WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

FIFTH PHASE

PLAN OF ACTION



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

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Foreword

Our world is going through tremendous turbulence and uncertainty, from escalating conflict to climate chaos, to growing divisions and discrimination. Children and youth, who make up more than a quarter of the world's population, often bear the brunt of these challenges, and they wonder what the future holds.

At the same time, their mobilization, advocacy and action on issues like climate justice and gender equality have shown that their voices matter, that they have solutions and that they want to be heard. Children and young people are key agents of change, and they represent the next generation of leaders.

The decision to dedicate the fifth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education – from 2025 to 2029 – to children and youth is very welcome. Creating a culture of human rights among this crucial group of people is one of the most powerful tools we have to drive positive change.

Human rights education equips children and youth with knowledge, skills and attitudes for action. For example, in an increasingly complex digital landscape, awareness about their rights online, including their rights to privacy, non-discrimination and freedom of expression, is vital. Such education empowers them to reject harmful content and online violence, and to use digital tools responsibly to promote human rights.

Human rights education also provides children and young people with the tools to engage in political processes, to understand the role of government and the law, and to recognize how they can drive positive change. For example, learning about the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and the right to political participation, can help prepare them to be future leaders on climate action.

Human rights education can instil in children and youth compassion and solidarity towards their fellow human beings. It can inspire an understanding of how social and cultural norms may propagate harmful stereotypes and build their confidence to speak out in support of those who experience discrimination.

This plan of action is a tool for all stakeholders working with children and youth on human rights and education. Based on internationally agreed standards, it can help States to develop comprehensive human rights education strategies – particularly about human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality – that can be adapted to national contexts.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is committed to working with governments, the private sector and civil society – children and youth in particular – to make human rights education a cornerstone of global action.

As we embark on this new phase of the World Programme, we must support human rights education for, with and by children and youth. It is one of the best investments we can make in a more just, equitable and sustainable future.

Volker Türk



United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2025–2029 IN BRIEF



Introduction

The World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005–ongoing) is a global initiative launched by the General Assembly to advance the implementation of human rights education worldwide, organized in five-year consecutive phases to focus relevant efforts on specific sectors/audiences. This initiative – complemented by the adoption, in 2011, of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training – reflects the international community's 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 life, effective human rights education promotes peace and contributes to the long-term prevention of violence and conflicts.

As decided by the Human Rights Council, the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the World Programme focuses on human rights education for children and youth, with an emphasis on education in relation to human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality. It is based on the understanding that human rights education is crucial to empower children and youth to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others, and to ensure their meaningful participation in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes. The plan of action of the fifth phase, included in this publication, provides guidance to develop a comprehensive human rights education strategy at the national level, in both formal and non-formal education, building on the plans of action of previous phases, as relevant (for more information, see the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005–ongoing) web page).

Four components for effective human rights education

The plan of action identifies four components for effective human rights education for children and youth. Action within each component must engage children and youth as key partners at all stages: planning, design, implementation, follow-up, and monitoring and evaluation.

A. Policies and related implementation measures

Policies and legislation should be developed or reviewed to ensure the inclusion of human rights education in formal education and to facilitate the work of relevant actors conducting human rights education in non-formal settings. All national policies, strategies and plans of action related to human rights education for children and youth should be coherent and synergetic, accompanied by implementation and evaluation measures, and seek to fulfil related international obligations.

B. Teaching and learning processes and tools

Human rights education fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes empowering children and youth to exercise their rights, and to respect and uphold the rights of others. The plan of action focuses on competencies in the three thematic areas of the fifth phase:

Education concerning	Human rights and digital technologies	Environment and climate change	Gender equality
KNOWLEDGE			
Children and youth are able to identify and explain:	• Their rights in the digital environment. • The potential of digital technologies to promote and protect human rights. • The possible adverse consequences of exposure to risks relating to digital content and contact. • Strategies to reduce harm and to protect their personal data, privacy and identity and those of others. • A healthy balance of digital and non-digital activities.	• The adverse effects of the multiple planetary crisis, including climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and other environmental challenges, on the enjoyment of human rights. • What their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment entails, including related policies and frameworks. • The principles of intergenerational equity, justice and solidarity, and State obligations to take action on climate change. • The effects of environment-related harm on certain groups of children and youth. • The link between patterns of inequity and the vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change, and the role of climate justice movements in addressing these issues.	• The equal rights of every person in all their diversities. • The historical roots, manifestations and evolution of gender-based discrimination, including gender-based violence. • Implications of social and cultural norms and attitudes associated with discriminatory gender roles and gender stereotypes, including on mental health. • The interaction and intersectionality of gender with other characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, status, sexual orientation and location, leading to discrimination. • The right of every person to make autonomous and informed decisions about their own bodies and reproductive functions. • Gender-related barriers to quality education and empowerment opportunities.

Education concerning	Human rights and digital technologies	Environment and climate change	Gender equality
SKILLS			
Children and youth are able to:	• Critically analyse the place of technologies in society and their uses for social participation and inclusion. • Responsibly use online information and combat disinformation, misinformation and other forms of harmful content. • Use digital platforms to express their views and advocate for their rights. • Engage in digital environments in a safe and respectful way. • Take actions in solving problems through the responsible use of technologies. • Hold States and other relevant actors, including businesses, accountable for failure to adopt human rights-based approaches in their use of digital technologies. • Seek support and engage with remedial mechanisms in cases where their rights in relation to the digital environment are violated.	• Access accurate and reliable environmental information, and critically reflect upon environmental challenges in life. • Contribute to protecting the environment, addressing the impacts of climate crisis and promoting climate justice. • Engage in and influence climate change and environmental decision-making processes. • Demand urgent and decisive measures to tackle global environmental harm. • Hold States and other actors, including businesses, accountable for failure to protect children and youth against environmental harm and to ensure their well-being. • Recognize threats against efforts for environmental protection, and take security and safety measures as appropriate. • Seek justice and obtain remedies for violations of their rights relating to environmental harm and other climate-related damage.	• Challenge harmful gender-based biases and ideologies that limit any person from enjoying their human rights, and uphold diversity and inclusion. • Access comprehensive sexuality education and make informed decisions, including about their sexual and reproductive health. • Especially for girls and women, exercise their rights on an equal basis with boys and men. • Critically and respectfully engage in conversations around gender equality and related issues, even when disagreements arise. • Seek support, justice and remedies when affected by gender-based violence.

