

Office of the United Nations  
Secretary-General's Envoy  
on Youth

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for  
Human Rights

# WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

## FOURTH PHASE PLAN OF ACTION



UNITED NATIONS



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HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

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# Foreword

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The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally challenged our world. It has fostered acts of solidarity and a common sense of humanity, and simultaneously led to a frightening rise in human rights violations, including discrimination, racism and hate speech.

With 1.8 billion youth globally affected by the pandemic, there is a pressing need to ensure that human rights education builds more equal, sustainable, inclusive societies and economies that are resilient in the face of crisis, so that all countries can *build back better*. Equally, there is a need to move away from the stereotypical notions of young people as mere beneficiaries and see them as the “actors of change” they are. Engaging, supporting and working with young people towards a just, equitable and peaceful future is of the utmost importance.

Human rights education for youth, in both formal and non-formal settings, promotes a shared sense of humanity and fosters a common understanding that all human beings are equally deserving of dignity, respect and justice. It empowers youth to fulfil their role as active citizens, to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others, and to participate meaningfully in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes.

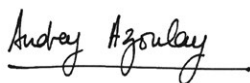
In recognition of this, the United Nations Member States launched the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education to advance human rights education programming for youth at the national level. This focus also contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 4 on Education and target 4.7, which touches upon the aims of education.

In adopting the Plan of Action for the fourth phase, Member States have committed to engage youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations as key partners at all stages. Young people must be the architects of human rights education efforts for their peers, within an enabling environment that supports their participation and leadership. And, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, human rights education policies and programmes must prioritize young people in situations of exclusion or vulnerability.

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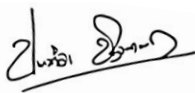
The United Nations Youth Strategy, *Youth 2030: working with and for young people*, commits the United Nations to increase its efforts to promote human rights education for youth, as well as global citizenship and education for sustainable development, with a view to foster civic awareness and participation, volunteerism and a culture of peace and non-violence among young people. Our organizations are committed to strengthening our work and assisting Member States in all their efforts towards achieving these goals.

**Audrey Azoulay**



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# PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2020–2024 **IN BRIEF**

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*This section summarizes the plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. It builds on the plans of action for the previous phases, highlighting the key actions to be taken by States and other stakeholders to strengthen implementation of human rights education for youth. The plan of action was adopted on 26 September 2019 by the Human Rights Council by its resolution 42/7.*



# I. World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005–ongoing)

## ■ *What is human rights education?*

Human rights education can be defined as education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights. Effective human rights education not only fosters knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, but also develops skills and attitudes that enable learners to take action: to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life. For those who have the responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, human rights education develops their capacity to do so.

Human rights education builds on fundamental human rights values – such as respect, equality and justice – and on the inalienability, interdependence, interrelatedness, indivisibility and universality of human rights. Educational activities should be practical and learner-centred, namely, by bringing human rights into contact with the real-life experience and context of learners. Such activities should empower learners to identify and claim their human rights entitlements and to seek solutions consistent with human rights standards to the challenges that they face. What is learned as much as the way it is learned should reflect human rights values, encourage participation and foster a learning environment where human rights are practiced.

## ■ *Why the World Programme for Human Rights Education?*

On 10 December 2004, the General Assembly, in its resolution 59/113, proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors.

Building on the foundations laid during the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004), the World Programme reflects the international community’s increasing recognition that human rights education can produce far-reaching

results. By promoting respect for human dignity and equality as well as participation in sustainable development and democratic decision-making, human rights education promotes peace and contributes to the long-term prevention of violence and conflicts.

The World Programme seeks to promote a common understanding of the 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 down to the grass roots. It provides practical guidance to States and other stakeholders in implementing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011).

Unlike the limited time frame of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004), the World Programme is open-ended and structured in consecutive phases. The first phase (2005–2009) focused on the integration of human rights education in primary and secondary education. The second phase (2010–2014) focused on human rights education in higher education and human rights training for civil servants, law enforcement officials and the military. The third phase (2015–2019) had the objective of strengthening the implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For information on the first, second and third phases, see [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/Programme.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/Programme.aspx).

## **II. Fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education: Youth Empowerment through Human Rights Education**

Since the early years of the United Nations, Member States have emphasized the importance of human rights education for youth, increasingly identifying it as a vital strategy for preventing and tackling current global challenges. They have also highlighted the role of youth as rights holders and key actors in realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development, securing peace and preventing violence and conflict.

Building on those notions, the plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme supports the development of a comprehensive human rights education strategy for youth at the national level, to be adapted to national contexts. The strategy is aimed at contributing to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 4 on inclusive and quality education. It is based on the understanding that human rights education empowers young people to recognize and fulfil their role as active citizens, to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others, and to participate accordingly in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes. In other words, human rights education is the key to young people’s empowerment, development and engagement, towards the achievement of a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

The plan of action, which benefited from the input and review of governmental and non-governmental experts and practitioners, including youth organizations and networks, identifies four components for effective human rights education for youth:

### **1. Policies and related implementation measures**

Policies and legislation should be developed, in collaboration with youth, to ensure the inclusion of human rights and human rights education in formal education and to support the work of civil

society – including youth groups and youth-led organizations – in conducting human rights education in non-formal settings. Policies should be accompanied by implementation and monitoring measures, and seek to fulfil related international obligations. All national policies, strategies and plans of action related to, or that may include, human rights education for youth – national initiatives on youth, education, human rights, including gender equality, global citizenship, sustainable development, peace, security, crime prevention, criminal justice, preventing violent extremism, fighting corruption and combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance – should be coherent and synergetic.

## 2. Teaching and learning processes and tools

Human rights education fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes empowering young people to exercise their rights, and to respect and uphold the rights of others.

★ With regard to **KNOWLEDGE**, young people are able to discuss:

- The history of human rights
- The close relationship between human rights, peace and sustainable development
- Human rights principles
- The role of human rights in the daily life of young people and the human rights issues of particular relevance to them
- The obligations of States in relation to human rights, and the protection mechanisms and complaint procedures available at the local, national, regional and international levels
- International human rights and related international laws
- Global challenges and their relationship with human rights
- Current and historical human rights issues and movements

★ With regard to **SKILLS**, young people are able:

- To analyse historical and contemporary issues from a human rights perspective

- To identify human rights issues in relation to key areas of life
- To identify and analyse human rights violations, their root causes and consequences
- To locate information and sources on human rights
- To apply human rights principles in resolving conflicts
- To lead, participate in and influence decision-making at various levels of government
- To network and collaborate with others in advocating for human rights
- To develop and defend proposals for changing policies or laws concerning human rights
- To prepare and carry out actions to promote and protect human rights
- To combat hate and discrimination online and offline, including by addressing risks on social media, such as in contacts with potential predators, violent content, bullying, hate speech and violent extremist views
- To analyse the impact of developments in information and communications technology on human rights

★ With regard to **ATTITUDES**, young people demonstrate:

