

World Programme for Human Rights Education
Submission to the Office of the
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
(May 2018)

The Portuguese Ombudsman institution, in its capacity of national human rights institution fully in line with the Paris Principles and accredited with “A” status since 1999, hereby replies to the call for input received from Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The current mandate holder is Maria Lúcia Amaral.

Possible Focus for the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

1. General Public

The Portuguese NHRI considers that the general public education for Human Rights must be a priority. We have been assisting worldwide to several demonstrations of intolerance such as xenophobia, racism, religious intolerance or homophobia. In this context, *education for tolerance* and respect of the “other” is paramount. We believe that spreading the values of respect for the difference and tolerance towards other people is urgent and may prevent conflicts and Human Rights violations.

Special focus must be made, in this respect, on raising awareness on the principle of equality and non-discrimination, as well as on the State’s duties to adequately protect Human Rights of every person, including the guarantee of international protection and asylum.

In this sense, we also believe that it is important to *break stereotypes* that may exist in the perception of the general public regarding certain categories of persons, such as refugees and irregular migrants, people of African descent, Roma citizens, Muslim citizens, LGBTI persons, women and older persons.

2. Employers, Entrepreneurs, Corporations and other Business Enterprises

HR education of corporations and employers in general for the primacy of human rights in the context of their activity is also urgent and paramount.

This education may have several different focus areas:

- *Fighting against exploitation.* It is important to address education as a strategy to fight against slavery, exploitation, trafficking and child labor. Awareness raising must be promoted, in order not only to prevent companies to directly carry out these type of Human Rights abuses, but also to prevent them to cooperate with other companies or persons who carry out these types of human exploitation;
- *Reconciling work and family life.* Employers and business enterprises must be aware that the right to enjoy family relationships, as well as the right to educate and to promote the development of one's children are Human Rights internationally protected. Therefore, work schedules must allow the right to a daily family life time, and workers must benefit right to parental leave according to gender equality principles.
- *Gender Equality.* Education on gender equality and non-discrimination is important to lead employers and business enterprises to provide equal opportunities to all genders and equal rights regarding salary levels.
- *Consumers Human Rights.* Finally, exploitation can also take place on the customers' side. Business enterprises must be trained in order to avoid practices that may lead to abuses, with special focus to exploitation of vulnerable persons, such as older or isolated persons, children and persons with disabilities.

3. Officials, civil servants and employers of detention and accommodation facilities

Finally, the Portuguese NHRI also considers that human rights education must target every person dealing with people living in detention centers or other accommodation facilities, even where not strictly considered as “detained”. We are referring to traditional prisons and immigrants' and juvenile detention centers, but also to accommodation facilities for especially vulnerable persons, who are deprived from their home environment. That is the

case of centers for children in danger deprived from a secure family background, as well as reception centers for refugees, asylum seekers and unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking or any form of violence and also centers for older persons and nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals and homes for persons with disabilities. We believe that all these persons are especially vulnerable and dependent on the personnel who work on these different types of facilities and homes. Therefore, it is especially important to provide these people with high human skills and human rights awareness, in order to prevent situations of inhuman and degrading treatment and to promote the protection of the rights of detainees, residents or users with respect for their autonomy and dignity.

4. Youngsters

Finally, the NHRI also considers important to develop education amongst Younger Persons for promoting their right to health and preventing substance abuse. Since substance abuse may lead to deviant behaviors, investing on education in this regard would be an adequate strategy not only to fight against Youngsters' health deterioration, but also to promote their future as responsible citizens.

Lisbon,

14 May 2018