

# DRAFT

## Plan of action for the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

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# I. Introduction

## A. Definition of human rights education

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.
2. Provisions on human rights education have been incorporated into many international instruments and documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education (art. 5); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (art. 7); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13); the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (art. 10); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 10); the International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (arts. 30 and 31); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 29); the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (art. 33); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (arts. 4 and 8); the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (Part I, paras. 33–34; Part II, paras. 78–82); the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (paras. 7.3 and 7.37); the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (Declaration, paras. 95–97; Programme of Action, paras. 129–139) and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference (paras. 22 and 107); and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (para. 131).
3. In December 2011, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.<sup>1</sup> The Declaration states that everyone “should have access to human rights education and training” (art. 1); it affirms that “States, and where applicable relevant governmental authorities, have the primary responsibility to promote and ensure human rights education and training” and that “States should create a safe and enabling environment for the engagement of civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders” (art. 7). Adopted in 2023, the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development is another global instrument dedicated specifically to human rights education.
4. In accordance with the above instruments, which contain elements of a definition of human rights education agreed upon by the international community, human rights education includes any learning, education, training or information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights.
5. Human rights education is a lifelong process that fosters:
  - (a) Knowledge and skills: learning about human rights and acquiring skills to exercise them in daily life;

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 66/137, annex.

- (b) Attitudes: developing or reinforcing attitudes, values and beliefs that uphold human rights;
- (c) Behaviour: taking action to defend and promote human rights.

## **B. World Programme for Human Rights Education and related initiatives**

6. With a view to encouraging human rights education initiatives, States have adopted various specific international frameworks for action, such as the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights (1988), focusing on the development and dissemination of human rights information materials; the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004) and its plan of action, encouraging the elaboration and implementation of comprehensive, effective and sustainable plans for human rights education at the national level; the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010); the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014); and the International Year of Human Rights Learning (2008–2009).
7. Other international frameworks that promote human rights education include the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022); the Education for All (2000–2015) movement and the Education 2030 Framework for Action; the Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (2012–2016); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the Transforming Education Summit convened by the Secretary-General (2022).
8. On 10 December 2004, the General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education.<sup>2</sup> The World Programme, which began on 1 January 2005, is aimed at advancing the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors and is structured in consecutive phases. The first phase (2005–2009) was dedicated to the integration of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems; the plan of action for its implementation (A/59/525/Rev.1) was adopted by the Assembly in July 2005.<sup>3</sup> The second phase (2010–2014) focused on human rights education in higher education and human rights training for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels; the plan of action (A/HRC/15/28) was adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2010.<sup>4</sup> The third phase (2015–2019) focused on strengthening implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists; the plan of action (A/HRC/27/28 and Corr.1) was adopted by the Council in September 2014.<sup>5</sup> The fourth phase (2020–2024) was dedicated to youth empowerment through human rights education; the plan of action (A/HRC/42/23) was adopted by the Council in September 2019.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution 59/113 A.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution 59/113 B.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 15/11.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution 27/12.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 42/7.

## **C. Objectives of the World Programme for Human Rights Education**

9. The objectives of the World Programme are:
  - (a) To promote the development of a culture of human rights;
  - (b) To promote a common understanding, based on international instruments, of basic principles and methodologies for human rights education and its harmonization in national policies;
  - (c) To ensure a focus on human rights education at the national, regional and international levels;
  - (d) To provide a common collective framework for action by all relevant actors;
  - (e) To enhance partnership and cooperation at all levels;
  - (f) To survey, evaluate and support human rights education programmes and other educational programmes that promote human rights, to highlight successful practices, to provide an incentive to continue and/or expand them and to develop new ones;
  - (g) To promote implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

## **D. Principles for human rights education activities**

10. Educational and training activities within the World Programme shall:
  - (a) Promote the inalienability, interdependence, interrelatedness, indivisibility and universality of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development;
  - (b) Foster respect for and appreciation of diversity, and opposition to discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth, place of residence, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, and other bases;
  - (c) Encourage analysis of chronic and emerging human rights problems – including poverty, violent conflicts and discrimination – in the light of rapidly changing developments in the political, social, economic, technological and environmental fields, leading to responses and solutions that are consistent with human rights standards and foster social cohesion;
  - (d) Empower communities and individuals to identify their human rights entitlements and to claim them effectively;
  - (e) Develop the capacity of duty bearers, in particular governmental officials, to meet their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of those under their jurisdiction;
  - (f) Build on the human rights principles embedded within the differing cultural contexts and take into account historical and social developments in each country;

- (g) Foster knowledge of, and the acquisition of skills to use, local, national, regional and international human rights instruments and mechanisms for the protection of human rights;
- (h) Make use of participatory methodologies that include knowledge, critical analysis and skills for individual and collective action furthering human rights and that take into consideration the age, cultural specificities and contexts of the learners;
- (i) Foster safe teaching and learning environments that encourage participation, the enjoyment of human rights and the full development of the human personality;
- (j) Be relevant to the daily life of the learners, engaging them in a dialogue about ways and means of transposing human rights from the expression of abstract norms to the reality of their social, economic, cultural and political conditions.

## **II. Children and youth empowerment through human rights education: plan of action for the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education**

### **A. Scope**

11. In its resolution 54/7, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare a plan of action for the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the World Programme, devoted to children and youth, with special emphasis on human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality. The Council also decided to align the fifth phase with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the synergies between the different concepts and educational methods mentioned therein.
12. The present plan of action provides guidance, based on internationally agreed-upon principles, to develop a comprehensive human rights education strategy for children and youth at the national level, in both formal and non-formal education<sup>7</sup>, to be adapted to national contexts. It lays out objectives, components, actions and practical steps for implementation, and potential relevant actors. As requested by the Council, the plan focuses on three thematic human rights education areas: human rights and digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality.
13. The plan of action builds on previous plans of action, in particular the ones for the first phase (focusing on human rights education in primary and secondary education), the second phase (focusing on human rights education in higher education) and the fourth phase (focusing on human rights education for youth). It also builds on the plan of action for the third phase with regard to training of educators in formal and non-formal education.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Formal education is “education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies”; non-formal education is “education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned” as “an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals”, which includes educational activities conducted by civil society organizations (UNESCO glossary, available at <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary>).

<sup>8</sup> Plan of Action for the third phase (A/HRC/27/28 and Corr.1), paras. 18–22.

14. Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”.
15. There is no internationally agreed-upon definition of youth.<sup>9</sup> While recognizing that the United Nations Secretariat, for statistical purposes, defines “youth” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, and the United Nations Security Council refers to persons of the age of 18-29 years old (Resolution 2250), the present plan of action acknowledges other definitions used by United Nations entities and bodies, as well as States, without prejudice.
16. Beyond age, both childhood and youth are fluid and non-homogeneous categories, made up of individuals with evolving capacities. They represent transitory periods of life, which differ according to different sociocultural settings. Children and young people also have multiple and intersecting identities (ethnicity, belonging to specific minorities or Indigenous Peoples, gender, etc.) with which they identify, in addition to their age.
17. UN bodies and documents as well as international fora, as detailed in the section below, have recognized that children and youth are rights holders and agents of change, key actors in realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development, securing peace and preventing violence and conflict. The inclusive participation of children and young people in shaping, implementing and monitoring policies that affect them, or will in the future, is essential. Human rights education – including education concerning human rights and digital technologies, environment and climate change and gender equality – empowers children and youth to take action and uphold their human rights and those of others, and to participate accordingly in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes. Human rights education is key to children and young people’s empowerment, development and engagement towards a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

## **B. Background**

18. As stated by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, “the education to which each child has a right is one designed to provide the child with life skills, to strengthen the child’s capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture which is infused by appropriate human rights values”; such education “is for every child an indispensable tool for her or his efforts to achieve in the course of her or his life a balanced, human rights-friendly response to the challenges that accompany a period of fundamental change driven by globalization, new technologies and related phenomena”<sup>10</sup>.
19. The Committee also emphasized “the importance of participation as a means of political and civil engagement through which adolescents can negotiate and advocate for the realization of their rights, and hold States accountable. States should (...) invest in measures that support adolescents to understand, recognize and fulfil their role as active citizens, including through citizenship and human rights education”<sup>11</sup>.
20. The United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People, launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2018, commits the United Nations to increase

<sup>9</sup> For information on various positions on this issue, see A/HRC/39/33, paras. 13–15.

<sup>10</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee), general comment 1 (2001), para. 2 and 3.

<sup>11</sup> CRC Committee, general comment 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, para. 24.

efforts to promote human rights education and training for youth, as well as global citizenship and sustainable development education, without discrimination, to foster civic awareness and participation, volunteerism and a culture of peace and non-violence among young people. In the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education (2022), young people urge decision-makers to promote education that is founded upon the principles of peace and human rights and one that enables every young person to lead a fulfilling, motivated, enjoyable, and quality life.

21. Human rights education for youth has been increasingly identified as a strategy for preventing and tackling current global challenges.<sup>12</sup> In the 1995 Doha Declaration, States expressed their commitment to develop educational programmes for youth as agents of positive change in the prevention of crime, focusing on the protection of human rights and the rule of law.<sup>13</sup> In its resolution 2250 (2015), the Security Council, affirming the important role that youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, urged States to support, as appropriate, quality education for peace that equips youth with the ability to engage constructively in civic structures and inclusive political processes. In his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the Secretary-General encouraged “teaching respect for human rights and diversity, fostering critical thinking, promoting media and digital literacy, and developing the behavioural and socioemotional skills that can contribute to peaceful coexistence and tolerance” as elements of related national plans of action.<sup>14</sup>
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.<sup>15</sup> This is reiterated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: target 7 of Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education is to “ensure that all learners acquire the 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”. The Dakar Framework for Action also notes that in situations affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, educational programmes shall be conducted in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and help to prevent violence and conflict.<sup>16</sup>
23. With regard to **education concerning digital technologies and human rights**, the UN Secretary-General stated the importance of making human rights the foundation of an open, safe and secure digital future.<sup>17</sup> The digital environment is constantly evolving and expanding, becoming increasingly important across most aspects of children and young people’s lives.<sup>18</sup> It affords new opportunities for the realization of their rights, such as ensuring their participation at the local, national and international levels, but also poses

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<sup>12</sup> A/HRC/35/6.

<sup>13</sup> Resolution 70/174, annex, para. 10.

<sup>14</sup> A/70/674, para. 54.

<sup>15</sup> See Plan of Action for the first phase (A/59/525/Rev.1), paras. 10–20; and Plan of Action for the second phase (A/HRC/15/28), paras. 18–20.

<sup>16</sup> Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, adopted at the World Education Forum, Dakar, 26-28 April 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 5: A Global Digital Compact — an Open, Free and Secure Digital Future for All (2023), p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> CRC Committee, general comment 25 (2021), paras. 2 and 3; UNICEF Policy Brief 4: Digital technologies, child rights and well-being (2024), p.1.

the risks of their violation or abuse. In this regard, the UN General Assembly highlighted the importance of capacity-building initiatives to enhance understanding, knowledge and skills relating to the human rights implications of new and emerging digital technologies<sup>19</sup>; it called upon States to support and invest in human rights education as a long-term and lifelong process to educate everyone on human rights principles and the methods of ensuring those principles in all societies, including in digital contexts, and to promote positive behaviour that addresses all forms of discrimination and violence that occur through or are amplified by the use of technology.<sup>20</sup> At the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit 2022, young people have expressed their commitment to champion human rights, equality and dignity online by leveraging the power of digital technologies and the internet, and to educate others on the advantages and risks of the digital world<sup>21</sup>; to this end, the Committee of the Rights of the Child recommended States to transform education and build the digital literacy and skills of children and youth in all formal, non-formal and informal contexts.<sup>22</sup> Around 2.2 billion – or two thirds of – children and young people worldwide, especially girls and adolescent girls, who are disproportionately impacted, do not have Internet access at home;<sup>23</sup> as the Secretary-General stated, reimagining education means investing in digital literacy and digital infrastructure among others.<sup>24</sup>

24. With regard to **education concerning the environment and climate change**, the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “the education of the child shall be directed to (...) the development of respect for the natural environment” (Art. 29.1.e). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) as well as the related Paris Agreement (2015) commit States to “promote and cooperate in education and training related to climate change and encourage the widest participation in this process”.<sup>25</sup> States in Latin America and the Caribbean have specifically undertaken to promote education and training on environmental matters through educational modules on access rights<sup>26</sup> for students at all levels of education.<sup>27</sup> In recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, the UN General Assembly called upon States and other relevant stakeholders to “strengthen capacity-building in order to scale up efforts to ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all”, noting that the human rights implications of environmental damage are felt most acutely by women and girls and segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous Peoples, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.<sup>28</sup> The Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights (2020) calls the United Nations family to “advocate for children and young people to receive an education that prepares them for the future they face and for the development of climate change related curricula at all

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<sup>19</sup> Resolution A/C.3/78/L.19/Rev. 1, para. 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 32.

