

THE DANISH  
INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

GUIDE ON HUMAN  
RIGHTS EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT

FURTHERING SDG TARGET 4.7 IN  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS





## GUIDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

FURTHERING SDG TARGET 4.7 IN PRIMARY  
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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## PREFACE

How do we move human rights from paper to practice and from debates in meeting rooms in New York and Geneva to the classrooms? We need to translate the international standards on human rights education into both action and concrete learning outcomes in school curriculum, adjusting content to age, subject, and context.

A momentum and platform has been created with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Agenda states that the SDGs "seek to realise the human rights of all" and should be implemented in accordance with states' human rights obligations. Human Rights Education (HRE) is thus a key enabler for realising the human rights obligations that underpin the entire Agenda.

Moreover, SDG target 4.7 focuses on the knowledge and skills needed by learners to promote sustainable development, including human rights education. One of the key means to achieve this is to mainstream human rights in school curriculum.

In this Guide, we take you step-by-step through the different phases of curriculum development and suggest sample curricula on human rights for four subjects across pre-primary and lower primary, upper primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary level.

We hope to inspire you to develop context adjusted and explicit human rights education curricula with a clear linkage to the international human rights system, while also remaining practical, participatory, and relevant for pupils and their context.

We also hope to bring conceptual clarity on human rights education and curriculum development and provide concrete suggestions on how to build human rights curricula fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century human rights challenges, while contributing to the realisation of the SDG goals and targets set by the international community.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Human rights education (HRE) is a driver for building peaceful and just societies. If future generations are to support this aim and foster a universal culture of human rights, it is crucial that human rights education is embedded in national education policies and mainstreamed in school curricula.

### KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDE

(...) by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.

**UN General Assembly (2011).  
Declaration on Human Rights  
Education and Training, Article 2, para  
1.**

A strong HRE school curriculum is key for ensuring that future generations understand their rights and respect and uphold the rights of others. Children and youth need to gain the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes towards human rights, and teachers need to drive the learning based on a HRE curriculum which supports the development of a human rights language characterised by respect, dignity, and practical relevance.

States have obligations under a range of human rights instruments to ensure that national education is aimed at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They are held accountable for these obligations through institutionalised human rights monitoring mechanisms and processes.

### 1.1 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR HRE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

HRE is called for in a range of international standards. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights stresses that the right to education should further "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". Furthermore, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training states that all persons should have access to human rights education (Article 1).

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General Comment 1, para. 15, indicates that "children should learn about human rights by seeing human rights implemented in practice", including in schools. In addition, its General Comment 5, para. 68, emphasizes "incorporating learning about the Convention, and human rights in general, into the school curriculum at all stages."

The World Programme for Human Rights Education was proclaimed at the UN General Assembly in 2004. Its first phase (2005-2009) focused on human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems. Its Revised Draft Plan of Action specifically called for including HRE in school curriculum and provides important guidance in this regard.



Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and the associated Education 2030 Framework for Action are focused on inclusive and equitable quality education. SDG target 4.7 specifically calls for HRE and its indicator, SDG 4.7.1, measures its integration in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education, and (d) student assessment.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2 WHY THIS GUIDE?

With SDG target 4.7, NHRIs have an important platform for furthering national implementation of human rights education within the education sector. SDG 4.7.1, the global SDG indicator for this target, has explicitly identified the curriculum as one of the means for measuring progress in the integration of human rights education within national frameworks.

This guide aims at supporting the work of national human rights institutions to effectively make use of this leverage to further HRE curriculum development within their national contexts.

It will do so by providing step-by-step guidance with concrete examples on how to strengthen

the integration of HRE in national curriculum development processes in keeping with both human rights and SDG commitments.

### 1.3 WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This Guide is particularly designed for NHRIs. With their unique position and in-depth knowledge of the human rights situation in their countries, NHRIs are well suited to take the lead in supporting education actors in defining a nationally relevant approach to HRE in curricula.<sup>2</sup>

Many NHRIs already dedicate considerable efforts towards promoting HRE in their countries. With their mandate on human rights education, as established by the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions, NHRIs are well-placed to act as data providers on national progress in human rights education. Moreover, NHRIs can use their mandate to advise governments on the effective integration of HRE in school curriculum, as a prerequisite for the establishment of a quality education.

#### SDG TARGET 4.7

By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

TARGET 4.7



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



#### 1.4 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

This first introductory chapter presents the rationale, aims and intended users for this guide.

The second chapter offers an introduction to key human rights education and curriculum development concepts. This will be particularly useful for NHRIs who have no previous experience in curriculum development and, specifically, on adapting the international framework on HRE into concrete and relevant learning outcomes in school curricula.

The third chapter of this Guide presents sample educational aims, content and competence areas, as well as HRE learning outcomes for the subjects of Citizenship/Social Studies, History, Religion, and Environmental Sciences. The sample HRE learning outcomes will particularly illustrate how HRE can be integrated across pre-primary and lower primary, upper primary, and lower secondary and upper secondary levels.

The fourth and final chapter details the specific steps in curriculum development, beginning with an analysis of curriculum traditions in one's own national context, through the curriculum elaboration stage, the mapping of HRE through the SDG 4.7/Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool or a HRE mapping study, the development of concrete curricula strategies, and a collection of guiding principles on HRE curriculum development. The guiding principles serve as a set of reminders about good practices that NHRIs can use when promoting HRE in formal education. Finally, there are reflections on further monitoring and evaluation of HRE.

#### SDG TARGET 4.7/HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION MONITORING TOOL

The SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool enables national human rights institutions and/or state parties to monitor the implementation of the human rights education element of global SDG target 4.7 and related human rights provisions

<https://sdg47-hre.humanrights.dk/>



# CHAPTER 2

## KEY CONCEPTS

When working with curriculum development and wanting to influence HRE curriculum in schools, it is essential to have a clear understanding of human rights education and curriculum concepts, together with the types of documents which regulate a curriculum in formal education.

