

RIGHTS SITES NEWS

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The Right to Education

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

~Nelson Mandela



Human Rights Education

The Human Rights Education Program is designed to introduce international human rights and responsibilities to K-12 students. It uses the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to help students understand and appreciate common human values, encourages them to apply international standards to their own lives, and supports positive student action to remedy human rights violations in their own communities.

What is the Human Right to Education?

The human right to education guarantees every child access to quality schools and services without discrimination. This includes the right to quality teachers and curricula, and the right to safe and welcoming school environments that respect human dignity. Education must be aimed at developing each child's personality and abilities to his or her fullest potential and preparing each child to participate in society and to do work that is rewarding.

The right to education is guaranteed in human rights declarations and treaties including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man.

Does the United States Guarantee the Human Right to Education for All Children?

In the United States there is a strong tradition of support for public schools. Forty-nine of fifty state constitutions recognize the right to education, yet millions of young people are not protected from violations of their human right to a quality education.

***Schools do not have adequate resources.** Many schools have overcrowded classrooms without enough textbooks and they lack qualified teachers.

***Disparities in Education and Opportunity Exist.** Students of color and low-income students are more likely to attend under-resourced schools, contributing to nationwide disparities in education and opportunity. In 2003, 60% of Black and 56% of Latino fourth graders nationally scored below the basic reading level for their grade, compared to only 25% of Whites.

These inequities reflect systemic violations of the right to a quality education and are further amplified by the discriminatory and inappropriate use of academic tracking and special education, dehumanizing disciplinary measures, high stakes testing, and unsafe schools. Equity, respect, and safety must be ensured to guarantee the right to education and schools must adapt to the needs and background of every student. *Adapted from the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative www.nesri.org.*

This issue of Rights Sites News is dedicated to upholding the **RIGHT TO EDUCATION** in schools in our cities, our states, our countries and our world. We welcome your feedback as we create a dialogue among human rights educators around the world!

Please email your feedback to **Kathy Seipp** at kseipp@mnadvocates.org

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Welcome Emily and Julia to our Education Team!

The Right to Education

What is the Right to Education?

The right to education is twofold: it requires free and compulsory primary level education, and it requires that there is equal access to every level of education. A basic education is a right inherent to being human, and thus constitutes an end in itself. However, education is also a means to an end: it is required to ensure all people can participate effectively in a free society, and to promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and groups.

What does the Right to Education include?

There are several components to the right to education:

The 4 A's: Education must be Available, Accessible, Acceptable, and Adaptable for All*

Available: Adequate school facilities and buildings. Healthy and safe physical environments with access to potable water.

“Functioning educational institutions and programs have to be available in sufficient quantity ”for all children, including “buildings,...trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries, [and]teaching materials.” In well resourced countries (like the US) there should be “libraries], computer facilities and information technology.”

Acceptable (Quality): Trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries. Good quality teaching materials. Respect of a child’s dignity.

“Education, including curricula and teaching methods, must be acceptable (relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality).” Schools must also meet standards for health and safety, teachers must have appropriate qualifications and requirements, and disciplinary policies must not violate the “dignity ”of the child.

Accessible: Free from discrimination. Affordable. Close in physical proximity to students.

Equal access for all to educational institutions must be guaranteed, especially for the most vulnerable groups in society. This includes physical access to facilities, as well as economic access (which requires that transportation, classroom materials and any other costs for basic programs be affordable).

Adaptable: Adaptable to different cultural, linguistic backgrounds. Able to work with children with disabilities.

Education must “adapt to the needs of changing societies and ...of students within their diverse social and cultural settings.” For example, education must adapt to the needs of children from different class and racial backgrounds, children who do not speak the primary language of the school system, and children with disabilities.

All four of these areas are important to ensuring the right to education. However, international law recognizes that some countries may not have the resources to fully implement the right immediately. For those countries, there are two rules: first, consistently work to improve the right, and second, always provide at least the minimum core content. The minimum core content includes (1) the right of access to public institutions without discrimination, and (2) free choice of education without interference by the state or a third party.

* These four components of the right to education are found in reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and in General Comment 13 (UN Doc E/C. 12/1999/10) by UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural rights (all quotes above are from General Comment 13).

