

Introduction

Welcome to *COMPASS*, the manual on human rights education with young people!

We hope that it will provide you with the ideas, inspiration and motivation to venture into the field of human rights education with young people. *COMPASS* has been produced within the framework of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, which was launched in 2000 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights. The programme aims to put human rights at the centre of youth work and thereby to contribute to the bringing of human rights education into the mainstream.

Human rights education – meaning *educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity* – is of incalculable value in shaping a European dimension of citizenship meaningful to all Europeans. Developed in conjunction with other programmes of the Directorate in Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe – intercultural learning, participation, empowerment of minorities and of young people from minority backgrounds – human rights education has the potential to be a catalyst for action and a source of synergies. Those involved in non-formal education in youth work should be able to consider the evolution, practice and challenges of human rights, with regard to their universality, indivisibility and inalienability, and what these mean to the young people of today.

The Directorate of Youth and Sport, especially through the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation, has acquired an undisputed reputation for expertise in developing educational approaches and materials suitable for use both in formal and non-formal contexts as well as in different cultural environments. Its work with multipliers, the impact of projects such as the “*all different – all equal*” youth campaign, and its long-term training programme have all contributed to the development of projects that make their impact first and foremost at grass-roots level while being pre-eminently European.

Recent events, both in Europe and other places of the world, threaten the foundations of a culture of peace and human rights. They show that a more visible, explicit and conscious approach to human rights education is needed urgently.

In this context, the Human Rights Education Youth Programme aims to:

- bring Human Rights Education within the mainstream of youth work practice;
- value and develop Non-Formal Education with young people as a form of Human Rights Education;
- value young people and youth organisations as a fundamental resource for Human Rights Education and civil society in Europe;
- promote a broad understanding of Human Rights Education while respecting the diversity of youth and social-cultural realities in Europe today;
- develop new associative networks and synergies with partners in the non-formal and the formal educational fields;
- pursue and achieve the maximum “multiplying effect” by involving practitioners and partners at national and local level;
- provide practitioners across Europe with new educational tools and networks for youth activities based on Human Rights Education;
- integrate accumulated experience in intercultural and non-formal education, youth participation and research;
- take into account innovations in educational approaches and media.

A compass for practitioners of human rights education

COMPASS is central to this programme, which also includes support to local pilot projects, national and regional training courses and specific activities related to different forms of violence. Instead of “another” manual or venturing into new approaches or proposals for human rights education, the central aim of this publication is to make human rights education accessible, usable and useful to educators, facilitators, leaders, teachers, volunteers and trainers who are active in

educational activities with young people. It is, in many ways, a modest (yet ambitious) answer to the question that many concerned activists and educators pose: “HOW do we do it?”

Experiences acquired during the educational activities of the 1995 European youth campaign against racism and intolerance “*all different – all equal*” revealed that the success of European educational projects of this kind depends on:

- the provision of appropriate and accessible educational methodologies and tools, such as the Education Pack “*all different – all equal*”;
- the availability of such materials in the national languages of the users;
- the existence of trainers and multipliers who can act and disseminate at national, regional and local levels.

COMPASS is a response to these needs. It is published by the Council of Europe in English, in French and in Russian and translation and adaptation to other languages and contexts is encouraged. The organisation of national and regional training courses should help trainers and educators to become familiar with the manual and to make sure that it reaches the schools, associations and youth groups at the local level. COMPASS only has meaning as a book for encouraging action.

An open and participatory production process

Producing COMPASS has proven to be a huge task. Its thematic scope is vast – human rights education concerns literally all aspects of life today – its geographical and cultural scope is extremely diverse. There are wide differences in the working environments and educational contexts of the potential users, both within and between non-formal and formal education. From the outset, the following issues became problematic:

- Is it possible to respect the intrinsic universality of human rights at the same time as addressing specific situations and cultural diversity across Europe?
- Is it really possible to use the same manual and methods across different countries?
- Is there anything in human rights or human rights education that is specific to Europe?
- Is it realistic to attempt to produce one manual that would be suitable for formal and non-formal educational environments?
- How much should users already know?
- Is it still possible to be innovative in this field?
- Will the manual’s target group be prepared to use it?
- Is there any point in producing something specifically for human rights education with young people?

It was not possible to answer all questions and dispel all concerns and risks. What was called for was a production process that could either provide answers or take the concerns into account. The final product should, in fact, be the result of contributions and expertise from:

- human rights education;
- intercultural learning;
- youth work;
- pedagogy and didactics;
- human rights organisations.

Reference Group and Production Team

A *Reference Group* was constituted on the basis of an open call launched by e-mail and the Internet. The group’s task was to serve as a support to the writers. The group also defined the outline of contents and general educational approaches and secured insights and perspectives from other materials and experiences.