### 2.1. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) describes human rights education as all types of education, training, information and learning activities that contribute to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses. It further recognises that HRE encompasses education about, for and through human rights.<sup>3</sup>

A comprehensive education in human rights not only provides knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, but also imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life.<sup>4</sup> Research has shown that such dispositions are fostered through participatory, learner centered, and democratic processes in the classroom.<sup>5</sup>

### EDUCATION ABOUT, THROUGH AND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- 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.

**UN General Assembly (2011). Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, Article 2, para 2.**

When it comes to international reporting and HRE examination by human rights monitoring bodies, the focus is primarily on the presence of HRE in formal education. SDG target 4.7 reinforces state human rights obligations to ensure HRE in formal education and, by measuring its progress, states are held accountable for their obligations to further human rights education.

NHRIs can also have the most sustainable impact if we succeed in integrating HRE in the national education curriculum and in formal education. In this way, securing HRE in the

classroom is not dependent on the NHRI's presence in the classroom and their delivery of HRE. It is the state that has the obligation through, inter alia, its schools and teachers, to provide HRE for all pupils and all students.

### FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

**Formal education** –programming carried out by schools or educational institutions with a structured curriculum, typically resulting in a degree or diploma that is recognised by the government. Examples: Primary school, secondary school.

**Non-formal education** –programming carried out by community groups and other organisations with a structured or sometimes loosely structured curriculum but that does not result in a credential. Examples: Adult education classes offered in community centers, community youth workshops.

**Informal education** – learning that takes place randomly, not through curriculum but through exposure to family, friends, the media, etc. Examples: digital news, conversations with peers.

**Inspired by UNESCO International Standard of Classification ISCED 2011.**

## 2.2 WHAT IS A CURRICULUM

Curriculum definitions vary. In a broad sense, the term, "curriculum" includes a range of elements necessary for students to learn in a systematic and intentional way.

Official Curriculum are the state guidelines or the sub-national guidelines for what and how

to teach at, for example, primary school level in formal education. This largely corresponds to all four dimensions in SDG indicator 4.7.1, covering educational policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment. This broad sense curriculum also includes policies and guidance around teaching and learning processes that support the learning environment, particularly in relation to human rights education.

### WHAT IS A CURRICULUM?

In the simplest terms, 'curriculum' is a description of what, why, how and how well students should learn in a systematic and intentional way.

**UNESCO International Bureau of Education**  
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/resources/ibe-glossary-curriculum.pdf>

In most countries, the curriculum is highly centralised at the national level. In these systems, the Ministry of Education has direct control or oversight of the curriculum. For example, Kazakhstan has a centralised education system with extensive central planning and a detailed system of learning outcomes. The Ministry of Education and Science is the competent central authority on education and regulates curriculum development. On the other hand, Mexico has a decentralised sub-national education system in which 31 states have autonomy over their education systems and the operation of basic education services (pre-primary, primary, secondary and initial teacher education) within their territories. Within the Secretary of Public Education (SEP), the General Department of

Curriculum Development (Dirección General de Desarrollo Curricular - DGDC) is in charge of issuing guidelines for the curriculum. However, the specificity of how these are met are determined by the 31 states.

The following table provides an overview of the most common documents constituting an official curriculum in formal education in the broad sense, as explained above.



## OVERVIEW OF MOST COMMON DOCUMENTS CONSTITUTING A BROAD-SENSE OFFICIAL CURRICULUM

Purpose ↓	Review Frequency ↓	Mandated Institution ↓	Contents ↓	Mandatory ↓
<b>Document: Basic Education Law</b>				
Regulates key aspects of public school operation and management	Typically reviewed every 10-15 years	Ministry of Education or Prime Minister's Office. Negotiated politically	Aims of education and, sometimes, learning methods and learning outcomes for each level or subject education levels. Sometimes also includes descriptions of subjects and allocated hours per week	Yes
<b>Document: Learning Outcomes Framework</b>				
Describes progressive competences or content to be taught for each subject, across grades and school levels	Typically reviewed every 10 years	Ministry of Education. Often negotiated politically. Includes sections in the curriculum that can be developed by sub-national education authorities if the system is decentralised	Repeats some of the information in the Basic Education Law but is more detailed in terms of progressive learning outcomes and sequencing of content. Can also contain specific learning methodologies and student assessment frameworks	Yes, although parts of the framework can include optional curriculum, such as learning outcomes for optional subjects
<b>Document: Other Centralised or Decentralised Regional School Policies</b>				
Presents in greater detail or supplements aspects of school operation not detailed in the Basic Education Law	Ongoing	Ministry of Education or other sub-national education authority and typically negotiated politically	Can address aspects of school life related to a human rights culture, such as the learning environment, budget transparency, requirements for anti-bullying policies, relations with parents and the community, discipline policies and complaint mechanisms	Yes
<b>Document: Guidance notes for Teachers</b>				
Explains the learning outcomes to the teacher	Ongoing	Prepared by Ministry of Education, a curriculum institute associated with the Ministry, or drafting group appointed by the Ministry. In decentralised education systems, these bodies may be sub-national (e.g. carried out at the provincial level)	Contains syllabus and additional background information for teachers as well as methodological suggestions for the delivery of lessons. May also contain diagnostic, formative and assessment strategies	Most of it will be mandatory. Some of it may be guiding
<b>Document: State authorised textbooks or resources</b>				
Materials for teachers to use in delivering lessons. These resources are often linked to learning outcomes and the national curriculum framework	Ongoing	Usually prepared by Ministry of Education or a curriculum institute. Sometimes prepared by university specialists, NGOs or textbook publishers and approved for use by the Ministry of Education or sub-national educational authorities	Syllabus in the form of, for instance, lesson plans, which typically include: content to be covered; the timed sequencing of activities to be carried out with students; discussion questions; handouts; suggested assessments and homework	Some resources may be mandatory, while some may be guiding



Curriculum in a narrow sense covers what the students are expected to learn. That is, the general aims of education, competence or content areas, and learning outcomes. It may also include syllabus, teacher guidelines and content descriptions. An example of this narrow sense curriculum is the sample HRE curricula in Chapter 3 of this guide. It will be this latter and “narrow” definition of curriculum that this Guide will use. This we suggest in efforts to operationalise in more concrete terms the “curriculum” dimension in SDG indicator 4.7.1.