<sup>21</sup> ITU Generation Connect Youth Call to Action (2022), pp. 2 and 4.

<sup>22</sup> CRC Committee, general comment 25, para. 32.

<sup>23</sup> Resolution A/C.3/78/L.19/Rev. 1, preambular para. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on Our Common Agenda (2021), p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992), art. 4(1)(i); Paris Agreement to UNFCCC (2015), art. 12.

<sup>26</sup> “Access rights” means the right of access to environmental information, the right of public participation in the environmental decision-making process and the right of access to justice in environmental matters, as in art. 2(a) of Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (2018).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 10(2)(d).

<sup>28</sup> Resolution A/RES/76/300, para. 4 and preambular para. 11.



levels of primary and secondary education”.<sup>29</sup> In its General Comment No. 26 (2023), the Committee on the Rights of the Child recognized that to ensure their free, active, meaningful and effective participation, children should be provided with environmental and human rights education, age-appropriate and accessible information, adequate time and resources and a supportive and enabling environment.<sup>30</sup>

25. With regard to **education concerning gender equality**, it must be noted that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are both a standalone goal in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 5) and inextricably linked to Goal 4 on quality education;<sup>31</sup> the achievement of gender equality requires that all learners not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.<sup>32</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stated that for girls and women to overcome social exclusion and poverty, which increase their vulnerability to exploitation, harmful practices and other forms of gender-based violence, they need to be equipped with the skills and competencies necessary to assert their rights; the two Committees recommended that States include in the educational curriculum information on human rights, including those of women and children, gender equality and self-awareness and contribute to eliminating gender stereotypes and fostering an environment of non-discrimination.<sup>33</sup> The Commission on the Status of Women also acknowledged the critical role of gender-sensitive education and training in achieving gender equality, recognizing the role of men and boys to this end.<sup>34</sup> International human rights experts also recommended that States develop educational programmes to eliminate prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes or behaviours with regard to any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.<sup>35</sup>

## C. Specific objectives

26. Taking into consideration the overall objectives of the World Programme, the present plan of action aims to achieve the following specific objectives:
- (a) To build on progress made during the previous phases of the World Programme, encouraging the development, adoption and implementation of sustainable national strategies for human rights education for children and youth, inclusive of all without discrimination, with them in leadership roles;

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<sup>29</sup> Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights (2020), p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> CRC Committee, general comment 26 (2023), para. 27.

<sup>31</sup> From Access to Empowerment: UNESCO Strategy for Gender Equality in and through Education 2019-2025, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015), p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Joint CEDAW Committee, general recommendation 31 / CRC Committee general comment 18, paras. 61 and 69(c).

<sup>34</sup> Commission on the Status of Women, CSW48 Agreed Conclusions (A) (March 2004), para. 4.

<sup>35</sup> The Yogyakarta Principles: Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2007), Principle 2F.

- (b) To expand human rights education for children and youth in formal and non-formal education and informal learning,<sup>36</sup> prioritizing those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;<sup>37</sup>
- (c) To provide guidance on key components and actions for human rights education for youth in formal and non-formal education, against which relevant data can be collected and national progress can be assessed;
- (d) To encourage and support children and young people's participation and leadership in human rights education programming for their peers;
- (e) To promote human rights education for children and young people as complementary to other actions for protecting and promoting their human rights;
- (f) To highlight the contribution of human rights education for children and youth in achieving sustainable development in the context of the 2030 Agenda and in preventing and tackling current global challenges;
- (g) To encourage networking and cooperation in human rights education for children and youth among local, national, regional and international governmental and civil society organizations dealing with human rights, children, youth, education and sustainable development.

## D. Components

27. The previous four phases of the World Programme identified elements for effective human rights education involving children and youth within formal education (first and second phases) and non-formal education (fourth phase) as well as human rights training of youth educators in formal and non-formal education (third phase).
28. Building on these elements, the present plan of action identifies the following **four components** for effective human rights education for children and youth, to be read in conjunction with those identified in the plans of action of previous phases of the World Programme. Action within each component must engage children and young people as key partners at all stages: planning, design, implementation and follow-up, as well as regular monitoring and evaluation.

### 1. Policies and related implementation measures

29. The development, adoption, implementation and monitoring of policies fostering human rights education for children and youth include the following actions:
  - (a) With regard to human rights education within **formal education** (primary, secondary, higher and vocational education), developing policies and legislation, in collaboration

<sup>36</sup> Informal learning is a form of learning that is intentional or deliberate but not institutionalized. It is less organized and structured than either formal or non-formal education and includes learning activities occurring in the family, the workplace, the local community and daily life, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis (UNESCO glossary).

<sup>37</sup> These may include women and girls; those with disabilities; those who belong to ethnic, religious and other minorities, including Indigenous and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and youth; those in disadvantaged socioeconomic situations or living in geographically remote areas; migrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons, and returnees; and those who are without parental care, are in conflict with the law including those incarcerated, or are victims of violations and abuses.

with children and youth as key partners, to ensure the inclusion of human rights and human rights education in formal education, including by:

- (i) Developing, strengthening and enforcing education laws and curricula to include human rights education, and adopting legislation on human rights education;
- (ii) Acknowledging, in the national – or provincial, where applicable – curriculum and educational standards, human rights knowledge, skills and attitudes as basic competencies, complementing literacy, numeracy and digital skills and competencies;
- (iii) Preparing a national curriculum specifically for human rights education, setting out concepts and goals, teaching and learning objectives and approaches;
- (iv) Ensuring that all relevant legislation and policies are aligned with human rights education principles based on good practice as contained in the present plan of action and other relevant international instruments and revising inconsistent legislation;
- (v) Providing guidelines to local authorities, across urban and remote locations, on their roles and responsibilities in implementing and supporting human rights education;
- (vi) Promoting a human rights-based approach to the whole educational establishments – from governance, management, discipline procedures, inclusion policies to other relevant regulations and practices;
- (vii) Developing policies to ensure that education and human rights education are accessible to all children and youth, without discrimination, particularly those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
- (viii) Developing procedures for the assessment of and feedback on students' achievements on human rights knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- (ix) Adopting guidelines for revising educational materials, so that they are in line with human rights principles, as well as for developing specific materials for human rights education;
- (x) Establishing policies and practices for the training, selection, appraisal, compensation, promotion, discipline and accountability of teaching and other education personnel based on the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, respect, fairness and transparency;
- (xi) Empowering the leadership of educational establishments to implement rights-based approaches in decision-making and innovation;
- (xii) Including human rights pre- and in-service training as a criterion for State licensing or certification for teaching and other education personnel, as well as for other relevant child- and youth-focused professions;
- (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;
- (xiv) Developing guidelines to ensure meaningful engagement of children and youth in the action above with an emphasis on intergenerational partnership;

