



THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

MAPPING OF
HUMAN RIGHTS
EDUCATION IN
DANISH SCHOOLS

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” It pervades everything, a little like IT. After all, there is no separate subject called IT.”

Teacher

” Some groups of trainee teachers do not necessarily recognise human rights as a framework for negotiation at school or in the world. It is by no means certain that they endorse them (human rights, ed.).”

Teacher educator

ABSTRACT

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has conducted a study of human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes in Denmark. The study shows that it is arbitrary whether pupils in primary and lower secondary schools in Denmark learn about rights of the child.

It also shows that human rights education must be strengthened significantly in order to observe the preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools (Folkeskoleloven), i.e. to "prepare the students to be able to participate, demonstrate co-responsibility and understand their rights and duties in a free and democratic society" throughout the schooling period. This applies to both primary and lower secondary schools and teacher university colleges. The aim is for human rights education to become more than good intentions and to provide education on a professional and informed basis.

The study consists of a questionnaire survey, prepared in collaboration with the Danish Union of Teachers, and 16 focus-group interviews of teachers and teacher trainers representing schools and university colleges all over Denmark. Moreover, the study reviews Danish legislation in this area, the Common Objectives as well as relevant EU and human rights obligations and recommendations for Denmark related to human rights education.

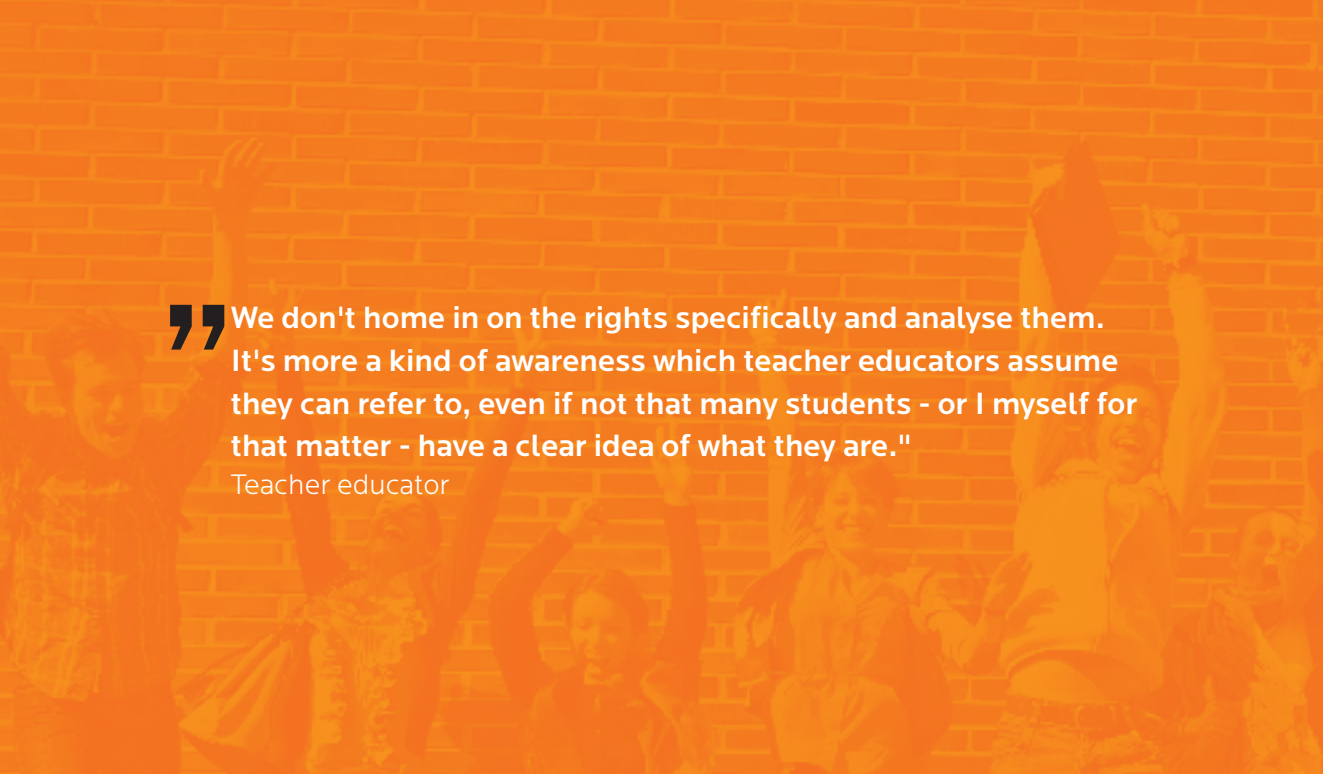
The study presents a number of recommendations and a catalogue of ideas containing initiatives to support the implementation of the recommendations.



PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

This study shows that it is arbitrary whether pupils in primary and lower secondary schools in Denmark learn about rights of the child. It also shows that human rights are not incorporated adequately in the official curriculum at schools and teacher university colleges.

An overall finding of the study is that teachers have insufficient frameworks and tools for creating quality in education when it comes to human rights education. The study respondents say that human rights and equality



” We don't home in on the rights specifically and analyse them. It's more a kind of awareness which teacher educators assume they can refer to, even if not that many students - or I myself for that matter - have a clear idea of what they are.”

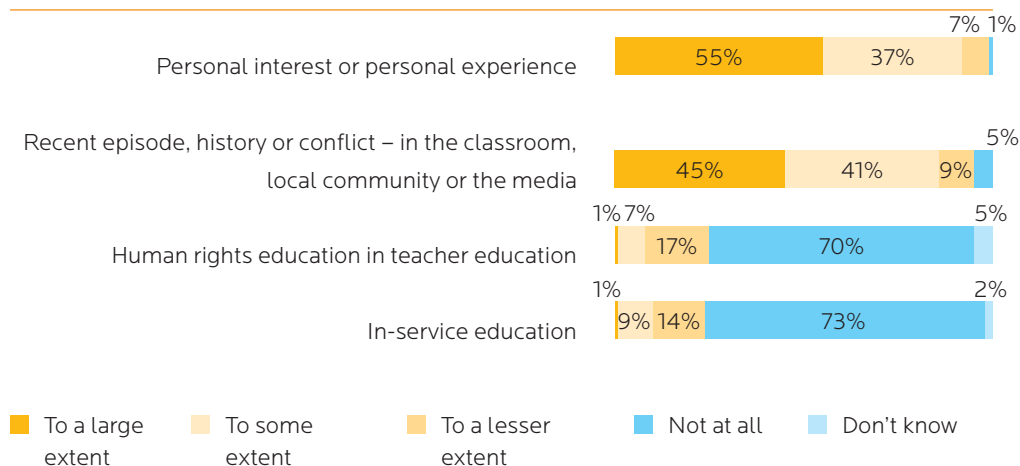
Teacher educator

“pervade” and are taught “indirectly”, “along the lines of IT” throughout the school system. But teachers most often fail to formulate knowledge and skill requirements concerning human rights for themselves and their pupils.

