

# Foreword

Since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 60 years ago, the international community has come to recognize and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms through a vast body of international human rights law. Among these rights, the right to education provides an entry point to the enjoyment of all human rights. It includes human rights education, the right to learn about those rights, and the ways and means to protect and promote them in our societies. Within the education system, human rights education promotes a holistic, rights-based approach that includes both “human rights through education”, ensuring that all the components and processes of education – including curricula, materials, methods and training – are conducive to learning about human rights, and “human rights in education”, ensuring that the human rights of all members of the school community are respected.

In 2004, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the *World Programme for Human Rights Education*. The World Programme aims to support existing initiatives in human rights education, building upon the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004). It provides a framework to develop and consolidate the programming of human rights education by everyone involved – especially at the national level.

As a contribution to national implementation, upon the initiative of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), the four partner organizations – the Council of Europe (CoE), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the OSCE/ODIHR – decided to develop a practical tool that would provide examples and guidance for all those involved in human rights education in the school system. The result is this collection of 101 good practices from Europe, North America and Central Asia – a resource for practitioners and policymakers as well as a platform for exchange among institutions and individuals.

Human rights education, together with education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding, is vital for all our societies. It promotes equality, empowerment and participation as well as conflict prevention and resolution. In brief, it is a means to develop societies where the human rights of all are respected, protected and fulfilled. We hope that this publication will inspire new initiatives in human rights education, encourage further implementation of those already in place, and enhance co-operation and partnership at all levels.



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# Introduction

## Purpose

“Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice” is a compilation of 101 examples of good practice in human rights education in primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training institutions in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) area, which is also covered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and, partially, the geographical mandate of the Council of Europe (CoE).<sup>1</sup>

The term “human rights education” is often used in this resource in a broader sense, to also include education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding, which are all based on internationally agreed human rights standards. These three areas are seen as interconnected and essential within educational systems in order to prepare youth to be active, responsible and caring participants in their communities, as well as at the national and global levels.

Human rights education has been defined as education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights. A comprehensive education in human rights not only provides knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, but also imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life. Education for democratic citizenship focuses on educational practices and activities designed to help young people and adults to play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society. Education for mutual respect and understanding highlights self-respect, respect for others, and the improvement of relationships between people of differing cultural traditions.

This book aims to support quality teaching in these areas and to inspire educational policymakers (those working in education ministries and local school boards) and administrators, teachers, teacher trainers, non-formal educators and all other interested actors, as well as to facilitate networking and the exchange of experience among education professionals.

### Solicitation and Selection Processes for Inclusion in the Compendium

In autumn 2007, a call was made for the submission of “good practices”. Outreach was carried out through existing networks and conference venues of each of the four partner organizations and through a dedicated section of the Human Rights Education Associates’ (HREA) website at <http://www.hrea.org/compendium>. Governments, NGOs and other stakeholders were encouraged to submit entries. Submission forms were made available in English, French and Russian.

The submission guidelines defined a “good practice” as a strategy resulting in the successful teaching and learning of human rights values and competencies that could be demonstrated through a learning activity, a methodological tool, an audio-visual resource or a documented programme design intended for the formal education sector.

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1 The OSCE is the world’s largest regional security organization, with 56 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

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Some 237 submissions were received from governments, NGOs, professional bodies and associations, as well as from individual educators.

Each submission was reviewed and assessed on the basis of how it met the following criteria:

- **Appropriateness:** The practice addresses core themes related to human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding;
- **Effectiveness:** It is likely/there is direct evidence that the practice will effectively meet its learning goals when implemented as planned (ideally being validated through an independent or professional evaluation);
- **Originality:** The practice demonstrates a unique approach to addressing a core theme related to human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding;
- **Ease of use:** The practice is well organized, with sufficient detail so that it can be used as a stand-alone resource;
- **Adaptability:** The practice's themes and methodologies allow it to be used in different local and national contexts;
- **Sustainability:** The practice has been in use for at least two years or, if recently developed, shows promise for sustainability of at least two years;
- **Approach:** The practice fosters participatory methods of learning/action; and
- **Inclusiveness:** The practice includes diverse or vulnerable groups.

Entries were collectively reviewed in terms of their geographical and linguistic representativeness, and their representation across different approaches and coverage of key sub-themes<sup>2</sup> (e.g., conflict-resolution programming).

There were several good submissions that are not included in the Compendium due to the overrepresentation of certain themes or countries in the entry pool. Other successful practices may simply not have been submitted for consideration. Therefore, the practices in the Compendium are included for their exemplary quality but certainly do not include all of the effective work that is being done in the area of human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding.

## Structure

The practices are organized into five areas of action, in line with the Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2009) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Building on the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004), the World Programme was proclaimed in December 2004 by the United Nations General Assembly to further the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors (Resolution 59/113A). The Programme is structured around an ongoing series of phases, with the first focussing on the integration of human rights education into primary and secondary school systems. Developed by a broad group of education and human rights practitioners from all regions, the Plan of Action for the first phase<sup>3</sup> details concrete strategies and practical recommendations for nation-wide implementation of human rights education; it addresses not only educational policies, processes and tools but also the environment within which education takes place.