### 2.3 OUTCOME-BASED VERSUS CONTENT-BASED CURRICULUM

Official curriculum in formal education can be either outcome-based or content-based.

In the traditional content-based curriculum, curriculum content consists of a listing of required and optional subjects for each grade and school level; the number of hours that the classes would meet, or “contact hours”; and a list of themes to be addressed. The focus is on the “what” of learning and not so much on the “how”. In societies where the national curriculum framework is a traditional content-based one, classroom teaching is both textbook-centred and teacher-directed.

The traditional, content-based approach to curriculum is, however, becoming less common. In the context of globalisation and international development, there is a growing convergence among Ministries of Education to organise their curriculum according to outcome-based education. This is a shift from “input governance”, focusing on resources invested in education, to “outcome measurement” and achievement testing for determining if schooling has been successful. Outcome-based education’s focus on achievement also brings a much greater focus on the “how” of learning and the use

of teaching methodologies that will allow all learners to succeed.

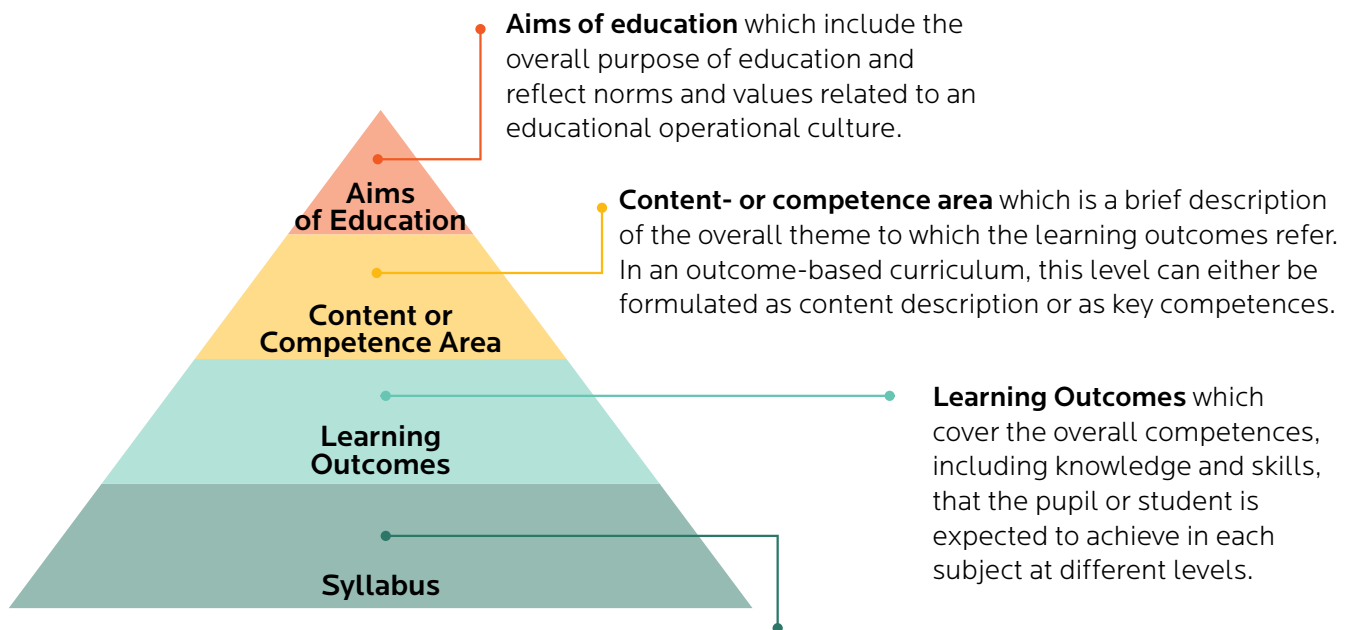
Outcome-based curriculum has a focus on learning outcomes. It recognises that learning outcomes should include the domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It has a stronger orientation towards the “how” of learning and, thus, the use of teaching methodologies that will allow all learners to achieve the expected outcomes. It calls for curriculum developers to find a balance between understanding content and developing skills, such as critical reasoning and communication. Social-emotional learning also finds a home in the outcome-based approach.

Traditional content-based curriculum and outcome-based curriculum are easy to distinguish on paper. An outcome-based curriculum will be organised along knowledge, skills and attitudes domains, or something quite similar. However, NHRIs should be aware that even with outcome-based curriculum, teaching might remain ‘traditional’ in approach. Curriculum is easier to change than the “philosophical ideas, cultural norms, and ideological discourses underpinning them”.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.4 LEVELS IN OUTCOME-BASED CURRICULUM

Outcome-based curriculum can typically be divided into four levels: aims of education, content- or competence area, learning outcomes, and syllabus. All of these levels are regulated in policies and frameworks. The following figure shows these levels in a narrow-sense curriculum understanding.

