

# DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE FOURTH PHASE (2020-2024) OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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## I. Introduction

### A. Context and definition of human rights education

1. The international community has increasingly demonstrated consensus regarding the fundamental contribution of human rights education to the realization of human rights. Human rights education is aimed at developing an understanding of our common responsibility to make human rights a reality in every community and in society at large. In that sense, it contributes to the long-term prevention of human rights abuses and violent conflicts, the promotion of equality and sustainable development and the enhancement of participation in decision-making processes within a democratic system.

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 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 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, without a vote, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. The Declaration states that human rights education provides persons with knowledge and skills and develops their attitudes and behaviours so as to empower them to enjoy and exercise their rights, and to respect and uphold the rights of others (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 and other relevant stakeholders in those processes (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 Declaration as a global instrument dedicated specifically to human rights education.

4. In accordance with those instruments, which contain elements of a definition of human rights education agreed upon by the international community, human rights education can be defined as any learning, education, training or information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights, including:

- (a) Strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b) Fully developing the human personality and sense of dignity;
- (c) Promoting understanding, tolerance, respect for diversity, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and minorities;
- (d) Enabling all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law;
- (e) Building and maintaining peace;
- (f) Promoting people-centered sustainable development and social justice.

5. Human rights education fosters:

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

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, ongoing), 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). Other international frameworks that promote, among other issues, 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 Global Education First Initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General; and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. On 10 December 2004, the General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education. 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 plan of action for its implementation (A/59/525/Rev.1) was adopted by the General

Assembly in July 2005. 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 plan of action (A/HRC/15/28) was adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2010. 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) was adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2014.

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

8. The objectives of the World Programme for Human Rights Education 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;
- (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 existing human rights education programmes, to highlight successful practices and 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.

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

9. Educational and training activities within the World Programme shall:

- (a) Promote the 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, sex, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability or sexual orientation and on other bases;

(c) Encourage analysis of chronic and emerging human rights problems, including poverty, violent conflicts and discrimination, in light of rapidly changing developments in the political, social, economic, technological and environmental fields, which would lead to responses and solutions consistent with human rights standards;

(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 pedagogies that include knowledge, critical analysis and skills for action furthering human rights and that take into consideration the age and the cultural specificities of the learners;

(i) Foster teaching and learning environments free from want and fear that encourage participation, the enjoyment of human rights and the full development of the human personality;

(j) Be relevant to the daily life of the learners, engaging them in a dialogue about ways and means of transposing human rights from the expression of abstract norms to the reality of their social, economic, cultural and political conditions.

## **II. Youth empowerment – A Plan of Action for the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme**

### **A. Scope**

10. In its resolution 39/3, the Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare a plan of action for the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme, devoted to youth. The Council placed special emphasis on education and training in equality, human rights and non-discrimination, inclusion and respect for diversity with the aim of building inclusive and peaceful societies.

It also decided to align the fourth phase with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the synergies between the different concepts and educational methods mentioned therein.

11. Accordingly, this Plan of Action provides guidance, based on internationally agreed-upon principles, to develop a **comprehensive human rights education strategy for youth** at the national level, to be adapted to national contexts. It lays out objectives, components, actions and practical steps for implementation, and potential relevant actors.

12. In its resolution, the Council encouraged States and relevant stakeholders, during the fourth phase of the World Programme, to strengthen efforts to advance implementation of the three previous phases. Related guidance is provided in the respective Plans of Action.

13. There is no consistent international **definition of youth**<sup>1</sup>. The variety of approaches reflects the fact that youth is a fluid and non-homogeneous category, rather than a fixed age group. Unlike other forms of identity, it is a transitory period of life, which differs depending on sociocultural settings. Young people have also multiple intersecting identities (gender; ethnicity; belonging to specific minorities; socioeconomic background; etc.) with which they identify, beyond age.

14. Accordingly, while recognizing that the UN Secretariat for statistical purposes defines “youth” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, this Plan of Action acknowledges other definitions used by UN entities and bodies, as well as Member States, without prejudice.

