

SUBMISSION TO UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON PHASE 5 OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION ASSOCIATES (HREA)

May 29, 2023

Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) is pleased to submit to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights its input on the focus of Phase 5 of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE). HREA is a non-governmental organization that supports human rights education; the training of human rights defenders and professional groups; and the development of educational materials and programming. HREA works with individuals, non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations, and governments interested in implementing human rights education programs.

HREA would like to recommend the fifth phase of WPHRE place importance on **Indigenous groups** as a learner target, with an emphasis on **climate justice as it connects to the right to development and wealth inequality**.

HREA feels strongly that Indigenous groups, climate justice, development, and wealth inequality are intrinsically linked. Indigenous populations are increasingly impacted by climate change, thus exacerbating wealth inequality in relation to development. Indigenous groups have been identified as extremely vulnerable within the context of the climate crisis, given that traditional territories occupied by these groups overlap with many naturally resourced areas that are currently being targeted by extractive industries. A major concern in this area is the widening gap of accessible education available to these populations – education that could enable them to hold duty bearers accountable.

We believe that supporting human rights education (HRE) initiatives for Indigenous groups around issues related to climate justice, development, and wealth inequality would increase their ability to engage in policy reform and community grassroots initiatives. Simultaneously, we believe that Indigenous groups have a wealth of traditional knowledge which could in turn support climate justice initiatives. By investing in Indigenous populations, and supporting their growth and education around HRE, these communities in turn will be empowered to cultivate their own knowledge communities where traditional ways of knowing and being in relation to the environment can be brought to the forefront of solutions-oriented dialogue around the climate crisis. By catalyzing Indigenous knowledge and voices around the climate crisis, Indigenous groups will be empowered and economically mobilized, thus addressing development in a sustainable way, while also creating new pathways and understanding around solutions to the pressing climate crisis.