A large majority – three fourths of the 445 respondents to the questionnaire – find that human rights should be given special attention in the curriculum. However, the focus-group interviews show that human rights education is often conducted without the teachers actually referring to ‘human rights’ or ‘rights’ and/or the courts and institutions that monitor a country’s observance of human rights.

87% of the teachers respond that their teacher education did not motivate them at all, or motivated them only to a lesser extent, to teach pupils about

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR MOTIVATION TO TEACH HUMAN RIGHTS DERIVE FROM THE FOLLOWING?



Source: The research institute MEGAFON for the Danish Union of Teachers and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, October-November 2012.

human rights. In the focus groups, the teachers/teacher trainers state that they lack knowledge of a theoretical basis for how to adapt human rights education to pupils in different years.

In addition, the focus-group interviews with teacher trainers reveal that human rights are generally regarded as a universal ethos that serves to encourage trainee teachers to reflect on the formative education, which, according to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools, is the object of Danish compulsory education. However, several teacher trainers find that there are groups of trainee teachers who do not necessarily accept human rights as a core value in school, society and the world at large.

WHY FOCUS ON PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND TEACHER EDUCATION?

The Danish Institute for Human Rights is authorised to implement and promote human rights education.¹ Since the adoption of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education in 2005, the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN have increased their focus on states ensuring human rights education of high quality, including at primary and secondary school level.² At national level, the focus on pupils' knowledge of human rights has increased in step with the strengthened focus in the public debate on interpretation, incorporation and monitoring of human rights. For example, the government platform of October 2011 says that the government will strengthen children's awareness of their rights and that the effort to promote human rights always starts at home.³

EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

Studies of pupils' knowledge and attitudes reveal that the knowledge of human rights and rights of the child is limited among Danish pupils. One such study was conducted by Amnesty International in 2009. According to that study, only half of the pupils in the lower secondary years know about the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.⁴ Another study, performed by UNICEF in 2010, shows that less than one out of 10 children in Denmark has good knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁵

A third study, conducted for Dignity, Danish Institute against Torture in 2011, concerns the Danish population's views on torture. According to that study, one out of four Danes believes that torture could be used in a few special cases, and particularly young people tend to accept the use of torture.⁶ Finally, a study published in 2012 from Aarhus University shows that Danish pupils in the lower secondary years take a positive view on equal rights in principle. But the response pattern changes when the questions are specified. The responses show that the boys, in particular, are sceptical about equal rights for ethnic minorities and gender equality. On the other hand, the Danish pupils generally have a high score when it comes to understanding democracy and confidence in the democratic institutions in society.⁷



Another purpose of the study of human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes in Denmark is to examine the implementation in practice of the preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools and how the curriculum otherwise may provide a framework for human rights education. According to the preamble, primary and lower secondary schools shall prepare the pupils for “participation, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy.”⁸ The question is whether the frameworks for human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes are adequate or should be strengthened.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Both supranational and international organisations like the UN, the Council of Europe and the EU impose a number of obligations on their member states regarding human rights education. The member states are thus obliged to ensure that their citizens gain knowledge of human rights e.g. via teaching at the primary and lower secondary level.



Specifically, both the Council of Europe and the UN have expressly recommended that the Danish State strengthen human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes. For example, in 2011 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended the Danish State to incorporate education in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into the national curriculum as a specific subject. The Committee also recommended the Danish State to develop systematic and permanent curricula about human rights and rights of the child for teachers and to continue its initiatives against bullying and harassment at school by monitoring school plans, among other measures.⁹

In continuation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendation of reintroducing mother-tongue tuition for bilingual pupils who do not receive such tuition organised by the municipality, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2013 and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in 2012 recommended the Danish State to ensure implementation of the frameworks for language stimulation for children with a minority background irrespective of their country of origin.¹⁰

” I sometimes think he had difficulty with these very bombastic statements that they should all just be sent home. They were not targeted directly at him. I had them in social studies and history and I had the impression that he didn't always find it enjoyable.”

Teacher

EU law focuses on both the right to education and access to education according to the central human rights principle of non-discrimination.¹¹ The most detailed protection is related to ethnicity and gender. The protection concerns a positive obligation to promote equal treatment in a number of social areas, including education.¹²

The key international documents on human rights education of relevance to Danish primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes are the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training of 2011 and the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education of 2010.¹³

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training reminds States not only of their obligation to ensure that their citizens gain knowledge of the content of the UN human rights conventions and the systems that protect human rights, but also of the necessity of those citizens learning to act in observance of human rights. History has shown that there is a need for educational strategies to empower individuals to act in the face of any violation of their own rights or those of others. Consequently, the Council of Europe Charter points out the need to incorporate human rights education as a central topic in the curricula of e.g. the formal education systems, including primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes.

” It is an integral part of the Danish primary school system – we have a democratic understanding of society, we are all humanists, we are concerned with people. We do not want to talk about equal opportunities. We have been there – we have moved on. It is so well established. It may be that there is a need at other workplaces ... The Danish primary school system is steeped in it. (...) We do not discriminate according to colour, religion, sexual orientation ...”

Teacher

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to provide new and more reliable knowledge on human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes. This includes visualising Denmark’s human rights obligations in this area with a view to qualifying the basis for the government’s decision on whether an action plan should be prepared and implemented. Another objective of this study is to enable municipalities and university colleges to assess whether the human rights education envisaged in the official curricula and implemented in practice is adequate or whether it should be strengthened locally.



EXPERT REFERENCE GROUP

An expert reference group was consulted during the preparation of the study in order to ensure that input from key actors in the area of primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education could contribute to the preparation of the study. Moreover, the expert reference group has contributed to ensuring that the recommendations of the study are relevant to the future development of primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes. The expert reference group consists of one representative from, respectively, the Danish Union of Teachers, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education and the National Association of School Parents, as well as researchers from Roskilde University and Aarhus University, Amnesty International, the head teacher at Sundbyøster School and a teacher educator from the UCC university college. The expert reference group held three meetings during the preparation of the study, and the members were also consulted on an ad hoc basis.