Education concerning	Human rights and digital technologies	Environment and climate change	Gender equality
ATTITUDES			
Children and youth demonstrate:	• Respect for the rights and dignity of others in digital environments. • Positive behaviours that address discrimination, violence and harmful behaviour that occur through technology. • Willingness to leverage digital technologies for human rights. • Digital citizenship and agency. • Resilience when becoming the target of harmful digital activities, and empathy and solidarity with others that are targeted. • Appreciation of social inclusion using digital platforms and social media. • Media maturity and an understanding of digital balance.	• A sense of shared responsibility for a healthy planet. • Respect for the role of traditional and Indigenous knowledge and practices in stewarding the environment and combating climate change and its impacts. • Willingness to share accurate environmental information with others and encourage action to promote sustainability and human rights. • Agency in taking action for the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and pushing for climate justice and action to promote accountability for environmental harms. • Optimism and hope towards a sustainable and thriving future.	• Confidence to combat gender inequalities and discriminatory gender norms. • Especially for boys and men, positive masculinity. • Openness to and respect for gender equality and diversity. • Empathy towards the perceptions and lived experiences of those who have experienced gender-based discrimination.

Methodologies for human rights education for children and youth should be learner-centred, participatory, gender-responsive, age-appropriate, transformative and inclusive. They should highlight experiential learning to enable children and youth to apply human rights principles to their lives, context and experiences, and foster peer-to-peer learning to allow for emotional connections, dialogue and understanding. Intergenerational and intercultural dialogue that strengthens solidarity between generations and cultures should accompany these efforts. Varied educational methods and settings, such as sports and outdoor learning, films, the arts, cultural activities, games and storytelling, can engage learners of all backgrounds and foster creativity.

Teaching and learning materials, support and other resources should build on human rights principles embedded in relevant cultural contexts and on local historical and social developments; be specific, scientifically accurate and relevant to children and youth; and be accessible to and engage with all children and youth without discrimination, taking into account languages, including Indigenous languages, and the needs of persons with disabilities.

C. Training of educators

Ensuring adequate training of educators should include the adoption of a comprehensive human rights training policy; fostering of appropriate methodologies and assessment methods, and development of related resources; and collaboration across formal, non-formal and informal settings, and among relevant stakeholders. Intergenerational learning and the expertise and well-being of educators, including children and young educators, should be emphasized.

A human rights training curriculum for educators should include:

- Learning objectives encompassing knowledge, skills and attitudes, both with respect to human rights and human rights education.
- Human rights principles, local protection mechanisms and child- and youth-specific human rights issues, and the contribution of educators and learners in addressing those.

- Gender equality issues, including the impact of gendered behaviours on teaching and learning processes.
- Ways to ensure equal treatment and participation, and an inclusive and collaborative learning environment.
- Guidance on appropriate teaching methodologies, on integrating human rights education in different subjects and incorporating needs assessment and education results into educational activities, and adapting curricula to formal, non-formal and, in general, local contexts.
- Cultural responsiveness and social, intercultural and leadership skills coherent with human rights principles.
- Strategies to recognize a victim of harm and to respond appropriately.

Training of educators should adopt participatory, learner-centred, peer-to-peer, experiential and action-oriented methodologies and address motivation, self-esteem, emotional development, critical thinking and reflection leading to human rights action. Evaluation should be infused throughout the training process.

D. An enabling environment

The learning environment, which encompasses physical and virtual spaces, and the broader surroundings, including the family and the local community, inevitably shapes the educational process. Human rights teaching and learning must happen in learning environments that promote and protect human rights. States should take measures to encourage the organization of and participation in human rights education activities and guarantee academic freedom and protection from reprisals for those who do so. Human rights education efforts for children and youth must also be accompanied by measures to increase the protection and realization of their human rights.

Regarding **human rights and digital technologies**, States should address challenges to improve digital inclusion and ensure equal access to digital environments for all children and youth, supported by safe, inclusive digital learning systems and proper infrastructure. Digital service providers should conduct human

rights due diligence to mitigate harms and prevent risks to human rights and actively engage with children and youth when developing products and services. No restrictions should be placed on the exercise of human rights by children and youth, including their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in the digital environment, other than those that are lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Regarding the **environment and climate change**, a safe, healthy and resilient infrastructure is important to effective learning. This includes ensuring safe travel to school, locating schools away from environmental hazards, and constructing buildings with adequate heating, cooling, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Regular inspections are needed to ensure the safety and resilience of infrastructures and the protection of students and educators from the impact of climate change and other natural disasters. States should ensure the right to education during emergencies by planning for continuity and sustainability. Environmentally friendly school facilities, such as those using renewable energy or with edible gardens, can benefit learners.

Regarding **gender equality**, in all educational environments appropriate conditions should be in place to ensure that all children and youth are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential. They should have equal access to the same quality of teachers, amenities and opportunities; unequal distribution of students in certain disciplines should be addressed. States must take measures to curtail violence against all children and youth, particularly women, girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, including through mechanisms for preventing, reporting and investigating incidents of violence in educational establishments.

Process for national implementation

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

A. Actors and coordination

States should assign a relevant ministry to lead, respond to or support the establishment of a coordinating body involving relevant government entities and civil society. The body, which could be (or could build on) an existing entity, should ensure coordination, information-sharing, maximization of resources and reporting. It should include relevant ministries; national human rights institutions; child and youth representatives; civil society organizations and networks; and representatives of educational establishments.

Other actors which should be encouraged to take an active role in promoting human rights education for children and youth include social service providers, local and national media, community and religious leaders, Indigenous Peoples and minorities, school-based parent committees and parent-teacher associations, the private sector, donors, health and mental health practitioners, social media influencers, cultural institutions and artists.

States should submit a midterm national progress report in 2027 and a final national evaluation report in early 2030 to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to inform the midterm and final reports to the Human Rights Council on the implementation of the fifth phase. Coordination with other relevant State reporting commitments to international and regional bodies and mechanisms should be ensured.

B. Steps for implementation

The coordinating body would lead and oversee the national strategy for human rights education for children and youth, including needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in line with the three-step phased approach outlined below. In the absence of a coordinating body, the approach could be implemented collaboratively by relevant actors.

The participation of children and youth as key partners in every step is essential. Avenues for their participation, including children and youth advisory boards or working groups, should be created or strengthened.

✓ STEP 1:

Undertake a national baseline study on human rights education for children and youth

A national assessment should be carried out to: (a) analyse the current national situation with regard to the above-mentioned four components concerning human rights education for children and youth; (b) determine which actions of the four components have already been implemented and to what extent; and (c) consider how to build on existing initiatives, good practices and lessons learned, how to use opportunities, and how to address shortcoming and obstacles. The resulting national baseline study should be broadly disseminated, particularly to children and youth.

✓ STEP 2:

Develop a national strategy to promote human rights education for children and youth

Building on the national baseline study, objectives and priorities should be set and a national strategy developed identifying results to be achieved and inputs, activities, mechanisms for coordination, and outputs (such as new or revised legislation, educational material or training programmes). The strategy should be disseminated broadly among institutions and stakeholders, particularly children and youth.

