

Plan of action for the fifth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

European Youth Forum comments

The European Youth Forum, the democratic platform of over 100 youth organisations across Europe, welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan of action for the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and to suggest proposals to strengthen the overall action plan. We are available to provide any further elaborations on the points below.

For any questions or points of clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica Nguyen, Policy and Advocacy Manager - Youth Rights: jessica.nguyen@youthforum.org

Paragraph in text	Suggestion	Comment/Justification
1. The international community has increasingly expressed consensus on the fundamental contribution of human rights education to the realization of human rights and its contribution to the prevention of violence and conflicts, the promotion of equality and sustainable development and participation in decision-making processes within democratic systems.	1. The international community has increasingly expressed consensus on the fundamental contribution of human rights education to the realization of human rights and its contribution to the prevention of violence and conflicts, the promotion of equality, an adequate standard of living , and sustainable development and participation in decision-making processes within democratic systems.	We suggest - if possible - expanding this definition slightly to also reflect the positive outcomes of equality, including providing children and youth an adequate standard of living where they can live above national poverty lines, and also contributing to their sense of fulfilment and purpose in life.
10. Educational and training activities within the World Programme shall:	10. Educational and training activities within the World Programme shall:	We propose to include a new sub-paragraph to infer towards the role of children and youth organisations who play a huge role in

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	<p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>(k) Strengthen links and ensure greater coherency amongst stakeholders - particularly children and youth movements and organisations - in providing human rights education in formal, non-formal and informal settings;</p>	<p>fostering human rights education in non-formal education settings, as it would be important to ensure their role is valued in the design, implementation and monitoring of this new action plan. More broadly, this includes their contribution to building civic engagement, openness, understanding, intercultural learning and social cohesion, and young people's empowerment and confidence.</p>
<p>22. Human rights education is an integral part of the right to education, as stipulated in several international human rights and education instruments and documents.¹⁵</p>	<p>22. Human rights education is an integral part of the right to education, as stipulated in several international human rights and education instruments and documents.¹⁵ ...</p> <p>Furthermore, greater attention must be provided to ensure the right to lifelong learning and quality education is paramount for young people turning 18 who may not have been able to yet complete their formal education, and who face additional challenges upon transitioning being rights-holders in their adulthood.</p>	<p>We suggest providing greater visibility to the barriers faced by children and young people in enjoying their right to education, namely those at a transition point between childhood and adulthood who are in precarious situations (i.e. those in humanitarian and conflict settings, juvenile justice systems, alternative care, experiencing school segregation, those with pending migrant status...).</p>
<p>26(g) To encourage networking and cooperation in human rights education for children and youth among local, national, regional and</p>	<p>26(g) To encourage networking and cooperation in human rights education for children and youth among local, national, regional and</p>	<p>We would suggest to include a more explicit reference to youth-led organisations who are key to directly facilitating human rights education outside of formal settings.</p>

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<p>international governmental and civil society organizations dealing with human rights, children, youth, education and sustainable development.</p>	<p>international governmental and civil society organizations dealing with human rights, children, youth, education and sustainable development, notably movements and organisations led by children and youth.</p>	
<p>29(a)(xiii) Adopting a participatory approach to policy development by involving teacher and parent associations and unions, professional and research bodies, civil society and other stakeholders in the preparation of educational policy texts;</p>	<p>29(a)(xiii) Adopting a participatory approach to policy development by involving teacher and parent associations and unions, professional and research bodies, civil society - notably children and youth movements and organisations - and other stakeholders in the preparation of educational policy texts;</p>	<p>We would suggest to include a more explicit reference to youth-led organisations who are key to directly facilitating human rights education outside of formal settings.</p>
<p>29(c)Ensuring coherence, links and synergies among related State and provincial policies, strategies and plans of action, including in the following areas: human rights education; children; youth; education; human rights, including the rights of those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability; digital technologies; environment and climate change; global citizenship; peace, security and the prevention of violent extremism, violence and conflict; crime</p>	<p>29(c)Ensuring coherence, links and synergies among related State and provincial policies, strategies and plans of action, including in the following areas: human rights education; children; youth; education; human rights, including the rights of young people reaching the age of majority and those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability; digital technologies; environment and climate change; global citizenship; peace, security and the prevention of</p>	<p>We suggest to provide better recognition of youth as a transition period and what it means to carry the rights from the CRC (i.e. those reaching the age of majority or turning 18), given that their right to lifelong learning and quality education is oftentimes not met in adulthood.</p>