(b) With regard to **non-formal and informal human rights education** conducted by civil society, including children- and youth-led movements and organizations, developing policies and related measures to remove barriers and facilitate their work, in collaboration with other stakeholders, including, for instance, validating certification; providing public spaces and financial support, including tax reductions; providing mentorships and other professional assistance, including organizing capacity-building initiatives; supporting human rights education programmes, including those online, with special consideration for initiatives involving children- or youth-led movements and organizations and the media; acknowledging children and youth work; facilitating alliances and networks; etc.;

(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 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.;

(d) Developing and adopting relevant, explicit and comprehensive **policy implementation and evaluation measures**, including mechanisms, responsibilities and adequate financing and resources, and involving all stakeholders to ensure coherence, monitoring, reporting and accountability;

(e) Fulfilling **international obligations** concerning human rights education for children and youth by:

(i) Promoting the ratification of international instruments encompassing the right to education as well as human rights education for children and youth;

(ii) Aligning national policies and implementation measures with regional and international instruments concerning human rights education, children and youth;

(iii) Including information on human rights education for children and youth in national reports to relevant international monitoring mechanisms, including the treaty bodies (especially the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), special procedures (especially the Special Rapporteur on the right to education), the universal periodic review and the review mechanism of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(iv) Cooperating with non-governmental organizations, including children and youth movements and organizations, national human rights institutions, other sectors of civil society and human rights education specialists in preparing the above-mentioned national reports;


(v) Implementing relevant recommendations made by international monitoring mechanisms.



## 2. Teaching and learning processes and tools

30. Acknowledging that human rights education for children and youth is necessarily context-specific and needs to tackle their specific learning needs, and in an age-sensitive manner, in this section the plan of action offers general guidance on content and methodologies, as well as tools and resources.

31. With regard to **content**, as mentioned above human rights education fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes empowering children and young people to exercise their rights and respect and uphold the rights of others. General human rights education competencies have been spelled out in the plans of action for the first and fourth phases. This plan of action focuses specifically on the competencies in the three thematic human rights education areas highlighted by the Human Rights Council<sup>38</sup>.

(a) With regard to **education concerning human rights and digital technologies**:

(i) **Knowledge**: children and young people are aware of and understand: 

- 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, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of association and peaceful assembly; 
- The digital environment, including its infrastructure, business practices, persuasive strategies, the uses of automated processing and personal data and surveillance, algorithmic personalization, artificial intelligence and relevant legal terms and conditions;
- The possible negative effects of digitalization on societies as well as the opportunities and risks associated with digital products, services and footprints, including environmental impacts;
- The possible adverse consequences of exposure to risks relating to content (including sexual content), contact, conduct and contract, including cyberaggression, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of violence;
- 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;
- The different barriers in accessing the digital environments faced by their peers who are in situations of exclusion and vulnerability, including those with different types of disabilities (such as physical, intellectual, psychosocial, auditory and visual), living in remote areas, in armed conflict, internally displaced, migrants, asylum-seeking and refugees, unaccompanied, in street situations and affected by natural disasters; 
- A healthy balance of digital and non-digital activities, as the use of digital technologies should not replace direct, responsive interactions among

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<sup>38</sup> Main sources for this section are relevant general comments of the CRC Committee and the CEDAW, the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, and other United Nations documents.

children and young people themselves or between children or young people and educators, parents or caregivers.

(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:

- Analyse the place of technologies in society, their impact on daily lives, their role in building knowledge and their uses for social participation;
- Effectively search, access, critically evaluate, ethically produce, use and disseminate information and knowledge through various channels and technologies;
- Safely handle a wide range of digital tools and resources, including those relating to content, creation, collaboration, participation, socialization and civic engagement;
- Detect and combat online disinformation, misinformation and other forms of biased or false content, including on sexual and reproductive health issues and human rights, hate speech, harmful content including gender-stereotyped, discriminatory, racist, violent, pornographic and exploitative information, abuse, exploitation, harassment, cyber fraud, cyberbullying, cybergrooming and cyberaggression;
- Co-design and carry out together with their peers effective online awareness and advocacy campaigns on key human rights topics of concern to children and young people in both offline and digital environments;
- 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;
- Engage in digital environments in a safe, effective, discerning and respectful way that enhances digital security, protects personal data, privacy and identity based on informed consent, respects the rights and dignity of others and does not violate legislation, such as that relating to incitement to hatred and violence, financial scams and terrorism;
- Take actions in solving problems at community, local, national, regional and global levels through the ethical and responsible use of current and future technologies;
- Seek professional help and support (psychological or legal) and effectively engage with child- and youth-friendly remedial judicial and non-judicial mechanisms in cases where their rights in relation to the digital environment are violated or abused.

(iii) Attitudes: children and young people demonstrate:

- Respect for the rights and dignity of others in digital environments;
- Positive behaviours that address all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful behaviour that occur through or are amplified by the use of technology;

- Willingness to leverage digital technologies for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Digital agency, which is the ability to control and adapt to a digital world with digital, media and information literacy, competence, and accountability;
- Resilience when becoming the target of any harmful digital activities as well as empathy and solidarity with others that are targeted, including through combatting cyber victimization;
- Appreciation of social inclusion through the use of digital platforms and social media;
- Media maturity and the understanding of digital balance, which are key in preventing problematic screen use and digital addictions.

(b) With regard to **education concerning the environment and climate change**:

(i) Knowledge: children and young people are aware of and understand:

- The adverse effects of the triple planetary crisis, comprising the climate emergency, the collapse of biodiversity and pervasive pollution, and other environmental challenges on the enjoyment of human rights;
- 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;
- That protecting the environment contributes to the fulfilment of human rights, and protecting human rights contributes to safeguarding the environment;
- The increasing interdependence of individuals, communities, societies, countries, natural resources and ecosystems and the resulting impacts;
- The principle of intergenerational equity, justice and solidarity and the interests of future generations whereby while the rights of children and young people who are present on Earth require immediate urgent attention, the children constantly arriving are also entitled to the realization of their human rights to the maximum extent;
- The intersectional and differential effects of environment-related harm on certain groups of children and youth, especially women and girls, those belonging to Indigenous Peoples and minority groups, those with disabilities and those living in disaster-prone or climate-vulnerable environments;
- The link between historical and ongoing patterns of inequity, such as colonialism, with the differing vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change.