15. Irrespective of the age range definition, formal education institutions are important settings for human rights education for young people<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, **this Plan of Action builds on previous Plans of Action**, respectively the one for the first phase (focusing on human rights education in primary and secondary education) and second phase (focusing on human rights education in higher education). It also builds on the Plan of Action for the third phase with regard to training of educators in formal and non-formal education<sup>3</sup>.

## B. Background

16. In addition to the instruments and documents mentioned in the introductory Section I.A “Context and definition of human rights education”, this Plan of Action draws on principles,

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of various positions on this issue, see “Youth and Human Rights – Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights” (A/HRC/39/33), paras. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup> In this Plan of Action, the terms “youth” and “young people” are used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> See Plan of Action for the third phase (A/HRC/27/28), paras. 18-22. “Formal education” refers to “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” (UNESCO glossary: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary>). Non-formal education includes, for instance, educational activities conducted by civil society organizations.

concepts and recommendations set by a number of international and regional instruments, documents and frameworks specific to youth in the areas of human rights, education and sustainable development.

17. Member States have emphasized at the United Nations the **importance of human rights education for youth** since the organization's early years. For instance, the 1965 Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples, as well as Resolution No. XX "Education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" adopted by the International Conference on Human Rights (Teheran 1968), stressed the energy, enthusiasm and creativity of young people and their role in shaping the future, hence the importance of human rights education to enable them to promote human rights and peace.

18. Human rights education is **an integral part of the right to education**, belonging to children and youth, as stipulated in several international human rights and education instruments and documents referenced in the plans of action for the first and second phase of the World Programme<sup>4</sup>. This has been reiterated in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education includes, as Target 7, that "By 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."

19. In recent years, human rights education for youth has been increasingly identified as a **strategy for preventing and tackling current global challenges**, including violent extremism and conflict<sup>5</sup>. Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), affirming the important role that youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, urges "Member States to support, as appropriate, quality education for peace that equips youth with the ability to engage constructively in civic structures and inclusive political processes", and refers to the Secretary-General's 2015 "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism" which encourages "teaching respect for human rights and diversity, fostering critical thinking [...] and developing the behavioural and socioemotional skills that can contribute to peaceful coexistence and tolerance"<sup>6</sup> as elements of related national plans of action. "Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy", launched in 2018 by the Secretary-General, commits the United Nations "to increase efforts to promote human rights education and training for youth, as well as global citizenship and sustainable development education, without discrimination, to foster civic awareness and participation, volunteerism and a culture of peace and non-violence among young people"<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> See Plan of Action for the first phase, paras. 10-20; Plan of Action for the second phase, paras. 18-20.

<sup>5</sup> See "Panel discussion on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices and challenges" (A/HRC/35/6).

<sup>6</sup> "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism – Report of the Secretary-General" (A/70/674), para. 54.

<sup>7</sup> "Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy", Fourth priority: "Youth and Human Rights".

20. Youth empowerment is a priority commitment of States at the **regional level**. The African Youth Charter (2006) and the Plan of Action of the African Youth Decade (2009-2018), endorsed by the African Union, support the development of national and regional plans of action for youth empowerment and participation and provide a framework for coordinated action in Africa. States in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2013), guaranteeing “participation, without any form of discrimination, of adolescents and young people in public debate, in decision-making and in all policy and programme phases, in particular on matters that affect them directly” and strategies “to provide education from early childhood that promotes tolerance, an appreciation for diversity, mutual respect and respect for human rights, conflict resolution and peace”. The IberoAmerican Convention on the Rights of Youth (2005) recognizes young people as subjects of rights and strategic development actors, guarantees their social and political participation and supports the adoption of related programmes and policies. The European Union Youth Strategy (2019-2027) promotes youth empowerment, inclusion and participation in democratic life.