✓ STEP 3:

Implement, monitor and evaluate the national strategy

Implementation of planned activities, monitoring and evaluation through consultations with relevant stakeholders, documentation of good practices and dissemination of information on progress and challenges should be carried out. Evaluation reports should be publicly available and easily accessible.



PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE FIFTH PHASE (2025–2029) OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 54/7, the Human Rights Council decided that the fifth phase (for 2025–2029) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education would focus on children and youth, with special emphasis on human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality. The Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare the plan of action and to then submit it to the Council at its fifty-seventh session.

2. In the present report, OHCHR outlines the scope, background, specific objectives and components of the plan of action and describes the steps to implement it. The report draws on, inter alia, relevant United Nations instruments and documents, the plans of action for the previous phases of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, materials published by OHCHR and other United Nations entities, and United Nations initiatives involving or led by children and young people. A youth consultation organized on the sidelines of the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum 2024, and an expert consultation with representatives of United Nations entities, civil society organizations and networks, children and youth, provided further elements. On 10 May 2024, OHCHR circulated a consolidated text among Member States, United Nations entities, national human rights institutions and civil society; by 24 June 2024, it had received 34 responses with comments, which have been taken into consideration in the report.

II. Scope

3. Under the overall umbrella of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, the present plan of action provides guidance for the period 2025–2029, based on internationally agreed-upon principles, to develop a comprehensive human rights education strategy for children and youth at the national level,[1] in both formal and non-formal education,[2] to be adapted to national contexts. It lays out objectives, components, actions and practical steps for implementation, and relevant actors.

4. An overall introduction to the World Programme for Human Rights Education, launched in 2005, including the background to it, its objectives, definitions, and principles for human rights education, is set out in paragraphs 1 to 10 of the plan of action for the fourth phase, adopted by the Human Rights Council.[3] That introduction should continue to frame the work on human rights education. Although not reproduced in the present report, it should be considered to form an integral part of this plan of action. *[For ease of reference, please see **annex II**, which includes paragraphs 1 to 10 of the plan of action for the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.]*

5. In article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as "every human being below the age of 18 years".

6. There is no internationally agreed-upon definition of youth.[4] While the United Nations Secretariat, for statistical purposes, defines "youth" as persons aged from 15 to 24 years, and the Security Council refers to persons aged from 18 to 29 years (in its

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1 For the purposes of the present plan of action, the word "national" is to be read to include subnational levels and Indigenous Peoples, as applicable.

2 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 (definitions from the UNESCO glossary, available at http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary).

3 Human Rights Council resolution 42/7.

4 A/HRC/39/33, paras. 13–15.

resolution 2250 (2015), the present plan of action acknowledges other definitions used by United Nations entities and bodies, as well as by States, without prejudice.

7. Looking beyond the criterion of age, both childhood and youth are fluid and nonhomogeneous categories, and are made up of individuals with evolving capacities. These are transitory periods of life, which differ according to different sociocultural settings. Children and young people also have multiple and intersecting identities with which they identify, in addition to age.

8. United Nations bodies and documents, as well as international forums, as detailed in the section below, have recognized that children and youth are rights holders and agents of change – key actors in realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development, securing peace and preventing violence and conflict. Human rights education – including education concerning human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality – empowers children and youth to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others and to participate in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes. Human rights education is key to children's and young people's empowerment, development and engagement towards a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

III. Background

9. Human rights education for children and youth is an integral part of the right to education.[5] This is reiterated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in target 7 of Goal 4 on quality education. The Dakar Framework for Action also notes that in situations affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, educational programmes are to be conducted in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and help to prevent violence and conflict.[6]

10. Each child has a right to an education that strengthens the child's capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture infused by human rights values; such education is indispensable for every child to achieve a balanced, human rights-friendly response to the challenges that accompany a period of fundamental change driven by globalization, new technologies and related phenomena.[7]

11. Participation is a means of political and civil engagement through which adolescents can negotiate and advocate for the realization of their rights and hold States accountable. States should therefore invest in measures that support adolescents in understanding, recognizing and fulfilling their role as active citizens, including through citizenship and human rights education.[8] In recognition of this, the Secretary-General has called upon the United Nations to ensure human rights education for children, inter alia, in national programming.[9]

12. Through the United Nations Youth Strategy, the Secretary-General commits the United Nations to increase efforts to promote human rights education for youth, as well as global citizenship and sustainable development education, without discrimination,

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5 A/59/525/Rev.1, paras. 10–20; and A/HRC/15/28, paras. 18–20.

6 Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, adopted at the World Education Forum, Dakar, 26–28 April 2000.

7 Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 1 (2001), paras. 2 and 3.

8 Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 20 (2016), para. 24.

9 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General, "Child rights mainstreaming" (July 2023), p. 8.

in order to foster civic awareness and participation, volunteerism and a culture of peace and nonviolence among young people.[10] In the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education, of 2022, young people urge decision makers to promote education that is founded upon the principles of peace and human rights and that enables every young person to lead a fulfilling, motivated, enjoyable and quality life.

13. Human rights education for young people has been increasingly identified as a strategy for preventing and tackling current global challenges.[11] The Security Council, affirming the important role that youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, has urged 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.[12]

14. With regard to education concerning digital technologies and human rights, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has stated the importance of making human rights the foundation of an open, safe and secure digital future.[13] The digital environment affords new opportunities for the realization of child and youth rights, such as ensuring their participation at the local, national and international levels, but also poses the risks of violation or abuse of those rights. In this regard, the General Assembly has highlighted the importance of promoting digital literacy and supporting capacity-building initiatives to enhance understanding, knowledge and skills relating to the human rights implications of new and emerging digital technologies;[14] it has called upon States to support and invest in human rights education as a long-term and lifelong process to educate everyone on human rights principles and the methods of ensuring those principles in all societies, including in digital contexts, and to promote positive behaviour that addresses all forms of discrimination and violence

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[10] See "Youth 2030: working with and for young people", p. 12.

[11] See A/HRC/35/6.

[12] Security Council resolution 2250 (2015).

[13] Our Common Agenda policy brief 5: "A global digital compact – an open, free and secure digital future for all" (May 2023), p. 14.

[14] General Assembly resolution 78/187, para. 9.

that occur through or are amplified by the use of technology.[15] Young people have expressed their commitment to championing human rights, equality and dignity online by leveraging the power of digital technologies and the Internet, and to educating others on the advantages and risks of the digital world;[16] to this end, States should build the digital literacy and skills of children in all formal, non-formal and informal contexts.[17] However, access to digital technologies, such as the Internet, is uneven; around 2.2 billion – or two thirds of – children and young people worldwide, especially girls and adolescent girls, who are disproportionately affected, do not have Internet access at home.[18] As the Secretary-General has stated, reimagining education means investing in digital literacy and digital infrastructure, among other things.[19]

15. With regard to education concerning the environment and climate change, it is stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child that "the education of the child shall be directed to … the development of respect for the natural environment" (art. 29 (1) (e)). Many regional and international frameworks emphasize the need to promote and to cooperate in education related to the environment and climate change, particularly for children and young people, and to encourage the widest possible participation in this process.[20] In recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, the General Assembly called upon States and other relevant stakeholders to "strengthen capacity-building in order to scale up efforts to ensure a clean,

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[15] Ibid., para. 32.

