A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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WHY A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

WHAT IS HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

Learning about human rights is the essential first step towards respecting, promoting and defending those rights. Knowledge and understanding of human rights can give young people a common language of respect, equality and dignity as well as shared values to create a more peaceful and just society.

THE RIGHT TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

All human beings have the right to education, and the right to an education that informs them of their rights and responsibilities.

WHY A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

Adopting a whole school approach goes beyond teaching human rights as a separate lesson in the classroom. It means creating an environment where everyone understands, values and protects human rights.

An example of a whole school approach to human rights education – The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project

The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project, facilitated by Amnesty International, encourages post-primary schools to take a whole school approach to human rights education and to recognise that they have a role to play in the wider world.

Schools involved in this project design and implement action plans to work on the following key areas of school life:
1. Governance and Participation
2. School Community Relations
3. Curriculum
4. Extra-Curricular Activities and School Environment

To date, schools from 14 countries around the world have been involved in the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project - Ireland, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Denmark, Ghana, Israel, Italy, Moldova, Morocco, Mongolia, Paraguay, Poland, Senegal and the UK.

This booklet is based on the framework and principles of the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project. Examples of the work being carried out in the Project schools around the world are provided throughout, and can be adapted to suit your own school context and human rights education aims.

"Human Rights carry no weight unless the people know them, unless the people understand them, unless the people demand that they be lived."
Eleanor Roosevelt, President and Chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1946-1952.

Human Rights Education involves:
■ Learning **about** human rights – learning about human rights documents, principles, issues and debates.
■ Learning **through** human rights – learning through inclusive, participatory and democratic methods.
■ Learning **for** human rights – learning that allows the practice of human rights in daily life.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 29
(1) "States parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: b) the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations."

"

All children have the right to express their views in all matters that affect them
Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Ireland – setting up an advisory committee

The Vice Principal in **Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount**, Dublin, recruited an advisory committee consisting of parent, teacher and student representatives. The advisory committee are involved in identifying how human rights can be further integrated into school values. They have discussed and written the school mission statement, which expresses the respect the school community has for human rights, and its determination to promote these rights.

Artwork created by students at Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount, as part of their 'One World' week, a celebration of cultural diversity.

GETTING STARTED

The first step is to decide who will be the lead coordinator of the whole school project and how you can ensure that this person is supported.

The decision to take a whole school approach to human rights education will require a commitment from school management structures, and the buy-in and cooperation of the whole school community.

CONSULTING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Why consult the school community?
The **content** and **process** of consulting the school community are both valuable and will direct you towards particular issues that need to be addressed.

Consider setting up an **advisory committee** to advise and support the whole school approach to human rights education. Ensure that the committee is representative of different groups within the school community e.g. parents, teachers from a range of disciplines, other staff, male and female students, students of different nationalities, religion, culture etc.

By actively encouraging people to contribute their **opinions and ideas** on the school's commitment to human rights you are demonstrating how human rights can be implemented in the school.

On a practical level, encouraging the school community's involvement in the consultation process at the start of the whole school project will foster their ownership of and support for the project. In addition, you will begin the process of **raising awareness** of human rights among the school community.

How to consult the school community

There are many ways in which you can consult the school community.

Explain the purpose of the consultation process so that people treat it seriously and recognise its value. Treat all opinions with respect and equality. Take into consideration the diverse range of individuals and groups of people that make up a school community.

CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES AND BASELINE MEASURES

Human Rights Temperature Exercise

Ask the school community to complete the human rights temperature exercise; a 20-question multiple choice survey identifying how human rights are (or are not) promoted within a school. The activity provides a baseline measure of how a school's existing practices support human rights and involves the whole school community.

*Contact the Human Rights Education team at Amnesty International Ireland for a copy of the Human Rights Temperature Exercise and guidelines on how to use it. Email **hre@amnesty.ie***

Mapping Exercise

Complete the mapping exercise worksheet in Appendix 1 with representatives from the advisory committee. Use the exercise to identify how the ten listed human rights principles in the appendix are promoted and respected within the school community, and how these principles can be further put into practice.

Suggestion Box

Put a suggestion box in each classroom and in the staff room. Encourage students and staff to post suggestions about improvements that can be made to raise awareness and respect for human rights in the school. Deal with the suggestions in a structured manner e.g. identify five priority areas and then ask the school community to vote for the issue they most want the school to address.

SWOT Analysis

Identify the **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses of the school's commitment to human rights across different areas of school life. Then identify the **O**pportunities that exist for improving these areas of school life, and the potential **T**hreats to improvement.