- Respect for all, based on the recognition of the dignity and rights of all persons
- Respect for and appreciation of diversity
- Openness to self-reflection and learning
- An active interest in human rights and justice-related themes
- Appreciation for the interconnectedness of rights, responsibilities, equality, diversity, non-discrimination, social cohesion and intercultural and interreligious dialogue
- Confidence in claiming human rights and an expectation of duty bearers to protect, respect and fulfil human rights

- Empathy and solidarity with those suffering from violations of human rights
- A commitment to protect human rights
- A belief in collaborative efforts for human rights

Methodologies for human rights education for youth should be designed by youth, be learner-centred and gender-sensitive, and promote the active participation of learners. They should highlight experiential learning to enable young people to apply human rights concepts to their lives, context and experiences, and peer-to-peer learning to allow for emotional connections, dialogue and understanding among youth. Intergenerational and intercultural dialogue and human rights campaigns that strengthen solidarity between generations and cultures should accompany these educational efforts. Varied educational methods and settings, such as sport, film, arts, cultures, games and storytelling, can collaboratively engage learners of all backgrounds.

Teaching and learning materials and other resources should be specific and relevant to youth, building on human rights principles embedded in relevant cultural contexts and local historical and social developments. They should be made accessible to and engage with all young people without discrimination, taking into due account languages and disabilities, among other factors. Training and resource centres can be established – or existing ones equipped – to promote sustainable human rights training programmes for youth, alongside human rights education studies, research and other relevant activities. Youth councils and local youth structures should be created or strengthened to support access to and delivery of human rights education, while platforms for youth to influence policy at all levels should be promoted. Facilitating the use of technology could increase access to human rights education and strengthen networking, the exchange of relevant information and discussion.

### **3. Training of educators**

Previous phases of the World Programme highlighted the major role and responsibility that educators have in transmitting human rights values, skills, attitudes, motivation and practices. Accordingly, training in human rights and human rights education methodologies for relevant professional groups – including

for teachers, higher education teaching personnel and other education staff – is a priority component of any human rights education planning in the formal education system. The same applies to educators in non-formal settings, with priority given to young trainers, leaders, representatives of youth centres and organizations, activists and volunteers, to build pools of skilled young people to train their peers.

Adequate training of educators can be ensured by adopting a comprehensive human rights training policy based on an assessment of existing practice; introducing human rights and human rights education principles and standards into the training curriculum of educators; using participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented methodologies that address motivation, self-esteem and emotional development leading to human rights sensitization and action; and developing related resources and collaboration across formal, non-formal and informal settings. The expertise of young educators and educators from groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability should in particular be emphasized, respected and included.

A human rights training curriculum for educators should use learning objectives that encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour with respect to human rights and human rights education. It should cover human rights principles, standards and protection mechanisms, and address human rights issues arising in communities, including those that are youth-specific. Social skills, intercultural and interfaith dialogue skills and leadership styles that are democratic and coherent with human rights principles should be part of the curriculum. Educators should also be able to deal with trauma, incorporate social-emotional learning and centre the voices of affected communities.

#### **4. An enabling environment**

The learning environment and the broader surroundings, such as the family and the local community, inevitably influence the educational process. Accordingly, States should take measures to encourage the organization of and participation in human rights education activities, and guarantee freedom from reprisals for

those who do so. Human rights education efforts for youth must also be accompanied by measures to increase the protection and realization of young people's human rights.

Action within each of these components should engage young people as key partners at all stages: planning, design, implementation and follow-up, monitoring and evaluation.



### III. Process for national implementation

A coherent and coordinated national strategy for human rights education for youth requires a significant commitment by States to allocating adequate human and financial resources to support the needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

The plan of action proposes three steps for implementation, to be led by a **national coordinating body**. The body, which could be (or build on) an existing entity, should ensure coordination, information-sharing and the maximization of resources, and avoid duplication of efforts. It should include, among others, relevant ministries, national human rights institutions, youth representatives, including those representing youths in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, civil society organizations and representatives of education establishments. Other potential actors may include social service providers, media, community and religious leaders, school-based parent committees and parent-teacher associations, the private sector, donors, health and mental health practitioners, social media influencers and other actors. It should liaise with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other relevant United Nations agencies and share information on national progress.

The three steps proposed for implementation are as follows:

#### ✓ **STEP 1:**

#### **To undertake a national baseline study on human rights education for youth**

The study would analyse the current situation with regard to the above-mentioned four components concerning human rights education for youth (existing policy and related implementation measures, teaching and learning processes and tools, training of educators, and the learning environment) and assess the specific human rights learning needs of youth. The study could serve as a basis for a national dialogue among all stakeholders with a view to developing a national strategy.

✓ **STEP 2:**

**To develop a national strategy to promote human rights education for youth**

Building on the national baseline study, the strategy would set the objectives, priorities and outputs throughout the period 2020–2024 and beyond by identifying inputs, activities, mechanisms for coordination, specific outputs and the results to be achieved, including relevant indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework. The strategy should be broadly disseminated to all stakeholders, particularly youth.

✓ **STEP 3:**

**To implement, monitor and evaluate the national strategy**

The next step would entail the implementation of the strategy, and regular monitoring and evaluation to improve further implementation. The national coordinating body should make the evaluation reports publicly available.

## IV. International cooperation

The plan of action encourages the international community to provide assistance for the implementation of the national strategy, and also to make relevant efforts at the regional and international levels. Relevant actors include the United Nations system; professional training institutions affiliated to the United Nations; other international and regional intergovernmental organizations; relevant professional networks, associations and trade unions at all levels; networks of higher education institutions, national human rights institutions and/or non-governmental organizations at all levels; international and regional human rights resource and documentation centres; international and regional financial institutions and bilateral funding agencies; multilateral and bilateral development agencies; and transnational corporations and their networks.

Assistance to be provided may include:

- Supporting the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy
- Supporting all actors involved, in particular non-governmental organizations, professional associations, higher education institutions, national human rights institutions and other civil society organizations
- Facilitating information-sharing at all levels, including information on available materials and relevant institutions and programmes
- Supporting and/or developing capacity-building programmes for youth, particularly human rights training for youth trainers, and the participation of young people in relevant events
- Supporting existing networks of human rights education and training for youth actors and promoting the creation of new ones at all levels
- Providing financial support and resources, including for young people and youth organizations

The plan of action also requests States to report to the Human Rights Council, through OHCHR, on national progress at midterm (2022) and at the end of the fourth phase, in early 2025.







**PLAN OF ACTION FOR  
THE FOURTH PHASE  
(2020–2024) OF  
THE WORLD PROGRAMME  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
EDUCATION**

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# I. Introduction

## A. Definition of human rights education

**1.** The international community has increasingly expressed consensus on the fundamental contribution of human rights education to the realization of human rights and on developing a common understanding of every person's responsibility in this regard. It is recognized that human rights education contributes to the prevention of violence and conflicts, the promotion of equality and sustainable development and participation in decision-making processes within democratic systems.