[16] International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Generation Connect: Youth Call to Action (2022), pp. 2 and 4.

[17] Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 25 (2021), para. 32.

[18] General Assembly resolution 78/187, preambular para. 19; and UNICEF and ITU, "How many children and young people have Internet access at home? Estimating digital connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic" (2020), p. 2.

[19] Our Common Agenda, report of the Secretary-General (2021), p. 41.

[20] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), arts. 4 (1) (i) and 6; Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015), art. 12; Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (1998), art. 3 (3); Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (2018), art. 10 (2) (d); Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights (2020), p. 10; Declaration on the Common Agenda for Education and Climate Change at COP28 (2023), art. 1.2.

healthy and sustainable environment for all", noting that the human rights implications of environmental damage were felt most acutely by women and girls and segments of the population that were already in vulnerable situations[21] A global survey conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) revealed that children and young people demand climate change education that helps them to understand climate change, take better action against climate change and recognize the human place within nature.[22] To ensure their free, active, meaningful and effective participation, which may result in more rights-compliant and effective environmental policies, children should be provided with environmental and human rights education, age-appropriate and accessible information, adequate time and resources and a supportive and enabling environment.[23]

16. With regard to education concerning gender equality, it must be noted that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 5) and is inextricably linked to Goal 4 on quality education;[24] the achievement of gender equality requires that all learners not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.[25] For girls and women to overcome social exclusion and poverty, which increase their exposure to exploitation, harmful practices and other forms of gender-based discrimination, including gender-based violence, they need to be equipped with the skills and competencies necessary to assert their rights, while boys are duly educated about and involved in combating genderbased discrimination.[26] States should therefore include in the educational curriculum specific information on the human rights of women and girls, on gender equality and on selfawareness, and ensure that schools provide age-appropriate information on sexual and

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[21] General Assembly resolution 76/300, para. 4 and preambular para. 11.

[22] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Youth demands for quality climate change education" (2022), p. 3.

[23] Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 26 (2023), para. 27.

[24] UNESCO, "From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019–2025", p. 4.

[25] Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015), p. 28.

[26] See A/HRC/WG.11/37/1.

reproductive health and rights; States should also contribute to eliminating gender stereotypes and fostering an environment of inclusion and non-discrimination.[27] The Commission on the Status of Women has also acknowledged the critical role of gender-responsive education and training in achieving gender equality, recognizing the role of men and boys to this end.[28]

[27] Joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, para. 69.

[28] Commission on the Status of Women, forty-eighth session, agreed conclusions, March 2004, para. 4.

IV. Specific objectives

17. 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 for Human Rights Education, encouraging the development, adoption and implementation of sustainable national strategies for human rights education for children and young people, inclusive of all without discrimination, with them in leadership roles;

(b) To expand human rights education for children and young people in formal and non-formal education and informal learning,[29] as part of their lifelong learning, prioritizing those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;[30]

(c) To provide guidance on key components and actions for human rights education for children and young people in formal and non-formal education, against which relevant data can be collected and national progress can be assessed;

(d) To encourage and support children's and young people's participation and leadership in human rights education programming for their peers;

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[29] 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 (see the UNESCO glossary).

[30] These may include women and girls; persons with disabilities (such as physical, intellectual, psychosocial, auditory and visual); those who belong to ethnic or religious minorities or other groups, including Indigenous Peoples, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and youth; those in disadvantaged socioeconomic situations or living in geographically remote areas, or in armed conflict, as well as internally displaced, migrant, asylum-seeking, refugee and returnee children and young people, and children and young people who are unaccompanied, in street situations or affected by natural disasters; and those who are without parental care, or are in conflict with the law, including those who are incarcerated, or are victims of violations and/or abuses.

(e) To promote human rights education for children and young people as complementary to other actions for protecting and promoting their human rights;

(f) To highlight the contribution of human rights education for children and young people 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 children and young people among local, national, regional and international governmental and civil society organizations dealing with human rights, children, youth, education and sustainable development, including child- and youth-led movements and organizations.

V. Components

18. Previous phases of the World Programme for Human Rights Education have identified elements for effective human rights education involving children and youth within formal education (the first and second phases) and non-formal education (the fourth phase), as well as human rights training of educators in formal and non-formal education (the third phase).

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

A. Policies and related implementation measures

20. States should develop, adopt, implement and monitor policies fostering human rights education for children and young people, which include the following actions:

(a) With regard to formal education, develop policies and legislation in line with the national contexts, to ensure the inclusion of human rights and human rights education, by:

(i) Developing, strengthening and enforcing education laws and curricula to include human rights education, and adopting legislation on human rights education linked with digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality;

(ii) Acknowledging, in the national curriculum and educational standards, human rights knowledge, skills and attitudes as basic competencies, complementing literacy, numeracy and digital skills;

(iii) Preparing a national curriculum specifically for human rights education or integrating human rights education into existing curricula – setting out concepts and goals, teaching and learning objectives, and approaches;

(iv) Ensuring that all relevant legislation and policies are aligned with human rights education principles based on good practices as contained in the present plan of action and other relevant international instruments;

(v) Providing guidelines to local authorities on their roles and responsibilities in implementing and supporting human rights education;

(vi) Promoting an approach based on human rights principles for all policies and practices within educational establishments[31] – from governance to management to disciplinary procedures to inclusion policies to other relevant regulations and practices;

(vii) Developing policies to ensure that education and human rights education are accessible to all children and young people, without discrimination, particularly those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;

(viii) Empowering the leadership of educational establishments to implement rightsbased approaches in decision-making and innovation;

(ix) Developing procedures for the assessment of and feedback on students' achievements on human rights knowledge, skills and attitudes;

(x) Adopting guidelines for revising educational materials to ensure that they are in line with human rights principles, and for developing specific human rights education materials;

(xi) Establishing policies and practices for the training, selection, appraisal, compensation, promotion and accountability of teaching and other education personnel based on the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, respect, fairness and transparency;

[31] For the purposes of the present plan of action, educational establishments include primary, secondary, higher and vocational education and training establishments.