## THE FOUR LEVELS: AIMS OF EDUCATION, CONTENT- OR COMPETENCE AREA, LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND SYLLABUS



**Syllabus** A document which often includes the above-mentioned aims and learning outcomes but provides more details in terms of selection and sequence of contents to be covered, mode of delivery, materials to be used, learning tasks and activities, and assessment/evaluation schemes for the specific course, unit of study or teaching subject.



An extension of the curriculum being organised around learning outcomes is the idea of learner competences. Key competences are like a composite of different, discrete learning outcomes that, when put together, result in the development of capabilities in the learner. For example, in HRE, let us consider one competence: "Being able to analyse and address a human rights problem in one's community". This competence would be based on **knowledge** about different categories of human rights, **skills** in identifying a problem in, for instance, the school and developing a strategy to address it, and an **attitude** of responsibility and wanting to make a positive difference.

HRE learning outcomes might be relevant for individual subjects by grade level, across several years of a subject, or perhaps across many subjects.

The learning outcomes contain important information and guidance for educators. However, they do not provide them with detailed information for the day-to-day planning of their classroom activities. This is the function of the documents at the syllabus level, which includes teacher guidelines, content descriptions, and other state-endorsed teaching materials and pupil textbooks. These documents provide educators with resources and ideas to translate the learning outcomes into interesting and effective teaching plans and activities.

Syllabus and curriculum are sometimes used synonymously. However, the term, syllabus, is mostly used to describe, in detail, what should be taught in a specific subject. At a minimum, a syllabus will contain specific content or themes to be addressed in the subject over the course of the year, organised in a coherent and sequential manner. However, this does vary from country to country.

## 2.5 MANDATORY VERSUS OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

Some subjects in the curriculum are mandatory, meaning that schools have an obligation to teach these subjects. This is the case with 'core subjects', including those that may be assessed through national tests. The curriculum can also include optional subjects. In addition, in some country contexts, space is given in the curriculum for regional authorities to develop subjects of special importance to the local community.

In terms of optional subjects, schools may be encouraged to offer a subject or integrate a core theme, such as human rights, but it is up to the school to decide. Many systems and authorities adopt flexible approaches, allowing schools some autonomy in deciding how much time should be allocated, in addition to choosing which optional subjects or themes to offer to students.

## 2.6 BINDING VERSUS INDICATIVE CURRICULUM

Some curricula contain both a binding part and an indicative part. The binding part constitutes the obligatory part of the teaching, i.e. the part of the teaching in a subject that the teacher can be held responsible for having taught.

## IMAGINED CURRICULUM

An imagined curriculum is a term that can be used to describe the discrepancy between what one imagines is taught and the teaching that takes place. An example of an imagined curriculum concerns the teaching of human rights in the Danish public school. The imagination is that human rights 'permeates' nearly all teaching in the Danish public school, and that human rights are taught in almost all subjects. This is not in fact the case, according to studies.<sup>7</sup>

The indicative part of the curricula, on the other hand, serves as an aid to the teacher in relation to how the binding part can unfold.

In some education systems, textbooks and resources are binding: educators are required to use them in their teaching. In other systems, schools and educators have some freedom in deciding syllabus and the resources to use in teaching. There might, however, be a recommended list of resources from which teachers can select. Teachers may also have the freedom to use additional resources, for example, from the NGO sector. However, in many countries, these still need to be "approved for use" by government authorities.

It will be in an NHRI's interest to further HRE in the **binding part** of the curriculum, particularly if the status of HRE in the binding part of the curriculum is weak.



## 2.7 EXPLICIT VERSUS IMPLICIT HRE CURRICULUM

In some contexts, "explicit" and "implicit" HRE curriculum are used synonymously with "direct" and "indirect" curriculum, respectively. Explicit HRE curriculum means that the word "human rights" appears in, for example, a learning outcome. An implicit HRE curriculum for a subject can be a curriculum where the closest to HRE is a content area or learning outcome that deals with, for example, "citizenship" or "democracy". These content areas or learning outcomes **may** imply that the teacher includes human rights as a dimension in the teaching.

However, for effectively furthering human rights education, there must be an explicit focus and reference in education policies, curricula, and teaching resources on the human rights enshrined in international or regional human rights instruments.

## ASSESS IF HRE IS EXPLICITLY INTEGRATED INTO THE CURRICULUM

You can assess this by asking the following questions:

- Is there a reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and/or other international and regional human rights standards?
- Is there any mention of international or regional human rights monitoring mechanisms (e.g. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Universal Periodic Review, Inter-American Commission of Human Rights ) and the way in which human rights are protected and promoted at national level (constitution, courts, national human rights institutions)?
- Are specific human rights and freedoms enshrined in international and regional treaties addressed in the curriculum (e.g. freedom of religion, freedom of expression, right to education)?
- Does the curriculum include teaching and learning on human rights principles drawing on international human rights standards (e.g. participation, non-discrimination, equality)?

The goal for NHRIs is to increase the explicit integration of HRE in school curriculum. The sample HRE curricula in Chapter Three in this Guide includes examples of explicit HRE in the aims of education, content areas, and learning outcomes.

Other education fields, also mentioned in SDG target 4.7, are education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, peace and non-violence, global citizenship,

and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. These fields can be viewed as interconnected in their educational aims and approaches to HRE and may provide an opportunity for the individual teacher to include HRE as a dimension in his/her teaching. However, there is no guarantee that this will happen.

NHRIs should work towards holding states accountable for the incorporation of explicit HRE into the curriculum so that it is not left to chance whether students will be exposed or not to HRE.