Once you've an idea of what your priorities are, it's time to create an action plan.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Ireland – student-led promotion of positivity and well-being

Students in **Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount**, noticed that problems in their local area were having an impact on students when they came to school. Levels of bullying had increased, particularly through the internet.

They decided to do something to improve student relations and to promote kindness and positivity within the school community. With the support of teachers, they ran 'Positive February', a month of activities during which students and staff made an extra effort to be kind to their peers, particularly to people they would not normally be in contact with.

Students from Presentation Secondary School Warrenmount, Dublin, participate in the International Food Festival, part of One World Week to celebrate diversity within the local and international community.

CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

An action plan is a structured way of setting out your immediate priorities for the school year and your long-term objectives. Aim to strike a balance between being ambitious and being realistic. Strive to bring about significant change within the school, but ensure that progress can be made within the first school year, and that the school community gets a sense of achievement from the project.

> **Consider choosing one of the following key areas of school life as your focus for a school year**

KEY AREA 1: PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

- *School values – incorporate respect for and promotion of human rights into school values and the expression of these values.*
- *School policies – update school policies to incorporate human rights, involving the school community in the process.*
- *School leadership – promote democratic participation and shared leadership of all members of the school community.*
- *Governance and participation – increase opportunities for students, teachers, and other staff members to participate in decision-making on matters that affect them at school.*

Key questions to consider:

- How respectful of human rights are current school values and policies?
- In what ways may the adoption of human rights values affect existing school policies?
- Who could act as human rights 'champions' within the school community?
- How can leadership/governance roles be more inclusive of students, teachers, parents and other school community members?
- What skills are needed by students, teachers and other staff in order to participate in the governance of the school and how can the development of these skills be facilitated?

Tips

- Use the language of human rights to make the links between school values and human rights more obvious to the school community.
- Promote the importance of democracy, using examples from around the world of democracy at work, and where democracy is not in place and people's opinions are suppressed.
- Ask students, teachers and other staff to provide feedback on good examples of leadership they have witnessed in the school.

SUGGESTED STRUCTURE FOR YOUR ACTION PLAN

Consider using these headings to structure your action plan. The action plan could also be used to monitor and evaluate progress made on an ongoing basis.

Planning:
Overall Goal – what is your long-term vision for integrating human rights education into your school?
Short-term Objectives – what steps will you take to achieve your overall goal?
Expected Time-Frame – when do you plan to implement each objective?
Results – how will you know you have achieved your objectives?

Evaluation:
Ideally, evaluation should be done at regular intervals e.g. after 6 months, 1 year, 18 months etc.
Challenges Experienced – what challenges or difficulties did you experience in implementing your objectives?
Changes Needed – do you need to adapt your Overall Goal or any of your Short-Term Objectives?

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Benin – partnership between teachers, students and the school leadership team

Students, teachers and the school leadership team at **Pahou College** in Benin are working together to promote human rights within their school community. They have created a consultative student council to improve the respect of human rights at the school. Teachers have developed class lessons on human rights issues. The school is also running an initiative to combat human rights violations in the school environment.

A group of students from Pahou College, a Human Rights Friendly School in Benin

Suggested activities:

- Draft a vision statement or a human rights commitment statement for the school that respects and promotes human rights. Consult the school community in doing so.
- Hold democratic elections for the school's student council and give them opportunities to voice their opinions and to make decisions regarding school matters. See **www.studentcouncil.ie** for ideas.

KEY AREA 2: SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- *Student-staff relations – identify how students and staff perceive their relationship with one another and seek to improve this relationship.*
- *Student-student relations – ensure that all students are encouraged to value diversity, treat each other with dignity and respect, and that conflict is dealt with promptly and fairly.*
- *Staff-staff relations – seek to improve how conflict between staff is dealt with, involve staff in decision-making and ensure that all members of staff feel equally respected.*
- *Parent and community-wide relations – engage a wide range of community members in the life of the school, and offer services and support to the wider community.*

Key questions to consider:

- How is freedom of expression promoted and how are the contributions of each individual valued in your school?
- How is conflict mediated in the school?
- Are there procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment?
- How can good practices around human rights in the global and wider local community have a positive influence on the school community and vice versa?

Tips

- Give students opportunities to work together to devise solutions for dealing with conflict and for promoting respect and cooperation amongst fellow students.
- Promote awareness and respect for diversity within the community, celebrating different cultures, religions and languages.