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Institute recommends that the Danish State draws up a national action plan for human rights education, and that Denmark in its future reporting, including to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, includes a situation report concerning Danish human rights education throughout the education sector, including in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher university colleges.

The UN World Programme recommends that States prepare national action plans to strengthen human rights in the educational sector. The study shows that human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes is currently diffuse and unsystematic. For Denmark to prepare, implement and regularly evaluate a national action plan would therefore have a decisive impact on the quality of human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education programmes.

The UN World Programme points out five key areas that are recommended to be included in the member states' national action plans for human rights education. These are 1. Educational policy, 2. Support for implementation of educational policy, 3. Learning environment, 4. Education and learning processes, and 5. Education and continuing education of staff at the educational institutions.¹⁴



RECOMMENDATION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS INSCRIBED IN THE PREAMBLE TO THE ACT ON DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Institute recommends that human rights are inscribed in the preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools so that human rights, on equal terms with ‘freedom of thought, equality and democracy’, are made integral to the preparation of pupils for participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on fundamental freedoms and democracy.

Stronger anchoring of human rights in the preamble will emphasise the position of human rights as a cornerstone of Danish democracy. Moreover, specification of human rights in the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools will strengthen teachers and schools overall in terms of their didactic and instructional choices as regards formative education of the pupils. Compared with today, this implies a higher degree of planning and differentiation of learning processes, with the aim of benefiting everyone, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion or other possible grounds for discrimination.

RECOMMENDATION 3: EXPLICIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Institute recommends explicit formulation of learning objectives for human rights education under the 'Common Objectives'. This would apply both to explicit learning objectives within the existing academic subjects, and to how human rights education is incorporated as an interdisciplinary element in compulsory education.

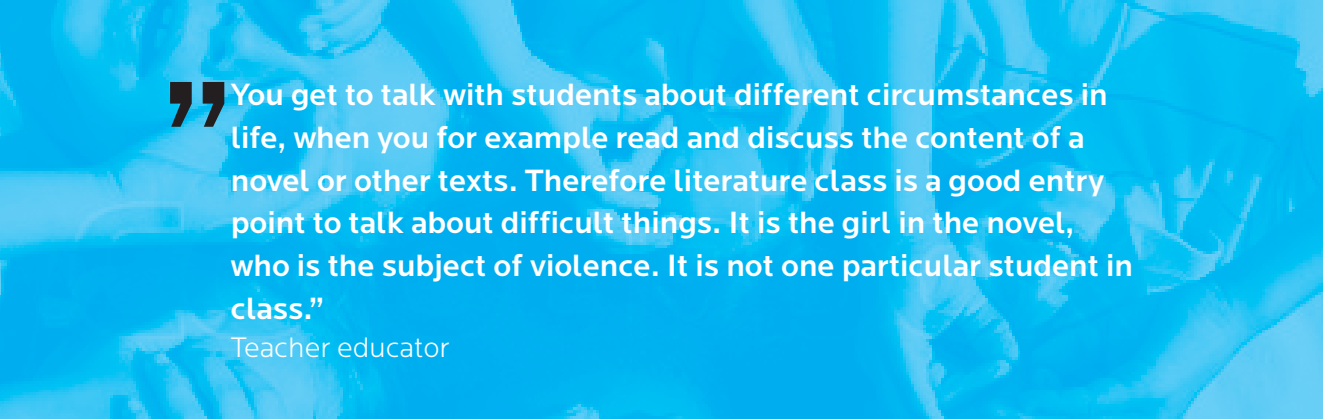
A commitment to and guidelines for human rights education throughout the pupils' schooling will ensure human rights education throughout the period of compulsory schooling. Within the existing academic subjects where human rights are taught most often, directly or indirectly – e.g. history, social science, religious education, Danish and Danish as a secondary language and other linguistic subjects – explicit objectives for human rights education need to be formulated. As a result, teachers will, to a higher degree in the compulsory part of Common Objectives, be guided as to implementation of the preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools in their practice.

The study points to a need for strengthening the positioning of human rights education in Common Objectives, to ensure Denmark's appropriate compliance with convention-bound obligations for human rights education as well as the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.¹⁵

RECOMMENDATION 4: HUMAN RIGHTS IN SCHOOL POLICIES AND ORGANISATIONAL PLANS

The Institute recommends to municipalities that human rights education be inscribed in school policies, and that school managements (boards of governors and head teachers) incorporate human rights education in their school's organisational plan, and that compliance in this regard is monitored e.g. as an integral element of the quality reports submitted by schools to municipalities pursuant to Section 40a of the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools.

Municipal school policies and the priorities of the individual schools impact on the way in which the official curriculum is implemented into teaching practice. In view of the general nature of school policies, it is up to school managements to prioritise topics and working methods. Explicit incorporation of human rights education into subjects, topics and learning methods would thus ensure the development and implementation of such practices at the individual schools.



”You get to talk with students about different circumstances in life, when you for example read and discuss the content of a novel or other texts. Therefore literature class is a good entry point to talk about difficult things. It is the girl in the novel, who is the subject of violence. It is not one particular student in class.”

Teacher educator

RECOMMENDATION 5: EXPLICIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The Institute recommends that human rights education be strengthened expressly in the Bachelor of Education curriculum, including in the main subjects of social science and history, and in the educational subjects of general educational theory and educational science. This should also apply to the university colleges' continuing education programmes for teachers and head teachers. In the light of the recently adopted executive order, which accords the individual teacher education institutions greater autonomy, it is recommended that this measure be reinforced in the implementation of local degree programmes at the university colleges.

It is important to strengthen human rights education in teacher education. The study shows that what little human rights education there is in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education is primarily conducted without the necessary focus on current knowledge of the vital role of human rights in a globalised and democratic society like the Danish one.

Moreover, greater cohesion between the curricula of primary and lower secondary schools and teacher university colleges is needed. For example, trainee teachers who opt for history as their main subject should not necessarily expect to learn about the history of human rights in their main subject. This applies even though they are obliged to work with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as an element of the official curriculum of lower secondary schools when they have to teach the subject themselves.

The study shows that unless the individual university colleges utilise – in the local degree programmes – the opportunities resulting from the decentralisation of the new teacher education programme, the executive order on teacher education programmes of 2013 does not initially strengthen the position of human rights in teaching practice.



RECOMMENDATION 6: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Institute recommends that equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory learning environment be incorporated into interventions relating to schools' and municipalities' commitment to pupil welfare, the learning environment and anti-bullying measures, including in their situation reports and other reporting procedures.

Incorporation of the grounds for discrimination of human rights law into existing guidelines and reporting procedures concerning pupil welfare, learning environment and anti-bullying measures from schools to the municipalities – and from the municipalities to the State – is a prerequisite for ensuring focus on equal opportunities in school development.

