Non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations have an irreplaceable role in the development of a worldwide culture of human rights, particularly at the national and local level, as governments often do not live up to expectations when it comes to the integration of human rights education into the curriculum. As highly committed groups with special expertise, they have contributed to the development of the human rights legislation and are careful watchdogs of the realisation of human rights at the national level. Some global human rights organisations like Amnesty International work systematically on awareness raising on human rights education and produces educational programmes worldwide. People's Decade of Human Rights Education (PDHRE-International) develops programmes and provides a website on human rights education relevant to people's daily lives in the context of their struggles for social and economic justice and democracy.

Some organisations such as the Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe (DARE) and many youth organisations concentrate on human rights education: they support human rights learning and the training of activists and professionals, develop educational materials and seek to raise the profile of education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

Other organisations concentrate on educating about children's rights. For some such as Save the Children or Fondation Terre des homes (Tdh) this is key to their worldwide mission; others like the Children's Rights Information Network serve hundreds of child-related NGOs by collecting and disseminating information. At the local and national level, many non-governmental organisations in Europe and





worldwide organise human rights education programmes and projects involving children and young people.

Clearly there are many kinds of human rights education and a wide spectrum of institutions and individuals seeking to promote rights learning. However, these diverse efforts have a great deal in common. All are grounded in the international human rights framework of law and seek to empower people to realise human rights in their daily lives in concrete and practical ways. They also share the values and principles of human rights, which are summed up in the preamble to the UDHR: "the inherent dignity and…equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family."

Useful Resources

- *ABC: Teaching Human Rights Education*: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2004: www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/abc.htm#I.
- Claude, Richard, *The Bells of Freedom*: erc.hrea.org/Library/Bells_of_Freedom/index.html
- Compendium of good practises in human rights education in the school system, including citizenship education and education for mutual respect and understanding: www.hrea.org/compendium
- First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education: Amnesty International, 1996: http://erc.hrea.org/Library/First_Steps/index.html
- Flowers, Nancy, *The Human Rights Education Handbook:* University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, 2000: www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hrhandbook/toc.html
- Gollob, Rolf and Kraft, Peter, Exploring Children's Rights: lesson sequences for primary schools: Strasbourg, Education for Democratic Citizenship, 2006: www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/ Source/ Pdf/Documents/2006_17_ExploringChildreensRights_En.pdf
- Play it Right! Human Rights Toolkit for Summer Camps in the City of Montreal: Equitas, International Centre for Human Rights Education, 2006: www.equitas.org
- Set of drawings to discuss children's rights: www.vormen.org/downloads/ChildrensRightsTextIllustr.pps
- Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action: World Conference on Human Rights, United Nations, Vienna, 1993: www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.CONF.157.23.
 En?OpenDocument

Useful websites

- Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org
- Building a Europe with and for Children: www.coe.int/children
- Children's Rights Information Network: www.crin.org
- Council of Europe: www.coe.int
- Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe: www.dare-network.org
- European Children's Network (EURONET): www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org
- Fondation Terre des hommes: www.tdh.ch
- Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org
- Human Rights Education Associates: www.hrea.org
- Human Rights Education Youth Programme: www.coe.int/compass
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: www.ohchr.org
- The People's Decade for Human Rights Education/ International Movement for Human Rights





Learning: www.pdhre.org/index.html

- United Nations CyberSchoolbus: www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus
- UNESCO: www.unesco.org
- UNICEF: www.unicef.org
- UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: www.unicef-irc.org
- UNICEF Voices of Youth: www.unicef.org/voy
- World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing): www.ohchr.org/english/ issues/education/training/programme.htm

References

- 1 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, 1993, Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, para. 33 of Section 1.
- $2\ \ See \ www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/programme.htm$
- 3 See http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=27234&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html .
- 4 The Dakar Framework for Action Education for All: meeting with our commitments, World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April, 2000: www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/framework.shtml
- $5 \hspace{0.2cm} \hbox{See www.unicef.org/specialsession/documentation/ documents/A-S27-19-Rev1E-annex.pdf} \\$
- 6 See www.unicef.org/voy
- 7 See www.unicef-irc.org
- 8 Recommendation No R (85) 7 of the Committee of Ministers: https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?Command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&DocId=686452&SecMode=1&Admin=0&Usage=4&InstranetImage=45239
- 9 Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1346 (1997) on human rights education, point 12.
- 10 Gollob, Rolf and Kraft, Peter, Exploring Children's Rights: lesson sequences for primary schools: Strasbourg, Education for Democratic Citizenship, 2006.