The Reference Group was composed of:

- Dr Elie Abouaoun, Lebanon, *Nouveaux Droits de l’Homme-International*
- Mr. Anatoliy Azarov, Russian Federation, *Moscow School of Human Rights*
- Ms Patricia Brander, Denmark, consultant, experienced with the “*all different - all equal*” Education pack
- Ms Ellie Keen, United Kingdom, *Human Rights Education Associates* and *Amnesty International*

- Ms Corina Michaela Leca, Moldova, *SIEDO - The Independent Society for Education and Human Rights*
- Ms Marie-Laure Lemineur, Spain and France, consultant experienced with the *United Nations University for Peace (Costa Rica)*
- Ms Brigitte Mooljee, United Kingdom, *Citizenship team at the Department of Education and Employment*
- Ms Louise Nylin, Sweden and USA, consultant with the *UNDP* and with the *People’s Decade for Human Rights Education*
- Ms Bárbara Oliveira, Sweden and Mozambique, consultant, former youth co-ordinator with *Amnesty International* in South Africa
- Ms Eunice Smith, *Division of Human Rights, Peace, Democracy and Tolerance, Social and Human Sciences sector at Unesco*
- Mr. Alessio Surian, Italy, *European Federation for Intercultural Learning*
- Ms Olena Suslova, Ukraine, *Women’s Information Consultative Centre*
- Mr. Wim Taelman, Belgium, *Flemish Association for Human Rights Education*
- Mr. Andrew Yurov, Russian Federation, *Youth Human Rights Movement, Advisory Council of the European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation*
- Ms Nancy Flowers, USA *, consultant, *Human Rights Education Resource Center, University of Minnesota*
- Ms Jana Ondráčková, Czech Republic *, human rights education programme developer and co-ordinator at the *Czech Helsinki Committee*
- Ms Vedrana Spajic-Vrkaš *, Croatia, Faculty of *Philosophy of Croatia University of Zagreb*

The Reference Group met in April 2001 at the European Youth Centre Budapest in what was a very intensive and fruitful meeting. The meeting produced the outline of *COMPASS*’ contents and structure, including the main themes that should be explored. Ideas for the process of production and testing of activities were also brought forward. The Production Team members, the group of eight people who authored the texts for *COMPASS*, were also part of the Reference Group. Other members of the group served as advisors and supervisors for the writers during the production phase; their work was voluntary.

The Production Team members divided the work among themselves in a way that would secure maximum “cross-fertilisation” of ideas and experiences, a realistic calendar and a clear identification of tasks and responsibilities. Sections and activities had writers and proofreaders in order to make sure that each text was read and commented on by at least two or three people before it even went to the rest of the team. The team held three meetings, in May, June and September 2001.

Testing and finalising

The final drafts of the texts were placed on the Internet and users of the HRE Youth Programme, as well as members of the Trainer’s Pool of the Directorate of Youth and Sports, could have access to them, make comments and suggest improvements. Although the time the texts were posted was short, the process was innovative and participatory.

Youth organisations, national youth councils and other partners of the Directorate of Youth and Sport were asked to provide references for human rights educational materials available in their country and language. The level of response was very varied and some lists were quite long; it was therefore decided to keep the references for the electronic version of *COMPASS* and for the HRE Resource Centre.

Particular attention was paid to involving or consulting youth organisations with specific expertise in the themes of the Manual. Their comments and suggestions were always useful.

The decision on the title – more than 20 suggestions for titles were received – was also highly participated, especially as a result of an announcement through the Human Rights Education Associates list (list members could indicate preferences). In order to secure consistency of styles and coherence of approaches and contents, the various authors’ work was given to a team of three final editors. Ellie Keen took responsibility for chapters 1, 3 and 4, Marie-Laure Lemineur for the background information on the themes and Patricia Brander worked on the activities and related texts. Rui Gomes, Programme and Training Administrator at the European Youth Centre Budapest, and coordinator of the project, did the final editing.

* was invited but could not attend the meeting.

What is in COMPASS?

The Production Team received from the Reference Group a mandate to be as complete and comprehensive in the contents as possible (so that anyone and everyone can find their matters of concern or work in the Manual) while producing a manual which:

- users don't have to read in its entirety to be able to use it - a facilitator should be able to run an activity without having to read material that is not directly relevant to their context or situation;
- contains a minimum of supplementary information for those facilitators who may feel uncomfortable when dealing with a certain theme (*COMPASS* should be sufficient);
- is eminently practical and based on experiential activities;
- is attractive, reflects the concerns of young people in Europe and is a tool to develop their social skills and attitudes as much as their knowledge and competencies;
- focuses on values and on social issues rather than (just) on formal rights as laid down in conventions;
- is usable in formal and non-formal education;
- leaves “background information in the background” and not at the beginning so that users can get on with the activities but know that supporting information is available for reference.