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<p>prevention and criminal justice and the fight against corruption; 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.;</p>	<p>violent extremism, violence and conflict; crime prevention and criminal justice and the fight against corruption; 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.;</p>	
<p>29(e) Fulfilling international obligations concerning human rights education for children and youth by:</p>	<p>29(e) Fulfilling international obligations concerning human rights education for children and youth by:</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>29(e)(vi) Strengthen coordination and collaboration between the UN Youth Office, UNICEF and OHCHR, to ensure the harmonisation of human rights education and language linked to children and youth is upheld across the UN's 3 pillars.</p>	<p>We suggest to include a reference on the need for greater coordination amongst key UN agencies, particularly to bridge the spaces and outcomes taking place in New York and Geneva, and to also ensure greater harmonisation in human rights language when it comes to upholding the right to human rights education for children and youth.</p>
<p>31(a)(i) <u>Knowledge</u>: Children and young people are aware of and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (first point) Their rights in digital environments, particularly the right to privacy, the right to protection from recognized and emerging risks of all forms of violence in the digital environments, the right to access 	<p>31(a)(i) <u>Knowledge</u>: Children and young people are aware of and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their rights in digital environments, particularly the right to privacy, the right to protection from recognized and emerging risks of all forms of violence in the digital environments, the right to access information, 	<p>With regards to the first point, we suggest making a more explicit link between the role of education and digital technologies on children and young people's health (specifically mental and emotional), their overall wellbeing, and the cyclical nature in which poor health and wellbeing further contributes to their lack of engagement with</p>

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<p>information, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of association and peaceful assembly;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Fifth point) 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; 	<p>freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of association and peaceful assembly, as well as the interlinkages with young people's right to health - notably their mental health and wellbeing;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Fifth point) 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, including ways to ensure quicker, more efficient and accessible ways to report harmful content and facilitate access to justice; (New point) Privacy information that is provided in a child and youth-friendly way and which facilitates in language accessibility 	<p>human rights education, among other areas.</p> <p>With regards to the fifth point, we feel that 'Coping strategies' is quite passive, and would also suggest other aspects where they have knowledge to make informed decisions later on, including with regards to understanding what harmful content is, and that there are avenues to reporting this.</p> <p>Finally, we also suggest including a new point to make more explicit mention around the aspects of knowledge with regards to information around online privacy. Given its complexities, we suggest that provisions be included around having this information provided in a child- and youth-friendly way to better add to their knowledge and empowerment.</p>
<p>31(a)(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (First point) Analyse the place of technologies in society, their impact on daily lives, their role in building knowledge and their uses for social participation; 	<p>31(a)(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (First point) Analyse the place of technologies in society, their impact on daily lives, their role in building knowledge and their uses for social participation and social inclusion; 	<p>With regards to the first point, we recommend expanding on this even further given that social participation is an aspect of achieving social inclusion more broadly.</p> <p>With regards to the sixth point, the mentioning of adults feels a bit disempowering as it establishes this line</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Sixth point) Identify and use digital platforms and means to express their views and to participate on an equal basis with adults, anonymously where needed, so that they can be effective advocates for their rights, individually and as a group; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Sixth point) Identify and use digital platforms and means to express their views and to participate on an equal basis with peers and adults, anonymously where needed, so that they can be effective advocates for their rights, individually and as a group; 	<p>between young people who may themselves be adults or the age of majority. We have proposed to include 'peers' but welcome a slightly more nuanced reference to others who they may engage with.</p>
<p>31(b)(i) <u>Knowledge</u>: children and young people are aware of and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (First point) The link between the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and other rights, such as the right to life, the right to health, the right to adequate standard of living and the right to education; (Seventh point) The link between historical and ongoing patterns of inequity, such as colonialism, with the differing vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change. 	<p>31(b)(i) <u>Knowledge</u>: children and young people are aware of and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (First point) The link between the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and other rights, such as the right to life, the right to health, the right to adequate standard of living and the right to education, and by extension, the right to clean air, clean water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainable food, a safe climate, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems; (Seventh point) The link between historical and ongoing patterns of inequity, such as colonialism, with the differing vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change, as well as existing inequalities linked to barriers in accessing legal recourse 	<p>With regards to the first point, we recommend expanding on the right to a clean and healthy environment to also reference other climate justice areas which directly have an impact on children and young people.</p> <p>With regards to the seventh point, we recommend to also highlight how existing and intergenerational inequalities additionally contribute to access to justice.</p>