**2.** Provisions on human rights education have been incorporated into many international instruments and documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education (art. 5); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (art. 7); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13); the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (art. 10); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 10); the International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (arts. 30 and 31); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 29); the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (art. 33); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (arts. 4 and 8); the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (Part I, paras. 33–34; Part II, paras. 78–82); the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (paras. 7.3 and 7.37); the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (Declaration, paras. 95–97; Programme of Action, paras. 129–139) and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference (paras. 22 and 107); and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (para. 131).

**3.** In December 2011, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.<sup>2</sup> The Declaration states that human rights education and training provides persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and develops their attitudes and behaviours to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights (art. 2). It affirms that “States, and where applicable relevant governmental authorities, have the primary responsibility to promote and ensure human rights education and training” and that “States should create a safe and enabling environment for the engagement of civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders” (art. 7). The UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974) preceded the United Nations Declaration as a global instrument dedicated specifically to human rights education.

**4.** In accordance with the above instruments, which contain elements of a definition of human rights education agreed upon by the international community, human rights education includes any learning, education, training or information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights.

**5.** Human rights education is a lifelong process that fosters:

- (a) Knowledge and skills: learning about human rights and acquiring skills to exercise them in daily life;
- (b) Attitudes: developing or reinforcing attitudes, values and beliefs that uphold human rights;
- (c) Behaviour: taking action to defend and promote human rights.

## **B. World Programme for Human Rights Education and related initiatives**

**6.** With a view to encouraging human rights education initiatives, Member States have adopted various specific international frameworks for action, such as the World Public Information

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution 66/137, annex.



Campaign on Human Rights (1988), focusing on the development and dissemination of human rights information materials; the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004) and its plan of action, encouraging the elaboration and implementation of comprehensive, effective and sustainable strategies for human rights education at the national level; the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010); the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014); and the International Year of Human Rights Learning (2008–2009).

**7.** Other international frameworks that promote human rights education include the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022); the Education for All (2000–2015) movement and the Education 2030 Framework for Action; the Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (2012–2016); and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**8.** On 10 December 2004, the General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education.<sup>3</sup> The World Programme, which began on 1 January 2005, is aimed at advancing the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors and is structured in consecutive phases. The first phase (2005–2009) was dedicated to the integration of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems; the revised draft plan of action for its implementation (A/59/525/Rev.1) was adopted by the Assembly in July 2005.<sup>4</sup> The second phase (2010–2014) focused on human rights education in higher education and human rights training for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels; the draft plan of action (A/HRC/15/28) was adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2010.<sup>5</sup> The third phase (2015–2019) focused on strengthening implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists; the plan of action (A/HRC/27/28 and Corr.1) was adopted by the Council in September 2014.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Resolution 59/113 A.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 59/113 B.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution 15/11.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 27/12.

## **C. Objectives of the World Programme for Human Rights Education**

**9.** The objectives of the World Programme are:

- (a) To promote the development of a culture of human rights;
- (b) To promote a common understanding, based on international instruments, of basic principles and methodologies for human rights education and its harmonization in national policies;
- (c) To ensure a focus on human rights education at the national, regional and international levels;
- (d) To provide a common collective framework for action by all relevant actors;
- (e) To enhance partnership and cooperation at all levels;
- (f) To survey, evaluate and support human rights education programmes and other educational programmes that promote human rights, to highlight successful practices, to provide an incentive to continue and/or expand them and to develop new ones;
- (g) To promote implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

## **D. Principles for human rights education activities**

**10.** Educational and training activities within the World Programme shall:

- (a) Promote the inalienability, interdependence, interrelatedness, indivisibility and universality of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development;
- (b) Foster respect for and appreciation of diversity, and opposition to discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth, place of residence, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, and other bases;

- (c) Encourage analysis of chronic and emerging human rights problems – including poverty, violent conflicts and discrimination – in the light of rapidly changing developments in the political, social, economic, technological and environmental fields, leading to responses and solutions that are consistent with human rights standards and foster social cohesion;
- (d) Empower communities and individuals to identify their human rights entitlements and to claim them effectively;
- (e) Develop the capacity of duty bearers, in particular governmental officials, to meet their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of those under their jurisdiction;
- (f) Build on the human rights principles embedded within the differing cultural contexts and take into account historical and social developments in each country;
- (g) Foster knowledge of, and the acquisition of skills to use, local, national, regional and international human rights instruments and mechanisms for the protection of human rights;
- (h) Make use of participatory methodologies that include knowledge, critical analysis and skills for individual and collective action furthering human rights and that take into consideration the age, cultural specificities and contexts of the learners;
- (i) Foster safe teaching and learning environments that encourage participation, the enjoyment of human rights and the full development of the human personality;
- (j) Be relevant to the daily life of the learners, engaging them in a dialogue about ways and means of transposing human rights from the expression of abstract norms to the reality of their social, economic, cultural and political conditions.

## II. Youth empowerment through human rights education: plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

### A. Scope

**11.** In its resolution 39/3, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare a plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme, devoted to youth. The Council placed special emphasis on education and training in equality, human rights and non-discrimination, inclusion and respect for diversity with the aim of building inclusive and peaceful societies. It also decided to align the fourth phase with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the synergies between the different concepts and educational methods mentioned therein.

**12.** The Council also encouraged States and relevant stakeholders, during the fourth phase, to strengthen efforts to advance implementation of the three previous phases.

**13.** The present draft plan of action provides guidance, based on internationally agreed-upon principles, to develop a comprehensive human rights education strategy for youth at the national level, to be adapted to national contexts. It lays out objectives, components, actions and practical steps for implementation, and potential relevant actors.

**14.** The plan of action builds on previous plans of action, in particular the ones for the first phase (focusing on human rights education in primary and secondary education) and for the second phase (focusing on human rights education in higher education).

It also builds on the plan of action for the third phase with regard to training of educators in formal and non-formal education.<sup>7</sup>

**15.** There is no internationally agreed-upon definition of youth.<sup>8</sup> The variety of approaches reflects the fact that youth is a fluid and non-homogeneous category, made up of individuals with evolving capacities, rather than a fixed age group. Unlike other forms of identity, it is a transitory period of life, which differs according to different sociocultural settings. Young people also have multiple and intersecting identities (gender, ethnicity, belonging to specific minorities or indigenous peoples, etc.) with which they identify, in addition to their age.

**16.** Accordingly, while recognizing that the United Nations Secretariat, for statistical purposes, defines “youth” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, the present plan of action acknowledges other definitions used by United Nations entities and bodies, as well as Member States, without prejudice.

## **B. Background**

**17.** Member States have emphasized at the United Nations the importance of human rights education for youth since the Organization’s early years. For instance, the 1965 Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples<sup>9</sup> and resolution XX “Education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” adopted by the International Conference on Human Rights, held in Tehran in 1968, stressed the energy, enthusiasm and creativity of young people and their role in shaping the future, hence the importance of human rights education to enable them to promote human rights and peace.