21. Taken together, the above-mentioned documents and frameworks recognize that youth are rights-holders and key actors in realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development and securing peace. The inclusive participation of young people in shaping and implementing policies that affect them, or will in the future, is essential. Human rights education empowers young people to do so by developing their knowledge, skills and confidence “to understand, recognize and fulfil their role as active citizens”<sup>8</sup>, to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others and participate accordingly in public affairs and decision-making processes. Human rights education is key to young people’s empowerment, development and engagement towards a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

### C. Specific objectives

22. Taking into consideration the overall objectives of the World Programme (See Section I.B above), the present Plan of Action aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

(a) Encourage the development, adoption and implementation of sustainable national strategies for human rights education for youth, inclusive of all youth, with youth in leadership roles, as well as strengthening of existing ones;

(b) Expand human rights education for, with and by youth in formal and non-formal education and informal learning<sup>9</sup>, prioritizing marginalized youth and youth in vulnerable situations;

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<sup>8</sup> General Comment No. 20 (2016) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, para. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Informal learning is defined as forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate but are not institutionalized. They are less organized and structured than either formal or non-formal education. Informal learning may include learning activities that occur in the family, in the workplace, in the local community and



(c) Provide guidance on key components and actions for human rights education for youth in formal and non-formal education;

(d) Support young people's participation and leadership in youth's human rights education programming;

(e) Promote human rights education for young people as complementary to other actions for protecting and promoting youth's human rights;

(f) Highlight the contribution of human rights education for youth to achieving sustainable development in the context of the 2030 Agenda and in preventing and tackling current global challenges, including violence and conflict;

(g) Encourage networking and cooperation in human rights education for youth among local, national, regional and international governmental and civil society organizations dealing with human rights, youth, education and sustainable development.

## D. Components

23. As mentioned, this Plan of Action builds on the plans of action for the previous three phases of the World Programme, which identify elements for effective human rights education involving youth within formal education (first and second phase) and for human rights training of youth educators in formal and non-formal education (third phase).

24. As human rights education concerns “not only the content of the curriculum but also the educational processes, the pedagogical methods and the environment within which education takes place”<sup>10</sup>, human rights education for youth should include:

(a) “Human rights through education”: ensuring that all components and processes of learning, including curricula, materials, methodologies and training are conducive to the learning of human rights;

(b) “Human rights in education”: ensuring respect for the human rights of all actors, and the practice of human rights, in learning processes and educational settings.

25. Thus, this Plan of Action identifies the following **four components for effective human rights education for youth**. Action within each component must engage young people as key leaders and partners at all stages – planning, design, implementation and follow-up, as

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in daily life, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially-directed basis (UNESCO glossary: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary>).

<sup>10</sup> General Comment No. 1 (2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education, para. 8.

well as regular monitoring and evaluation.

### **(a) Policies<sup>11</sup> and related implementation measures**

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

27. With regard to human rights education for youth within **formal education** (secondary, higher and vocational education), developing policies and legislation, in collaboration with youth as equal partners, for ensuring the inclusion of human rights and human rights education in formal education:

(a) Reviewing existing education laws to include human rights education and adopting legislation on human rights education;

(b) Ensuring that all relevant legislation and policies are aligned with human rights education principles based on good practice as contained in this Plan of Action and other relevant international instruments, and revising inconsistent legislation;

(c) Developing policies and regulations regarding governance and management of youth-serving educational establishments consistent with human rights principles;

(d) Developing policies to ensure that education and human rights education are accessible to all youth, without discrimination, particularly marginalized youth and youth in vulnerable situations;

(e) Establishing policies and practices for the recruitment, appraisal, compensation, discipline and promotion of teaching personnel which respect the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, respect, dignity, fairness and transparency;

(f) Making human rights training a criterion for state licensing or certification for teaching personnel, school administrators and other relevant youth-focused professions.

28. Regarding **non-formal** human rights education for youth conducted by recognized civil society organizations, require human rights education certification or licensing for human rights educators, develop policies to ensure recognition (for instance, validating certification, financial recognition, mentorships and other professional support) and facilitate and support such programming (providing public spaces and financial support including tax reductions, supporting online and traditional media to deliver human rights education with special consideration given to youth-led organizations and media, etc.);

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<sup>11</sup> Policies may be defined as clear and coherent statements of commitments. Prepared at different levels of government, in cooperation with all stakeholders, they include principles, definitions and objectives and serve as a normative reference throughout the education system and for all actors.