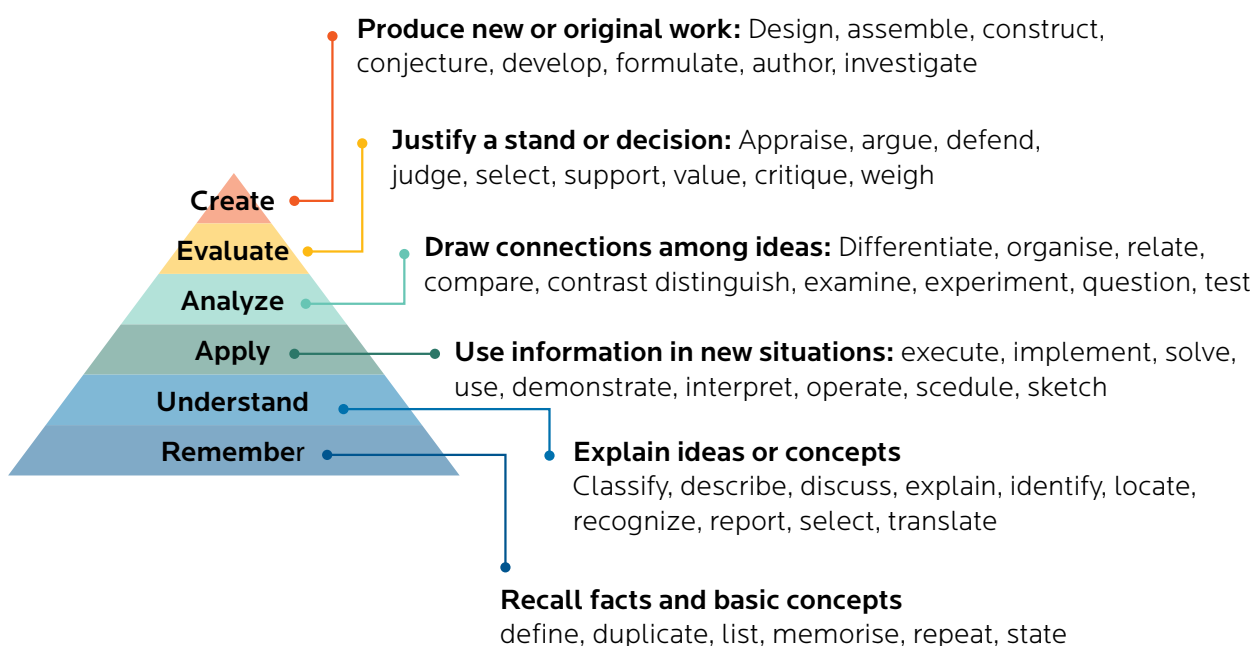
## 2.8 INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Outcome-based education has been influenced by Bloom's taxonomy of learning outcomes which distinguishes between "lower-order" kinds of learning, such as memorisation, and

"higher-order" learning that involves, for example, critical thinking, creative thinking, and the application of learning. Many curriculum developers refer to Bloom's taxonomy when developing learning outcomes, as a reminder to work **progressively** towards more complex learning tasks. HRE curriculum should include experiences that work towards critical thinking and the ability to act. In other words, an HRE curriculum should not only be focused on learning about human rights standards, but also on analysing human rights issues and how human rights can be applied in everyday life.

HRE uses different kinds of instructional methods, especially those that promote critical thinking, open dialogue, and participatory processes in the classroom. These reflect the "through" human rights of HRE. This methodology enables learners to achieve human rights competencies by

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



being practical in orientation and providing students with opportunities to practise human rights competencies in their educational environment and community. HRE uses learner-centred methods and approaches that empower students and encourage their active participation, co-operative learning, sense of solidarity, creativity, dignity and self-esteem. HRE should be practical in relating human rights to participants' real-life experiences and take place in learning environments that respect the human rights of all participants.

Some outcome-based curricula explicitly refer to learning methodologies while others do not. If the formal curriculum in your context includes an integrated description of learning methodologies, you may therefore have the possibility to have a structural impact on the learning methodologies.

### LEARNER CENTREDNESS

An approach to organising teaching, learning and assessment based on the learner's personal characteristics, needs and interests.

**International Bureau of Education (2013)**



## CHAPTER 3

### SAMPLE HRE CURRICULA

In this chapter, we introduce you to sample aims of education, content areas and learning outcomes. This is a narrow sense curriculum focusing on the specific knowledge and skills students are expected to achieve and responding to the curriculum dimension in SDG indicator 4.7.1.

#### 3.1 AIMS OF EDUCATION

On the next page you will find examples of existing aims of education in two national education policies from South Africa and Denmark, respectively.





### Example 1 • Extract of South Africa National Education Policy, 1996

“4. [...] (a) the advancement and protection of the fundamental rights of every person guaranteed in terms of Chapter 3 of the Constitution, and in terms of international conventions ratified by Parliament, and in particular the right-

- i. of every person to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or education institution on any ground whatsoever;
- ii. of every person to basic education and equal access to education institutions;
- iii. of a parent or guardian in respect of the education of his or her child or ward;
- iv. of every child in respect of his or her education;
- v. of every student to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable;
- vi. of every person to the freedoms of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression and association within education institutions;
- vii. of every person to establish, where practicable, education institutions based on a common language, culture or religion, as long as there is no discrimination on the ground of race;
- viii. of every person to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice within an education institution;”<sup>8</sup>

### Example 2 • Extract of Denmark Folkeskole/ Public School Act,

“§ 1. The primary and lower secondary school must, in collaboration with the parents, provide the pupils with knowledge and skills which prepare them for further education and make them want to learn more, make them familiar with Danish culture and history, give them an understanding of other countries and cultures, contribute to their understanding of human interaction with nature and further the individual student's all round development.

Para. 2. The primary and lower secondary school must develop working methods and create a framework for experience, immersion and desire for action so that the pupils develop cognition and imagination and gain confidence in their own possibilities and grounds for taking a stand and acting.