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	<p style="color: red;">due to economic barriers and a lack of judicial expertise in environmental matters.</p>	
<p>31(b)(iii) <u>Attitudes</u>: children and young people demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (First point) Agency in being at the forefront calling for protection of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and pushing for climate environmental harms; 	<p>31(b)(iii) <u>Attitudes</u>: children and young people demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (First point) Agency in being at the forefront calling for protection of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, its linkages with other human rights, and pushing for climate environmental harms; 	<p>We would suggest including the intersection with other human rights as well.</p>
<p>31(c)(ii) <u>Skills</u>: children and young people are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Eight point) Seek professional help and support (psychological or legal) and effectively access child- and youth-friendly justice and remedy when affected by violence, including verbal and emotional abuse, stalking, sexual harassment and sexual violence, physical violence and exploitation. 	<p>31(c)(ii) <u>Skills</u>: children and young people are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Eight point) Identify harmful forms of gender-based violence, online and offline, and seek professional help and support (psychological or legal) and effectively access child- and youth-friendly justice and remedy when affected by violence, including verbal and emotional abuse, stalking, sexual harassment and sexual violence, physical violence and exploitation. 	<p>We would suggest including a point on prevention first, before seeking support.</p>

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<p>33(h) Creating or strengthening children and youth councils and local children and youth structures that support access to and delivery of human rights education; providing platforms for them to influence policy at all levels;</p>	<p>33(h) Creating or strengthening independent children and youth councils and local children and youth structures in cooperation with already established youth-led organisations such as National Youth Councils, including independent youth organisations, that support access to and delivery of human rights education; providing platforms for them to influence policy at all levels;</p>	<p>We have heard from our members that some governments in Europe have already been trying to create their own youth councils/structures that are a parallel of already existing independent youth organisations, so we are concerned that there may be a risk of sidelining already established and independent youth structures. We would suggest to clarify that these newly established structures be independent themselves, and to also to be established in direct cooperation with existing youth-led organisations in order to ensure complementarity rather than their unintentional replacement.</p>
<p>40. ...The risks and opportunities associated with children and youth's engagement in the digital environment change depending on their age and stage of development; measures to protect children and youth in, or facilitate their access to, such environment must be guided by those considerations, in line with the best interests of the child.</p>	<p>40. ...The risks and opportunities associated with children and youth's engagement in the digital environment change depending on their age and stage of development; measures to protect children and youth in, or facilitate their access to, such environment must be guided by those considerations, in line with the best interests of the child, and through child- and youth-friendly information.</p>	<p>We suggest including a reference to access to information as part of children and young people's broader - and more informed engagement with digital spaces.</p>
<p>51(a)(vi) Involvement of various actors within formal, non-formal and informal education;</p>	<p>51(a)(vi) The current situation and involvement of various actors within formal, non-formal and informal education;</p>	<p>Perhaps this can be further elaborated to explicitly make reference to youth orgs, CSOs etc. and to understand what their role is in facilitating education, not only whether they are involved or not.</p>