Suggested activities:

- Establish a peer mediation scheme for managing conflict situations – see **www.peermediation.org** for ideas and **www.ateci.ie** for information about upcoming CPD courses on the topic.
- Inform all parents of the opportunity to be involved with the Board of Management and provide these opportunities regularly.
- Organise a human rights awareness day for the whole school community. Draw attention to human rights abuses around the world. Make sure to include ways in which people can take action during the day to uphold and defend human rights around the world.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Ireland – creating teacher, parent and student contracts

In **Coláiste Pobail Setanta** in Dublin, the school management organised for teacher, parent and student representatives to come together to draft a contract for teachers, parents and students. This enabled members of the school community to identify their expectations of one another in areas such as classroom behaviour, assistance with homework and participation in extra-curricular activities. These contracts are printed in the school diaries used by all students.

A student from Coláiste Pobail Setanta, Dublin, mentoring pupils from a feeder primary school as part of the mentoring programme to ease the transition from primary to secondary school.

- *Curriculum policy and practice - identify different ways in which human rights education can be integrated into the curriculum.*
- *Teaching materials – identify teaching materials that will support teachers in incorporating human rights issues into their teaching practice.*
- *Teacher training - provide training and support for teachers to incorporate human rights values and principles into their work.*

Key questions to consider:

- Is teacher training necessary to support the integration of human rights into the curriculum?
- Do teachers currently teach in a way that respects human rights e.g. using participatory methods?
- Are lessons and tasks adapted for all students, taking into account their specific needs?

Tip

- Choose a number of ideas from the 'Human Rights Education in the Curriculum' ideas on pages 9 and 10 to incorporate human rights education into your lesson plans over the school year.

Suggested activities:

- Compile and catalogue all the school's human rights resources in one central point.
- Provide a forum for teachers to share their own created resources with one another e.g. staff meeting presentations, resource library, email or online forum.

RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS

'Voice Our Concern' – contains warm up activities useful for introducing human rights education issues and methodologies to any class, lots of activities for exploring human rights education through drama, music, poetry, photography, film and the visual arts.

'Geography, Development and Human Rights: A Multimedia Teachers' Manual for the Senior Cycle' – explores the relationship between human rights and poverty, approaches to development, global slums, multinational corporations and gender issues. Useful for Junior and Senior Cycle Geography, Business Studies and English, using the video stories as the basis for debate, discussion and written exercises.

'Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) Resource Pack' – explores the background and content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, what it means to be a human rights activist, and how students can get involved in protecting and promoting human rights. Particularly useful for CSPE and English.

'A is for Action' – a guide to finding and planning a CSPE action project based on human rights issues

All available online at **www.bit.ly/amnestyeducation**
Hardcopies available by contacting **hre@amnesty.ie**

From the Republic of Conscience: Reflections on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by 31 Irish writers with an introduction by Seamus Heaney'. Particularly useful for CSPE and English – available online at **www.irishtimes.com/indepth/amnesty/**

We would love to hear more ideas of how you incorporate human rights into the curriculum. Contact **hre@amnesty.ie**

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Ireland – engaging members of the wider community

Castleknock Community College in Dublin is committed to actively engaging members of the wider community in the life of the school, and embracing the multicultural, multilingual nature of its constituency. Each year, 'Grandparents' Day' is organised, an intergenerational series of workshops and celebrations promoting positive relations between students and older people. The school also runs a language centre, which provides linguistic support for all international students, and intercultural support for students, parents and other members of the community.

A grandmother makes her way through the halls of Castleknock Community College, Dublin, to take part in the annual Grandparents Day celebrations.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Moldova – improving school community relations

In **Liceum Ion Creanga** in Moldova, the Amnesty International School Group is the driving force behind the school's human rights education activities. The group organised a 'Day of Friendly Communication' to improve school community relations. Teachers and students performed on stage and participated in discussions. Flash mobs have also been planned to draw the attention of the school administration to problems such as unsanitary conditions in the school canteen and safety issues in school corridors.

The launch of the Human Rights Friendly Schools project in Liceum Ion Creanga, Moldova.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Ideas from teachers at Newpark Comprehensive School in Dublin, students of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth and Amnesty International.

History:

■ Using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, identify and discuss the human rights issues within particular themes e.g. power relations; inequality; progression; democracy vs. dictatorship; genocide; apartheid.

■ Discuss the aftermath of the Second World War, the origins of the United Nations and the evolution of international human rights frameworks within twentieth century history.

■ Ask students to research and present to the class a case of human rights abuse or human rights activism that occurred within a historical period being studied.

Geography:

■ As part of a country case study, carry out a comparison of the availability of quality education and quality healthcare for particular groups within the population. Analyse how the right to adequate living standards is or is not upheld in a range of countries/communities.

