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Office of the High Commissioner
for Human Rights.
World Program for Human Rights
education. 5th Phase.
Reply to the call for inputs.
Coordinated by Christophe Barbey.
Geneva, 12th of June 2024

Beloved Human Beings,

The center for Global Nonkilling, “Le Mouvement paix du Grand Genève” and APRED present their compliments to Human Rights educators, human rights promoters, activists and practitioners; to human rights defenders whenever their action is needed; to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to all persons in its office: thanking them all for their essential work valuing the human personality and well-being, and the establishment of thriving and happy societies.

To us, Human Rights Education has three components:

- A. A content: Human rights and related elements.
- B. A methodology: Education and human rights practices.
- C. Recipients, in a universal perspective: givers and receivers, partakers in and of human rights.

The mandate for the 5th program is vast and diverse and contains valuable guidance and monitoring tools.

We see it both as a challenge and an opportunity.

Our contribution, as it may be integrated in the 5th plan, focuses on our usual areas of concern: the rights to life and to peace, and on how these are reflected in human rights education and in the Human Rights Education plan.

A. Human Rights

1° The right to life

Life as a right holds a special space in the interdependence with all human rights. It precedes them. If life is canceled ...¹.

It also holds a special relation with the right to a safe environment as it is life within this environment that sustains life for all². The right to life and the right to a safe, clean and sustainable environment are mutually integrative.

The right to life has an important reciprocal (horizontal) dimension: the right to life of others enshrines one's own right to life into a safe and peaceful space from which life can thrive for all and all human rights be lived and fulfilled, together. Education to these linkages and integrations is essential.

We would like the 5th human rights education plan to dedicate a special chapter to the sustenance and enjoyment of life as it does, chapter by chapter, for the right to education, new technologies, environment and climate change, gender equality.

2° The right to peace

The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

Education to peace and to the right to enjoy peace³ has a dual component: to learn how to be peaceful and to educate peacefully (education by peaceful means which we will address hereafter under “methodologies”).

To let life exist and flourish, most of the time and through most human activities, life is and must be surrounded by a peaceful and safe environment, but also be improved and practiced, guaranteed by sustainable development.

Said otherwise, if life and the right to life precede all other human rights, peace (as well as a clean environment and sustainable development) surrounds and *enables* all human rights.

“A Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviors and ways of life based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation (...).”

Resolution 53/243, United Nations General Assembly, 93rd session, 1999.

3° Human rights in relation to institutions

Civic space shall be made of and for mutual understanding and cooperation rather than strife, competing relations or relations based on power or coercion. It is valid at all ages.

Similarly, the right to participate in the decision-making process, as set up in numerous texts⁴, broadly and inclusively understood expresses itself at best when peacefully shared.

Human rights education shall entail enhanced dialogue procedures, consensus making, negotiation and mediation skills and structures, as well as new forms of democracy.

4° The right to education and a comprehensive education system shall encompass and express themselves sharing four types of knowledge⁵:

¹... all other human rights are canceled.

² § 31 of the draft plan.

³ A/RES/71/189, §1.

⁴ Covenant on Civil and Political rights, article 25.

⁵ Instead of our 4 categories, the plan lists three of them: knowledge and skills, attitude and behaviors, § 5.

We clearly prefer to celebrate the value of knowledge *per se*, i.e. ethics are greater and precede practices. And if good “best practice” (learning to do) will always be linked to a previous knowledge (or a test), they gain both from direct experience while using the practice, yet they also return to knowledge in the evaluation process. They are complementary yet different. Then, even if very different in terms of conscience, we nevertheless merge attitudes and behaviors into a single category summarized as “well-being” or learning to be. The rise of attitudes into conscience being as important as the