Government Obligations to Fulfill the Right to Education*



As with every human right, all countries have the following obligations when it comes to implementing the right to education:

- ◆ **Respect** – the obligation to respect requires governments to refrain from interfering directly or indirectly with the enjoyment of the right to education.
- ◆ **Protect** – the obligation to protect requires governments to prevent third parties, such as corporations, from interfering in any way with the enjoyment of the right to education.
- ◆ **Fulfill** – the obligation to fulfill requires governments to adopt the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of the right to education.
- ◆ **Guarantee** – the obligation to equity and non-discrimination in the right to education in order to prevent inferior educational opportunities and outcomes for particular communities, whether due to class, race, gender, language or other factors.
- ◆ **Utilize** – the obligation to maximum available resources to ensure the right to education based on the resources of society as a whole, not only the resources within the current budget.
- ◆ **Meet minimum core** – the obligation for the right to education based on minimum standards that are shaped and informed by the specific learning needs of students and communities in particular socio-economic contexts.
- ◆ **Report** – the obligation to report about human rights in relation to both conduct and results, so that governments are responsible for their action and inaction, as well as for educational results and outcomes.
- ◆ **Monitor**– the obligation to provide education, effective remedies when rights are violated, and ensure the effective participation of civil society in the education system.

Education for All by 2015!

UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization each year focuses on a theme related to the Education For All ideals established in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA).

At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 members of 164 countries adopted the Framework for Action, committing themselves to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015. The EFA Goals include the following:

- i. expanding and improving comprehensive **early childhood care and education**, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- ii. ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have **access to** and complete **free** and **compulsory primary education** of good quality;
- iii. ensuring that the **learning needs** of all young people and adults are met through **equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills** programs;
- iv. achieving a **50 % improvement** in levels of **adult literacy** by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- v. achieving **gender equality** in education by 2015 with a focus on **ensuring girls' full and equal access** to and achievement in **basic education** of good quality;
- vi. improving all aspects of the **quality of education** and ensuring excellence of all so that **recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills**.

For more information about EFA go to <http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/index.shtml>.



Did you know...??

One in four adults in the developing world—**771 MILLION** people— is illiterate. **2/3** are **WOMEN**. Without an education women have fewer employment options and often earn less than men. In fact, women earn only three-quarters of what men earn. (UNICEF)

More than **115 MILLION** children of primary school age are not in school. (UNICEF)

Nearly **53%** of the children currently not in primary school are girls. The gender gap is even bigger in some countries of the world, and is often even bigger in secondary schools. (UNICEF)

Universal primary education would cost **\$10 BILLION** a year - that's half of what America spends on ice cream. (ActionAid)

Young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those missing education. Universal primary education would prevent **700,000 CASES** of HIV each year - about 30% all new infections of this age group. (Oxfam)

Some of the main reasons why so many children are not currently in primary school include:

POVERTY: families may have difficulty affording school fees or the cost of uniforms, or may need children to work to contribute to the family income.

SAFETY: families may keep their children at home if they feel the journey to school is too long or that it's dangerous to walk to school alone. They may also be worried about bullying and sexual harassment or violence, especially for girls.

LOCAL TRADITIONS: in some countries, families place more emphasis on the education of boys, and may not believe it is important to send their daughters to school. Girls may be forced to marry young, drop out of school, or dedicate themselves to housework.

TEACHER SHORTAGE: There is a massive global shortage of teaching professionals - at least 15 million teachers are needed to ensure that every child can complete a basic education of good quality by 2015.

Voices of Youth

unicef 

Check out this fantastic website at:

<http://www.unicef.org/voy/>

This site for students contains the sections Explore, Speak Out, and Take Action. Students' voices from around the world are heard and are making a difference!

Questions for discussion at the Voices of Youth site include:

How would you rate your education?

Do you think money is important?

Do you know your rights?

Do you have something to say about issues affecting young people?

Do you want to link up with youth from around the world?



East St. Paul YMCA kids raise money for children in Nepal!



For more information about our

Moving Live Speakers Bureau

go to: http://www.intermediaarts.org/pages/programs/movinglives/mlsb_2005/mlsb_main.htm

In late July while many middle school students' minds are on things other than learning, a dynamic group from East St. Paul's YMCA, called Y-Start, focused on the theme of Human Rights for eight weeks. They spent a day at Minnesota Advocates learning about the **Right to Education** for children in Nepal. Kathy Seipp introduced the students to the issue of child labor around the world and in Nepal specifically.