29. Ensuring **coherence, links and synergies among related policies, strategies and plans of action**, including in the following areas: youth; education; human rights, including gender equality; global citizenship; peace and prevention of violent extremism, violence and conflict; sustainable development, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other development frameworks; combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; etc.;

30. Adopting relevant and comprehensive **human rights training policy and evaluation measures for educators** (as detailed below in the Section “Training of educators”);

31. Developing and adopting relevant, explicit and comprehensive **policy implementation and evaluation measures**. Include clearly defined measures, mechanisms, responsibilities and resources. Involve all stakeholders to ensure coherence, monitoring and accountability of policies;

32. Fulfilling **international obligations** on human rights education for youth:

(a) Promoting the ratification of international instruments encompassing human rights education for youth;

(b) Aligning national policies and implementation measures with human rights education and youth regional and international instruments;

(c) Including information on human rights education for youth in national reports to relevant international monitoring mechanisms, including United Nations treaty bodies (especially the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), United Nations special procedures (especially the Special Rapporteur on the right to education) and the Universal Periodic Review;

(d) Cooperating with non-governmental organizations, other sectors of civil society and human rights education specialists in preparing the above-mentioned national reports;

(e) Publicizing and implementing recommendations made by international monitoring mechanisms.

### **(b) Teaching and learning processes and tools**

33. Acknowledging that human rights education for youth is necessarily context-specific and needs to tackle specific learning needs of youth within their experience and realities, this Section proposes general guidance on contents, methodology and tools/resources.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See also the plans of action for the first phase (secondary education) and second phase (higher and vocational education) of the World Programme.

34. With regard to **contents**, in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (art. 2), human rights education fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes empowering young people to exercise their rights and respect and uphold the rights of others. Competencies in these areas should include<sup>13</sup>:

(a) Knowledge: Young people are aware of and understand:

- i) The history of human rights and their evolving nature linked to human struggles for freedom, equality, justice and dignity, including the history and significance of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights;
- ii) The close relationship between human rights, peace and sustainable development - the three pillars of the United Nations;
- iii) Human rights principles: participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination, including gender equality, accountability and freedom from violence;
- iv) International human rights standards relevant to youth contained in relevant documents, particularly the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and *Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy*, including the right of young people to participate in public affairs and the value of their voice in influencing democratic decision-making processes;
- v) State obligations in relation to human rights; definitions of rights-holders and duty-bearers; human rights legislation, mechanisms for protection and complaint procedures available when human rights are violated at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- vi) Human rights and international humanitarian law and protection during armed conflict, efforts to secure justice on the international level (i.e., the International Criminal Court) and the prevention of war crimes and of crimes against humanity;
- vii) Critical global challenges (poverty; climate change; etc.) and their relationship with human rights; human rights violations and their root causes, both globally and in their communities, and factors contributing to supporting or undermining human rights in their environment (e.g., political, legal, cultural/social, religious and economic);

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<sup>13</sup> This Section draws from the “core competencies” section of the OSCE’s “Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems”, 2012.

viii) Current and historical human rights issues and movements – in their country, region and globally – and individuals and groups, including women, young people and marginalized groups who have advanced the human rights cause.