(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:

- Exercise their right to access accurate and reliable environmental information, including about the causes, effects and actual and potential sources of climate and environmental harm, adaptive responses including

those from other regions, relevant climate and environmental legislation, regulations, findings from climate and environmental impact assessments, policies and plans, sustainable lifestyle and consumption, and traditional, ancestral and Indigenous knowledge;

- Face expected environmental challenges in life, such as disaster risks and environment-related health impacts;
- Critically reflect upon environmental challenges, solve problems, make well-balanced decisions and assume environmental responsibility, such as through sustainable lifestyles and consumption as well as circular economy, in accordance with their evolving capacities;
- Share ideas, encourage others and take action, individually and collectively including with Indigenous Peoples, to protect the environment, address the impacts of the climate crisis and promote climate justice and environmental sustainability;
- Meaningfully engage and influence in climate change and environmental decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- Demand – both online and offline – for urgent and decisive measures to tackle global environmental harm and identify practices of green-washing or green-sheening;
- Hold States and other relevant actors, including businesses, accountable for failure to protect children and young people against environmental harm and to ensure their well-being and development, taking into account the possibility of future risk and harm;
- Effectively engage with child- and youth-friendly judicial, quasi-judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, including child- and youth-centred national human rights institutions, for violations of their rights relating to environmental harm.

(iii) Attitudes: children and young people demonstrate:



- Sense of solidarity, connectedness and belonging to a common and diverse humanity and planet Earth;
- Sense of shared responsibility for a healthy planet and for respecting the needs and rights of each other, of other living beings and of nature itself;
- Respect for and recognition of the multifaceted role of traditional and Indigenous knowledge and practices in stewarding the environment and combatting climate change and its impacts;
- Willingness to share accurate and reliable environmental information to others, including through digital means, to raise awareness and encourage action;
- Agency in being at the forefront calling for protection of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and pushing for climate



justice and effective action to address and promote accountability for environmental harms;

- Optimism and hope towards a sustainable and thriving future.

(c) With regard to **education concerning gender equality**:

(i) Knowledge: children and young people are aware of and understand:

- The equal rights of women, girls, men, boys and people of diverse gender identities to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity;
- The historical roots, manifestations and evolution of discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, including gender-based violence, violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights, child and forced marriage, gender gap in education, discrimination in formal and informal employment, unequal access to resources and unequal distribution of care functions and related activism and movements;
- Implications of social and cultural norms, attitudes and expectations that are associated with traditional femininity and masculinity and sex- and gender-linked stereotypical roles;
- The interaction and intersectionality of gender with other characteristics such as age, ethnicity, wealth, status, ability, geographical location, and sexual orientation;
- The right of every woman, girl, man, boy and person of diverse gender identities to make autonomous decisions about their own bodies and reproductive functions which is at the core of their basic rights to equality, privacy, and bodily integrity;
- Gender-related barriers preventing women, girls, men, boys and people of diverse gender identities from quality education, lifelong learning and empowerment opportunities, including child marriage, child labour and domestic work, and early and unintended pregnancy;
- The link between their choices and their own well-being and that of others.



(ii) Skills: children and young people are able to:

- Identify, challenge and change gender-based attitudes and biases and adopt more positive roles and forms of behaviour in the home, at school, in wider society, and in digital environments, including through the use of gender-sensitive language in everyday life;
- Challenge patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies and structures that limit girls and women from freely and fully exercising and enjoying their human rights and uphold diversity and inclusion;
- Access accurate and evidence-based information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including in relation to gender relations and responsible sexual behaviour, HIV prevention, nutrition, protection

from violence and harmful practices, and prevention of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;

- Especially for girls and women, claim and exercise broader socioeconomic, cultural and political rights, on an equal basis with boys and men in their societies;
- Realize their health, well-being and dignity and develop respectful social and age-appropriate sexual relationships;
- Exercise personal autonomy and make informed decisions and choices, including control over their health and sexual and reproductive decisions;
- Critically yet respectfully engage in conversations around gender equality and related issues even when disagreements arise;
- 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.

(iii) Attitudes: children and young people demonstrate:

- Confidence to address and combat gender inequalities and gender stereotypes, including their own role in perpetuating or combating them, within a human rights framework;
- Especially for boys and men, positive masculinity <sup>39</sup>;
- Openness to and respect for diversity in gender identity and expression and diverse views on the matter;
- Empathy towards the perceptions and lived experiences of those who experienced discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity.



32. Appropriate **methodologies** for human rights education for children and youth should be designed with them as key partners, be learner-centred, participatory, gender-sensitive and responsive, age-appropriate, transformative and inclusive. They should highlight experiential learning to enable children and young people to apply human rights concepts to their lives, context and experiences, and peer-to-peer learning to allow for emotional connections, dialogue and understanding among themselves. Intergenerational and intercultural dialogue and human rights campaigns that strengthen solidarity between generations and cultures should accompany these educational efforts. Varied educational methods and settings, such as sports and outdoor learning, films and documentaries, arts, cultures, games and storytelling, can collaboratively engage learners of all backgrounds.