As described in the legal analyses of the study, primary and lower secondary schools and university colleges are obliged by EU Directives to ensure equal treatment in respect of gender and ethnicity. Moreover, primary and lower secondary schools and university colleges are obliged by UN conventions to ensure protection against discrimination in teaching practice and education programmes on the basis of the grounds for discrimination protected by human rights law.

” Problems dealing with attitudes to diversity are at management level, among teacher educators and students, but that is actually also a practical situation that we have no control of. But where there may be some presentations and discussions that can be important to talk about. This is not what happens today – it is not something we talk about.”

Teacher educator

RECOMMENDATION 7: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT DANISH UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

The Institute recommends that equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory learning environment be incorporated into the accreditation of the university college degree programmes.

Denmark is obliged to ensure equal access to education and a non-discriminatory learning environment. Thus, it appears to be a central issue for the university colleges to include diversity and equal opportunities in the teacher education programmes. This includes that the university colleges should consistently consider how they can provide degree programmes that – in terms of enrolment, completion and retention – ensure equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory learning environment on the basis of the grounds for discrimination protected by human rights law.

CATALOGUE OF IDEAS

During the preparation of the study, a number of initiatives were proposed to support the implementation of the recommendations. These proposals were developed, inter alia, in dialogue with the expert monitoring group attached to the study. The catalogue of ideas is meant to provide inspiration for the State, municipalities, civil society organisations, the Danish Institute for Human Rights itself, etc. This summary of the study presents selected initiatives.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **Guide to Denmark's National Action Plan for Human Rights Education and Training.** A number of programmes assist the member states in preparing a national action plan for human rights education and training. These include Human Rights Education in Primary and Secondary School Systems: A Self-assessment Guide for Governments published in 2012 by UNESCO and OHCHR. This guide takes the reader through the steps required in developing, implementing and evaluating an action plan for human rights education and training in primary and lower secondary schools and at teacher university colleges.
- **Reporting on upper secondary school human rights education and training.** In extension of the first phase of the UN's World Programme for Human Rights Education, a corresponding national study of human rights education and training in upper secondary systems will strengthen the foundation for a national action plan as regards both the legal frameworks and the teachers'/trainers' observations and perceptions regarding their own teaching.
- **Official translation of the UN Declaration and Council of Europe Charter.** The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training from 2011 and the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education from 2010 elaborate on the



obligations prescribed by human rights conventions to provide quality human rights education. A Danish language translation of both the declaration and the charter will raise awareness of Denmark's obligations in the education sector, including among relevant actors at central and local government level and in civil society, who participate in reporting to inter- and supranational institutions.

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE COMMON OBJECTIVES AND THE ACT ON DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- **Incorporation of human rights in the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools and the Common Objectives 2013.** In connection with the Danish school reform, work is in progress to simplify the rules governing the Common Objectives. The Danish Institute for Human Rights is a consultative party to this process and cites the wording of the end and interim targets for the curriculum subjects social science and history relating to human rights, which it proposes as inspiration in a policy brief of 14 February 2013, and its response to the consultation on the bill for amendment of the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools.¹⁶
- **Inspiration from other Nordic countries.** In Sweden and Norway, 'human rights' are inscribed in the preamble to the respective national education

acts, as they are in the preamble to the Danish Private Independent Schools Act. In Finland, 'human rights' are inscribed in the goals for the decree on national objectives for basic education (primary and lower secondary education).

- **Relevant and updated materials.** Versatile, continuously updated, academically and educationally well-founded materials should be developed on, for example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These materials should deal systematically with human rights, their content, control mechanisms and be adapted for the individual year-groups in primary and lower secondary schools.
- **Resource centre for Danish primary and lower secondary schools.** In support of the school reform in 2013, a corps of academic consultants is being established under regional and local authority teachers' resource centres to serve primary and lower secondary schools. It will be relevant to ensure that the national corps of academic consultants have the competencies required for providing human rights education. This would be achieved by the corps portfolio numbering consultants with the competencies to develop and apply educational approaches, which draw on human rights concerns in addressing co-determination, participation and a non-discriminatory learning environment. For example, in terms of achieving equal opportunities regardless of gender, sexual orientation, first language, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, disability, class etc.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN SCHOOL POLICIES AND ORGANISATIONAL PLANS

- **Human rights as an elective subject in local authority schools.** In connection with the Danish school reform, municipalities will have the option of establishing new elective subjects for approval by the municipal council. Following special authorisation from the Ministry of Education, independent institutions such as Frijsenborg Efterskole have reported the value of introducing 'Citizenship' as a subject in which human rights is given prominence.



- **Classroom calm and class management.** Further to the Danish school reform's focus on improving class management, guides and other resources should be developed which in their educational approach take account of human rights from both a professional perspective and school management perspective, for example, in relation to achieving a non-discriminatory learning environment and promoting equal opportunities. The municipalities' and schools' priorities in certain areas of their policies and organisational plans are inspired by governmental development programmes for example. As such, specific guides and resources which draw on human rights and hence equal opportunities as focal perspectives will help municipalities and schools in their efforts to improve classroom calm and class management.

EXPLICIT LEARNING GOALS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

- **Fund for development of vocational and inter-vocational programmes at Danish university colleges.** The establishment of vocational and inter-vocational programmes on human rights education and training will serve to strengthen the academic setting for human rights education and training. These programmes will empower teacher trainers to develop, document

and disseminate human rights education and training. Across the university colleges sector, this initiative will also serve to provide inspiration to cater for the didactic and instructional theory dimension of human rights education and training, which the study indicates failed to feature in the teacher education curriculum of 2006.

- **Human rights from a teaching perspective.** Advancement of the didactic and instructional theory dimension of human rights education in primary and lower secondary schools and teacher education will call for dedicated primers for the teacher education curriculum. These should deal more directly with human rights and human rights dilemmas from a professional (teaching) perspective. This includes providing inspiration on how to teach human rights to different year-groups with focus on how human rights principles and methods may be applied in resolving conflicting concerns such as regard for the needs of a restless or disruptive pupil versus regard for the collective interests of the class as a whole.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACHIEVING A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- **Focus on equal opportunities in surveys on school bullying and pupil wellbeing.** The Danish school reform of 2013 proposes the development of well-defined indicators for pupils' wellbeing and learning environment based on the Danish Centre of Educational Environment (DCUM) thermometer designed for that purpose. A learning environment based on non-discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, first language, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, disability, class etc. would be useful to integrate into the templates DCUM provides for local authority and school bullying and wellbeing surveys, for example, in the form of questions concerning pupil perceptions of equal opportunities based on specific grounds for discrimination. This will make it possible to identify the need for changes in practice with a view to safeguarding equal opportunities and preventing discrimination.