(b) Skills: Young people are able to:

i) Describe historical and contemporary political, legal, economic, cultural and social processes from a human rights perspective and using human rights language;

ii) Identify important human rights issues in relation to key areas of life for themselves and others (e.g., school, family and community);

iii) Identify human rights violations, including their root causes and consequences; identify the individual and collective benefits of realized human rights;

iv) Locate information and sources on human rights relevant to their personal, academic and professional needs and interests, including through the use of information and communication technologies; evaluate information sources, including media and learning resources, and recognize points of view, bias and reliability;

v) Apply human rights principles and redress mechanisms in resolving interpersonal conflicts; identify and apply strategies for opposing all forms of discrimination and bullying;

vi) Participate in development and decision-making with regard to policies and programmes that affect them; participate in discussions and debates, including on youth-specific barriers to human rights, and contributing sensitively and constructively on controversial human rights topics;

vii) Network and collaborate with others in advocating for human rights and amplifying marginalized voices;

viii) Develop and defend proposals for changing policies or laws concerning human rights (e.g., in the context of educational settings, the community or society); use human rights standards to claim rights towards duty bearers in and beyond their environment using legal and non-violent methods; and

ix) Lead human rights organizing and campaigning efforts; prepare and carry out actions to promote and protect human rights in private and public domains, including public-awareness activities; organize or join campaigns for victims of human rights violations; combat hate and discrimination online and offline; develop media literacy; handle risks on social media such being

contacted by potential predators, viewing violent content, and facing bullying, hate speech, and violent extremist views; and influence politics, the media and local issues.

(c) Attitudes: Young people demonstrate:

i) Respect for oneself and others based on the recognition of the dignity of all persons and their human rights;

ii) Respect for and appreciation of diversity, including through the use of inclusive language and attitudes, and opposition to discrimination on the basis of race, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, sexual orientation or other bases;

iii) Openness to self-reflection and learning, including awareness of one's own prejudices and biases and commitment to overcoming these so as to improve personal behaviour aligned with human rights principles;

iv) An active interest in human rights and justice-related themes;

v) Appreciation of the link among rights, responsibilities, equality, diversity, non-discrimination, social cohesion and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;

vi) Confidence in claiming human rights and an expectation of duty bearers to protect, respect and fulfil human rights;

vii) Empathy and solidarity with those suffering human rights violations, injustice and discrimination, especially groups in vulnerable situations;

viii) Commitment to protect human rights and to not being a bystander;

ix) A belief that each person working collaboratively with others can make a difference in promoting human rights locally and globally; motivation in carrying out collaborative efforts for human rights (e.g., as leaders, mediators or activists).

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

(a) Learner-centred, contextualized methodologies and approaches that empower youth and solicit their active participation; activities that challenge their own biases, perspectives and privileges and encourage critical thinking and the exploration of alternative perspectives, paying attention to different needs and abilities and adapted across formal and non-formal settings;

(b) Experiential learning methodologies that enable young people to apply human rights concepts to their lives and experiences, including through community service and entrepreneurial activities, engaging in human rights advocacy on the local or global level, community organizing, meeting with government representatives, and raising awareness among youth and community members about human rights;

(c) Peer-to-peer learning – in safe spaces, possibly unsupervised by adults, which allow for connections, dialogue and understanding among youth; soliciting input from youth participants; centering youth voices; featuring youth social movements, youth advocates and other leaders; ensuring that different young voices, perspectives, cultures, and experiences are heard and represented. This approach can be accompanied by intergenerational planning and implementation of human rights campaigns to strengthen solidarity between generations;

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

36. With regard to teaching and learning **materials, support and other resources:**

(a) Ensure that materials build on human rights principles as embedded in relevant cultural contexts, as well as local historical and social developments;

(b) Establish and develop training and resource centres to promote the establishment or enhancement of sustainable human rights training programmes for youth and ensure their quality, to provide facilities for human rights education studies and research and to collect, share, translate and adapt human rights education materials, including those issued by United Nations or regional inter-governmental organizations;

(c) Facilitate access to new information technologies for networking, exchange of human rights information and discussion. Multi-country networks could engage in policy dialogue, exchange model programmes and initiatives including good practices and lessons learnt, and share evaluation tools and other resources. Use existing or new education portals and onsite/online communities of practice, and integrate an online and offline network that is youth friendly, connects the human rights education community, and houses resources and materials to implement human rights education at the national level. Gather information, experiences, methodologies and training opportunities, and share work of institutions and experts in the field;

(d) Use technology to increase access to human rights education through social media, develop website resources, develop and facilitate online learning programmes, e-forums, massive open online courses (MOOCs), web conferencing and distance learning programmes and mobile apps;

(e) Encourage scholarships and exchanges as a means to promote human rights education for youth;

(f) Create youth councils and local level youth structures that support access to and delivery of human rights education; provide platforms for youth to influence policy at all levels;

(g) Prioritize youth, particularly marginalized youth, in developing accessible and engaging materials. Consider languages and disabilities.