(xii) Including human rights pre- and in-service training as a criterion for State licensing or certification for teaching and other education personnel, as well as for other relevant child- and youth-focused professions;

(xiii) Adopting a participatory approach to policy development by involving students, teacher and parent associations and unions, professional and research bodies, civil society including national human rights institutions and child- and youth-led movements and organizations, and other stakeholders, in the preparation of educational policy;

(xiv) Developing guidelines to ensure meaningful engagement of children and youth in the actions above, with an emphasis on intergenerational partnership;

(b) With regard to non-formal human rights education conducted by civil society, national human rights institutions, child- and youth-led movements and organizations, the private sector and other actors, developing policies and related measures to remove barriers and facilitate their work, in collaboration with other stakeholders, including, for instance, validating certification; providing access to public spaces and financial support, including tax reductions; providing mentorship and other professional assistance, including organizing capacity-building initiatives; supporting human rights education programmes, including those online, with special consideration for initiatives involving child- or youth-led movements and organizations; facilitating alliances and networks; and so on;

(c) Ensuring coherence, links and synergies among related national policies, strategies and plans of action;

(d) Developing and adopting relevant, explicit and comprehensive policy implementation and evaluation measures, with a clear division of responsibilities, with dedicated, adequate and sustainable financial and other resources, and involving all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure coherence, monitoring, reporting and accountability;

(e) Fulfilling international obligations concerning human rights education for children and youth by promoting the ratification of – or the withdrawal of reservations to – regional and international instruments encompassing the

right to education as well as human rights education; and aligning national policies and implementation measures with regional and international instruments concerning human rights education, children and youth.

B. Teaching and learning processes and tools

21. Acknowledging that human rights education for children and youth is necessarily context-specific and needs to tackle their specific learning needs, and in an age-sensitive manner, this section offers general guidance on content, methodologies, materials and resources.

22. With regard to content, as mentioned above, human rights education fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes empowering children and young people to exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others. General human rights education competencies have been spelled out in the plans of action for the first and fourth phases. The present plan of action focuses specifically on the competencies in the three thematic human rights education areas highlighted by the Human Rights Council.[32]

(a) Education concerning human rights and digital technologies:

(i) Knowledge: children and young people are aware of and understand:

a. Their rights in digital environments, particularly the right to life, to nondiscrimination, to privacy, to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, to protection from recognized and emerging risks of all forms of violence in the digital environments, and to access information, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of association and peaceful assembly;

[32] The main sources for this section are relevant general comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, and other United Nations documents.

b. The digital environment, including its infrastructure, its business practices and its persuasive strategies, the uses of automated processing, personal data and surveillance, algorithmic personalization, artificial intelligence, and relevant legal terms and conditions;

c. The potential of digital technologies to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in both offline and digital environments;

d. The possible negative effects of digitalization on societies, as well as the opportunities and risks associated with digital products, services and footprints, including environmental impacts;

e. The possible adverse consequences of exposure to risks relating to digital content, contact, conduct and contract,[33] including cyberaggression, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other forms of violence;

f. Coping strategies to reduce harm, and strategies to protect their personal data, privacy and identity and those of others and to build their social and emotional skills and resilience;

g. The different barriers in accessing the digital environments faced by them and their peers who are in situations of exclusion and vulnerability;

h. A healthy balance of digital and non-digital activities, as the use of digital technologies should not replace direct, responsive interactions among children and young people themselves or between children or young people and educators, parents or caregivers.

[33] Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 25 (2021), paras. 14 and 104.

(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:

a. Critically analyse the place of technologies in society, their impact on their daily lives, their role in building knowledge and their uses for social participation and inclusion, especially for those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;

b. Search effectively for, access, critically evaluate, and responsibly produce, use and disseminate information and knowledge through various channels and technologies;

c. Detect and combat online disinformation, misinformation and other forms of biased or false content, hate speech, harmful content and behaviours including discriminatory, racist, violent, pornographic and exploitative information, sexual and gender-based violence, abuse, exploitation, harassment, cyberfraud, cyberbullying, cybergrooming and cyberaggression;

d. Co-design and carry out, together with their peers and others, effective online awareness and advocacy campaigns on key human rights topics of concern to children and young people in both offline and digital environments;

e. Identify and use digital platforms and means to express their views and to participate, as appropriate, on an equal basis with their peers and adults, anonymously where needed, so that they can be effective advocates for their rights, individually and as a group;

f. Engage in digital environments in a safe, effective, discerning and respectful way that enhances digital security, protects personal data, privacy and identity on the basis of informed consent, respects the rights and dignity of others, and does not violate legislation;

g. Take actions in solving problems at the community, local, national, regional and global levels through the responsible use of current and future technologies, based on human rights principles;

h. Hold States and other relevant actors, including businesses, accountable for failure to adopt approaches based on human rights principles in their use of digital technologies;

i. Seek professional and multisectoral support (including psychological or legal support) and engage effectively with child- and youth-friendly remedial judicial and non-judicial mechanisms in cases where their rights in relation to the digital environment have been violated or abused.

(iii) Attitudes: children and young people demonstrate:

a. Respect for the rights and dignity of others in digital environments;

b. Positive behaviours that address all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful behaviour that occur through or are amplified by the use of technology;

c. Willingness to leverage digital technologies for the promotion and protection of human rights;

d. Digital citizenship and agency, which is the ability to control and adapt to a digital world with digital, media and information literacy, competence and accountability;

e. Resilience when becoming the target of any harmful digital activities as well as empathy and solidarity with others that are targeted, including by combating cybervictimization;

f. Appreciation of social inclusion through the use of digital platforms and social media;

g. Media maturity and an understanding of digital balance, which are key in preventing problematic screen use and digital addictions.

(b) Education concerning the environment and climate change:

(i) Knowledge: children and young people are aware of and understand:

a. The increasingly adverse effects of the multiple planetary crisis, including climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and other environmental challenges, on the enjoyment of human rights;

b. What their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment entails, and its interdependence with other rights such as the rights to life, to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, to an adequate standard of living, to education and to an effective remedy;

c. The international, regional and national policies and frameworks related to the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as well as civic participation in environment-related procedures;

d. The interdependence of individuals, communities, societies, countries, natural resources and ecosystems and the resulting impacts of actions or inactions;

e. The principles of intergenerational equity, justice and solidarity, as well as State obligations to take action on climate change on the basis of those principles in accordance with States' common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities;

f. The intersectional and differential effects of environment-related harm on certain groups of children and young people, including women and girls, those belonging to Indigenous Peoples or to minorities, those of African descent, those with disabilities, those living in disaster-prone or climatevulnerable environments, and those compelled to migrate due to environmental challenges;

g. The link between historical and ongoing patterns of inequity, such as colonialism, displacement and genocide, with the differing vulnerability of

ecosystems and people to climate change and the role of climate justice movements in addressing these issues.