■ Look at the human rights implications of desertification and globalisation, particularly in developing countries, and analyse the human rights impact of multi-national corporations in these processes.

■ Discuss the human impact of the provision and distribution of resources such as water and oil.

■ Analyse the human rights abuses associated with slum settlements, such as poor sanitation, inadequate housing and the absence of health facilities and schools.

Business Studies:

■ Analyse the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) statistics of different countries. Analyse what these differences mean, and how these broad statistical measures mask inequalities between different segments of the population e.g. between genders, religious groups, social groups.

■ Analyse the emergence and growth of the fair-trade movement, looking at specific case-studies in different countries, and discussing the business and human rights benefits of the movement.

■ Discuss corporate social responsibility, ethics in globalisation, and look at case studies of particular Multi-National Corporations with positive and negative human rights records.

Maths:

■ Explore statistics on human rights issues e.g. poverty, AIDS, child mortality, discrimination against particular groups within societies.

■ Watch and analyse videos about statistical trends in human rights and development issues. See **www.gapminder.org**

■ Discuss how broad statistical measures such as GDP and HDI (Human Development Index) often mask inequalities between different segments of the population e.g. between genders, religious groups, social groups.

Biology:

■ Analyse the effect that poverty can have on the body in a broader discussion on nutrition. Compare health trends in developing and developed countries. Identify the links between human rights and global hunger.

■ Explore issues such as disease and immunisation and pollution within a human rights framework. Relate this to Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – 'everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health of himself and his family'.

Languages

General:

- Use reading comprehensions and oral listening exercises with a human rights theme e.g. fair trade, child labour.
- Set up a link with a French/Spanish/German/Irish-medium school and enable students to practice their language skills, using human rights issues as the focus for the content of correspondence.
- Analyse the human rights record of countries where the language of study is spoken, comparing it to human rights issues in Ireland.

English:

- Identify particular human rights issues within set texts e.g. the right to security in *Goodnight Mr. Tom* (Michelle Magorian), the right to a nationality and the right to practice religion in *Across the Barricades* (Joan Lingard), the right not to be discriminated against for any reason including race in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Harper Lee).
- Use a human rights issue to stimulate creative writing e.g. videos about human rights issues (see the Amnesty International 'Geography, Development and Human Rights' resource).
- Practice functional writing skills by participating in letter writing campaigns (see **www.amnesty.ie** for ideas).
- Create a forum for practising debating skills by having student prepare and debate controversial human rights issues in class.

Religion:

- Identify and discuss human rights issues related to themes of the curriculum including sectarianism and tolerance, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and social justice.
- Use participatory methodologies to promote equality and respect among students and staff e.g. role-play, song, hot seating.
- Integrate the human rights perspective of international aid when undertaking fundraisers or projects for development and emergency relief programmes.

CSPE:

- Discuss all seven concepts of the CSPE curriculum through the lens of human rights and social justice. For example, under the concept of 'development', look at the relationship between poverty and human rights. Under the concept of 'law', analyse the role of the courts in upholding human rights commitments.

Art:

- Create campaign posters/photographic displays promoting awareness of and action on human rights issues.
- Organise a t-shirt design project promoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Music:

- Explore the content, historical context and motivation behind civil rights and protest songs.
- Conduct a music writing workshop with a human rights theme.

Woodwork/Metalwork:

- Create placards for use in human rights demonstrations.
- Create a prize for a human rights award in the school or community.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Ireland – campaigning and raising awareness of human rights issues

St. Mac Dara's Community College in Dublin has a very active Amnesty International student group. The group has organised a number of extra-curricular activities to promote human rights awareness among the school community and has participated in a number of national campaigns. They organised '48 Hours for Zimbabwe', a project drawing attention to the difficult living conditions and human rights abuses experienced by many Zimbabwean people. The group lived on €2 a day for two days, and ate separately from the rest of the school community in the canteen to draw attention to their project.

A student from St Mac Dara's Community College in Dublin takes part in the Amnesty International Ireland 'Back to the Dail' action, drawing awareness to the importance of protecting funding for mental health services.

KEY AREA FOUR: EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Extra-curricular activities - integrate human rights into the provision of extracurricular activities.

The school environment - promote an environment where the physical and mental health of all community members is respected, and where dignity, equality and inclusivity are core values.