1. Knowledge *per se* and learning to know.
 Knowledge on Human rights, Ethics, Sustainable development, the Culture of peace⁶, general understanding of the human culture and civilization, of the universe and the environment, and of history.
 Learning to know through adapted pedagogy and by creating intellectual curiosity.
To know life, human nature and the people, to know nature and the Earth well because earnest knowledge is a door to happiness.
2. Learning to be (savoir-être⁷): the joy of living, the positive bases of mental health, the personal capacity to learn, to evolve and progress, to be well or heal⁸. All sorts of cognitive skills, critical and creative thinking, active listening and gentle talk, self-awareness, conscience but also play when accurate. Emotional skills.
Happy people breed a happy world.
3. Learning to do (savoir-faire): To develop the pleasures and joys, the rewards of doing and of doing well. Intellectual, emotional, relational and practical skills of all sorts. Sustainable development, peace and human rights are based on a few essential skills such as long-term thinking, respects for others and for the planet, but also resilience and improvement.
Knowledge to become a global friendly and eco-responsible citizen...
4. Learning to live together in peace⁹ (savoir vivre-ensemble): How to relate and live together, universally, through all kinds of participative and collaborative activities and worthwhile decision-making processes.
 All sorts of peace and pro-social skills: listening, dialogue means, intercultural skills, eco-and global citizenship, mediation and peaceful prevention and settlements of disputes.
The beauty of life, available to all, enshrined by all.

This, knowledge and the right to knowledge, is where the interaction between peace and human rights is particularly important. Human rights practiced peacefully will ground the human being consciously in its existence, where peace will allow the person to express its existence in a friendly, universal and sustainable manner, in common with others, ideally all others.

We would like to see the 5th human rights education plan insist on this aspect: the essential link between knowledge, peace and peace skills for the fulfilment of all Human Rights.

B. **Education Methodology**

- 1° Regarding education towards killing-free societies, we join in annex the 2015 “Vasa Statement”.
- 2° To teach, nonetheless through example and exemplarity, education must be peaceful and adopt peaceful methods of teaching and learning.
 Education shall also assure peaceful settings for schools and their surroundings at large and what happens therewith.
 This means that:
 - a. School programs shall value Peace and Human Rights for themselves, but also value Sustainable Development, prevention of violence and of conflict by developing human and eco-conscience and practices, by avoiding heartless speech, any form of dogmatism and bullying, all kinds of violence.

quality of conscience for choices of behaviors. To merge all our three categories into human reality, we add, “peaceful leaving together”. We do trust that these distinctions are more potent regarding the progress of human rights.

⁶ A/HRC/RES/55/17

⁷ “Savoir-être”, the knowledge of being

⁸ And in soft justice, the knowledge to redeem, rehabilitate and reintegrate society.

⁹ <https://www.un.org/fr/observances/living-in-peace-day>

- b. School programs shall adopt non-violent pedagogy, positive discipline, non-violent communication, and insist on developing Social-Emotional Learning. These require adapted programs, curricula, but also strong and relevant initial and continuing teacher trainings.
Children and young people will learn more from teachers who are themselves trained to express and value human rights and peace, theirs and the ones of others; teachers that can show they peacefully live.
- c. Schools shall have inclusive prevention programs, promoting inclusiveness and fairness, respect for diversity, equality, empowerment and valuation.
- d. Schools shall have mediation programs and facilities, including for peer-to-peer mediations.
- e. Coercive educative measures are always at first a failure of prevention. They shall be avoided, or if ever needed be strictly limited. They shall be restorative and overviewed by independent bodies, which bodies shall include students and elders, parents.
- f. Evaluation and monitoring of Human rights Education programs shall be considered through specific quantitative and qualitative criteria; including knowledge and skills acquisition. They shall also be apprehended through the pleasure of learning and of sharing knowledge.
- g. Teachers are supported in the search for and their promotion of peace and peaceful methods¹⁰.

3° Peace and Human Rights Education methods shall include:

- a. Intercultural activities and practices.
- b. Child and youth centered approaches.
- c. Active and experiential learning, based on learning by doing, experience sharing and role play, on compassionate “trials and error” procedure and self-building of experience.
- d. Cooperative and peer-to-peer learning¹¹ including innovative decision-making process (zero opposition vote and consent).
- e. They shall be open to the city, to the diversity of people and activities, of all stages and walks of life.

C. Recipients of human rights and indicators

1° Allow us to regret the absence in the fifth’s program mandate of lifelong education, education of adults. However great the seeds we plant now for youth and children will bloom, and fruit in the future: in the present state of the world valuing life including in its ecological (climate) and peaceful (living together) dimensions is of vital importance for all (if not to all).

In this sense, the 2011 Declaration on Human Rights Education¹² is broader, and so is SDG 4.7 as it addresses “all learners”¹³.