(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:

a. Exercise their right to access accurate and reliable environmental information – including about the causes, effects and actual and potential sources of climate and environmental harm, adaptive responses including those from other regions, relevant climate and environmental legislation and regulations, findings from climate and environmental impact assessments, policies and plans, sustainable lifestyles and consumption, and traditional, ancestral and Indigenous knowledge (with the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples);

b. Adopt strategies to adapt to and build resilience in preparing for increasing environmental challenges in life, such as disaster risks and environmentrelated health impacts;

c. Critically reflect upon environmental challenges, contribute to solving problems, including by supporting circular economy approaches, and make responsible decisions, including by adopting sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns, in accordance with their evolving capacities;

d. Share ideas, encourage others and take peaceful action, individually and collectively, including with Indigenous Peoples, to contribute to protecting the environment, addressing the impacts of the climate crisis and promoting climate justice and environmental sustainability;

e. Meaningfully engage in and influence climate change and environmental decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and global levels;

f. Demand – both online and offline – urgent and decisive measures to tackle global environmental harm, and identify practices of greenwashing or greensheening;

g. Hold States and other relevant actors, including businesses, accountable for failure to protect children and young people against environmental harm and to ensure their well-being and development, taking into account the possibility of future risk and harm;

h. Recognize threats, intimidation, harassment and other serious reprisals against efforts for environmental protection, and take security and safety measures as appropriate;

i. Engage effectively with child- and youth-friendly judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, including child- and youth-centred national human rights institutions, to seek justice and obtain remedies for violations of their rights relating to environmental harm and other climate-related losses and damage.

(iii) Attitudes: children and young people demonstrate:

a. A sense of solidarity, connectedness, and belonging to a common humanity and planet Earth;

b. A sense of shared responsibility for a healthy planet;

c. Respect for and recognition of the multifaceted role of traditional and Indigenous knowledge and practices in stewarding the environment and combating climate change and its impacts;

d. Willingness to share accurate and reliable environmental information with others, including through digital means, to raise awareness of, and to encourage action to promote, sustainability and human rights;

e. Agency in taking action and being at the forefront calling for protection of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, with its linkages with other human rights, and pushing for climate justice and effective action to address and promote accountability for environmental harms;

f. Optimism and hope towards a sustainable and thriving future.

(c) Education concerning gender equality:

(i) Knowledge: children and young people are aware of and understand:

a. The equal rights of every person in all their diversities to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, without distinction of any kind;

b. The historical roots, manifestations and evolution of gender-based discrimination, including gender-based violence, child and forced marriage, the gender gap in education, discrimination in formal and informal employment, unequal access to resources and unequal distribution of care functions, and related activism and movements;

c. Implications of social and cultural norms, attitudes and expectations that are associated with discriminatory gender roles and gender stereotypes, including on mental health;

d. The interaction and intersectionality of gender with other characteristics such as age, ethnicity, wealth, status, ability, sexual orientation and geographical location, leading to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination;

e. The right of every person in all their diversities to make autonomous and informed decisions about their own bodies and reproductive functions, which is at the core of their basic rights to equality, privacy and bodily integrity;

f. Gender-related barriers to quality education, lifelong learning and empowerment opportunities, including child marriage, child labour and domestic work, and adolescent and unintended pregnancy;

(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:

a. Identify, challenge and change harmful gender-based attitudes and biases and adopt more positive roles and forms of behaviour in the family, at school, in wider society and in digital environments, including through the use of gender-responsive language in everyday life;

b. Challenge ideologies and structures that limit any person from freely and fully exercising and enjoying their human rights, and uphold diversity and inclusion;

c. Access comprehensive sexuality education, that is, accurate information on sexual and reproductive health and rights and the related services, including in relation to prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, nutrition, protection from violence and harmful practices, and prevention of adolescent pregnancy;

d. Especially for girls and women, claim and exercise broader social, economic, cultural and civil and political rights, on an equal basis with boys and men;

e. Make informed decisions, including about their sexual and reproductive health;

f. Critically and respectfully engage in conversations around gender equality and related issues, even when disagreements arise;

g. Seek professional and multisectoral support (including psychological, legal or medical) and effectively access child- and youth-friendly justice and remedies when affected by gender-based violence, online and offline.

(iii) Attitudes: children and young people demonstrate:

a. Confidence to address and combat gender inequalities and discriminatory gender norms, including their own role in perpetuating them;

b. Especially for boys and men, positive masculinity;[34]

c. Openness to and respect for gender equality and diversity;

d. Empathy towards the perceptions and lived experiences of those who have experienced gender-based discrimination.

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[34] UNESCO, "Positively, men: engaged for positive masculinities and gender equality" (2022).

23. Appropriate methodologies for human rights education for children and young people should be designed with them as key partners, and be learner-centred, participatory, genderresponsive, age-appropriate, transformative and inclusive. They should highlight experiential learning to enable children and young people to apply human rights principles to their lives, context and experiences, and peer-to-peer learning to allow for emotional connections, dialogue and understanding among themselves. Intergenerational and intercultural dialogue that strengthens solidarity between generations and cultures should accompany these educational efforts. Varied educational methods and settings, such as sports and outdoor learning, films and documentaries, the arts, cultural activities, games and storytelling, can collaboratively engage learners of all backgrounds and foster creativity.

24. Teaching and learning materials, support and other resources, including those related to digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality, should build on human rights principles embedded in relevant cultural contexts, as well as local historical and social developments, and be specific, scientifically accurate, up to date and relevant to children and young people. They should be made accessible to and engage with all children and young people without discrimination, taking into due account languages, including Indigenous and mother tongue languages, and the needs of persons with disabilities.[35]

C. Training of educators

25. Strategies for ensuring adequate training of educators should include the adoption of a comprehensive human rights training policy based on an assessment of existing practices; the introduction of human rights and human rights education principles and standards, as well as advocacy skills with regard to the human rights of children and young people, 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 as well as with relevant stakeholders, including national human

[35] For further recommendations on teaching and learning materials, support and other resources, see the plan of action for the fourth phase (A/HRC/42/23), para. 29.

rights institutions. In all these courses of action, intergenerational learning and the expertise and well-being of educators – particularly children and young educators and educators from groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability – should be emphasized and respected.

26. 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) 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 and beyond the communities in which they live;

(c) Gender equality issues, including the impact of gendered behaviours on teaching and learning processes;

(d) Ways to ensure equal treatment and participation in the classroom and the wider community of the educational establishment, taking into account the diversity of learners and their needs, including those of persons with disabilities, and to facilitate a supportive, inclusive and collaborative environment and culture that allows all learners to participate confidently in learning, without fear, shame or risk;

(e) Guidance on appropriate methodologies for human rights education that are participatory, learner-centred, age-appropriate, gender-responsive, experiential and actionoriented and that empower child and youth participation;

(f) Contextualized child- and youth-specific human rights issues;

(g) Educators' social and emotional skills, intercultural and interfaith dialogue skills and leadership styles that are democratic and coherent with human rights principles;

(h) 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 them and choose from among them as well as to develop new resources;

(i) Examples of integrating human rights education into content that educators already teach, including arts and humanities, career and life skills, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), languages, physical education and social sciences, along with cross-discipline learning;

(j) Strategies to recognize a child or young person who is a victim of harm perpetrated online or offline and respond appropriately, to intervene early in case of sexual harassment and violence, including bullying and cyberbullying, and to deal with trauma and avoid retraumatization, with the interests of the victims at the centre;

(k) Cultural responsiveness that prepares educators to recognize and respect diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs and practices, and address their own biases and prejudices;

(l) Regular and encouraging learner assessments with child- and youth-specific competencies, both formal and informal;

(m) Incorporating needs assessment and evaluation results, with the input of children and young people, into educational activities;

(n) Adapting curricula to formal or non-formal settings and to the local context and population;

(o) Comprehensive sexuality education, including information on sexual and reproductive health and rights;

(p) Digital competencies and agency, including appropriate and human rightsrespecting use of digital devices and technologies, in line with the best interests of the child and in a manner that does not expose children and young people to violence, discrimination, misuse of their personal data, commercial exploitation or other infringements of their rights, taking into account the research on the effects of digital technologies on children and young people's development.