### **(c) Training of educators**

37. Previous phases of the World Programme highlighted the importance of appropriate training of educators, i.e. those who design, develop, implement and evaluate human rights education activities in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

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

39. The same priority applies, by analogy, to youth educators in non-formal settings. In line with peer learning methodology, training priority should be given to youth who are trainers, leaders, representatives of youth centers and organizations, activists and volunteers to build pools of skilled young people to train their peers. Youth should participate in designing, implementing, and evaluating training of youth educators.

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

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



- (a) Adopting the internationally-agreed definition of human rights education and training as an empowering process transferring knowledge and developing skills, attitudes and behaviour which promote and protect human rights;
- (b) Pre-service and in-service training, required for all educators, adapted to their particular culture, education and experience, based on training needs assessment and integrated into existing training;
- (c) The training of trainers, particularly those delivering pre-service and in-service training, who should be qualified and experienced human rights education practitioners and reflect the diversity of learners;
- (d) Requiring human rights education for the qualification, accreditation and career development of educational staff; including human rights education in formal teacher training and in the training of other youth-focused professions such as social service and health;
- (e) Recognizing, accrediting and supporting non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society carrying out training activities in human rights education;
- (f) Improving criteria and standards to evaluate training programmes and their implementation;
- (g) Creating enabling learning and working environments for educators, as human rights learning can take place effectively only where human rights are practiced;
- (h) Ongoing support and mentoring, especially for youth educators and educators from marginalized groups and groups in vulnerable situations.

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

- (a) Learning objectives that encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour with respect to human rights and human rights education;
- (b) The principles outlined in Section I.C “Principles for human rights education activities” above;
- (c) Human rights principles and standards and protection mechanisms in and beyond the communities where educators are active; rights and contribution of educators and learners in addressing human rights issues in the community where they live, including security issues;

(d) Appropriate methodology for human rights education that is participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented, takes into account cultural considerations and empowers youth participation;

(e) Contextualized youth-specific human rights issues, for instance how youth may face overlapping forms of discrimination due to their intersecting identities, such as youth with disabilities; belonging to ethnic, religious, gender and other minorities; indigenous peoples; with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds; migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees; in conflict with the law; victims of violations and abuses;

(f) Educators' social skills and leadership styles that are democratic and coherent with human rights principles;

(g) Information on existing teaching and learning resources for human rights education, including information and communication technologies, and digital and social media, to build capacity to review and choose from among them as well as develop new resources;

(h) Examples of integrating human rights education into content that educators already teach;

(i) Strategies to deal with trauma, avoid re-traumatization, incorporate social-emotional learning and center voices of affected communities;

(j) Addressing educators' own bias and prejudice, including when working with young people;

(k) Regular and motivating learner assessment, with youth-specific competencies, both formal and informal;

(l) Incorporating needs assessment and evaluation results, with youth input, into their educational activities;

(m) Adapting curriculum to formal or non-formal settings and to the local context and population.

**43. Training methodologies** for training of educators include participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented approaches and should address motivation, self-esteem and emotional development leading to human rights sensitization and action. Online platforms allow for self-paced learning, sharing of learning resources, learning across

contexts, knowledge of other actors for advocacy and coalition building and digital curricula. Evaluation should be infused throughout the training process<sup>14</sup>.

#### **(d) An enabling environment**

44. Wherever human rights education for youth takes place – in formal, non-formal or informal settings, the learning environment and the broader surroundings inevitably influence the educational process.