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2 As some practices in this Compendium include references to human rights education related to sexual orientation, it is important to note that there remains no clear consensus among OSCE participating States about the specific inclusion of this consideration within OSCE commitments.

3 Available on line at <http://www.ohchr.org>.

There are five main Sections in the resource:

- Section 1. Laws, guidelines and standards;
- Section 2. Approaches and practices to improve the learning environment;
- Section 3. Teaching and learning tools for the classroom;
- Section 4. Professional development for educators and other adults; and
- Section 5. Evaluation and assessment approaches.

Each section includes short and descriptive information about a particular practice, as well as details about how to obtain more information, and is organized into the following fields:

- Name of practice;
- Name of organization;
- Intended audience;
- Purpose;
- Description;
- Strengths;
- Adaptability; and
- Availability.

A “Partners’ resources” entry at the end of each section of the Compendium highlights and makes available relevant tools produced by the four partner organizations.

This printed version of the Compendium is complemented by a Compendium Annex (available on line and on CD), including full or partial examples of the selected practices, as well as related resources available through the partner organizations.

The Compendium is available in English, French and Russian. It is also available on line at the websites of the partners and HREA.

### **Partners and Framework for Collaboration**

The Compendium is the result of a partnership between ODIHR, CoE, OHCHR and UNESCO. The four organizations contracted HREA as institutional consultant to implement this project under their guidance and co-ordination. HREA is an international human rights organization that supports human rights learning, the training of activists and professionals, the development of educational materials and programming, and community-building through online technologies.

Each of the four partner organizations has a history of engagement with human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding, which is briefly described below:

#### *OSCE/ODIHR*

The OSCE’s work in human rights education takes place in the context of the OSCE commitments. Relevant provisions date to the Helsinki Final Act (1975) and were subsequently reiterated in the Copenhagen Document (1990), Moscow Document (1991) and the Istanbul Charter for European Security (1999). Among the more recent key documents is OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 11/05 on Promotion of Human Rights Education and Training in the OSCE Area, which tasked ODIHR with the development of this Compendium. Work on the Compendium built upon the 2005–2006 Project on Diversity Education. As part of this project, ODIHR collected and analyzed information and materials on tolerance, diversity and human rights education in the public school systems from the replies to a questionnaire sent to education authorities in the OSCE region. OSCE field operations also develop concrete educational projects in the area of human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding, either in their own initiatives or by supporting the efforts of local and international NGOs and governments.

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ODIHR publications are available at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/publications.html>.

## *Council of Europe*

The Council of Europe has a longstanding tradition of supporting and promoting citizenship and human rights education. Its flagship project, “Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education”, started in 1997 and is currently in its third phase. In 2005, the project was given a political impetus at the Third Summit in Warsaw, during which Heads of State and Government called for “increased efforts of the Council of Europe in the field of education aimed at ensuring access to education for all young people across Europe, improving its quality and promoting, *inter alia*, comprehensive human rights education”. Concrete results include the adoption of reference texts, the development of political frameworks and the creation of networks and forums, as well as the production of a wealth of materials in the area of democratic citizenship and human rights education, all of which have been negotiated and approved by its 47 member states; these include an Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Pack, as well as materials for teachers. The Council of Europe Steering Committee on Education is currently preparing a European Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights. The Council supports the promotion and monitoring of the Plan of Action of the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education at the European level. Within this framework a Regional European Meeting on the World Programme for Human Rights Education was organized by the Council of Europe and its partner institutions in 2007 in the Council’s headquarters in Strasbourg. Further information and publications are available at <http://www.coe.int/edc>.

## *OHCHR*

Human rights education is central to the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and protect the effective enjoyment by all of all human rights. The High Commissioner also co-ordinates education and public information programmes in the field of human rights (General Assembly Resolution 48/141). Through its Head Office in Geneva and its field offices, the Office of the High Commissioner implements human rights education programmes and provides assistance to governments, institutions and NGOs in this area. It promotes human rights education by facilitating information-sharing and networking among all actors, in particular through tools such as a the Database and the Resource Collection on Human Rights Education and Training; supporting national and local capacities for human rights education through the “Assisting Communities Together” (ACT) Project, which provides financial assistance to grass-roots initiatives; developing human rights education and training materials for various target audiences; disseminating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and co-ordinating the World Programme for Human Rights Education. More information and publications are available at <http://www.ohchr.org>.

## *UNESCO*

The Constitution of UNESCO states that the Organization’s principal purpose is to “*contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language and religion*”. In 2003, “UNESCO and Human Rights Education” was developed and integrated into the overall UNESCO Strategy on Human Rights, which was then adopted by the General Conference during its 32nd Session. Within the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, the Organization assists Member States in formulating policies, strategies, action plans and programmes that will ensure education for human rights. Its interest in human rights education is further enhanced by its key role in the Education for All (EFA) movement, which, by virtue of its universality and its commitment to quality, is concerned with content and processes in, as well as access to, education. Further information is available at <http://www.unesco.org/en/human-rights-education>.