” Strategies and action plans in relation to increased diversity belongs in the category of 'nice to have', as opposed to the category 'need to have'.”

Teacher educator

- **Strengthened focus on continuing education for teachers of Danish as a second language.** In 2013, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended Denmark to prioritise tuition in Danish as a second language where needed by pupils.¹⁷ Because Danish as a second language has been removed from the teacher education curriculum for 2013, honouring this recommendation will be contingent on the willingness of Danish municipalities to prioritise continuing education of teachers of Danish as a second language, and the commitment of head teachers at municipally-run schools to prioritising this area.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACHIEVING A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT DANISH UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

- **Preparation of a diversity policy.** The preparation of guidelines for realising the commitment to diversity at the individual university colleges may draw inspiration from research in the field. Research indicates that the low representation of ethnic minorities on teacher education programmes and in the teaching profession may be attributable to the low profile of minority/majority issues in teacher education. This may make it difficult for trainee teachers from an ethnic-minority background to achieve a teacher identity within the frameworks of Danish teacher education.¹⁸ A diversity policy would provide guidelines for the efforts at each university college to achieve a non-discriminatory learning environment and equitable training for all prospective teachers.

METHOD

The study uses the UN definition of human rights education and training. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) encompasses:

- (a) “Education **ABOUT** human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection;
- (b) Education **THROUGH** human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners;
- (c) Education **FOR** human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.” (Human Rights Council resolution 16/1).

Human rights education and training thus goes beyond education that purely provides knowledge **ABOUT** human rights. According to the Declaration, human rights education is to make use of participant-oriented and inclusive learning methods. **THROUGH** human rights education, the state shall promote equal opportunities and ensure a safe, participatory and non-discriminatory learning environment for each learner. Human rights in the setting of Danish schools and teacher university colleges should thus empower each pupil/trainee teacher with specific skills **FOR** enjoying and exercising his or her own rights and for respecting and upholding the rights of others.

THE LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

The legislative analysis consists of a presentation of the international and regional human rights frameworks for human rights education. This means documents from the UN, the Council of Europe and the EU, together with a presentation of recent years' recommendations from these institutions to the Danish State concerning human rights education and equal opportunities in primary and lower secondary schools.

The legislative analysis also comprises a study of the official curricula at Danish schools and teacher colleges. The official curriculum in schools is the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools and its appurtenant texts, also referred to as the Common Objectives, which describe the contents of the education. The Common Objectives inform teachers of what subjects and topics they are to teach their pupils. The Common Objectives are divided up into a binding component, which is mandatory for teachers to teach, and a guide to inspire teachers in how to teach in practice so that the pupils achieve the objectives of the teaching. The analysis of the Common Objectives for 19 academic subjects in primary and lower secondary schools reveals the scope of and method by which teachers have an obligation and are instructed to provide human rights education in order to achieve the interim and final objectives – and in a more general sense to fulfill the objects of Danish primary and lower secondary education.



The official curriculum for teacher education consists partly of an act and two executive orders governing the initial (first degree) teacher education programmes and postgraduate or vocational conversion courses (to qualify as a 'meritlærer') and partly of local degree programmes. Searches were performed both in the national executive order and in local degree programmes for the teacher education curriculum of 2006. Searches were also performed in the legislative basis for the teacher education curriculum of 2013.

The procedure for establishing how human rights education is incorporated in the legislative frameworks for school and teacher education curricula was first to perform a search on the term 'human rights' in the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools, the Common Objectives and teacher education B.Ed. prospectuses. This search comprised the national executive orders and a total of 19 local degree programmes.

Next, a search was performed using 17 terms (primary and lower secondary schools) and 37 terms (teacher education). These were either identified in collaboration with the focus group, or are terms associated with human rights education, such as 'freedom' or 'citizenship'.

” We do not verbalise it (human rights, ed.) so specifically when we talk about education in GD (general didactics, ed). But we could very easily. Perhaps that is why we are here, because it is interesting.”

Teacher educator

THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The empirical analysis examines how primary and lower secondary school teachers and teacher trainers report on, and perceive, their human rights teaching/training in practice. Respondents were asked how they perceive 1) the curriculum for human rights education; 2) how they personally conduct human rights education; 3) how their educational institution upholds human rights, including as regards equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory learning environment. Finally, respondents were asked 4) what motivated those of them who had taught human rights to do so.

The level of practice was also mapped by means of a questionnaire survey conducted in association with the Danish Union of Teachers. The questionnaire was sent out to 1,200 members of the Danish Union of Teachers, with a response rate of 37%. 13 focus-group interviews were conducted at municipal schools under nine different municipalities with a total of 50 teachers, together with three focus-group interviews with 12 teacher trainers representing four of Denmark's seven university colleges.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

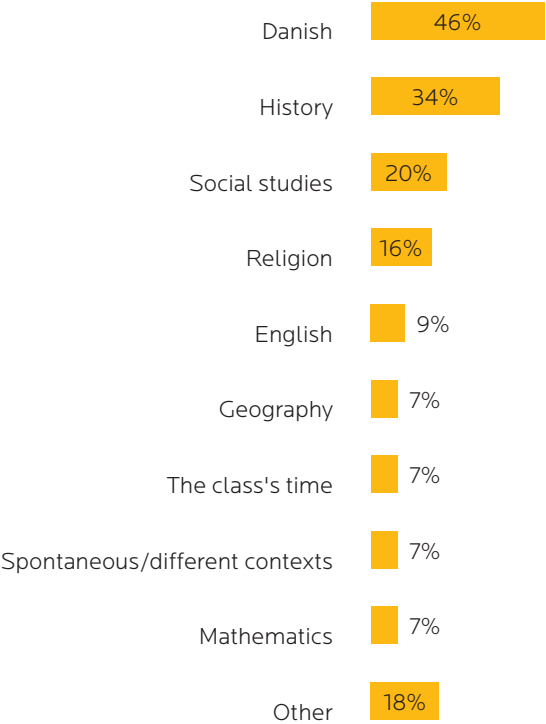
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is inscribed as a compulsory component in history for the final years of lower secondary school. Social science includes binding objectives not only for human rights education, but for education in a number of constitutional rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion and the rule of law. Notably the binding component of the Common Objectives, which comprises the main academic texts for school subjects and topics, appears to be aimed primarily at education for democratic citizenship. Equality, which is referred to in the preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools, is to only a lesser extent elaborated on in the Common Objectives. In the guide to the Common Objectives, there are several mentions that teachers may opt to provide human rights education, including in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In the light of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, requirements regarding the pupils' knowledge of human rights are conspicuous by their absence. In other words, greater prominence should be given to human rights education, including the rights of the child and economic, social and cultural rights. There is also a lack of curriculum requirements for specific skills in relation to the pupils' formative education throughout their schooling. This, in the sense that human rights education should be provided on an academic and well-informed basis, adapted to age-cohort and year-group and with reference to the human rights obligations assumed by Denmark both nationally and internationally.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRACTICES IN PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The quantitative part of the study indicates that only a minority of Danish teachers prepared teaching focused on human rights within the last year. The majority had, however, included human rights spontaneously in open class discussions. The responses also indicate that of those who taught