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<sup>7</sup> Plan of Action for the third phase (A/HRC/27/28 and Corr.1), paras. 18–22. Formal education is “education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies”; non-formal education is “education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned” as “an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals”, which includes educational activities conducted by civil society organizations (UNESCO glossary, available at <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary>).

<sup>8</sup> For information on various positions on this issue, see A/HRC/39/33, paras. 13–15.

<sup>9</sup> General Assembly resolution 2037 (XX).

**18.** Human rights education is an integral part of the right to education, as stipulated in several international human rights and education instruments and documents.<sup>10</sup> This is reiterated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: target 7 of Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education is to “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”.

**19.** In recent years, human rights education for youth has been increasingly identified as a strategy for preventing and tackling current global challenges.<sup>11</sup> In the 1995 Doha Declaration on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice into the Wider United Nations Agenda to Address Social and Economic Challenges and to Promote the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, and Public Participation, Member States expressed their commitment to develop educational programmes for youth as agents of positive change in the prevention of crime, focusing on the protection of human rights and the rule of law.<sup>12</sup> In its resolution 2250 (2015), the Security Council, affirming the important role that youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, urged Member States to support, as appropriate, quality education for peace that equips youth with the ability to engage constructively in civic structures and inclusive political processes. In his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the Secretary-General encourages “teaching respect for human rights and diversity, fostering critical thinking ... and developing the behavioural and socioemotional skills that can contribute to peaceful coexistence and tolerance” as elements of related national plans of action.<sup>13</sup> The United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People, launched by the Secretary-

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<sup>10</sup> See Plan of Action for the first phase (A/59/525/Rev.1), paras. 10–20; and Plan of Action for the second phase (A/HRC/15/28), paras. 18–20.

<sup>11</sup> See A/HRC/35/6.

<sup>12</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/174, annex, para. 10.

<sup>13</sup> A/70/674, para. 54.

General in 2018, commits the United Nations to increase efforts to promote human rights education and training for youth, as well as global citizenship and sustainable development education, without discrimination, to foster civic awareness and participation, volunteerism and a culture of peace and non-violence among young people.<sup>14</sup>

**20.** Youth empowerment is a priority commitment of States at the regional level. The African Union African Youth Charter (2006) and the African Youth Decade (2009–2018) Plan of Action support the development of national and regional plans of action for youth empowerment and participation and provide a framework for coordinated action in Africa. The Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth (2005) recognizes young people as subjects of rights and strategic development actors, guarantees their social and political participation and supports the adoption of related programmes and policies. States in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2013), guaranteeing “participation, without any form of discrimination, of adolescents and young people in public debate, in decision-making and in all policy and programme phases, in particular on matters that affect them directly” and strategies “to provide education from early childhood that promotes tolerance, an appreciation for diversity, mutual respect and respect for human rights, conflict resolution and peace”. The adoption of the Youth Development Index (2017) by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations marked its commitment to pay greater attention to youth in the region and invest accordingly. The Council of Europe Agenda 2020 adopted by the youth ministers and its draft Youth Strategy 2030 associate human rights education to the core principles and priorities of youth policy, notably regarding young people’s access to rights. The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010) recognizes a specific role for youth, especially in non-formal education, as important actors for human rights education. The European Union Youth Strategy (2019–2027) promotes youth empowerment, inclusion and participation in democratic life.

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<sup>14</sup> The fourth priority of the Strategy is “Youth and human rights”.

**21.** The above-mentioned documents and frameworks recognize that youth are rights holders and key actors in realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development, securing peace and preventing violence and conflict. The inclusive participation of young people in shaping and implementing policies that affect them, or will in the future, is essential. Human rights education empowers young people to understand, recognize and fulfil their role as active citizens,<sup>15</sup> to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others and to participate accordingly in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes. Human rights education is key to young people's empowerment, development and engagement towards a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

### C. Specific objectives

**22.** Taking into consideration the overall objectives of the World Programme, the present plan of action aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- (a) To build on progress made during the previous phases of the World Programme, encouraging the development, adoption and implementation of sustainable national strategies for human rights education for youth, inclusive of all youth without discrimination, with youth in leadership roles;
- (b) To expand human rights education for, with and by youth in formal and non-formal education and, indirectly, informal learning,<sup>16</sup> prioritizing young people in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, para. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Informal learning is a form of learning that is intentional or deliberate but not institutionalized. It is less organized and structured than either formal or non-formal education and includes learning activities occurring in the family, the workplace, the local community and daily life, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis (UNESCO glossary).

<sup>17</sup> These may include youth with disabilities; youth who belong to ethnic, religious and other minorities, including indigenous and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex youth; youth in disadvantaged socioeconomic situations or living in geographically remote areas; migrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons, and returnees; and youth who are without parental care, are in conflict with the law or are victims of violations and abuses.



- (c) To provide guidance on key components and actions for human rights education for youth in formal and non-formal education, against which national progress can be assessed;
- (d) To encourage and support young people's participation and leadership in human rights education programming for youth;
- (e) To promote human rights education for young people as complementary to other actions for protecting and promoting the human rights of youth;
- (f) To highlight the contribution of human rights education for youth in achieving sustainable development in the context of the 2030 Agenda and in preventing and tackling current global challenges;
- (g) To encourage networking and cooperation in human rights education for youth among local, national, regional and international governmental and civil society organizations dealing with human rights, youth, education and sustainable development.

## D. Components

**23.** The previous three phases of the World Programme identified elements for effective human rights education involving youth within formal education (first and second phases) and for human rights training of youth educators in formal and non-formal education (third phase).

**24.** Building on these elements, the present plan of action identifies the following four components for effective human rights education for youth.<sup>18</sup> Action within each component must engage young people as key partners at all stages: planning, design, implementation and follow-up, as well as regular monitoring and evaluation.

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<sup>18</sup> For further details on these components, see the respective plans of action of the previous phases.