Key questions to consider:

- ■ How can existing extra-curricular activities promote human rights values?
- ■ Are all students, regardless of their abilities or needs, encouraged and enabled to participate in before and after school activities?
- ■ Is the wider community encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities?
- ■ How can the school support human rights issues locally, nationally and globally through extra-curricular activities?
- ■ Does the school oppose and confront discrimination in all its forms?
- ■ Is the value that the school places on human rights reflected in the appearance and atmosphere of the school?

Tips

- ■ Encourage and empower members of the school community who show initiative to make positive contributions to the school environment.
- ■ Identify the main areas within extra-curricular education that could be improved upon, and bolster the areas in which your school is already successfully promoting human rights.

Suggested activities:

- ■ Ask students which extra-curricular activities they would like to participate in. Insofar as possible, provide a variety of extra-curricular activities, or provide information for how students can get involved in those activities outside of school if it is not possible to provide them within school time and resources.
- ■ Start an Amnesty International student group to provide students with a forum for finding out about, discussing and acting on human rights issues.
- ■ Encourage students and staff to display students' work in all subject areas.
- ■ Organise solution discussions, which take a similar format to debates. Instead of asking students to argue an opinion they do not necessarily agree with ask teams to research the complexities of a particular problem or issue, identifying possible solutions and the pros and cons for each potential solution. Ask teams to present the most feasible and human rights friendly solution.

EVALUATING AND SHARING PROGRESS

MEASURING AND REFLECTING ON ACTION TAKEN, COMMUNICATING IDEAS LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY

Evaluating progress
A strong evaluation comes from good planning and forward thinking. Keep a record of your starting point/baseline. Formalise your action plan into writing and identify specific objectives, and how you will measure progress made towards achieving each objective. Measure the progress of your work at regular intervals. Ensure that consultation with the wider school community makes up a core part of your evaluation. Identify changes that need to be made, and don't be afraid to adapt your aims based on progress, challenges and successes that arise in the implementation of your objectives.

Communicating ideas and sharing progress
As you identify your objectives for the whole school project and implement your action plan, it is important to communicate regularly with the school community about the rationale behind the project, and the progress being made.

Tips
- ■ Consider fostering links with other schools in the national and international community, with whom you can share ideas and examples of good practice, and troubleshoot challenges.
- ■ Consider joining a global linking programme to create a formal partnership with another school, and to embed a wider view of the world into the life of the school.
- ■ Liaise with organisations working within the area of human rights and development issues for support on how to bring the global perspective into the everyday teaching and learning within your school.

*Contact Amnesty International Ireland to become a member of the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project. Email **hre@amnesty.ie***

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Ghana – campaigning on the Death Penalty

Accra High School declared a week of campaigning to promote the abolition of the Death Penalty in Ghana. The school held a public press conference and demonstration, built a death penalty coalition and presented petitions to the President of Ghana and Members of Parliament on Human Rights Day, December 10th. The school also organised mock parliamentary debates, organised a drama production and took part in a letter writing action on the use of the death penalty in Equatorial Guinea.

Students from Accra High School performing a traditional dance during a Demand Dignity campaign event.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

Morocco – improving school community cooperation and safety

Staff and students in **Lycée Ibn Youssef** have come together to improve school community relations and to promote awareness of human rights within the school community. Members of the school community identified that there was a high risk of female students being attacked at break times. As a result, a safe space where they can spend their breaktimes has been assigned.

Students at Lycée Ibn Youssef take part in an Amnesty International letter writing marathon in December 2010.

Complete the mapping exercise worksheet with representatives from different groups within the school e.g. parents, teachers from a range of disciplines, other staff, male and female students, students of different nationalities, religion, culture etc.

Use the exercise to identify how the ten listed human rights principles are promoted and respected within the school community, and how these principles can be further put into practice.

Global Principles for human rights friendly schools	How is this principle currently promoted / respected?	How can this principle be further put into practice?
Human Rights Framework 1. Equality, non-discrimination, dignity and respect underpin all aspects of school life. 2. The school provides a learning environment in which human rights are respected. 3. The school strives to ensure that basic economic, social and cultural rights are respected. 4. The school embraces inclusivity in all aspects of school life.		
Participation 5. The school encourages free, active and meaningful participation by all members of the school community in the daily life, policies and practices of the school. 6. The school ensures access to information that is necessary for full participation of school community members.		
Accountability 7. The school upholds the principles of fairness, accountability and transparency in its planning, processes and policies. 8. The school protects members of the school community by making safety and security a shared priority and responsibility.		
Empowerment through teaching and learning 9. The school integrates human rights into all areas of the curriculum and teaching practices. 10. The school works to empower all students to reach their full potential through education, in particular students who are marginalised due to their status.		