27. Training methodologies for the training of educators include participatory, learnercentred, peer-to-peer, experiential and action-oriented approaches and should address motivation, self-esteem, emotional development, critical thinking and reflection leading to human rights sensitization and action. Evaluation should be infused throughout the training process.[36] 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.

D. An enabling environment

28. Wherever human rights education takes place – in formal, non-formal or informal settings – the learning environment, which encompasses physical and virtual spaces, and the broader surroundings, including the family (parents, legal guardians and other family members) and the local community, inevitably shapes the educational process.

29. It is essential to ensure that human rights teaching and learning happens in learning environments that promote and protect human rights. Educational objectives, practices and the organization of educational establishments must be consistent with human rights values and principles. Likewise, it is important that the culture and the community within and beyond educational establishments are also embedding and embodying those principles. States should take measures to encourage the organization of and participation in human rights education activities, and guarantee academic freedom and protection from reprisals for those who do so. Human rights education efforts for children and young people must also be accompanied by measures to increase the protection and realization of children and young people's human rights.

30. With regard to human rights and digital technologies, States should address prevailing challenges to improve digital inclusion within and among countries, including the gender, disability and age digital divides and the disparities in access between rural and

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[36] OHCHR, *From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology* (2019).

urban areas.[37] Measures should be taken to ensure that all children and young people have equal and effective access to the digital environment in ways that are appropriate and meaningful for them. Developing safe and inclusive digital learning systems and environments includes ensuring proper infrastructure in schools and other learning settings, such as public libraries. Measures to protect children and young people in, or facilitate their access to, the digital environment must be guided by considerations associated with their age and stage of development, in line with the best interests of the child and their evolving capacities, and be communicated in a child- and youth-friendly manner. Specific measures to ensure protection of personal and sensitive data of both learners and educators, and protection of children and young people from online violence, are also required. Digital service providers should conduct human rights due diligence in the full life cycle of technologies they develop in order to mitigate harms and prevent risks to human rights, in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. They should also actively engage with children and young people, applying a child- and youth-rights and accessibility approach as well as appropriate safeguards, and give due consideration to their views when developing products and services. States should also ensure that no restrictions are placed on the exercise by children and young people of their human rights, including their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in the digital environment, other than those that are lawful, necessary and proportionate.[38]

31. With regard to the environment and climate change, a safe, healthy and resilient infrastructure is important to effective learning. This includes ensuring safe travel and transport to school; that schools and alternative learning facilities are located at safe distances from sources of pollution, flooding, landslides and other environmental hazards, including sites contaminated by mines, unexploded ordnance and other hazardous substances; and the construction of buildings and classrooms with adequate heating and cooling and access to sufficient and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. It is also important to ensure, through regular

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[37] General Assembly resolution 78/187, para. 10.

[38] Ibid., para. 14; and Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 26 (2023), para. 65.

inspections, that the educational infrastructure is safe and resilient enough to withstand disasters and that adequate resources are dedicated to the protection of students and educators from the impacts of climate change and other natural disasters. States should also ensure the right to education in emergencies, including natural disasters and other climate impacts, by putting in place plans and structures for continuity and sustainability at all levels – from early childhood education through to secondary and tertiary education – and through different phases of an emergency, paying particular attention to children and young people in situations of exclusion or vulnerability. Environmentally friendly school facilities, such as those with lighting and heating sourced from renewable energy, and edible gardens, can benefit learners.[39]

32. With regard to gender equality, the creation of an educational environment in which all children and young people are treated equally and are encouraged to achieve their full potential contributes to the elimination of gender-based discrimination.[40] Education must be accessible, both in law and in practice, to every child and young person; appropriate conditions must be created in order for their right to education to be fully and freely enjoyed and exercised. This includes providing access to educational institutions that are within safe reach for all children and young people, either by ensuring that educational institutions are accessible at some reasonably convenient geographical location or through technological means such as digital access. Proximity to schools, in particular in rural areas, is crucial, given the prevalence of gender-based violence in public spaces and the risk that they face when travelling to and from school. Consideration should be given to providing adequate infrastructure in educational institutions. Ensuring the rights of all children and young people within education extends beyond numerical equality. It requires that they be ensured equal access with the same quality of teachers and amenities, and an environment characterized by opportunities to pursue goals towards their self-determination and self-actualization; where relevant, unequal distribution of students in certain educational disciplines, especially STEM, must

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[39] Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 26 (2023), para. 55.

[40] Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) (see the Platform for Action in annex II, para. 72).

be addressed. States should also take measures to curtail violence against all children and young people, particularly women, girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, including designating a mechanism for preventing, reporting and investigating incidents of violence in educational institutions and providing adequate public funding to address the problem.

VI. Process for national implementation

33. A coherent and coordinated national strategy for human rights education for children and young people, in line with the present plan of action, requires a significant commitment by States to allocate adequate human and financial resources to support the needs assessment, and the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

A. Actors and coordination

34. States should assign a relevant ministry to lead, respond to or support the initiative of others to establish a coordinating body involving relevant government entities and civil society, which should consult with children and young people within the country. The body, which could be or could build on an existing entity, would ensure coordination, informationsharing and the maximization of resources and reporting, and avoid duplication of efforts. States should facilitate opportunities for participation by all relevant actors; and the members of the coordinating body should reflect the diversity of the child and youth population of the country, including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability.

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

(a) Relevant ministries (education, children, youth, justice, information and communications technology, environment, women, and so on) and relevant local government entities;

(b) National human rights institutions;

(c) Child and youth representatives (from child- and youth-led movements and organizations, network councils and volunteer groups);

(d) Relevant civil society organizations and networks;

(e) Representatives of educational establishments, including teacher-training institutions and research institutes, as well as teachers' associations and unions.

