

**Seminar on the United Nation's Declaration on human rights education and training**  
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**Workshop: Role of Other Stakeholders in a Declaration  
on Human Rights Education and Training**

**ROLE OF NGOs**

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Your Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Advisory Committee and dear colleagues, I would first like to thank the Moroccan Government for hosting this event and providing me with the opportunity to address you on the topic of the role of NGOs in a declaration on human rights education and training. In my presentation today I will address two key areas: the important role that NGOs have historically had in working with states and inter-governmental organizations in promoting and implementing human rights education; and NGO input into the draft declaration, based upon a written statement prepared and submitted to the Human Rights Council in their 10<sup>th</sup> session earlier this year.

Before I turn to these two points, I would like to begin by sharing with you some examples of impacts of human rights education. We do not have the benefit of rights-holders here in this room to share with us the results of human rights education, but I would like to share just a few quotes to remind us of the intention of all of our efforts. These quotes come from a 10-country impact evaluation that I had the privilege to carry out for Amnesty International.

**Impacts of HRE Programming Programming on Individual Participants**

- More respectful of others (15%)

*Personally I uphold human rights in everyday dealings, such as respecting others and being cautious not to bury their dignity, and to resist racial discrimination. – Morocco*

- Learned more about HR (13%)

*I have gotten information about what I can fight for, about people in different cultures and about possibilities of help. – Poland*

- Empowerment (13%)

*I tend to speak up for myself if I see injustice in my classroom or with friends. - Malaysia*

- Developed positive opinion towards HR (9%)

*I became more aware of the importance of helping people if they are in trouble. That we're all equal and that nobody's human rights are worth less than mine. - Slovenia*

- Behavioral (8%)

*Registration at school of my daughters in spite of the opposition of my husband...Telling my husband that I am aware of women's rights and do not accept violence against me and my daughters. – Morocco*

- Promoting HR (6%)

*People are speaking out and reporting the cases if she or he is abused. – South Africa*

Amnesty International, as well as many other NGOs, are carrying out effective human rights education that have impacts such as these.

## **IMPORTANCE OF NGOs IN WORKING WITH STATES AND IGOS IN PROMOTING AND IMPLEMENTING HRE**

NGO – including those in consultative relationship with the United Nations and those who are not - have traditionally been one of the leading sectors in relation to the implementation of human rights education and training. The evaluation of the Decade for HRE confirmed the essential role that NGO leadership and activities have played.

NGOs actively carry out human rights education and training through non-formal programming, such as with youth in after-school and summer programming, but have also worked directly with state agencies, such as police academies and teacher training institutions, in developing their capacities to carry out HRE. Almost anywhere you see an HRE program, you are likely to see an NGO presence or influence. NGOs have demonstrated special expertise and commitment to human rights, and can assist duty bearers in carrying out their human rights education responsibilities.

NGOs carrying out human rights education have increased in number and often communicate and collaborate with one another, thus increasing the effective implementation of HRE globally.

The following charts demonstrate the expansion of transnational civil society networks and their role in the human rights education movement over the last 15 years.

- Emergence and expansion of regional HRE networks (2001-2007).

Many regional HRE networks have emerged over the past 15 years. Some of these are more active than others.

Chart 1. Newly established regional HRE networks/ networks that have a strong HRE mandate

- Arab Human Rights Education Network [established in 2004]
- Asia-Pacific Human Rights Education Listserv [2003]
- Balkan Human Rights Network [2002]
- Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe Network (DARE) [2003]
- Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (Euromed) [1997]
- Human Security Network [1999]
- Red Interamericana de Educación en Derechos Humanos (educa-dh) [2001]
- Réseau Francophone sur l'Éducation en Droits Humains [2004]
  
- Membership of the Global HRE List (1999-2009).

My organization, HREA, maintains a Global HRE listserv. This listserv is used to facilitate learning and sharing of experiences internationally. This week, for example, we concluded a four-week, on-line forum on the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

When we began this listserv in 1999, we had 290 members. At this moment, we have over 6,000 members representing nearly 190 countries.

Year	Membership
1999	290
2000	1,300
2001	2,037
2002	3,013
2003	3,245
2004	3,479 (from 150 countries)
2005	3,571
2006	3,627
2007	4,809
2008	5,384
2009	6,023 (from 189 countries)

## **NGO INPUT INTO THE DRAFT DECLARATION**

A written statement submitted to HR Council in their 10<sup>th</sup> session in relation to human rights education. The statement reflected discussions among NGOs facilitated by the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) and my organization Human Rights Education Associates (HREA). The 365 signatories from 88 countries representing every continent included 56 organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and 309 organizations without consultative status, including 5 national human rights institutions.