## **1. Policies and related implementation measures**

**25.** The development, adoption, implementation and monitoring of policies fostering human rights education for youth include the following actions:

- (a) With regard to human rights education for youth within formal education (secondary, higher and vocational education), developing policies and legislation, in collaboration with youth as key partners, to ensure the inclusion of human rights and human rights education in formal education, including by:
  - (i) Reviewing existing education laws and curricula to include human rights education and adopting legislation on human rights education;
  - (ii) Ensuring that all relevant legislation and policies are aligned with human rights education principles based on good practice as contained in the present plan of action and other relevant international instruments and revising inconsistent legislation;
  - (iii) Developing policies and regulations regarding governance and management of youth-serving educational establishments that are consistent with human rights principles;
  - (iv) Developing policies to ensure that education and human rights education are accessible to all youth, without discrimination, particularly youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
  - (v) Establishing policies and practices for the selection, appraisal, compensation, discipline and promotion of teaching and other education personnel which respect the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, respect, fairness and transparency;
  - (vi) Considering human rights training as a criterion for State licensing or certification for teaching and other education personnel, as well as for other relevant youth-focused professions;

- (b) Regarding non-formal human rights education for youth conducted by civil society, including youth groups and youth-led organizations, developing policies and related measures to facilitate their work, for instance, validating certification; providing public spaces and financial support, including tax reductions; providing mentorships and other professional assistance, including organizing capacity-building initiatives; supporting human rights education programmes, including those online, with special consideration for initiatives involving youth-led organizations and the media; acknowledging youth work; etc.;
- (c) Ensuring coherence, links and synergies among related policies, strategies and plans of action, including in the following areas: human rights education; youth; education; human rights, including gender equality; rights of indigenous peoples; global citizenship; peace, security and the prevention of violent extremism, violence and conflict; crime prevention and criminal justice and the fight against corruption; sustainable development, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other development frameworks; combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; etc.;
- (d) Developing and adopting relevant, explicit and comprehensive policy implementation and evaluation measures, including mechanisms, responsibilities and resources and involving all stakeholders to ensure coherence, monitoring and accountability;
- (e) Fulfilling international obligations concerning human rights education for youth by:
  - (i) Promoting the ratification of international instruments encompassing human rights education for youth;
  - (ii) Aligning national policies and implementation measures with regional and international instruments concerning human rights education and youth;
  - (iii) Including information on human rights education for youth in national reports to relevant international monitoring mechanisms, including the treaty bodies (especially the Committee on the Rights of the Child

and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), special procedures (especially the Special Rapporteur on the right to education) and the universal periodic review;

- (iv) Cooperating with non-governmental organizations, including youth organizations, national human rights institutions, other sectors of civil society and human rights education specialists in preparing the above-mentioned national reports;
- (v) Implementing relevant recommendations made by international monitoring mechanisms.

## **2. Teaching and learning processes and tools**

**26.** Acknowledging that human rights education for youth is necessarily context-specific and needs to tackle specific learning needs of youth, and in an age-sensitive manner, in this section the plan of action offers general guidance on content and methodologies, as well as tools and resources.<sup>19</sup>

**27.** With regard to content, in line with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, human rights education fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes empowering young people to exercise their rights and respect and uphold the rights of others. Competencies in these areas include:<sup>20</sup>

- (a) Knowledge: young people are aware of and understand:
  - (i) The history of human rights and their evolving nature linked to human struggles for freedom, equality, justice and dignity; the inalienability, universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of human rights;
  - (ii) The close relationship between human rights, peace and sustainable development – the three pillars of the United Nations;

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<sup>19</sup> For more details, see the respective plans of action of the previous phases.

<sup>20</sup> This list is non-exhaustive and draws from the “core competencies” section of the guidelines on human rights education for secondary school systems developed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2012.

- (iii) The human rights principles of participation and inclusion; equality and non-discrimination, including gender equality; accountability; and freedom from violence;
  - (iv) The relevance of human rights to the daily life of youth at the individual, community and society levels;
  - (v) Human rights issues of particular relevance to youth at the local and national levels, in relation to pertinent international human rights documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Youth 2030 strategy;
  - (vi) State obligations in relation to human rights; definitions of rights holders and duty bearers; human rights legislation; mechanisms for protection and complaint procedures available when human rights are violated at the local, national, regional and international levels;
  - (vii) Human rights, international humanitarian law and protection during armed conflict; prevention of and accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity;
  - (viii) Critical global challenges (poverty, climate change, etc.) and their relationship with human rights; human rights violations and their root causes, both globally and locally, and factors contributing to supporting or undermining human rights (e.g., political, legal, cultural/social, religious and economic);
  - (ix) Current and historical human rights issues and movements – in their country, region and globally – and individuals and groups, including women, young people and groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, who have advanced the human rights cause;
- (b) Skills: young people are able to:
- (i) Analyse historical and contemporary political, legal, economic, cultural and social processes from a human rights perspective and using human rights language;

- (ii) Identify important human rights issues in relation to key areas of life for themselves and others (e.g., educational and work settings, family and community);
- (iii) Identify and analyse human rights violations, including their root causes and consequences; identify the individual and collective benefits of realized human rights;
- (iv) Locate information and sources on human rights relevant to their personal, academic and professional needs and interests, including through the use of information and communications technologies; evaluate information sources, including media and learning resources, and recognize points of view, bias and reliability;
- (v) Apply human rights principles and redress mechanisms in resolving interpersonal conflicts; identify and apply strategies for opposing all forms – including online – of discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment and gender-based violence;
- (vi) Lead, participate in and influence development and decision-making with regard to policies and programmes that affect them, at various levels of government; lead and participate in discussions and debates, including on youth-specific barriers to human rights, and contribute sensitively and constructively on controversial human rights topics;
- (vii) Network and collaborate with others in advocating for human rights and amplify marginalized voices;
- (viii) Develop and defend proposals for changing policies or laws concerning human rights (e.g., in the context of educational settings, the community or society); use human rights standards to claim rights towards duty bearers, locally and beyond, using legal and non-violent methods;
- (ix) Prepare and carry out actions to promote and protect human rights in private and public domains, including public-awareness activities; lead human rights organizing and campaigning efforts, including for

- victims of violations; conduct human rights education activities using appropriate methodologies;
- (x) Combat hate and discrimination online and offline; develop media literacy; handle risks on social media such as contacts with potential predators, violent content, bullying, hate speech and violent extremist views;
  - (xi) Identify and analyse the impact of developments in information and communications technology to the protection, respect and fulfilment of human rights, including the risks and opportunities linked to social media;
- (c) Attitudes: young people demonstrate:
- (i) Respect for themselves and others based on the recognition of the dignity and rights of all persons, and understanding of their responsibility to promote and protect human rights;
  - (ii) Respect for and appreciation of diversity, including through the use of inclusive language and attitudes, and opposition to discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth, place of residence, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity and other bases;
  - (iii) Openness to self-reflection and learning, including awareness of their own prejudices and biases and commitment to overcoming them so as to improve personal behaviour in line with human rights principles;
  - (iv) An active interest in human rights- and justice-related themes;
  - (v) Appreciation of the link among rights, responsibilities, equality, diversity, non-discrimination, social cohesion and intercultural and interreligious dialogue;
  - (vi) Confidence in claiming human rights and an expectation of duty bearers to protect, respect and fulfil human rights;

- (vii) Empathy and solidarity with those suffering human rights violations, injustice and discrimination, especially groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
- (viii) Commitment to protect human rights and to not being a bystander;
- (ix) A belief that each person working collaboratively with others can make a difference in promoting human rights locally and globally; motivation in carrying out collaborative efforts for human rights (e.g., as leaders, mediators or activists).