33. Actions with regard to **teaching and learning materials, support and other resources** include:

(a) Ensuring that all educational materials, including those related to digital technologies, environment and climate change, and gender equality, build on human rights principles

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<sup>39</sup> See UNESCO, Positively, men: engaged for positive masculinities and gender equality (2022).

embedded in relevant cultural contexts, as well as local historical and social developments, and are specific, scientifically accurate, up-to-date and relevant to children and youth;

(b) Supporting the development, or review, of human rights educational materials that conform with human rights principles, including by eliminating traditional gender stereotypes that reproduce and reinforce gender-based discrimination against girls and women and promoting more balanced, accurate, healthy and positive projections of the images and voices of women and girls;

(c) Establishing or strengthening existing training and resource centres to promote the establishment or enhancement of sustainable human rights training programmes for children and youth and ensure their quality, to provide facilities for human rights education studies and research and to collect, share, translate and adapt human rights education materials, including those issued by the United Nations;

(d) Facilitating access to new information technologies as well as investing in the maintenance and renewal of connectivity infrastructure for networking, exchange of relevant information and discussion (e.g., national and multi-country networks could engage in policy dialogue and exchange information on programmes and experiences, including good practices and lessons learned, as well as on educational and training opportunities, methodologies, evaluation tools and other resources);

(e) Using existing or new education portals and onsite/online communities of practice which integrate an online and offline network that is accessible to children and youth, connect the human rights education community and house resources and materials to implement human rights education at the national level;

(f) Using technology to promote innovative approaches to education, including to increase access to human rights education through social media, developing website resources and developing and facilitating online learning programmes, e-forums, open educational resources, massive open online courses, web conferencing and distance learning programmes and mobile apps;

(g) Encouraging scholarships and exchanges, particularly for children and youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, as a means to promote human rights education;

(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;

(i) Prioritizing children and youth, particularly those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, in developing accessible and engaging materials, taking due account of languages, including Indigenous and mother tongue languages, and disabilities.

### **3. Training of educators**

34. Previous phases of the World Programme highlighted the **major role and responsibility that educators have** in transmitting human rights values, skills, attitudes, motivation and practices. Accordingly, training in human rights and human rights education methodologies for relevant professional groups – including teachers, higher education teaching personnel and other education staff – is a priority component of any human rights education planning in the formal education system. The same applies to educators in non-formal settings, with priority given to children and young trainers, leaders,

representatives of children and youth centres and organizations, activists and volunteers, to build pools of skilled educators and children and young people to train their peers.

35. **Strategies** for ensuring adequate training of educators should include the adoption of a comprehensive human rights training policy based on an assessment of existing practice; the introduction of human rights and human rights education principles and standards, as well as advocacy skills with regard to the human rights of children and youth, into the training curriculum; the fostering of appropriate methodologies and assessment methods; the development of related resources; and collaboration across formal, non-formal and informal settings. In all these courses of action, the expertise of educators – particularly children and young educators and educators from groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability – should be emphasized and respected.
36. A human rights **training curriculum** for educators should include the following elements:
  - (a) Learning objectives that encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour with respect to human rights and human rights education;
  - (b) The principles outlined in section I.D “Principles for human rights education activities” above;
  - (c) Human rights principles and standards and protection mechanisms in and beyond the communities where educators are active, and the rights and contributions of educators and learners in addressing human rights issues in the communities in which they live;
  - (d) Gender issues and gender sensitivity and the impact of gendered behaviours on teaching and learning processes;
  - (e) Ways to ensure equal treatment and participation in the classroom and the wider community of the educational establishment taking into account the diversity of learners, including providing a supportive and collaborative environment and culture that allows all learners to participate confidently in learning, without fear, shame or risk;
  - (f) Guidance on appropriate methodology for human rights education that is participatory, learner-centred, age-appropriate, gender sensitive, responsive and transformative, experiential and action-oriented, that takes into account cultural considerations and empowers child and youth participation;
  - (g) Contextualized child- and youth-specific human rights issues, for instance, how children and youth may face overlapping forms of discrimination due to their multiple and intersecting identities;
  - (h) Educators’ social skills, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue skills and leadership styles that are democratic and coherent with human rights principles;
  - (i) Information on existing teaching and learning resources for human rights education, including information and communications technologies and digital and social media, to build capacity to review and choose from among them as well as develop new resources;
  - (j) Examples of integrating human rights education into content that educators already teach, including STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), history, geography and art;
  - (k) Strategies to recognize a child or young person who is a victim of harm perpetrated online or offline and respond appropriately, intervene early in case of sexual harassment

and violence, deal with trauma, avoid retraumatization, incorporate social-emotional learning and centre voices of affected communities;

(l) Addressing educators' own biases and prejudices, including assumptions and stereotypes about gender (conscious or subconscious), when working with children and young people;

(m) Regular and motivating learner assessment with child- and youth-specific competencies, both formal and informal;

(n) Incorporating needs assessment and evaluation results, with children and youth input, into educational activities;

(o) Adapting curricula to formal or non-formal settings and to the local context and population;

(p) Comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, informed consent, responsible sexual behaviour, prevention of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;

(q) Digital competencies and agency, including the appropriate and ethical use of digital devices and technologies, in line with the best interests of the child and in a manner that does not expose children and youth to violence, discrimination, misuse of their personal data, commercial exploitation or other infringements of their rights, taking into account the research on the effects of digital technologies on children and youth's development, especially during the critical neurological growth spurts of early childhood and adolescence.

37. **Training methodologies** for the training of educators include participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented approaches and should address motivation, self-esteem and emotional development leading to human rights sensitization and action. Online platforms allow for self-paced learning, sharing of learning resources, learning across contexts, knowledge of other actors for advocacy and coalition building and digital curricula. Evaluation should be infused throughout the training process.<sup>40</sup>

#### **4. An enabling environment**

38. As mentioned above, human rights education goes beyond cognitive learning. Wherever human rights education takes place – in formal, non-formal or informal settings – the learning environment, which encompasses physical and virtual spaces, and the broader surroundings, including the family (parents, legal guardians and other family members) and the local community, inevitably shape the educational process.
39. It is essential to ensure that human rights teaching and learning happen in a human rights-based learning environment. Educational objectives, practices and the organization of the educational establishments must be consistent with human rights values and principles. Likewise, it is important that the culture and the community within and beyond the educational establishments are also embedding and embodying those principles. In this regard, States should take measures to encourage the organization of and participation

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<sup>40</sup> See OHCHR, *From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology* (2019); OHCHR and Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education, *Evaluating Human Rights Training Activities: A Handbook for Human Rights Educators* (2011).

in human rights education activities, and guarantee freedom from reprisals for those who do so. Human rights education efforts for children and youth must also be accompanied by measures to increase the protection and realization of children and young people's human rights.