As a result, *COMPASS* is organised in the following way:

- Chapter 1:* Familiarises the reader with what we mean by human rights education. It should motivate, inspire and introduce the reader on how to get the best out of *COMPASS* and its educational approaches,
- Chapter 2:* A collection of 49 activities of different levels of complexity, which cover different themes and address different types of rights,
- Chapter 3:* “Taking action”, contains ideas and tips for those that would like to be more active in promoting human rights,
- Chapter 4:* Provides essential information about human rights and international standards and documents,
- Chapter 5:* Supplementary background information about the themes,
- The appendices:* Contain essential information on legal documents, because human rights are also about laws.

The choice of themes

The Reference Group originally identified sixty-three issues that should be covered in *COMPASS*. These ranged from terrorism to euthanasia. It was difficult for the Production Team to identify and decide on a way to group all the issues into a logical framework. In the end, they chose fifteen themes – Children, Citizenship, Democracy, Discrimination and Xenophobia, Education, Environment, Gender Equality, Globalisation, Health, Human Security, Media, Peace and Violence, Poverty, Social Rights and Sport. It was a difficult decision but the Team considered this the most useful way in which to organise the activities in chapter 2. Whenever questions or doubts arose, we chose to be as inclusive as possible. For the activities, a sixteenth theme was found – general human rights, referring to activities that generally develop important attitudes and awareness on all human rights. There is no background information on this general theme.

The barrier of ethnocentrism

The most serious challenge faced during the production of *COMPASS* was related to ethnocentrism. The diversity of both background and experiences of those in the Production Team was intended to ensure that most linguistic, educational and social backgrounds would be represented in the manual. *COMPASS* should be truly European and intercultural.

It is unclear to what extent this intention was ever feasible or realistic. We came to realise that sometimes we had read things in different languages but were in fact reading and referring to the same source material. The fact that the original version of *COMPASS* was drafted in English naturally encouraged all of the writers to conduct research first of all

through English reference literature and on English language Internet pages. Hopefully, our awareness of the risk may have limited the damage but it was not easy to avoid it – an inevitable consequence of globalisation! Also, it would have been impossible to produce *COMPASS* with a team of 50 people writing in 50 different languages.

Pancho, the cartoonist working with us, synthesised all these dilemmas when, confronted with the request of drawing about and for a European public, he asked “but how shall I draw a European?”

About the methods

As stated earlier, it was not our intention to produce a “new” manual, but rather to produce something that can be used easily by all those working on human rights issues with young people. We came to realise that there are many excellent materials already available.

These have naturally served as inspiration to the Production Team. Whenever possible, credits and references have been given, but we apologise for any omissions. Those familiar with this kind of work will also realise that some methods have been adapted or repeated in *COMPASS*. These *recycled* methods were kept because our purpose is to provide a practical and usable tool. If a method or dynamic has proven to be effective, it would be a loss to deprive other users from using it.

Adaptation is also a key word for this entire manual. Although the activities may appear to some as ready-made solutions, the active user of *COMPASS* will need to look around and think of where they are before deciding where to go. Suggestions are given in the relevant section about how to adapt activities to meet the specific concerns of the young people, to be appropriate to the educational context, to fit the time available, etc.

COMPASS intends to provide different paths and ways that can and should be taken bearing in mind the different cultural and social values of young people in Europe. This diversity in approaches is a strength and ensures that human rights do not become a dogma imposed on anyone.

Reaching the local level

Producing *COMPASS* is only a starting point. Training courses are being organised at regional and national level that will involve youth workers and teachers. Parallel to this, *COMPASS* will be translated into other languages. For what, when and where, please consult the website of the programme at <http://www.coe.int/hre>.

What is out and what comes next?

Of the many activities written by the Production Team, more than twenty had to be left out because there was not enough room for everything. Entire pages of background information had to be cut drastically or reduced for the same reason.

Many of these texts will find their way to users through an interactive version of *COMPASS*. This version, which will be made during 2003, will allow much better interactivity between texts and activities and will, as far as possible, benefit from suggestions and texts proposed by users.

Also not included in this manual is the proposed *photo pack*, a series of photos on human rights issues, *filmographies* and *songs for human rights*. *COMPASS* is, indeed, about providing directions, starting points, references and orientation. Not everything can fit in. The Human Rights Education Youth Programme still has a long way to go. Indeed, there is a lot more to human rights education than just *COMPASS*.

But *COMPASS* may be your starting point. We wish you success and fun in using it.