2° Aware that this is not in the mandate, we would have appreciated if the 5th human rights education plan had defined a common base, a foundation of Peace education, and invited each country to adopt this common education base in their

¹⁰ § 36

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_learning
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%C3%A9dagogie_coop%C3%A9rative

¹² A/RES/66/137, §1 states that everyone should have access to human rights education and training. §3 addresses lifelong education.

¹³ SDG 4.7: By 2030 ensure *all learners* acquire 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.

national programs, approaches and methodologies and to ensure a follow-up on the implementation of such programs¹⁴.

- 3° The development of Social-Emotional Learning in school from an early age shall be addressed as a prerequisite for Human rights embodiment.
- 4° Greater means of participation for all children and students is needed for formal education¹⁵.
- 5° In informal and non-formal education, it is not only human rights education, but also human rights practice that is needed. Respect for others is an essential base, but freedom of information, opinion and expression take place, not without saying, in peace and freedom. Human rights for all by all seems highly needed¹⁶.
- 6° In intrastate relations, where local authorities have autonomy designing curricula and practices, international obligations (and good will) are still relevant. Coordination and oversight mechanisms, as well as incentives need to be put in place¹⁷.
- 7° Comparing education budgets, in regions and among countries says a lot about human rights and peace priorities¹⁸. Publication of such economic data should be required.
- 8° They are more than 8'500 recommendations about education and human rights education in the Universal Periodic Review database¹⁹, and the treaty bodies database would require deeper research to sought out the education theme therein. A comprehensive study of these recommendations, if not yet existing, would show trends and needs, but also positive actors (and others).
- 9° With regard to human rights education concerning the environment and climate change, we note again the absence of peace and peace means in the enumeration of the draft²⁰. In our humble opinion, this is problematic.
 - a. **Peace between Humanity and the Earth** (environment), call it sustainability, is the overall (and unavoidable) goal.
 - b. Such peace requires kindness and benevolence for nature.
 - c. Which also requires apprehending nature (and health) without fright and thus, with a forgiving resilience.
 - d. There is also a very wide solidarity dimension – we are all together on the Planet, as in the way we express our human rights, commonly – in our response to the environment and to climate change²¹.

¹⁴ Such “peace policies” plans, including education to peace are starting to appear in some of the SDG 16 Voluntary National Reports and in some of the works of the Peacebuilding Commission.

¹⁵ § 29 a XIV of the draft plan where children and youth are quoted, yet they are missing in XIII, where they belong as rights bearers.

¹⁶ § 29, b.

¹⁷ § 29, c. Similar issues (or problems) are starting to be thoroughly discussed and addressed in the implementation of Universal Periodic Review mechanisms. Thus, the importance of national mechanism for reporting and follow-up (NMIRFS), which shall (or could) be used as well to monitor human rights - and peace - education.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/national-mechanisms-implementation-reporting-and-follow>

¹⁸ § 29, d. The example of Costa Rica abolishing the army in 1948 to reinforce development and education by reallocating military funds is worth mentioning.

¹⁹ [Link to the database](#) (right to education, human rights education and training, special procedures filters).

²⁰ § 31, b.

²¹ The right to solidarity has an Independent Expert: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-international-solidarity>

- e. Non-violence regarding climate change is intensive and shall stay non-violent. As such it requires non-violent education and accompaniment. We recall SDG 4.7 that specifically mentions non-violence.
- f. How non-violence relates to human rights, in general as in each situation, with their respective purposes and limit; how what may sometimes seem be seen as divergent interests shall be addressed by educating on ways to mitigate these interests for their mutual benefit and fulfillment

The plan shall mention peace and non-violence as elements of human rights education.

- 10° We commend the mention of peace organizations as partners to be included in the education coordination bodies. We admit that more can be done in our respective countries²².
- 11° When looking at the long-term perspective, peace makes a huge difference for learners and teachers, practitioners of human rights: the more human rights are embodied and practiced in peace, the less conflictive the expressions and practices of human rights are, the easier they will become real and effective, fulfilled.
- 12° We salute the overall dispositions for the implementation of the plan and will do our best to support it.

Dear life and peace participants,
 May we all enjoy our rights, may we express and share them peacefully and universally, together as with and through our institutions.
 Thank you.



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²² Noteworthy www.grainesdepaix.org