**28.** Appropriate methodologies for human rights education for youth should be designed by youth and include:

- (a) Learner-centred, gender-sensitive, contextualized methodologies and approaches that empower youth and solicit their active participation; activities that challenge their own biases, perspectives and privileges and encourage critical thinking and the exploration of alternative perspectives, paying attention to different needs and abilities and adapted across formal and non-formal settings; inclusive approaches so that different young voices, perspectives, cultures and experiences are heard and represented;
- (b) Experiential learning methodologies that enable young people to apply human rights concepts to their lives and experiences, including through community service and entrepreneurial activities, engaging in human rights advocacy on the local or global level, community organizing, meeting with government representatives and raising awareness among youth and community members about human rights;
- (c) Peer-to-peer learning – in safe spaces, possibly unsupervised by adults and where young people usually gather, which allow for emotional connections, dialogue and understanding among youth; soliciting input from youth participants and centring youth voices; featuring youth social movements, youth advocates and other leaders; supporting efforts of youth-led organizations, as they are especially placed to engage their peers in situations of exclusion or vulnerability and build upon young people’s diversity of experiences. The peer-to-peer approach can be accompanied by



intergenerational dialogue and human rights campaigns to strengthen solidarity between generations;

- (d) Varied and engaging educational methods and settings such as sport, film, arts, culture, games, storytelling, drama and role playing which can engage collaboratively learners of all backgrounds and are useful in developing knowledge and leadership skills, supporting intercultural competencies and providing safe spaces to engage women and girls and promote female leadership. These can challenge societal gender norms, foster youth-led programming regardless of identity, promote understanding across different identities to build peaceful, inclusive and equitable societies and foster team-building, empathy and respect.

**29.** Actions with regard to teaching and learning materials, support and other resources include:

- (a) Ensuring that materials build on human rights principles embedded in relevant cultural contexts, as well as local historical and social developments, and are specific and relevant to youth;
- (b) Establishing or strengthening existing training and resource centres to promote the establishment or enhancement of sustainable human rights training programmes for youth and ensure their quality, to provide facilities for human rights education studies and research and to collect, share, translate and adapt human rights education materials, including those issued by the United Nations;
- (c) Facilitating access to new information technologies for networking, exchange of relevant information and discussion (e.g., national and multi-country networks could engage in policy dialogue and exchange information on programmes and experiences, including good practices and lessons learned, as well as on training opportunities, methodologies, evaluation tools and other resources); using existing or new education portals and onsite/online communities of practice which integrate an online and offline network that is accessible to youth, connect the human rights education community and house resources and materials to implement human rights education at the national level;

- (d) Using technology to increase access to human rights education through social media, developing website resources and developing and facilitating online learning programmes, e-forums, massive open online courses, web conferencing and distance learning programmes and mobile apps;
- (e) Encouraging scholarships and exchanges as a means to promote human rights education for youth;
- (f) Creating or strengthening youth councils and local youth structures that support access to and delivery of human rights education; providing platforms for youth to influence policy at all levels;
- (g) Prioritizing youth, particularly youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, in developing accessible and engaging materials, taking due account of languages, including indigenous languages, and disabilities.

### **3. Training of educators**

**30.** Previous phases of the World Programme highlighted the importance of appropriate training of educators, i.e., those who design, develop, implement and evaluate human rights education and training activities in formal, non-formal and informal settings, whether they are civil servants or representatives of civil society.

**31.** The plans of action for the first and second phases highlighted the major role and responsibility that teachers, higher education teaching personnel and other education staff have to transmit human rights values, skills, attitudes, motivation and practices, both in carrying out their professional responsibilities and as role models. Accordingly, training in human rights and human rights education methodologies for those professional groups, aimed at fostering knowledge about, commitment to and motivation concerning human rights, is a priority component of any human rights education programming in the formal education system.

**32.** The same priority applies, by analogy, to youth educators in non-formal settings. In line with peer-learning methodology, training priority should be given to youth who are trainers, leaders, representatives of youth centres and organizations, activists and volunteers to build pools of skilled young people to train their

peers. Youth should participate in designing, implementing and evaluating training of youth educators.

**33.** Strategies for ensuring adequate training of educators should include the adoption of a comprehensive human rights training policy based on an assessment of existing practice; the introduction of human rights and human rights education principles and standards, as well as advocacy skills with regard to the human rights of youth, into the training curriculum; the fostering of appropriate methodologies and assessment methods; the development of related resources; and collaboration across formal, non-formal and informal settings. In all these courses of action, the expertise of educators – particularly young educators and educators from groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability – should be emphasized and respected.

**34.** Adopting a comprehensive human rights training policy for educators should include the following elements:

- (a) Adopting the internationally agreed definition of human rights education and training as an empowering process, transferring knowledge and developing skills, attitudes and behaviour which promote and protect human rights;
- (b) Pre-service and in-service training, required for all educators, adapted to their particular culture, education and experience, based on a training needs assessment and integrated into existing training;
- (c) The training of trainers, particularly those delivering pre-service and in-service training, who should be qualified and experienced human rights educators and reflect the diversity of learners;
- (d) Requiring human rights education for the qualification, accreditation and career development of educational staff and including human rights education in formal teacher training and in the training of other youth-focused professions such as social service and health;
- (e) Recognizing and supporting non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society carrying out training activities in human rights education;

- (f) Improving criteria and standards to evaluate training programmes and their implementation;
- (g) Creating enabling learning and working environments for educators, as human rights learning can take place effectively only where human rights are practised;
- (h) Ongoing support and mentoring, especially for youth educators and educators from groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability.

**35.** A human rights training curriculum for educators should include the following elements:

- (a) Learning objectives that encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour with respect to human rights and human rights education;
- (b) The principles outlined in section I.D “Principles for human rights education activities” above;
- (c) Human rights principles and standards and protection mechanisms in and beyond the communities where educators are active, and the rights and contributions of educators and learners in addressing human rights issues in the communities in which they live;
- (d) An appropriate methodology for human rights education that is participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented, takes into account cultural considerations and empowers youth participation;
- (e) Contextualized youth-specific human rights issues, for instance, how youth may face overlapping forms of discrimination due to their multiple and intersecting identities;
- (f) Educators’ social skills, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue skills and leadership styles that are democratic and coherent with human rights principles;
- (g) Information on existing teaching and learning resources for human rights education, including information and communications technologies and digital and social media, to build capacity to review and choose from among them as well as develop new resources;

- (h) Examples of integrating human rights education into content that educators already teach;
- (i) Strategies to deal with trauma, avoid retraumatization, incorporate social-emotional learning and centre voices of affected communities;
- (j) Addressing educators' own biases and prejudices, including when working with young people;
- (k) Regular and motivating learner assessment with youth-specific competencies, both formal and informal;
- (l) Incorporating needs assessment and evaluation results, with youth input, into educational activities;
- (m) Adapting curricula to formal or non-formal settings and to the local context and population.