The co-signed organizations support HRE as a vital strategy addressing the root causes of human rights violations and conflict and called upon the HR Council to ensure that the view be reflected fully in the UN Declaration.

HREA, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning and these 365 NGO signatories call upon the Human Rights Council to ensure the following:

### **(1) Concept and Definition**

The declaration, as a new international human rights standard, should provide a clear conceptualisation of human rights education. Currently, human rights education is interpreted as including human rights training. This point also must be clarified in the declaration. The definition should not be formulated as a closed or exclusive meaning of human rights education. As international human rights law has already demonstrated, human rights concepts continue to develop. As human rights education encompasses all human rights, the definition in the declaration should remain non-exhaustive so that as specific human rights develop conceptually and new human rights are recognised, these also are comprehended within the definition of human rights education set forth in the declaration. The basis of the non-exhaustive definition and clear conceptualisation can build upon the provisions of many human rights instruments that are summarised in the OHCHR publication<sup>1</sup> and the “Context and definition of human rights education” described in the Plan of Action<sup>2</sup> for the first phase of the WPHRE (paras.1-6).

### **(2) Accountability / Duty-bearers and rights-holders**

Over the course of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education and the WPHRE, the question of accountability has often been raised. The declaration should clarify the concept of duty-bearers and rights-holders regarding implementation of human rights education and training. In this context, it is also important to consider that the duty-bearer in a certain area of human rights may become the rights-holder in another area of human rights education or training. For example, members of the judiciary can be the duty-

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<sup>1</sup> See, The UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) No.3 - The Right to Human Rights Education, OHCHR, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> A/59/525 Rev.1 / A/59/113B (2 March 2005) *Revised draft Plan of action for the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education*, paras.1-6.

bearer in implementing the right to human rights education, but they themselves can also be the beneficiary of human rights education.

To date much emphasis has been placed on human rights education in formal education, especially primary and secondary education, in both practice and theory. This tendency is derived from States' obligations to provide for the right to education. Fewer efforts have been undertaken in the training of professional groups such as members of the judiciary, the continuing education of health professionals, and non-formal/informal education in communities and for the general public. At the same time human rights education has historically addressed rights-holders with the aim to educate them about their rights in order to empower them. Duty-bearers with responsibilities to guarantee or protect human rights, for example law enforcement officials and public servants, often are not beneficiaries of human rights education programmes. The declaration therefore should also include references to international obligations that States have to train government personnel adequately in human rights, including the most recent human rights treaties and the protection of the most vulnerable groups. NGOs often have expertise in and motivation for carrying out such training activities.

A human rights-based framework should be part of all human rights education, schooling, learning and training.

### **(3) Monitoring system**

To the maximum degree feasible, the declaration should provide for monitoring to ensure implementation by duty-bearers and rights-holders. Although there have been a number of commitments expressed by governments to human rights education as well as plans of action, the lack of an effective monitoring system has created difficulties for evaluating the implementation of human rights education. Effective evaluations are essential for validating and improving effective human rights education programming. In this respect, it is vitally important to explore linkages between the declaration and the WPHRE. For example, experiences gained within the WPHRE, especially those from the NGO sector, could be used to identify relevant and practical outcome indicators.

This would also be an opportunity to set and develop standards and practices in human rights education around the world by including benchmarks and indicators.

### **(4) Financial resources**

The perennial inadequacy of financial resources has been a major obstacle for civil society in its efforts to promote and implement human rights education. The declaration should contain a provision of assurance of access to financial resources. It could, for example, stipulate the responsibility of governments to include human rights education and training in annual national budgetary planning. The declaration could also stipulate such a requisite responsibility within the UN system as a condition of international cooperation and assistance for implementation of the right to human rights education at the global level.

## **(5) The role of civil society and NGOs**

Through all experiences and surveys of the UN Decade and the first phase of the WPHRE, it is evident that civil society actors and NGOs are the main contributors to the promotion and implementation of human rights education. This significant role must be clearly recognised in the declaration. It is also particularly important to take into account that many NGOs and other civil society actors have made various contributions and have special expertise in the field of human rights education in their respective countries but are not closely working with the United Nations system. Many of them are not even in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. For drafting a truly meaningful United Nations declaration, their views and suggestions are indispensable in the drafting process. In this context, it is imperative that the importance of supporting their involvement and efforts toward the implementation of human rights education and training be clearly stated in the declaration.

Thank you for your kind attention.