Para. 3. The primary school must prepare the students for participation, co-responsibility, rights and duties in a society with freedom and democracy. The school's functioning must therefore be characterised by intellectual freedom, equality, and democracy.”<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2 HRE CONTENT AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following sample HRE curricula are meant to serve as inspiration when proposing recommendations for curriculum development on explicit HRE in your own context. The content areas and learning outcomes are formulated for four different subjects, using progressive taxonomies across four levels: pre-primary and lower primary, upper primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary, according to the division in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The subjects covered are History, Citizenship/Social Science, Religion, and Environmental Studies.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CONTENT AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE SUBJECT, HISTORY

PRE-PRIMARY AND LOWER PRIMARY (5-9 YEARS) ↓	UPPER PRIMARY (9-12 YEARS) ↓	LOWER SECONDARY (12-15 YEARS) ↓	UPPER SECONDARY (15-18+ YEARS) ↓
<b>CONTENT AREAS:</b> Origins of human rights in x country and internationally			
<p><b>Can recognise</b> the concept of rights and duties and how this relates to their basic needs as a student in the class and school</p> <p><b>Can tell</b> about basic needs as a student in school and recognise equivalent rights and duties that the individual has in the class and school</p>	<p><b>Can paraphrase</b> how the notion of human rights has evolved over time, for example, in relation to women, persons with disabilities, children, indigenous peoples, refugees</p> <p><b>Can illustrate</b> different views on the origins of human rights</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> the role of social and political movements for the development of human rights in the 19th and 20th centuries in the country and internationally</p> <p><b>Can analyse</b> the factors that have influenced the integration of specific rights in the development of the constitution in country x.</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> the extent to which collective action and changes in national laws over the years have furthered human rights from the post WWII war period to today</p> <p><b>Can apply</b> human rights standards in assessing a historical challenge, both in one's own country and other countries</p>
<b>CONTENT AREAS:</b> Development of human rights for groups of individuals in need of special protection			
<p><b>Can recall</b> that children have rights and duties related to family life</p> <p><b>Can tell</b> about children's rights in the family before and now</p>	<p><b>Can explain</b> about children's rights and duties before and now in their local community/country</p> <p><b>Can illustrate</b> the key developments in children's rights in their community and society before and now</p>	<p><b>Can describe</b> the historical challenges faced by specific groups for the recognition of rights at the national level</p> <p><b>Can assess</b> the factors which have supported or hindered developments for increased human rights protection for specific groups</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> the historical and current status of human rights for vulnerable groups in the national constitution and laws</p> <p><b>Can critique</b> how global developments in human rights for groups in need of special protection has impacted the protection of human rights in their country before and now</p>
<b>CONTENT AREAS:</b> Human Rights and Peace			
<p><b>Can recognise</b> that the human rights principle of equality can prevent conflict in everyday life in family and school</p> <p><b>Can tell</b> about situations in family and school where inequality has led to conflict</p>	<p><b>Can recall</b> the facts about the Enlightenment in the 18th century, engendering human rights and ideas of equality</p> <p><b>Can demonstrate</b> how respecting human rights and the human rights principle of equality has promoted peace both in the past and the present in their country</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> the rationale for the establishment of the UN and the international human rights system, following WWII and its efforts to maintain peace</p> <p><b>Can assess</b> the root causes of human rights violations, including the role of stereotypes and prejudice in processes that historically have led to human rights abuses, both nationally and internationally</p>	<p><b>Can talk</b> about genocides that took place in the 21st century and their origins</p> <p><b>Can critique</b> efforts to secure peace and justice at the international level, both historically (e.g. Nuremberg trial) and currently (e.g. the International Criminal Court)</p>

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CONTENT AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE SUBJECT, RELIGION

PRE-PRIMARY AND LOWER PRIMARY (5-9 YEARS) ↓	UPPER PRIMARY (9-12 YEARS) ↓	LOWER SECONDARY (12-15 YEARS) ↓	UPPER SECONDARY (15-18+ YEARS) ↓
<b>CONTENT AREAS: Freedom of religion or belief</b>			
<p><b>Can recall</b> that people have different religions, beliefs and worldviews protected by human rights</p> <p><b>Can state</b> that having and practising a religion or belief is a human right (including not to have or practise a religion or belief)</p> <p><b>Can list</b> examples of how one can respect other people's right to freedom of religion or belief, in class, school or community</p>	<p><b>Can recall</b> key aspects of the right to freedom of religion or belief</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> that it is a human right to have, adopt, change or leave a religion or belief</p> <p><b>Can talk</b> about their own and other people's religion, beliefs and worldviews in a human rights-respecting manner that is non-biased and without using stereotypes or derogatory language</p>	<p><b>Can recognise</b> the permissible limitations to freedom of religion or belief</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> the importance of freedom of religion or belief for democracy and pluralism</p> <p><b>Can differentiate</b> between the right of the individual to freedom of religion or belief, and the protection of religions</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> national and global developments impacting on freedom of religion or belief</p> <p><b>Can identify</b> factors that promote or inhibit freedom of religion or belief (including laws and social norms)</p> <p><b>Can analyse</b> the challenges to freedom of religion or belief in their own community/country</p> <p><b>Can exemplify</b> the relationship between freedom of religion or belief and other rights, including freedom of expression and women's rights</p>
<b>CONTENT AREAS: Religion and human rights</b>			
<p><b>Can repeat</b> that different religions and worldviews exist and that these are protected by human rights</p> <p><b>Can talk</b> about equality and non-discrimination from the perspective of their own worldview, religion or belief</p>	<p><b>Can tell</b> about teachings from other religions, beliefs or worldviews that align with human rights principles</p> <p><b>Can identify</b> concrete examples of individuals and groups who have defended human rights from a religious/belief perspective</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> the ways in which religion can encourage, inspire, and support fulfilment of human rights</p> <p><b>Can critique</b> the extent to which religion can be an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights</p>	<p><b>Can exemplify</b> how the relationship between religion and human rights is complex</p> <p><b>Can analyse</b> texts, traditions and values within their own religion, belief or worldview that align with human rights principles of dignity, equality and non-discrimination</p> <p><b>Can evaluate</b> the different roles that religion plays in supporting or hindering human rights nationally, regionally and/or globally</p>