**36.** Training methodologies for training of educators include participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented approaches and should address motivation, self-esteem and emotional development leading to human rights sensitization and action. Online platforms allow for self-paced learning, sharing of learning resources, learning across contexts, knowledge of other actors for advocacy and coalition building and digital curricula. Evaluation should be infused throughout the training process.<sup>21</sup>

#### **4. An enabling environment**

**37.** Wherever human rights education for youth takes place – in formal, non-formal or informal settings – the learning environment and the broader surroundings, including the family (parents, legal guardians and other family members) and the local community, inevitably influence the educational process.

**38.** Measures should be taken to encourage organization of and participation in human rights education activities and guarantee freedom from reprisals for those who do so. Accountability

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<sup>21</sup> See OHCHR, *From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology* (New York and Geneva, 2019), available at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training6en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training6en.pdf); OHCHR and Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education, *Evaluating Human Rights Training Activities: A Handbook for Human Rights Educators* (Montreal, 2011), available at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/EvaluationHandbookPT18.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/EvaluationHandbookPT18.pdf).

mechanisms must ensure youth safety and access. Human rights education must be independent of political influence and interference.

**39.** Youth face specific challenges in ensuring respect for their rights in society, and may also face overlapping forms of discrimination due to their multiple and intersecting identities.<sup>22</sup> National strategies for human rights education for youth must be accompanied by measures to increase the protection and realization of young people’s human rights, including the development of redress mechanisms accessible to youth.

## **E. Process for national implementation**

**40.** A coherent and coordinated national strategy for human rights education for youth, in line with the present plan of action, requires significant commitment by Member States. While the strategy should build on progress made at the national level during the previous phases of the World Programme, adequate human and financial resources are needed to support the needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a national strategy for human rights education for youth. A national coordinating body should lead this process; three steps for implementation are proposed in the plan of action.

### **1. Actors and coordination**

**41.** As a starting point, Member States should designate a relevant department as a focal point responsible for taking the initiative, responding to or supporting the initiative of others to establish a national coordinating body involving relevant government entities and civil society, and with youth representatives as essential participants, that should consult with local youth within the country. The body, which could be or build on an existing entity, would ensure coordination, information-sharing and maximization of resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Member States should facilitate opportunities for participation by all relevant actors; the members of the national coordinating body

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<sup>22</sup> In the report “Youth and human rights” (A/HRC/39/33), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights described challenges and discrimination encountered by young people in gaining access to their rights.

should reflect the diversity of the youth population of the country, including youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability.

**42.** The following national actors must be included in the national coordinating body:

- (a) Relevant ministries (education, youth, justice, etc.) and relevant local government entities;
- (b) National human rights institutions;
- (c) Youth representatives (youth-led organizations, network councils and volunteer groups), including young human rights defenders and those representing youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
- (d) Civil society organizations and networks working on human rights and human rights education, education, youth, peace and sustainable development;
- (e) Representatives of secondary, higher and vocational education establishments, including teacher-training institutions and research institutes, as well as teachers' associations and unions.

**43.** Other potential actors may include social service providers, media, community and religious leaders, school-based parent committees and parent-teacher associations, the private sector, donors, health and mental health practitioners, social media influencers and other actors as appropriate.

**44.** Representatives of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations in the country may participate in the meetings of the national coordinating body.

**45.** The national coordinating body should cooperate with national agencies responsible for drawing up country reports for submission to the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the treaty bodies, special procedures and the universal periodic review, and to other international or regional intergovernmental bodies<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For instance, a specific UNESCO mechanism monitors implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

to ensure that progress in human rights education under the plan of action is included in those reports. It should also liaise with OHCHR and share information on national progress.

## **2. Steps for implementation**

**46.** The national coordinating body is responsible for leading and overseeing the national strategy for human rights education for youth, including needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; three steps to this end are outlined below.

**47.** The participation of youth as key partners in every step of the national strategy is essential; youth must be empowered to take the lead on actions. Avenues for youth to participate should be created or strengthened, including by setting up youth advisory boards or youth working groups on human rights education, and youth should be regular counterparts to provide their perspectives, for instance through a combination of national online and offline polls using popular social media platforms, as feasible. Diversity of youth voices should be ensured.

### **Step 1 – Undertake a national baseline study on human rights education for youth**

**48.** Step 1 should entail the following actions:

- (a) Mandate a competent institution to carry out a national assessment study, through broad consultations, to be published and widely disseminated to the public once completed. The study should analyse the following:
  - (i) The current national situation of human rights education for youth in the four areas highlighted in section II.D “Components” (policy and related implementation measures; teaching and learning processes and tools; training of educators; an enabling environment), including existing initiatives, good practices, shortcomings and obstacles, with particular attention to initiatives and projects initiated by young people;
  - (ii) Human rights learning needs of youth, based on a survey on their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours;



- (iii) Historical and cultural contexts that may influence human rights education for youth, including the human rights situation of youth and barriers to their engagement and participation;
  - (iv) Useful experiences, methodologies, resources and tools existing at the subregional, regional and international levels;
  - (v) Involvement of various actors within formal, non-formal and informal education;
  - (vi) The role, content and methodology of related types of education (education for sustainable development, peace education, global education, citizenship education) that may exist in the country;
- (b) Determine which actions of the four components outlined in section II.D are already implemented and to what extent;
  - (c) Consider how to build on existing initiatives, good practice and lessons learned, how to use opportunities and which measures are necessary to address shortcomings and obstacles.

**49.** The outputs of step 1 include:

- (a) A national baseline study on human rights education for youth;
- (b) A national dissemination campaign regarding the baseline study through, for example, online and traditional publications and communications materials, conferences and public discussion. Special focus should be placed on disseminating results to youth spaces.

**Step 2** – *Develop a national strategy to promote human rights education for youth*

**50.** Step 2 should entail the following actions:

- (a) Build on the national baseline study, developing objectives for a national strategy (2020–2024 or beyond) using the plan of action as a reference;
- (b) Set priorities on the basis of the findings of the baseline study, taking into account the most pressing needs and/or available

opportunities and focusing on impactful interventions that will secure sustainable change, rather than ad hoc activities, with particular regard to youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;

- (c) Develop the national strategy, identifying:
  - (i) Inputs: human, financial and time resources required;
  - (ii) Activities: tasks, responsibilities and time frames;
  - (iii) Mechanisms for coordination;
  - (iv) Outputs (such as legislation, educational materials or training programmes);
  - (v) Existing laws, policies and programmes that can contribute to the strategy or need to be revised to support an enabling environment;
  - (vi) Results to be achieved, and related quantitative and qualitative indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework.

**51.** The output of step 2 is the national strategy for human rights education for youth, in a language accessible to youth, which identifies objectives, priorities and outputs for 2020–2024 or beyond and should be broadly disseminated among institutions and stakeholders, particularly youth.