The Y-Start students then participated in theatrical and written activities conducted by two Moving Lives artists, Katie Vang and Tou Saiko Lee. Both are new members of the Moving Lives Speakers Bureau. Both are spoken word artists. And both are determined to make an impact on the lives of students. They shared personal stories and related the importance of making an impact on your community.

Thanks to everyone who participated and made this day a huge success!



After their day at Minnesota Advocates, the East St. Paul Y-Start group held a fundraiser at their local Rainbow Foods to raise awareness and money for children in Nepal! They raised almost \$200.00 in one day! Enough to pay for one students' tuition, books, meals and uniforms for the 2006-2007 school year.

WAY TO GO Y-START KIDS!

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS ACROSS THE WORLD!



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES!

The Ann Bancroft Foundation is Announcing its Fall 2006 Round of Dare to Dream Mini-Grants



The Ann Bancroft Foundation supports girls and women to realize their highest dreams and potential. The foundation endeavors to live this mission by recognizing individual achievement and by promoting initiatives that inspire courage, risk-taking, integrity, and individuality in girls and women. The Dare to Dream Mini-Grant Program provides small grants of \$100 to \$500 to girls in grades 6 through 10, who have a dream and need the financial and caring support of adults in order to achieve that dream. The program has provided over \$210,000 to 570 girls in Minnesota to participate in events such as classes, camps, or lessons to improve a skill; outdoor adventures or camps; honors programs; travel with approved schools or groups; and, choir trips or school activities.

Eligibility Guidelines:

1. For Minnesota girls age 10 through grade 10 who reside in the state of Minnesota.
2. Grants range from \$100 to \$500 and the amount for activity must be exact
3. Girls must have an adult mentor other than an immediate family who will guide them through the process.
4. Girls need to clearly describe a special interest that has sparked their imagination, creativity, or a dream that they may not have thought possible.

For more eligibility guidelines go to the Ann Bancroft Foundation's website at <http://annbancroftfoundation.org> and click on Dare to Dream Mini-Grants.

Application Deadline: November 15, 2006

More Funding Opportunities:

► Do Something

www.dosomething.org

Gives grants of \$500 each to 30 young people who submit creative proposals for solving local problems in the areas of community building, health, and the environment.

► National Crime Prevention Council

<http://ncpc.org/programs/tcc/grant.php>

Offers \$500 grants for service learning projects planned and implemented by youth to address crime, violence, and drug abuse in their schools and communities.

► Tolerance.org

www.tolerance.org/teens/grants.jsp

Tolerance.org provides \$500 grants to support youth-directed programs and projects that address social boundaries in schools or communities.



► Youth Service America

www.ysa.org/awards

Provides grants and awards to support and motivate youth, teachers, and service-learning coordinators, who plan and implement projects for National Youth Service Day and on-going service throughout the year.

► Youth Venture

www.youthventure.org

Invests in the ideas of young people, ages 12-20, who create, launch, and lead sustainable clubs, businesses, and organizations that benefit the community.

Global Human Rights Education Starts in Minnesota!

In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, and in collaboration with the Minnesota Global Education Network members: Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Resources Center of the Americas, and World Citizen, the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center has developed, piloted, and launched one of the most innovative, emergent human rights education programs in the country. ***This is My Home: A Minnesota Human Rights Education Experience*** (www.thisismyhome.org) is a multi-faceted human rights education curriculum, which is currently being distributed statewide to all Minnesota schools and globally free-of-charge via the Internet.

The goal of this project is to promote human rights and increase cultural competencies that will lead to long-term changes in students' attitudes and levels of engagement toward school, the family, and the community. The University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center received a grant from the Education Minnesota's Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to conduct a pilot set of human rights education workshops and evaluate their impact on effective teaching practices. Over the next two years educators from Twin Cities, Rochester, Duluth, Moorhead, St Cloud and Grand Rapids will be engaged in a pilot project of integrating *This is My Home* into their schools and communities. By attending workshops and using existing human rights educational resources, educators will be exposed to the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will foster a positive and dynamic classroom climate, implement inclusive curriculum, and create connections with students and the larger community. This project will also work to share effective practices in classrooms and schools throughout Minnesota, by documenting and evaluating ways in which teachers are integrating cultural competency and human rights education activities into the curriculum and school.