IN WHAT FEW SELECTED SUBJECTS HAVE YOU CONDUCTED HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION DURING 2011/12?

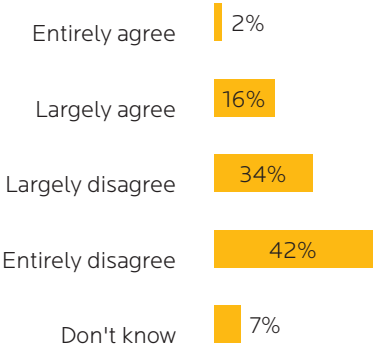


Source: The research institute MEGAFON for the Danish Union of Teachers and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, October-November 2012

human rights, the majority were teaching years 4-6 and typically as part of the formative education component of the subject Danish.

The qualitative part of the study indicates that when human rights are addressed 'spontaneously' or as a 'dimension' of another topic, the result is 'indirect' or 'implicit' human rights education. In other words, teachers report that human rights form the basis for and are included in many of the discussions that arise in class, but often without the teacher explicitly mentioning 'human rights' or 'rights'. Translated into the Declaration's delineation of **ABOUT, THROUGH** and **FOR** human rights, the finding is that teachers are educating pupils **FOR** values that are in keeping with human rights or a so-called 'human rights' culture'; see the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. Based on the teachers' statements, this typically happens without any specific reference to human rights and knowledge of the mechanisms at the national or international level for monitoring observance of human rights.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: IN DENMARK, HUMAN RIGHTS ARE SO UNIVERSAL THAT IT IS NOT A TOPIC I NEED TO GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION IN MY TEACHING



Source: The research institute MEGAFON for the Danish Union of Teachers and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, October-November 2012

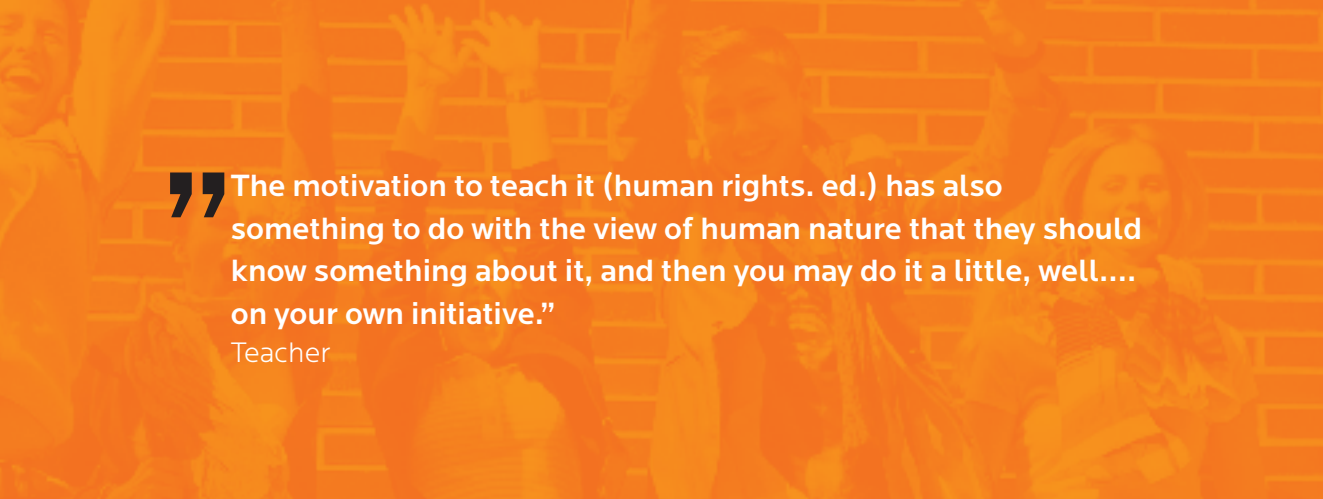
” I think that we are very aware of this issue, although it has not been formalised. We have not done that. We could do it. We should perhaps have included it in our focus-point with the world citizen (...) As something mandatory ... the rights of the child or human rights ... instead of us each fumbling around on our own and including it.”

Teacher

A large majority of the 445 respondents to the questionnaire assert that human rights should be given special attention in the curriculum. As shown in the figure, 76% of teachers state that they largely disagree that human rights are so universal that they do not need to be given special attention.

Those teachers who report that they planned and provided human rights education offer as explanations that human rights provide a useful starting point for teaching pupils about complex issues, such as dilemmas concerning individual versus collective rights. The examples offered concern anything from development in relationships between boy- and girl-groupings in class to issues concerning war and refugees.

However, a number of teachers point out that “getting round to” human rights means specifically electing to do so, since only a few teaching hours are assigned to history in every week, and there is a lot of ground to cover. The same applies to the subject of social science, for which some constitutional rights are included in the official curriculum. The majority of teachers who responded to the questionnaire have not learnt about human rights as part of their teacher education, or about instructional theory applied to human rights education in order to adapt the subject to different year groups. A minority group, who had received training in human rights as part of their teacher education state that this was in the context of discussions concerning



”The motivation to teach it (human rights. ed.) has also something to do with the view of human nature that they should know something about it, and then you may do it a little, well.... on your own initiative.”
Teacher

the preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools. The teachers report that their motivation for including human rights in their teaching typically derives from their personal experience rather than from their formal education.

Human rights education in Danish primary and lower secondary schools is thus relatively arbitrary in its scope and method. Many of the teachers assert that pupils in the final year of lower secondary school know of The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and some history and social science teachers report that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights is included as a possible question in the final examination. However, several teachers emphasise that teaching designed to provide specific knowledge **ABOUT** human rights is limited. Some teachers find it sufficient for the pupils to know of the existence of human rights, while others question whether this is adequate. The study therefore raises the question of whether education is provided **FOR** human rights – in the sense of acquiring the skills for addressing human rights concerns in discussions, opinions and decisions – given that what they learn **ABOUT** human rights – in the sense of being able to explain the key principles and contents of human rights and their interaction with the Danish democratic system, for example – is very limited.