36. Other actors may include social service providers, local and national media, community and religious leaders, Indigenous Peoples and minorities, school-based parent committees and parent-teacher associations, the private sector, donors, health and mental health practitioners, social media influencers, cultural institutions, artists, and other actors as appropriate. These actors must be encouraged to take an active role in promoting or implementing human rights education for children and young people.

37. Representatives of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations in the country may participate in the meetings of the coordinating body and support it, upon request.

38. The coordinating body should cooperate with national agencies as well as other relevant provincial, local and district offices 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 initiatives, such as the reporting mechanism under the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development and the review mechanism of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure that progress in human rights education under this plan of action is included in those reports.

39. With regard to implementation of this plan of action, States should submit a midterm national progress report in 2027 to OHCHR. OHCHR will compile received information in a report to the Human Rights Council. In early 2030, States should submit a final national evaluation report to OHCHR, which will prepare a final report to the Council on the implementation of the fifth phase.

B. Steps for implementation

40. The coordinating body is responsible for leading and overseeing the national strategy for human rights education for children and young people, including needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in line with intergenerational collaboration approaches. Drawing upon good practices and lessons learned from previous phases of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, States may wish to consider the phased approach for implementation as outlined below. In the absence of a coordinating body, the approach could be implemented collaboratively by relevant actors.

41. The participation of children and young people as key partners in every step of the national strategy is essential. Avenues for children and young people – including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability – to participate should be created or strengthened, including by setting up children and young people's advisory boards or working groups on human rights education; they should be regular counterparts and provide their perspectives, for instance through a combination of national online and offline polls using non-traditional ways of data collection, as feasible.

Step 1 *– National baseline study on human rights education for children and young people*

42. Step 1 should entail the following actions:

(a) Carry out a national assessment study, through broad consultations, to be shared with the public for validation and feedback. The study would analyse the current national situation of human rights education for children and young people in the four areas highlighted in section V above ("Components"), including existing initiatives, good practices, shortcomings and obstacles.

(b) Determine which actions of the four components outlined in section V above have already been implemented and to what extent;

(c) Consider how to build on existing initiatives, good practice and lessons learned, how to use opportunities and how to address shortcomings and obstacles.

43. The outputs from step 1 include:

(a) A national baseline study on human rights education for children and young people, with disaggregated data on those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;

(b) A national dissemination campaign regarding the baseline study. Special focus should be placed on disseminating results to children and young people, in a language and format accessible to them.

Step 2 *– National strategy to promote human rights education for children and young people*

44. Step 2 should entail the following actions:

(a) Building on the national baseline study, develop objectives for a national strategy using the present 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, with particular regard to children and young people in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;

(c) Develop the national strategy, identifying:

(i) Inputs: the human, financial, time and technological resources required;

(ii) Activities: tasks, responsibilities, time frames and milestones;

(iii) Mechanisms for coordination;

(iv) Outputs (such as new or revised legislation, educational materials or training programmes);

(v) Results to be achieved, and related quantitative and qualitative indicators as a core element of the monitoring and evaluation framework.

45. The output from step 2 is the national strategy for human rights education for children and young people, in a language accessible to them, which should be disseminated broadly among institutions and stakeholders, particularly children and young people.

Step 3 *– Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy*

46. Step 3 should entail the following actions:

(a) Implement planned activities;

(b) Monitor implementation, including through consultations with relevant stakeholders and tracking of the indicators in the strategy, and conduct evaluations and document good practices in order to further improve the implementation;

(c) Acknowledge and disseminate information on progress and challenges in implementing the strategy.

47. The coordinating body should evaluate the implementation of the national strategy, together with children and young people, and make the evaluation reports publicly available and easily accessible. Evaluations should be inclusive and transparent, reflecting human rights values; they should address the four areas of human rights education for children and young people identified in section V above ("Components") and should include recommendations for future actions based on lessons learned throughout the implementation process.

48. The outputs from step 3 are the identified outputs of the national strategy as well as the evaluation reports.



ANNEX I

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 57/10 OF 9 OCTOBER 2024, LAUNCHING THE FIFTH PHASE OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

57/10. World Programme for Human Rights Education: the plan of action for the fifth 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, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 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, as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building, to be provided in consultation with and with the consent of Member States concerned,

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, in which the Assembly declared that human rights education and training should embrace and enrich, as well as draw inspiration from, the diversity of civilizations, religions, cultures and traditions of different countries, as it is reflected in the universality of human rights,

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, 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, in its third phase on furthering the implementation of the first two phases and on promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists, and in its fourth phase, on youth, aligning that phase with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, while strengthening all previous phases of the World Programme,

Recalling Human Rights Council resolution 54/7 of 11 October 2023, in which the Council decided that the fifth phase of the World Programme would continue to focus on youth, while expanding to include children as priority sectors, with special emphasis on human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality, and to align the fifth 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, and requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a plan of action for the fifth phase,

1. *Acknowledges* the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparing the plan of action for the fifth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2025–2029), in consultation with States, relevant intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society and youth;

2. *Reaffirms* the continuation of the World Programme on Human Rights Education and launches its fifth phase, for the period 2025–2029, taking into account the plans of action as guidance documents for States and other relevant stakeholders in crafting human rights education strategies and programmes;

3. *Encourages* States and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement human rights education initiatives, within their capabilities and in line with national needs and priorities, during the fifth phase;

4. *Encourages* States to submit on a voluntary basis a midterm progress report and a final national evaluation report on the implementation of the fifth phase to the Office of the High Commissioner, as specified in the plan of action;

5. *Encourages* States and relevant stakeholders, during the fifth phase of the World Programme, to continue and further strengthen efforts to advance also the implementation of the four previous phases;

6. *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;

7. *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;

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

9. *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;

10. *Reminds* States of the need to prepare and submit on a voluntary basis their national evaluation reports on the fourth phase of the World Programme to the Office of the High Commissioner by April 2025;

11. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to submit a final report on the implementation of the fourth phase of the World Programme, based on national evaluation reports, to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session;

12. *Decides* to follow up on the implementation of the fifth phase of the World Programme in 2027, and requests the Office of the High Commissioner to prepare, from within existing resources, a midterm progress report, in easy-to-read accessible format, on the implementation of the fifth phase of the World Programme and to submit it to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-sixth session;

13. *Also decides* to convene at its sixty-third session a high-level panel discussion to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training on the theme "The fifteenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices, challenges and the way forward", further decides 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 sixty-fourth session.

46th meeting
9 October 2024

[Adopted without a vote.]



ANNEX II

PARAGRAPHS 1 TO 10 OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE FOURTH PHASE (2020–2024) OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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.[1] 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.

[1] Resolution 66/137, annex.

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 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.[2] 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.[3] 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

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[2] Resolution 59/113 A.

[3] Resolution 59/113 B.

the Human Rights Council in September 2010.[4] 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.[5]

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.

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[4] Resolution 15/11.

[5] Resolution 27/12.

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.



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
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