Human Rights Commissions throughout the state will be instrumental in this process. The Human Rights Center strives to create long-lasting partnerships between schools, communities, and Human Rights Commissions in the implementation of *This is My Home* and in evaluating its impact and sharing successful practices.

Some of the ways that teachers can use this toolkit:

- ◆ To teach about human rights within the Minnesota State Academic Standards
- ◆ To promote social justice, democracy, and human rights education by connecting it to state, national and international human rights standards
- ◆ To integrate human rights to any course topic
- ◆ To bring current affairs and news into the classroom and teach critical thinking and resolution skills
- ◆ To address underlying principles of human rights

Organizations working on the Right to Education

Access Network

A national initiative that seeks to strengthen the links between school finance litigation, public engagement, and the standards-based reform movement.

► Council of Educational Facility Planners

A professional association, whose mission is to improve the places where children learn; members include individuals, institutions and corporations involved in planning, designing, building, equipping and maintaining schools and colleges.

► Global Campaign for Education

www.campaignforeducation.org/

The Global Campaign for Education promotes education as a basic human right, and mobilizes public pressure on governments and the international community to fulfill their promises to provide free, compulsory public basic education for all people. The GCE, founded in 1999, brings together major NGOs and teachers' unions in over 150 countries around the world and provides resources, news, and action kits on promoting the right to education.

► National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

The NCEF provides information on planning, designing, funding, building, improving, and maintaining schools. It was created by the U.S. Department of Education in 1997.

► Right to Education Project

The Right to Education Project (RTE) is a public access human rights resource started by Katarina Tomasevski, the first ever Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, after her appointment in 1998.

► UNESCO Education for All

The Education for All movement took off at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990. Since then, governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and the media have taken up the cause of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults.

COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

September

September 18:

Walk for Justice. Walk to support Minnesota Advocates! Boom Island Park, Minneapolis. For more information go to: http://www.mnadvocates.org/Walk_For_Justice.html.

September 21:

International Day of Peace. The UN declared the years 2001-2010 as the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World. Ideas for celebrating: attend a vigil; meditate for peace; write a letter to your representatives asking them to uphold non-violence. For more information visit: www.internationaldayofpeace.org.

September 21:

Women's Program Fall House Party. This fundraiser for the Women's Human Rights Program at Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights will feature Imani Jaffar-Mohammad, who will speak on Women Rights in Islam. 5-7 p.m. at the home of Marlene Kayser at 466 S. Mississippi River Blvd., St. Paul.

September 28-December 14:

The Women's Human Rights Film Series, sponsored by The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library and Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, returns this fall with four powerful films. The first film, "Bride Kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan," will be shown on September 28 at 7 p.m., at the St. Anthony Park Branch Library.

October

October 19-20:

Education Minnesota Professional Conference. Minnesota's largest professional development opportunity for educators. The event is free and open to the public. No registration required. St. Paul River Center. For more information go to: www.educationminnesota.org.

November

November 25-December 10:

16 Days of activism against gender violence campaign!

The 16 Days website contains a free toolkit, supplemental resources and the 16th year of the 16 Days campaign. To learn more go to: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>.

December

December 10th:

International Human Rights Day!

Check the Minnesota Advocates website for information on local events at: www.mnadvocates.org.

TAKE ACTION GUIDES

► **The Kids Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis**

Provides everything kids needs to make a difference in the world: step by step directions for letter-writing, interviewing, fundraising, speech-making, media coverage, and more. Includes 22 reproducible handouts. Available through Free Spirit Publishing.

► **Making History: A Social Studies Curriculum by Sheldon Berman, series coordinator**

Making History helps teachers prepare students for democratic participation in society. Students are encouraged to use their own experiences to assess controversial issues. Activities explore the meaning of empowerment and how to create change in the community and the nation at large. Available through Free Spirit Publishing.

► **Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship by Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger**

Take Action! is a step by step guide to active citizenship that equips young people with the tools they need to make a difference. Ideal for grades 8-10. Available through Free the Children.

► **The Youth Act Kit by youthact.org**

The Youth Act Kit gives students the advocacy skills they need to learn about a problem, take action, and ultimately change public policy. The curriculum is structured to be used with social studies and civic health classes. Available through YouthAct.org.

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