The study shows that the teachers' immediate reflections on education **THROUGH** human rights concern the options pupils have for participation and learning by serving on the pupil council. In addition, the teachers emphasise factors and initiatives concerning relationships between pupils during the school day, i.e. treating each other “decently”, and concerning the school's provisions for pupils with special needs. Several of the teachers, including the teachers at the two special needs schools included in the study, assert that human rights education cannot be provided by “one-way communication“. The teachers highlight that teaching this subject is interesting because it often elicits the pupils' preunderstanding, involves interactive exercises and challenges both academic low- and high-performers in a class.

The quantitative part of the study reveals that by far the majority of the teachers hold that non-discrimination is a key issue to be addressed in primary and lower secondary schools. Meanwhile, this issue is scarcely discussed among teaching staff. The qualitative part of the study demonstrates that concerns about promoting equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory learning environment in the school's activities overall is not something the teachers in the focus groups have previously discussed explicitly with their colleagues.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR DANISH TEACHER EDUCATION

In the legislative frameworks for the teacher education curriculum in force until January 2013, human rights feature twice in Christian studies/life enlightenment/citizenship, a formative general studies combination subject compulsory for all trainee teachers. Human rights are mentioned under the captions 'religion and culture' and 'history of ideas and ethics'. Beyond that, human rights receive a single mention in social science under the area 'political systems, democracy and democratic systems'. Social science is a main subject, in which only a small proportion of trainee teachers receive training. A broader search reveals that other wordings in the official curriculum would allow for human rights education if prioritised by the teacher trainers. For teacher education, the manner in which the official curriculum is implemented in local degree programmes is significant. With the exception of two local degree programmes, human rights are less well-represented in local degree programmes than in the official national curriculum.

A new teacher education curriculum came into effect in 2013. This features three instances of human rights, and, as in the preceding executive order, twice in Christian studies/life enlightenment/citizenship and once in social science. Beyond that, the curriculum's educational theory and educational science cover what are termed 'international declarations of intent', which is

” (...) it surprises the trainee teachers that compliance with the Convention on the Right of the Child is not a matter for discussion, but a basis to which they are obligated. There are very few of them who already know this. This is a point that has become clearer over the past couple of years.”

Teacher educator


a rather more vague wording than formerly, where 'international declarations and conventions' were part of the curriculum. The interviews with teacher trainers did, however, reveal that this previous, more precise wording was not construed as urging tutors in educational theory subjects to provide education in human rights or the rights of the child.

However, 'the rights of the child' do feature under Christian studies/life enlightenment/citizenship in the 2013 curriculum, which, compared with its predecessor, yields fewer ECTS credits ahead of examination. Education **FOR** and **THROUGH** human rights does not feature in explicitly worded requirements in the teacher education curriculum.

TEACHER TRAINER PERCEPTIONS OF PRACTICES AT TEACHER UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

The findings of the focus-group interviews of teacher trainers at four different university colleges give the impression that human rights education in Christian studies/life enlightenment/citizenship primarily emphasises education **ABOUT** human rights in the context of the history of ideas.

The training reported by the teacher trainers has little focus on current issues and the human rights obligations assumed by Denmark nationally and



internationally. Moreover, the teacher trainers, including tutors in educational subjects and main subjects, identify human rights as an indirect ethos referred to in discussions with the trainee teachers, among other things, in the context of the objects of primary and lower secondary school education. In this way, teacher trainers justify the human rights education they provide by conveying the intention to encourage trainees to reflect on the formative education which is the object of primary and lower secondary education under the governing Act. This may be construed as education **FOR** human rights, which, as in primary and lower secondary schools, is typically provided without reference to the human rights obligations assumed by Denmark both nationally and internationally.

In the study, the question of how teachers and teacher trainers educate **THROUGH** human rights, is defined both as the participants' perception of their institution's position on human rights, including a special focus on safeguarding equal opportunities and a non-discriminatory learning environment, and is explored by inquiring into their professional reflections as teachers in providing human rights education.

”Deducing something from decisions (of UN committees, the Council of Europe or the European Court of Human Rights, ed.) to really examine it in detail is not something we do. When we work with human rights, it is the history of ideas, and it is something with the basis discussion. Who manages human rights, and that is where we falter.”

Teacher educator

At institutional level, staff at three of the four university colleges assert that their management does not prioritise regard for the diversity of the existing student body. Tutors in Christian studies/life enlightenment/citizenship especially share the view that human rights would serve as a platform for discussion and learning processes to encourage trainee teachers to question aspects such as dominant norms in society. The same tutors find that human rights among some groups of trainee teachers do not always represent a universal ethos shared and endorsed by all.

Finally, several of the teacher trainers would like to see a professional environment for human rights education, and inspiration for fulfilling the obligation from a professional perspective.

SUMMARY – DIFFUSE AND UNSYSTEMATIC INTRODUCTION

Although the teacher trainers and school teachers who participated in the study appear largely to be teaching human rights to the extent proposed by the mandatory components of the official curriculum, the end result is still sporadic. This is due to the fact that the formal requirements are few and far between. There is thus a diffuse and unsystematic introduction to human rights, which in some instances, both in schools and teacher colleges, is provided without any mention of human rights or specific rights such as the right to privacy, the right to education or the right to a fair trial. The rights are only very rarely placed in a given context with examples to shed light on human rights dilemmas, such as reconciling respect for freedom of speech with protection against hate speech for example. Further, neither in the first nor middle years of lower secondary school are human rights incorporated, regardless of the fact that they provide vital frameworks for relationships within the family unit, in school, society and the world at large.

