

# HRE and Other Education Fields

## ***A human rights world***

Human rights affect every aspect of our lives. Indeed, violations of human rights lie at the root of almost every problem in the world today: violence, poverty, globalisation, the environment, economic inequality, and lawlessness. Not to mention the wars and conflicts that are destroying parts of the globe.

Although human rights, in their original conception, were broadly confined to the civil and political spheres, it is now acknowledged that they must embrace social, cultural, and economic issues as well. Today, people even speak of a third generation of rights that takes into account collective rights and issues concerning future generations of mankind. All of this has significant implications for the work we do as educators: it means that education dealing with such issues as globalisation, the environment, peace and intercultural relations, among others, are all forms of human rights education. They deal with human rights issues and they attempt to build a culture that respects them.



**What have been the main changes in your country over the last 20 years in the area of human rights?**

In this manual we try to address the full spectrum of issues connected with human rights. We shall look, in this chapter, at the way in which many, if not most, of these issues are relevant to other fields of education – such as development education, peace education, environmental education, education for citizenship, and so on. Anyone who is engaged in one or other of these forms of education should find questions of relevance within these pages.

## ***What is a “human rights issue”?***

Almost any question concerning violations of rights may be termed a human rights issue. The international community now recognises three different “generations” of rights, which cover different dimensions of human activity:

### ***First generation rights (Liberty rights)***

These include the civil and political rights – such as the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to life, to a fair trial, to participation in the political life of society, and so on. These issues (though not only these issues) are traditionally addressed in the formal education sector through citizenship education, civic education, political education /education for democracy or law-related education.

### ***Second generation rights (Equality rights)***

These include the social, economic and cultural rights – such as the right to an adequate standard of living, to work, to join a trade union, to health and to education. Within the formal education

"The rights of all men are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened."

John Kennedy

sector, at least, these areas are often neglected. Economics education, for example, rarely deals with such issues - although arguably it should do. The issues are sometimes addressed by the "hidden curriculum" - that is, by many of the less formal activities carried out by schools or youth groups, or the work done in tutor groups or personal, social and health education. There is, however, increasing recognition that second generation rights are just as relevant to citizenship as the traditionally accepted first generation rights - and rightly so.

### **Third generation rights (Solidarity rights)**

These rights are also known as "emerging" rights, because they are still in the process of being acknowledged and recognised. They refer to the *collective* rights of society or peoples - such as the right to sustainable development, to peace, or to a healthy environment. There are increasing educational areas that look specifically at these rights - for example, environmental education, peace education and development education.

(More information about the different generations of rights can be found in Chapter 4)



**Have any of the issues that you have explored with your group been human rights issues?**

## **Issues covered in the manual**

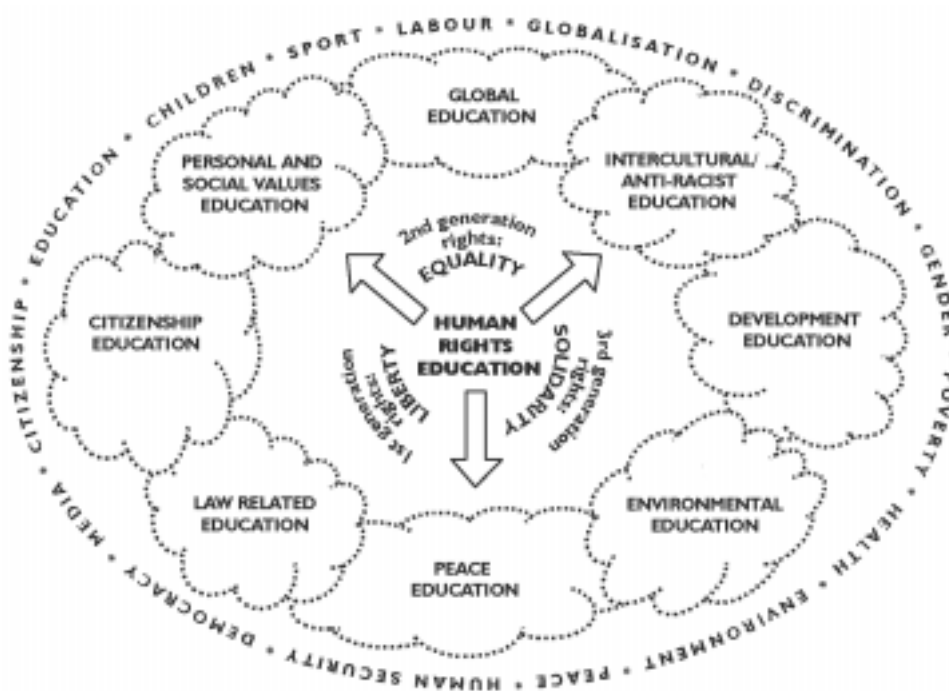
This manual has been structured around 16 human rights-related issues, each of which can be seen to be directly relevant to one or more of the different generations of rights.

