



Human Rights Educators USA Feedback on the Draft Plan of Action for the Fifth Phase (2025-2029) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

Thank you for requesting feedback from Human Rights Educators USA. The organization has identified several recommendations. Highlighted text denotes specific language additions or alterations. More detailed information is provided below.

1. Note on Language: National

The use of the term “national” could prove problematic for countries such as the United States where educational standards are implemented at the state level and within sovereign Indigenous Nations. On page 11, point 29a(ii), the language “national – or provincial, where applicable” is used. However, this language is not consistent throughout the document. There is also concern that sovereign Indigenous Nations may be excluded from this language. We recommend using “**at the level of nations, provinces, and sovereign Indigenous Nations**” instead, and for this language to be consistent throughout the plan.

Some specific locations within the text where this language may be substituted includes

- Point 12 on page 5
- Point 29a(iii) on page 11
- Point 29e(ii) on page 12
- Point 33e on page 19

2. Indigenous Sovereignty, Self-Determination and Knowledges

In 31b(i), bullet point seven, add, “such as colonialism, **displacements, and genocides.**”

We recommend adding a new bullet point at the end of 31b(i) to connect our previous note on being inclusive to different governing bodies that implement educational objectives, saying, “**Support Indigenous Nations in building capacities to take on more prominent roles in the education of their citizens.**”

Additionally, while the importance of Indigenous knowledges is included in some sections of the draft, it should be present throughout the document. One place in particular where it should be mentioned is in point 11 where climate and environmental change is discussed.

It should also be noted that the term “**knowledges**” versus “knowledge” more fully includes the insights, perspectives and worldviews from Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems. Knowledges should therefore also be consistently used throughout the document, for example under point 29a(ii) and 29b(iii) among others. It is especially important to use “knowledges” in 31b(ii) bullet point one when describing “ancestral and Indigenous knowledges.”

3. Access to Digital Technologies

To further highlight the importance of youth access to digital technologies, we recommend adding the language for inclusive access for all to point 23, on page 8, immediately before the last sentence of the paragraph. It may follow as, “...contexts. **It is essential for all young people to have access to digital technologies such as the Internet.** Around 2.2 billion...”

4. Addition to Digital Skills

At the end of point 31a(ii) bullet four, We recommend adding “**as well as Indigenous and minoritized histories, languages, arts/literature/media, narratives, and scholarship.**”

5. Gender Terminology

Point 31c(i) uses the language, “women, girls, men, boys and people of diverse gender identities.” Yet the inclusion of individuals of diverse gender identities is not repeated in other areas. To prevent the exclusion of unspecified groups, the language could be broadened. This broadened language such as “**all gender identities**” should be replicated throughout the document.

Some specific locations within the text where this language may be substituted includes

- Point 31c(i) bullet point 4 on page 17
- Point 33b on page 19, “**...reproduce and reinforce gender-based discrimination and promote more balanced, accurate, healthy and positive projections.**”

6. Additions to Miscellaneous Points

- Point 33a, “...local historical and social developments **inclusive of Indigenous and minoritized histories that** are specific...”
- Point 33d, “...programmes and experiences, **including language accessibility,** good practices...”
- Point 33f, “...and mobile apps **such as podcasts.**”
- Point 36j should include in alpha order the subjects, “...educators already teach, **including arts and humanities, career and life skills, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), human rights, languages, physical education and social**”

sciences (economics, history, geography, psychology, sociology) along with cross-discipline learning;”

- Point 36l should include, “...(conscious or subconscious), and dominate narrative myths, when...”
- Point 37 should include, “learner centred, peer to peer, experiential and action-oriented approaches and should address motivation, self-esteem, relational and emotional learning, critical thinking, storytelling and reflection leading to human rights sensitization and action.”

7. Addition to Training Curriculum

We recommend including training on both cultural responsiveness and cultural humility under point 36. The text may state,

(r) Training on cultural responsiveness and cultural humility that prepares educators to recognize and respect diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices, fosters an openness to learning in oneself and one’s students, and creates inclusive learning environments respectful of cultural diversity, with assessment tools available for educators to use and evaluate the curricula’s cultural responsiveness and cultural humility.

Cultural responsiveness consists of understanding, considering, and responding to the diverse cultural aspects of an individual or group of individuals, including but not limited to their cultural background, beliefs, and practices. Cultural humility is a framework for understanding cultural diversity that promotes a continuous learning process including self-reflection, teachability, and acknowledging one’s own biases. The inclusion of both cultural responsiveness and cultural humility is necessary; both an understanding and a framework for understanding advances an effective human rights approach to cultural diversity.

8. Environment and Climate Change: Access to Healthy and Safe Food

In point 41, a variety of infrastructure necessary to protect against the effects of environment and climate change are listed. We recommend the inclusion of “access to healthy and safe food sources, including land and water for sustainable agricultural production.”

9. Mandating a Competent Institution

Point 51a notes that a nation mandates a competent institution to carry out a national assessment study. We recommend including wording that allows for a collaboration of organizations to aid in carrying out the national assessment. This recommendation aims to address countries who do not have national human rights institutions that could feasibly undertake this step.

10. Consideration for Step 2

Under Step 2 on pages 25-26, it would be beneficial to include the importance of supporting educator and student academic freedom to learn. Language could be drawn from the forthcoming UN Academic Freedom guidelines developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.

11. Word Count

At the in person expert consultation on April 18 and 19 in New York City, there was a mention of a potential word count of approximately 8,500 words. Given the document currently contains nearly 12,000 words, there is concern that major cuts may be made to the draft. If this is the case, Human Rights Educators USA would like the opportunity to highlight areas that are important to remain in the document as well as provide input on the later version.

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