### **Step 3 – Implement, monitor and evaluate the national strategy**

**52.** Step 3 should entail the following actions:

- (a) Implement planned activities;
- (b) Monitor implementation and conduct evaluations to improve further implementation of the national strategy;
- (c) Acknowledge and disseminate information on progress and challenges in implementing the strategy.

**53.** The national coordinating body should evaluate the national strategy and make the evaluation reports publicly available. Evaluations should be inclusive and transparent, reflecting human rights values; they should address the four areas of human rights education for youth identified in section II.D “Components”, as well as:

- (a) Youth involvement and leadership in the national strategy;
- (b) Geographic breadth of implementation of the national strategy;
- (c) Inclusivity of the strategy for youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
- (d) Cross-sectorial collaboration beyond the educational sector.

**54.** The outputs of step 3 are the identified outputs of the national strategy.

## **F. International cooperation**

### **1. Reporting to the Human Rights Council**

**55.** Member States will submit a midterm national progress report in 2022 to OHCHR, which will compile all received information in a report to the Human Rights Council. In early 2025, they will submit a final national evaluation report to OHCHR, which will prepare and submit a final report on the implementation of the fourth phase to the Council by the end of 2025. Progress review meetings, involving relevant stakeholders, could take place during relevant Council sessions.

### **2. International support**

**56.** The international community should provide assistance to the implementation of the national strategy, as well as related efforts carried out at the regional and international levels.

**57.** United Nations human rights mechanisms, within their specific mandates, can support national efforts under the plan of action. United Nations treaty bodies, when examining State party reports, may review and advise on implementation of treaty provisions relating to human rights education for youth. Thematic and country special procedures of the Human Rights Council may review and advise on related progress within their specific mandates. National human rights education efforts for youth should be regularly reviewed in the context of the universal periodic review.

**58.** International cooperation and assistance may be provided by:

- (a) The United Nations system, including its specialized agencies, the United Nations University and the United Nations-mandated University for Peace;
- (b) Professional training institutions affiliated to the United Nations, such as those concerned with social welfare, medical and health services, drugs and trafficking prevention, refugees and migration, conflict prevention and peacebuilding and criminal procedure;
- (c) Other international and regional intergovernmental organizations;
- (d) Relevant international, regional and national professional networks, associations and trade unions;
- (e) International, regional and national networks of higher education institutions, national human rights institutions and/or non-governmental organizations;
- (f) International and regional human rights resource and documentation centres;
- (g) International and regional financial institutions and bilateral funding agencies;
- (h) Multilateral and bilateral development agencies;
- (i) Transnational corporations and their networks.

**59.** It is essential that actors collaborate closely in order to maximize resources, avoid duplication and ensure coherence.

**60.** The above-mentioned organizations and institutions may:

- (a) Support Member States and the national coordinating body in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy;
- (b) Support other national and local actors involved, in particular non-governmental organizations, professional associations, higher education institutions, national human rights institutions and other civil society organizations;
- (c) Facilitate information-sharing at all levels by identifying, collecting and disseminating information on good practice,

for example through databases and the awarding of prizes, as well as on available materials and relevant institutions and programmes;

- (d) Support and/or develop capacity-building programmes for youth, particularly human rights training of youth trainers, and the participation of youth in relevant events, as well as the development of educational materials based on good practice;
- (e) Support existing networks of human rights education and training youth actors and promote the creation of new ones, at all levels;
- (f) Provide financial support and resources, including for youth and youth organizations.





## **ANNEX**

# **HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 42/7 OF 26 SEPTEMBER 2019, ADOPTING THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE FOURTH PHASE OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

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## 42/7. World Programme for Human Rights Education: adoption of the plan of action for the fourth phase

*The Human Rights Council,*

*Guided* by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

*Reaffirming* that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as stipulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in other international human rights instruments, States are duty-bound to ensure that education is aimed at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 59/113 A of 10 December 2004, in which the Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, in which the Assembly decided, inter alia, that the Human Rights Council should promote human rights education and learning,

*Reaffirming* the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/137 of 19 December 2011,

*Recalling* its resolutions on the World Programme for Human Rights Education,

*Recalling also* that the World Programme is an ongoing initiative, structured in consecutive phases, to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors, and that States should continue the implementation of previous phases while taking the measures necessary to implement the current phase,

*Recognizing* that the World Programme focused in its first phase on the integration of human rights education into the primary and secondary school systems, in its second phase on human rights education in higher education and human rights training for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel, and in its third phase on furthering the

implementation of the first two phases and on promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists,

*Recalling* Human Rights Council resolution 39/3 of 27 September 2018, in which the Council decided to make youth the focus group of the fourth phase of the World Programme and to align the fourth phase with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a plan of action for the fourth phase,

*Noting* the United Nations Youth Strategy launched by the Secretary-General in September 2018, which commits the United Nations to step up efforts to protect and promote the rights of young people and to support their civic and political engagement, including through human rights education,

**1.** *Takes note with appreciation* of the draft plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and welcomes the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparing the said draft plan of action in consultation with States, relevant intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society and youth;

**2.** *Adopts* the plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education;

**3.** *Calls upon* all States and other relevant stakeholders to develop initiatives in accordance with the World Programme and, in particular, to implement, within their capabilities, the plan of action for the fourth phase, and encourages States to submit their midterm progress reports and final national evaluation reports on the implementation of the fourth phase to the Office of the High Commissioner, as specified in the plan of action;

**4.** *Encourages* States and relevant stakeholders, during the fourth phase of the World Programme, to strengthen efforts to advance also the implementation of the three previous phases, including by undertaking their own activities in support of all four phases;

**5.** *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, in close cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, to promote the national implementation of the plan of action, to provide technical assistance when requested and to coordinate related international efforts;

**6.** *Appeals* to relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, and to all other international and regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, within their respective mandates, to promote and provide technical assistance when requested for the national implementation of the plan of action;

**7.** *Encourages* all national human rights institutions to assist in the implementation of human rights education programmes, in accordance with the plan of action;

**8.** *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to disseminate the plan of action widely among States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society;

**9.** *Reminds* States of the need to prepare and submit their national evaluation reports on the third phase of the World Programme to the Office of the High Commissioner by April 2020;

**10.** *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to submit a final report on the implementation of the third phase of the World Programme, based on national evaluation reports, to the Human Rights Council at its forty-fifth session;

**11.** *Decides* to follow up on the implementation of the World Programme in 2022, and requests the Office of the High Commissioner to prepare, from within existing resources, a midterm progress report on the implementation of the fourth

phase of the World Programme and to submit it to the Council at its fifty-first session;

**12.** *Also decides* to convene at its forty-eighth session a high-level panel discussion to mark the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training on the theme “The tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices, challenges and the way forward”, decides further that the discussion will be fully accessible to persons with disabilities, and requests the Office of the High Commissioner to prepare a summary report of the discussion and to submit it to the Human Rights Council by its forty-ninth session.

*39<sup>th</sup> meeting*  
*26 September 2019*

[Adopted without a vote.]



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