A large proportion of the participating teachers and teacher trainers assert the importance of providing human rights education, and several of them mention that their participation in the study has inspired new reflection on the subject. For the majority, it is the first time they have engaged in specific professional dialogue with their colleagues on issues surrounding human rights education, including efforts to ensure a non-discriminatory learning environment throughout the activities of the institutions. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training from 2011 and the preceding World Programme from 2005, together with the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education from 2010, are largely unknown to teachers/trainers in schools and teacher colleges. And this, in spite of the fact that these documents urge not only states but also other actors to target efforts at human rights education.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Cf. Adopted Bill L 154: Act on The Institute for Human Rights – Denmark’s National Institution for Human Rights 24-10-2012.
- 2 UN (2005) World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005- ongoing) and UN World Programmes for Human Rights Education and Training, Phase I and Phase II. Phase III was launched October 2013. The action programmes are available at: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE Visited on 29-10-2013.
- 3 Government platform. Government platform, October 2011. A Denmark that Stands Together. Available at: www.stm.dk/_p_7811.html Visited on 10-10-2013.
- 4 Public Opinion for Amnesty International Danmark (2009) Danske skoleelever mangler viden om menneskerettigheder (Danish pupils lack human rights knowledge).
- 5 UNICEF (2010) Nordic Study on Child Rights to Participate.
- 6 Opinion for RCT (2011) Survey. Available at: www.dignityinstitute.dk/servicenavigation/nyheder-og-aktiviteter/nyheder/2011/12/hver-fjerde-dansker-er-fortortur.aspx Visited 24-10-2013.
- 7 Bruun and Lieberkind (2012) De danske elever (Danish pupils), Department of Education (DPU), Aarhus University.
- 8 Consolidated Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools no. 998 of 16-08-2010.
- 9 View the latest report here: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs56.htm. Visited on 24-10-2013.
- 10 Ibid and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2013) Concluding Observations on the fifth Periodic Report of Denmark, adopted by the Committee at its fiftieth session (29 April – 17 May 2013); Council of Europe ECRI report on Denmark (22 May 2012). Available at: www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/denmark/DNK-CBC-IV-2012-025-DNK.pdf. Visited on 29-10-2013.

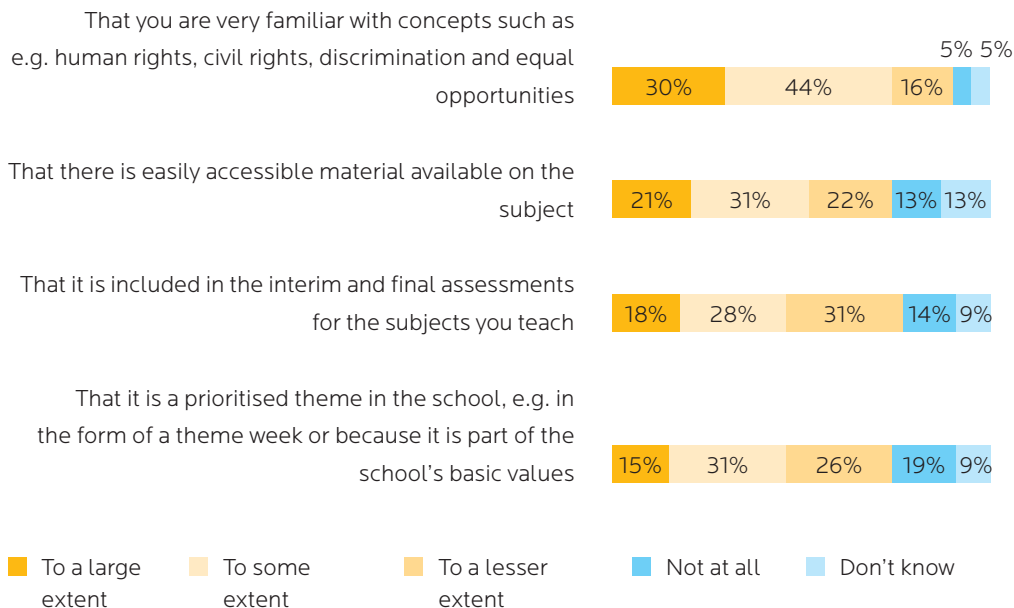
- 11 Regarding the right to and access to education, see the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) (2000/C 364/01); Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 July 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin which has been implemented into Danish law by the Danish Act on Ethnic Equality No. 374 of 28 May 2003; Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services has been implemented into Danish law by Consolidated Act no. 1527 of 19 December 2004 Act on Equality Between Women and Men.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 UN General Assembly (2011) Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 66/137, Annex. United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, 19-12-2011; Council of Europe (2010) Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, CM/Rec 7, 2010.
- 14 See the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education and Training (2005). Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/HREducationTrainingIndex.aspx Visited on 29-9-2013.
- 15 View the latest report here: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs56.htm Visited on 30-06-2013.
- 16 Cf. Danish Institute for Human Rights (2013) Policy-brief 1; Danish Institute for Human Rights (2013) Consultation response to the bill for amendment of the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools. Both available (in Danish only) at: www.menneskeret.dk/skoletjeneste (visited on 29-10-2013).
- 17 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2013) Concluding Observations on the fifth Periodic Report of Denmark, adopted by the Committee at its fiftieth session (29 April – 17 May 2013).
- 18 Cf. Canger, Techla (2008) Mellem minoritet og majoritet – et ikke-sted. Om minoriserede unges biografiske fortællinger om uddannelse, normalitet og andethed (Between minority and majority – a non-place. On the biographical narratives of minoritised youth concerning education, normality and otherness), PhD thesis, Graduate School in Lifelong Learning, Roskilde University.

THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS' RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERN

- NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- HUMAN RIGHTS INSCRIBED IN THE PREAMBLE TO THE ACT ON DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- EXPLICIT LEARNING GOALS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- HUMAN RIGHTS IN SCHOOL POLICIES AND ORGANISATIONAL PLANS
- EXPLICIT LEARNING GOALS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION
- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN DANISH PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT DANISH UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

See the recommendations on page 11.

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE FOLLOWING FACTORS RELEVANT FOR WHETHER YOU TEACH HUMAN RIGHTS?



Source: The research institute MEGAFON for the Danish Union of Teachers and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, October-November 2012.

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This study reveals the need to strengthen human rights education in Danish primary and lower secondary schools and at teacher university colleges. The preamble to the Act on Danish primary and lower secondary schools states that: “The school shall prepare the pupils for active participation, co-responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy.” But although respect for human rights is central to all democratic societies, human rights education has weak status within Danish schools.

Human rights education is essential in enabling children, adolescents and adults to understand and act on their rights and obligations. This entails knowledge of the human rights obligations Denmark has assumed nationally and internationally.

Human rights have bearing on a number of the topics currently addressed in the Danish schools debate, such as inclusion, pupil co-determination and a learning environment that promotes wellbeing and equal opportunities.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has recently launched a schools service at www.menneskeret.dk/skoletjeneste which compiles knowledge and resources to support teachers and managers in compulsory education, upper secondary education and training and at university colleges in fulfilling their obligation to strengthen human rights education at the local level.

This is a condensed version of the study. The full study is available at <http://www.menneskeret.dk/udgivelser/udredninger>.