40. With regard to **human rights and digital technologies**, States must address prevailing challenges to bridge the digital divides within and among countries, the gender, disability and age digital divides and the divide between rural and urban areas.<sup>41</sup> Measures must be taken to ensure that all children and youth have equal and effective access to the digital environment in ways that are meaningful for them. Developing safe and inclusive digital learning systems and environments contributes to the widening of digital access to education and prevention of digital divides; this includes ensuring proper infrastructure in place in schools and other learning settings, such as public libraries, to enable access for all children and youth to the basic utilities necessary for learning, including access to devices, electricity, connectivity, educational materials and professional support. 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. Specific measures to ensure protection of personal and sensitive data of both the learners and educators, and protection of children and youth from online violence, including cyberbullying and sexual and gender-based violence, are also required. Digital service providers must actively engage with children and youth, applying a child- and youth-rights and accessibility approach as well as appropriate safeguards, and give due consideration to their views when developing products and services. States must also ensure that no restrictions are placed on the exercise by children and youth of their human rights, including to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in the digital environment, other than those that are lawful, necessary and proportionate.<sup>42</sup>
41. With regard to **environment and climate change**, a safe, healthy and resilient infrastructure is important to effective learning. This includes ensuring safe travel and transport to school; that schools and alternative learning facilities are located at safe distances from sources of pollution, flooding, landslides and other environmental hazards, including contaminated sites; and the construction of buildings and classrooms with adequate heating and cooling and access to sufficient, safe and acceptable drinking water and sanitation facilities. It is also important to ensure, through regular inspections, that the educational infrastructure is safe and resilient enough to withstand disasters and that adequate resources are dedicated to the protection of students and educators from the impacts of climate change and disasters. States should also ensure the right to education in emergencies, including natural disasters and other climate impacts, by putting in place plans and structures for continuity at all levels – from early childhood education through to secondary and tertiary education – and through different phases of an emergency, with particular regard to children and youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability. Environmentally friendly school facilities, such as those with lighting and heating sourced from renewable energy and edible gardens, can benefit learners.



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<sup>41</sup> Resolution A/C.3/78/L.19/Rev. 1, para. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 14.

42. With regard to **gender equality**, the creation of an educational environment in which children and youth of all gender identities are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential, contributes to the elimination of gender-based discrimination.<sup>43</sup> Education must be accessible, in both law and practice, to all women, men, girls, boys and people of diverse gender identities. Appropriate conditions shall be created for their right to education to be fully and freely enjoyed and exercised. This includes providing access to educational institutions that is within safe reach for all, particularly girls, women and LGBTI children and youth, either by ensuring that they are accessible at some reasonably convenient geographical location or through technological means. Proximity to schools, in particular in rural areas, is crucial, given the prevalence of gender-based violence in public spaces and the risk that they face when travelling to and from school. Essential consideration must be given to providing adequate infrastructure in educational institutions, such as gender-segregated and gender-neutral, where appropriate, water and sanitation and hygiene facilities, appropriate sanitary protection materials and information on puberty and menstrual issues. Ensuring the rights of all children and youth within education extends beyond numerical equality. It requires that they be ensured equal access with the same quality of teachers and amenities, and an environment characterized by opportunities to pursue goals towards their self-determination and self-actualization. States must also take measures to curtail violence against all, particularly girls, women and LGBTI children and youth, including designating a mechanism for preventing, reporting and investigating incidents of violence in educational institutions and providing adequate public funding to address the problem.

## **E. Process for national implementation**

43. A coherent and coordinated national strategy for human rights education for children and youth, in line with the present plan of action, requires a significant commitment by States to allocating adequate human and financial resources to support the needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

### **1. Actors and coordination**

44. States should assign a relevant Ministry to take the initiative, respond to or support the initiative of others to establish a coordinating body involving relevant government entities and civil society, and with children and youth representatives as essential participants, that should consult with the children and youth within the country. The body, which could be or build on an existing entity, would ensure coordination, information-sharing and maximization of resources and reporting, and avoid duplication of efforts. States should facilitate opportunities for participation by all relevant actors; the members of the coordinating body should reflect the diversity of the children and youth population of the country, including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability.
45. The following national actors must be included in the coordinating body:
- (a) Relevant ministries (education, children, youth, justice, information and communications technology, environment, women, etc.) and relevant local government entities;

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<sup>43</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), Annex II para. 72.

- (b) National human rights institutions;
  - (c) Child and youth representatives (child- and youth-led movements and organizations, network councils and volunteer groups), including young human rights defenders and those representing children and youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
  - (d) Civil society organizations and networks working on human rights and human rights education, education, children, youth, peace, sustainable development, protection in humanitarian crisis, digital environment, environment and climate change, and gender equality;
  - (e) Representatives of primary, secondary, higher and vocational education establishments, including teacher-training institutions and research institutes, as well as teachers' associations and unions.
46. Other potential actors may include social service providers, local and national media, community and religious leaders, Indigenous Peoples and minority groups, school-based parent committees and parent-teacher associations, the private sector, donors, health and mental health practitioners, social media influencers, cultural institutions, artists and other actors as appropriate. These actors must be encouraged to take an active role in promoting or implementing human rights education for children and youth.
  47. Representatives of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations in the country may participate in the meetings of the coordinating body.
  48. The coordinating body should cooperate with national agencies as well as other relevant provincial, local and district offices responsible for drawing up country reports for submission to the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the treaty bodies, special procedures, the universal periodic review, and to other international or regional intergovernmental bodies, such as the reporting mechanism under the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development and the review mechanism of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure that progress in human rights education under this plan of action is included in those reports. It should also liaise with OHCHR and share information on national progress.

## **2. Steps for implementation**

49. The coordinating body is responsible for leading and overseeing the national strategy for human rights education for children and youth, including needs assessment, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in line with intergenerational collaboration and gender mainstreaming approaches; three steps to this end are outlined below.
50. The participation of children and youth as key partners in every step of the national strategy is essential. Avenues for children and youth – including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability – to participate should be created or strengthened, including by setting up children and youth advisory boards or children and youth working groups on human rights education; they should be regular counterparts to provide their perspectives, for instance through a combination of national online and offline polls using non-traditional ways of data collection, as feasible.

### ***Step 1 – Undertake a national baseline study on human rights education for children and youth, possibly within the first year of the current phase***

51. Step 1 should entail the following actions:



(a) Mandate a competent institution to carry out a national assessment study, through broad consultations, to be shared with the public for validation and feedback and widely disseminated once completed. The study should analyse the following:

(i) The current national situation of human rights education for children and youth in the four areas highlighted in section II.D “Components” (policy and related implementation measures; teaching and learning processes and tools; training of educators; an enabling environment) in formal, non-formal and informal settings, including existing initiatives, good practices, shortcomings and obstacles, with particular attention to initiatives and projects initiated by children and young people;

(ii) Human rights learning needs of children and youth, based on a child- and youth-friendly survey on their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours taking into account various literacy levels and special needs;

(iii) The human rights situation in educational establishments (primary, secondary, higher and vocational education establishments) and other places where non-formal and informal education takes place;

(iv) Historical and cultural contexts that may influence human rights education for children and youth, including their human rights situation and barriers to their engagement and participation;

(v) Useful child- and youth-friendly contextualized experiences, methodologies, resources and tools existing at the local, subregional, regional, national and international levels;

(vi) Involvement of various actors within formal, non-formal and informal education;

(vii) The role, content and methodology of related types of education (education for sustainable development, peace education, global education, citizenship education) that may exist in the country;

(b) Determine which actions of the four components outlined in section II.D are already implemented and to what extent;

(c) Consider how to build on existing initiatives, good practice and lessons learned, how to use opportunities and which measures are necessary to address shortcomings and obstacles.