45. Educational processes must model human rights principles, i.e. must promote respect for human rights and the dignity of learners and educators, as well as inclusion of youth from all backgrounds, particularly from marginalized communities or groups in vulnerable situations. Learning environments must be safe spaces free of violence where human rights are practiced, freedom of expression and participation nurtured, and conflict is resolved through dialogue.

46. Measures should be taken to guarantee freedom from reprisals for those participating in human rights education activities. Accountability mechanisms must ensure youth safety and access. Human rights education must be independent of political influence and interference.

47. Youth face specific challenges in ensuring respect for their rights in society, such as the right to participate in politics and public decision-making, to gain access to decent jobs when transitioning from education to the labour market, and sexual and reproductive health rights. Young people may also face overlapping forms of discrimination due to their intersecting identities, such as youth with disabilities; belonging to ethnic, religious, gender and other minorities; indigenous peoples; with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds; migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees; in conflict with the law; victims of violations and abuses<sup>15</sup>. National strategies for human rights education for youth must be accompanied by measures to increase protection and realization of young people's human rights, including the development of youth-friendly redress mechanisms.

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

48. A coherent and coordinated national strategy for human rights education for youth, in line with this Plan of Action, requires significant commitment by Member States. They should allocate adequate human and financial resources to support the needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a national strategy for human rights education for youth. A national coordinating body should lead this process; this Plan of Action proposes three steps for its implementation.

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<sup>14</sup> See OHCHR, *From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology* (HR/P/PT/6/Rev.1), 2019; OHCHR and Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education, *Evaluating Human Rights Training: A Handbook for Human Rights Educators* (HR/P/PT/18), 2011.

<sup>15</sup> The OHCHR report “Youth and Human Rights” (A/HRC/39/33), describes challenges and discrimination encountered by young people in gaining access to their rights.

## **(a) Actors and coordination**

49. As a starting point, Member States should designate a relevant department as a focal point responsible for taking the initiative, or responding to the initiative of others, to establish a national coordinating body involving relevant government entities and civil society, with youth representatives as essential participants. The body would ensure coordination, information-sharing and maximization of resources, and avoid duplication of efforts. Youth leadership should consult with local youth within the country. Member States should facilitate opportunities for participation by all relevant actors; the members of the national coordinating body should reflect the diversity of the youth population of the country, including marginalized youth and youth in vulnerable situations<sup>16</sup>.

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

- (a) Relevant ministries (education, youth, justice, etc.) and relevant local government entities;
- (b) National human rights institutions;
- (c) Youth representatives (youth-led organizations, networks councils, and volunteer groups), including young human rights defenders and those representing marginalized youth and youth in vulnerable situations;
- (d) Civil society organizations and networks working on human rights and human rights education, the right to education, youth, peace and sustainable development;
- (e) Representatives of secondary, higher and vocational education establishments, including teacher-training institutions and research institutes.

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

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

53. The national coordinating body should cooperate with national agencies responsible for drawing up country reports for submission to the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the treaty bodies, special procedures and the universal periodic review

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<sup>16</sup> These may include youth with disabilities; belonging to ethnic, religious, gender and other minorities; indigenous peoples; with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds; migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees; in conflict with the law; victims of violations and abuses.

mechanism, and to other international or regional intergovernmental bodies<sup>17</sup> to ensure progress in human rights education under this Plan of Action is included in those reports. It should also liaise with OHCHR and share information on national progress.

### **(b) Steps for implementation**

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

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

**56. Step 1: Undertake a national baseline study on human rights education for youth**

#### **ACTIONS:**

- (a) Mandate a competent institution to carry out a national assessment study, through broad consultations, to be published and widely disseminated to the public once completed. The study should analyze the following:
  - i) Current situation of human rights education for youth in the four areas highlighted in Section D “Components” (Policy and policy implementation measures; Teaching and learning processes and tools; Training of educators; An enabling environment), including existing initiatives, their shortcomings and obstacles to their implementation;
  - ii) Youth human rights learning needs, based on a survey on their relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes;
  - iii) Historical and cultural contexts that may influence human rights education for youth, including challenges and threats;
  - iv) Useful experiences, methodologies, resources and tools existing at the local, national, regional and international levels;