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CONTENT AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE SUBJECT, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

PRE-PRIMARY AND LOWER PRIMARY (5-9 YEARS) ↓	UPPER PRIMARY (9-12 YEARS) ↓	LOWER SECONDARY (12-15 YEARS) ↓	UPPER SECONDARY (15-18+ YEARS) ↓
<b>CONTENT AREAS: The Environment and Human Rights</b>			
<p><b>Can recall</b> how a safe, clean and healthy environment is linked to the child's right to health</p> <p><b>Can identify</b> actions that can be taken in their class to support that the school promotes the right to health for a safe, clean and healthy environment</p>	<p><b>Can describe</b> in own words how the right to health, the right to life and other human rights are linked to a safe, clean and healthy environment</p> <p><b>Can tell</b> about groups and organisations who promote human rights related to a safe, clean and healthy environment</p> <p><b>Can illustrate</b> how the right to be heard is linked to the protection of the environment</p>	<p><b>Can tell</b> about specific human rights obligations of the government which are linked to a safe, clean and healthy environment</p> <p><b>Can demonstrate</b> how the health of the environment can affect human rights of certain groups in the community, for example indigenous peoples and children</p>	<p><b>Can describe</b> the root causes of environmental crises and the human rights implications of these crises</p> <p><b>Can develop</b> ideas and proposals for furthering a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment while respecting human rights</p>
<b>CONTENT AREAS: Sustainable Development and Human Rights</b>			
<p><b>Can recall</b> that human rights are linked to sustainable development</p> <p><b>Can recognise</b> that the earth's resources are limited and that not all people have equal access to these resources</p>	<p><b>Can exemplify</b> how human rights are linked to the three dimensions of sustainable development</p> <p><b>Can articulate</b> ways in which different actors in society have an impact on sustainable development and human rights</p>	<p><b>Can tell</b> about the human rights obligations of government related to sustainable development</p> <p><b>Can discuss</b> whether discrimination and inequalities are an obstacle for sustainable development in their country</p> <p><b>Can analyse</b> how certain groups globally have unequal access to resources and services and relate this to human rights</p>	<p><b>Can explain</b> the barriers to sustainable development in their context and the extent to which human rights can help address them</p> <p><b>Can discuss</b> trade-offs in government decisions related to sustainable development and the role that human rights can play</p> <p><b>Can question</b> the impact of different development models on the enjoyment of human rights</p>





## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CONTENT AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOME FOR THE SUBJECT, CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL STUDIES

PRE-PRIMARY AND LOWER PRIMARY (5-9 YEARS) ↓	UPPER PRIMARY (9-12 YEARS) ↓	LOWER SECONDARY (12-15 YEARS) ↓	UPPER SECONDARY (15-18+ YEARS) ↓
<b>CONTENT AREAS: Children's Rights and Human Rights</b>			
<p><b>Can recall</b> that all children have rights and why there is a need for rights</p> <p><b>Can recall</b> specific children's rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p>	<p><b>Can explain</b> the links between human rights and human rights obligations</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> why certain groups are in need of special human rights protection, including children, women and girls, and other vulnerable groups in context</p> <p><b>Can identify</b> human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights</p> <p><b>Can illustrate</b> important human rights issues in relation to key areas of life for themselves and others (e.g. school, family and community)</p>	<p><b>Can repeat</b> key features and differences between regional and international human rights standards</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> how regional and international human rights are protected in their national systems e.g. in their Constitution</p> <p><b>Can examine</b> critical human rights challenges in their community and society and factors contributing to supporting or undermining human rights and children's rights</p>	<p><b>Can explain</b> the evolving nature of human rights</p> <p><b>Can draw</b> connections between a topical issue in their community and human rights e.g. related to social media platforms, the environment, gender etc.</p> <p><b>Can develop</b> arguments to resolve situations where different human rights seem to compete or conflict with each other</p>
<b>CONTENT AREAS: National and International Systems of Human Rights Protection</b>			
<p><b>Can tell</b> about the basic concept of rights and duties with reference to human rights</p>	<p><b>Can recall</b> what makes rules just or unjust according to human rights values</p> <p><b>Can describe</b> how to use complaint mechanisms for the protection of their own rights in the family, school, or community</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> how the protection of human rights for children has evolved over time in their national systems</p>	<p><b>Can recall</b> how international human rights systems interact with national systems</p> <p><b>Can assess</b> the root causes of major human rights issues at the local, national and global levels</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> the human rights values of transparency and accountability for the rule of law</p> <p><b>Can discuss</b> how one can raise a human rights issue in their national system</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> the workings of the international human rights system</p> <p><b>Can examine</b> different justice systems at the local, national and global levels and evaluate if and how they support or inhibit human rights</p> <p><b>Can produce</b> an analysis of the status of a human rights issue in their country and the way in which national and international factors have an impact</p>
<b>CONTENT AREAS: Equality and Non-Discrimination</b>			
<p><b>Can recall</b> that all children have equal rights</p> <p><b>Can discuss</b> why not all children enjoy rights in the same way</p> <p><b>Can explain</b> gender equality as a human right</p>	<p><b>Can explain</b> the unjust when some groups of children are treated differently solely because of their characteristics</p> <p><b>Can give</b> examples of grounds of discrimination as per international human rights standards</p> <p><b>Can identify</b> the basic human right of equality and non-discrimination</p> <p><b>Can apply</b> the principle of equality and non-discrimination to gender and gender identity in school</p>	<p><b>Can explain</b> in own words the key content of non-discrimination treaties, such as CEDAW, CERD and CRPD</p> <p><b>Can give</b> examples of discriminatory behaviour and practices in their community that are not in keeping with human rights</p> <p><b>Can analyse</b> the factors in their context that cause or reinforce discriminatory practices</p>	<p><b>Can discuss</b> how international standards on equality and non-discrimination are included in national constitutions or laws</p> <p><b>Can assess</b> a current national situation against international or regional standards on non-discrimination and equality</p> <p><b>Can produce</b> an analysis of measures that need to be taken in their community to address discrimination and further equal opportunities</p>

# CHAPTER 4

## INTEGRATING HRE IN THE CURRICULUM STEP-BY-STEP

In this chapter, we take you Step-by-Step through the curriculum development process.