- |                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ General human rights          | ▪ Globalisation      |
| ▪ Children                      | ▪ Health             |
| ▪ Citizenship                   | ▪ Human security     |
| ▪ Democracy                     | ▪ Media              |
| ▪ Discrimination and Xenophobia | ▪ Peace and Violence |
| ▪ Education                     | ▪ Poverty            |
| ▪ Environment                   | ▪ Social rights      |
| ▪ Gender equality               | ▪ Sport              |

None of these themes is any more important than the others. Indeed, these themes are in fact interrelated to such an extent 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 one with another, in various different and intimate ways.

The diagram on the following page provides one illustration of this interdependence. There are others that we could have shown: the circle round the outside could have been reordered almost randomly and connections still be identified. The issues in the outer circle blend into one another, just as the educational spheres in the central circle merge together. Even the distinctions between first, second and third generation rights is not clear-cut. Education, for example, is traditionally classed as a second generation right, but education is just as necessary for effective political participation (a first generation right) as it is for sustainable development (a third generation right).

Accordingly, the following analyses should be seen as just one description among many, but they help to illustrate the ways in which the various themes are relevant to many of the current educational fields, and how these educational fields overlap with one another.



## Citizenship Education

Citizenship education encourages the development of young people as active and responsible citizens. In 1997, The Council of Europe established the Education for Democratic Citizenship project (EDC), and the June 2000 report for this project emphasises the importance of *social justice* and *equality of rights* for citizenship. T.H.Marshall, in his book *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge University Press, 1950), suggests that citizenship can only be effective when it ensures access to three main types of rights. In this way, he identifies three components of citizenship:

- the *civil component*, which includes the rights addressing individual freedom;
- the *political component* - e.g. the right to participate in the exercise of political power and to vote and participate in parliamentary institutions;
- The *social component* of citizenship, which relates to the right to the prevailing standard of living and equal access to education, health care, housing and a minimum level of income.

## Personal and Social Education

Many countries have some form of education that considers the role of the individual in society and helps to prepare young people for some of the personal challenges that they will meet. This may overlap with citizenship issues but may also include aspects of the individual's life related to leisure – including sport, clubs and associations, music, art, or other forms of culture. Such education may also be concerned with personal relationships. Human rights enter into these questions in two central ways: firstly, because personal development and personal relations possess moral and social aspects that need to be guided by human rights values; secondly, because the right to take part in cultural life is recognised in the UDHR as well as in other international treaties. Even if the young people with whom you work are able to claim this right, there are young people around the globe who are not.

"Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."

UDHR, Article 27

"The greatest evil today is indifference. To know and not to act is a way of consenting to these injustices. The planet has become a very small place. What happens in other countries affects us."

Elie Wiesel

## **Values Education / Moral Education**

Values education is also a common part of the school curriculum in different countries, but it often gives rise to two fundamental concerns in people's minds: which values such education should aim to teach, and how we can be sure that these values are not merely relevant to our own particular culture? These are common problems faced by many who engage in this area of education, and human rights provide a convenient means of addressing it. Human rights are not only based on values that are common to every major religion and culture, but they are also admitted to be universal by almost every country in the world. No-one can be criticised for teaching human rights values!

## **Global Education**

Globalisation is an issue at the front of many young people's minds, and we have included it as one of the separate themes within this manual. The general heading of global education normally covers work that looks at different forms of existence and patterns of behaviour around the globe. Such education is important because it looks at the individual's place not just in his or her own community or society, but in the world as a whole. It can be used to raise a number of questions connected with human rights and can help to open people's eyes to violations of rights being committed in different reaches of the globe. Global education enables young people to assess the impact of their own actions and to consider their individual responsibilities.

The Institute of Global Education, a non-profit United Nations Non-Governmental Organisation, was founded in 1984 as The World Peace University. The Institute declares its goal as "to help co-create a world where peace and food sufficiency are a way of life, where environmental responsibility exists, where social justice prevails and where an individual achieves the highest degree of self-realisation within a community of co-operation."

## **Intercultural Education**

There is a natural connection between global education and intercultural education, which looks at the way we interact with other cultures, societies and social groupings. All societies today are characterised by increasing levels of multiculturalism and cultural diversity and this makes acknowledgement of, and respect for, the rights of minorities increasingly important. We are being forced to reassess old conceptions of national societies as culturally homogeneous entities: the dual processes of European integration, together with increased economic and social interdependence between different world regions have made such notions outdated. Even in those parts of the globe which are not experiencing patterns of immigration, existing conflicts can more often than not be traced back to a lack of understanding between different peoples or ways of life to be found in one common society. The conflicts in Northern Ireland, in the former Yugoslavia and in parts of the Caucasus are sad illustrations of the problems that can arise from an inability to respect and live with other cultures.

Intercultural education is also an effective way of addressing the modern phenomena of racism and racial discrimination and intolerance.