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, a specific UNESCO mechanism monitors implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

- v) Involvement of various actors - within formal, non-formal, and informal education;
  - vi) Role, content and methodology of related types of education (education for sustainable development, peace education, global education, citizenship education) that may exist in the country.
- (b) Determine which actions of the four components above are already implemented and to what extent;
- (c) Identify and consider how to build on good practice and lessons learned, how to use opportunities and which measures are necessary to address shortcomings and obstacles.

57. The outputs of Step 1 include:

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

## **58. Step 2: Develop a national strategy to promote human rights education for youth**

### **ACTIONS:**

- (a) Building on the national baseline study, develop objectives for a national strategy (2020-2024 or beyond) using this Plan of Action as a reference;
- (b) Set priorities on the basis of the findings of the baseline study, taking into account the most pressing needs and/or available opportunities and focusing on impactful interventions that will secure sustainable change, rather than ad hoc activities;
- (c) Develop the national strategy identifying:
  - i) Inputs: available human, financial and time resources;
  - ii) Activities: tasks, responsibilities, and timeframes;
  - iii) Mechanisms for coordination;
  - iv) Outputs (such as legislation, educational materials or training programmes);
  - v) Existing laws, policies and programmes that can contribute to the strategy or need to be revised to support an enabling environment;

vi) Results to be achieved, and related quantitative and qualitative indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework.

59. The output of Step 2 is the national strategy for human rights education for youth, in youth-friendly language, which identifies objectives, priorities and outputs for 2020-2024 or beyond, and should be broadly disseminated among institutions and stakeholders, particularly youth.

### **60. Step 3: Implement, monitor and evaluate the national strategy**

#### **ACTIONS:**

- (a) Implement planned activities;
- (b) Monitor implementation and conduct annual evaluations to improve further implementation of the national strategy;
- (c) Acknowledge and disseminate the achievements and challenges to the public.

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

- (a) Youth involvement and leadership in the national strategy;
- (b) Geographic breadth of implementation of the national strategy;
- (c) Inclusivity of the strategy for marginalized youth and youth in vulnerably situations;
- (d) Cross-sectorial collaboration.

62. The outputs of Step 3 are the identified outputs of the national strategy.

## **F. International cooperation**

### **(a) Reporting to the UN Human Rights Council**

63. Member States should submit a mid-term national progress report in 2022 to OHCHR, which will compile all received information in a report to the Human Rights Council. In early 2025, they should submit a final national evaluation report to OHCHR, which will prepare

and submit a final report on the implementation of the fourth phase to the Human Rights Council by the end of 2025.

### **(b) International support**

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

65. United Nations human rights mechanisms, within their specific mandates, can support national efforts under this Plan of Action. United Nations treaty bodies, when examining State party reports, may review and advise on implementation of treaty provisions relating to human rights education for youth. Thematic and country special procedures of the Human Rights Council may review and advise on related progress within their specific mandates. National human rights education efforts for youth may also be regularly reviewed in the context of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism.

66. International cooperation and assistance may be provided by:

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



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

68. The above-mentioned organizations and institutions may:

- (a) Support Member States and the national coordinating body in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy;
- (b) Support other national and local actors involved, in particular non-governmental organizations, professional associations, higher education institutions, national human rights institutions, and other civil society organizations;
- (c) Facilitate information sharing at all levels by identifying, collecting and disseminating information on good practice, for example through databases and the awarding of prizes, as well as on available materials and relevant institutions and programmes;
- (d) Support and/or develop capacity-building programmes for youth, particularly human rights training of youth trainers, and the participation of youth in relevant events, as well as the development of educational materials based on good practice;
- (e) Support existing networks of human rights education and training youth actors, and promote the creation of new ones at all levels;
- (f) Provide financial support and resources, including for youth leaders and organizations.