52. The outputs of step 1 include:

(a) A national baseline study on human rights education for children and youth with disaggregated data on those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;

(b) A national dissemination campaign regarding the baseline study through, for example, online and traditional publications and communications materials, conferences, public discussion and social media. Special focus should be placed on disseminating results to children and youth spaces, in a language accessible to them.

***Step 2 – Develop a national strategy to promote human rights education for children and youth***

53. Step 2 should entail the following actions:

- (a) Build on the national baseline study, developing objectives for a national strategy (2025–2029 or beyond) using this plan of action as a reference;
  - (b) Set priorities on the basis of the findings of the baseline study, taking into account the most pressing needs and/or available opportunities and focusing on impactful interventions that will secure sustainable change, rather than ad hoc activities, with particular regard to children and youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
  - (c) Develop the national strategy, identifying:
    - (i) Inputs: human, financial, time and technological resources required;
    - (ii) Activities: tasks, responsibilities, time frames and milestones;
    - (iii) Mechanisms for coordination;
    - (iv) Outputs (such as new or revised legislation, educational materials or training programmes);
    - (v) Results to be achieved, and related quantitative and qualitative indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework.
54. The output of step 2 is the national strategy for human rights education for children and youth, in a language accessible to them, which identifies objectives, priorities and outputs for 2025–2029 or beyond and should be broadly disseminated among institutions and stakeholders, particularly children and youth.

***Step 3 – Implement, monitor and evaluate the national strategy***

55. Step 3 should entail the following actions:
- (a) Implement planned activities;
  - (b) Monitor implementation, including through consultations with relevant stakeholders and tracking of the indicators in the strategy, and conduct evaluations as well as document good practice to improve further implementation;
  - (c) Acknowledge and disseminate information on progress and challenges in implementing the strategy.
56. The coordinating body should evaluate the national strategy, together with children and youth, and make the evaluation reports publicly available. Evaluations should be inclusive and transparent, reflecting human rights values; they should address the four areas of human rights education for children and youth identified in section II.D “Components”, as well as:
- (a) Children and youth involvement and leadership in the national strategy;
  - (b) Geographic breadth of implementation of the national strategy;
  - (c) Inclusivity of the strategy for children and youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability;
  - (d) Cross-sectorial collaboration beyond the educational sector.
57. The outputs of step 3 are the identified outputs of the national strategy as well as the evaluation reports, which include recommendations for future actions based on lessons learned throughout the implementation process.

## **F. International cooperation**

### **1. Reporting to the Human Rights Council**

58. States will submit a midterm national progress report in 2027 to OHCHR, which will compile all received information in a report to the Human Rights Council. In early 2030, they will submit a final national evaluation report to OHCHR, which will prepare and submit a final report on the implementation of the fifth phase to the Council by the end of 2030. Progress review meetings, involving relevant stakeholders such as children and youth movements and organizations, should take place during relevant Council sessions.

### **2. International support**

59. The international community should provide assistance to the implementation of the national strategy, as well as related efforts carried out at the regional and international levels.
60. United Nations human rights mechanisms, within their specific mandates, can support national efforts under this plan of action. United Nations treaty bodies, when examining State party reports, may review and advise on the implementation of treaty provisions relating to human rights education for children and youth. Thematic and country special procedures of the Human Rights Council may review and advise on related progress within their specific mandates. National human rights education efforts for children and youth should be regularly reviewed in the context of the universal periodic review.
61. International cooperation and assistance may be provided by:
- (a) The United Nations system, including its specialized agencies, the United Nations University and the United Nations-mandated University for Peace;
  - (b) Professional training institutions affiliated to the United Nations, such as those concerned with digital technologies, the environment and climate change, and gender equality;
  - (c) Other international and regional intergovernmental organizations;
  - (d) Relevant international, regional and national civil society organizations, professional networks, associations and trade unions;
  - (e) International, regional and national networks of educational establishments (primary, secondary, higher and vocational education), national human rights institutions and/or non-governmental organizations;
  - (f) International and regional human rights resource and documentation centres;
  - (g) International and regional financial institutions and bilateral funding agencies;
  - (h) Multilateral and bilateral development agencies;
  - (i) Transnational corporations and their networks.
62. It is essential that actors collaborate closely in order to maximize resources, avoid duplication and ensure coherence.
63. The above-mentioned organizations and institutions may:
- (a) Support Member States and the coordinating body in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy;

- (b) Support other national and local actors involved, in particular educational establishments (primary, secondary, higher and vocational education), non-governmental organizations including children and youth movements and organizations, professional associations, national human rights institutions and other civil society organizations;
  - (c) Facilitate information-sharing at all levels by identifying, collecting and disseminating information on good practice, particularly from children and youth movements and organizations, to highlight their diverse experiences in the area of human rights education, as well as on available materials and relevant institutions and programmes, taking due account of languages, including child- and youth-friendly and Indigenous languages;
  - (d) Support and/or develop capacity-building and mentorship programmes for children and youth, particularly human rights training of children and youth trainers, and the participation of children and youth in relevant events, as well as the development of educational materials based on good practice;
  - (e) Support effective human rights training (including training on participatory teaching and learning methodologies as relevant) for educators, including children and youth trainers and teacher trainers, education officials, employees of non-governmental organizations working with and for children and youth, and caregivers;
  - (f) Support existing networks among actors in human rights education and training, especially children and youth actors, and promote the creation of new ones, at all levels;
  - (g) Support research on the implementation of national human rights education in educational establishments (primary, secondary, higher and vocational education), including studies on practical measures for its improvement, through a participatory research approach with children and youth;
  - (h) Provide financial support and resources, including for children and youth movements and organizations, and involve children and youth in the selection processes.
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