The Directorate of Youth and Sport, especially through the European Youth Centres and Foundation, has devoted much effort to the field of intercultural education. The 'All Different All Equal' campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance was set up to address

All different, but not indifferent!

the growth of racist hostility and intolerance towards minority groups. The Campaign itself sought to “bring people together and give extra momentum to the struggle against all forms of intolerance.”

The education pack, ‘All Different All Equal’, was produced in order to help youth workers and educators to contribute to the campaign. It identified two major directions for intercultural education:

- helping young people to gain the capacity to recognise inequality, injustice, racism, stereotypes and prejudices, and
- giving them the knowledge and the abilities which will help them to challenge and to try to change these whenever they have to face them in society.

The objectives and principles of intercultural education have also been pursued in a variety of ways through *intercultural learning* - a term that is more commonly used in non-formal education, particularly in European youth work.

## Anti-racist education

Anti-racist education takes as its starting point the assertion that we live in a multi-cultural and democratic society, in which all citizens have a right to equity and justice. Nevertheless, it recognises the very real existence of racism and racist attitudes in every modern society, and the impact that this can have for black pupils – both in terms of giving them a negative experience of the education process and in terms of diminishing their chances in later life. Anti-racist education attempts to address racist behaviour, language and practices, both individual and institutional, and to increase general awareness of the harmful effects of racism in modern society. It aims to help in the creation of a multi-racial and interdependent society in which all citizens’ rights are respected and protected.

## Development Education

Development education has strong links with global education, but gives particular emphasis to third generation rights – such as sustainable development, the right to a healthy environment, and peace. It also gives high priority to issues concerning the *interaction* of different societies and methods of development, which is why we have created a link in the diagram with intercultural education. Development education is thus holistic, in the sense that it is based upon a view of the world as one interconnected whole, and it is oriented towards the future.

The Development Education Association is a British organisation that has been working for almost 10 years in this field. They define development education as lifelong learning that:

- explores the links between people living in the “developed” countries of the North with those of the “developing” South, enabling people to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world
- increases understanding of the economic, social, political and environmental forces which shape our lives
- develops the skills, attitudes and values which enable people to work together to take action to bring about change and take control of their own lives.

## Environmental Education

The search for methods of sustainable development forms one of the key aims of development education, and leads naturally to concerns about the future state of the environment. From this perspective, questions concerning further economic development - particularly of

“Intercultural education proposes processes to enable the discovery of mutual relationships and the dismantling of barriers.”

‘All Different - All Equal’ Education Pack

“Education should further the appropriate intellectual and emotional development of the individual. It should develop a sense of social responsibility and of solidarity with less privileged groups and should lead to observance of the principles of equality in everyday conduct.”

UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms

“There is no way to peace.  
Peace is the way.”

M. K. Gandhi

developing countries – need to be balanced against their cost to mankind and the natural world as a whole. Environmental education aims to bring these questions to public attention, and to encourage greater care and respect for the natural resources of the world.

That also links in with human rights concerns. Since the life of mankind is dependent on a healthy and sustainable environment, consideration for the human rights of people throughout the globe, and of future generations, brings environmental issues to the forefront. Today, some people even speak of the need for official recognition of a separate environmental human right.

## ***Peace Education***

The natural resources of this world have not been equally distributed. They have been, and no doubt will continue to be, one source of violent conflict between different individuals and societies. There are, unfortunately, many others. Peace educators may be interested in more equitable or more sensible ways of sharing the earth’s resources as a means of resolving some of the conflicts in the world, but their focus is likely to be primarily on the conflicts themselves and more particularly on their structural causes. Peace education is based on a concept of peace that goes beyond the mere absence of war: peace can only be addressed by means of a search for justice and by understanding structural forms of exploitation and injustice.

Few people will need to be convinced of the need for peace education - for a better understanding of conflict, for respect among peoples that makes violent conflict less likely, and for the skills to transform potentially dangerous situations into peaceful ones. The world needs that: a *genuine* right to life for everyone, and a *genuine* respect for *everyone* – including, even, those among us who have made mistakes. Education for tolerance, for intercultural understanding, and fundamentally, education in the inherent and universal nature of basic human rights must be an important route towards that aim.

The period 2001-2010 has been declared the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (UN Doc A/RES/53/25). The International Peace Research Association, which was set up with support from UNESCO, has a Peace Education Commission that brings together educators working to promote a culture of peace.

## ***Law-related Education***

This is perhaps the most “formal” of the different education fields we have discussed so far, but law-related education is not just learning about the laws that exist, it is also about developing respect for the rule of law and for the fundamental principles of justice that are laid out in the international human rights treaties.

The connection between law-related education and human rights can be made at two separate levels: firstly, in the specific ‘legal’ rights that protect the individual against unfair trials, but secondly at the level of international law. The UN institutions, the European Court of Human Rights and other regional structures are legal institutions that exist to protect our human rights, but we need to know about them and we need to use them, if they are to be effective in this aim. They will not hunt us out.