**STEP 1:** In Step 1, we introduce the first measures to be taken to ascertain your state's human rights obligations in relation to human rights education and the nature of your national curriculum.

**STEP 2:** In Step 2, we explore the key processes and stakeholders in curriculum development.

**STEP 3:** In Step 3, we introduce two tools for mapping and determining the status of HRE in the curriculum, as the basis for a data-driven dialogue with national education stakeholders.

**STEP 4:** In Step 4, we provide guidance on some of the questions that can help inform different HRE curricula strategies.

**STEP 5:** In Step 5, we develop HRE learning outcomes.

**STEP 6:** In Step 6, we introduce some considerations for strengthening monitoring and evaluation of human rights education at the national level.

**STEP 1:  
KNOW THE HUMAN RIGHTS  
OBLIGATIONS YOUR STATE HAS  
IN RELATION TO HUMAN RIGHTS  
EDUCATION AND UNDERSTAND YOUR  
NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK.**

The first step in the HRE curriculum development process or assessment is to understand your state's international obligations in relation to HRE and the manner in which your national curriculum is constructed.

The following are some of the important aspects to explore.

- What are the applicable human rights provisions/obligations regarding HRE for your country?
- How do teachers learn about the subject-specific curriculum? Is it through text books or syllabi from which they create or adapt lessons?
- Is the curriculum content-based or outcome-based?
- Is the curriculum centralised or decentralised with regional differences?
- How is the curriculum built up? Is there a binding and an indicative part of the curriculum?
- What are the content areas and learning outcomes for each stage of schooling?
- What are the subjects associated with each grade level? Which are mandatory? Which are optional? How many hours a week are the classes supposed to meet?
- How is subject-specific curriculum conveyed? Are there learning outcomes organised by school level and/or by subject across grade levels?
- How do teachers learn about the subject-specific curriculum? Is it through text books or syllabi from which they create or adapt lessons?

The information collected under this step provides you as an NHRI with a good starting point for deciding on your HRE curricula strategy based on applicable human rights standards. It also provides some first indications as to which part of the national curriculum you might aim to change to best integrate HRE. For instance, you might want to propose changes in the mandatory and binding part of the national curriculum and ensure that explicit HRE is strengthened in this part of the curriculum. This could be, for example, instead of suggesting changes in the indicative part of the curriculum in a proportionally small region with a decentralised curriculum.

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDE TO THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
(SDGS)**

The Human Rights Guide to the SDGs is a multilingual database connecting specific provisions of more than 50 global and regional human rights instruments to the SDGs.

You can use it to identify the specific human rights obligations your country has in relation to human rights education.

Just search SDG 4, Target 4.7 and your country

**You can find it her <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/>**

## UNDERSTANDING THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF YOUR NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

If you are not familiar with the overall structure of your national education system for primary and secondary schools, you may want to familiarise yourself with basic information such as:

- the governance structure at the national, regional and local levels;
- long-term, mid-term and short-term education planning instruments (including national social and economic development plans);
- required years of schooling;
- numbers of schools and students;
- participation and graduation levels, taking into account gender and vulnerable groups;
- the proportion of public and private schools and how national curriculum standards are applied in the private sector;
- any national assessments or exams administered to students;
- the statistics that are regularly collected by schools and the Ministry of Education.

This information should be available on the website of the Ministry of Education. Some of the information can also be accessed in UNESCO Education Policy Reviews or the OECD's Education Policy Outlook-Country Profiles.

## STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE KEY PROCESSES AND STAKEHOLDERS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Planned curriculum reviews are natural opportunities to integrate HRE in the national school curriculum. It is thus important to familiarise yourself with these processes in your country, including gaining an overview of the authorities and stakeholders that are engaged in these processes. Data collection and mapping activities on the degree of integration of human rights education in national curriculum may also offer important opportunities for dialogue and stakeholder engagement outside of these structured processes that could be a catalyst for change.

## WHAT IS A CURRICULUM REVIEW CYCLE?

A systematic approach to evaluating, reviewing and revising curriculum within a specific timeframe which aims to identify gaps and weaknesses with a view to increasing curriculum effectiveness and continually improving student learning experiences. Normally it involves several phases including: research and selection; revision and development; implementation; and evaluation and monitoring.

**Source: International Bureau of Education**  
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/c/curriculum-review-cycle>

Either way it is important to identify the national body that has the official mandate to develop school curriculum. In some countries, there may be a specialised department in the Ministry of Education responsible for issuing national curriculum standards. In other contexts,



there may be autonomous bodies that have important advisory roles in this regard.

In Singapore's highly centralised education system, the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning and Development Division is responsible for designing formal curricula, including learning outcomes; developing teaching approaches and assessment strategies; and formulating instructional resources to support curriculum implementation.<sup>10</sup>

Hong Kong has a Curriculum Development Council, a freestanding advisory body appointed by the government to develop curriculum and work with the territory's Student Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

In Australia, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority and the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards in the Australian State of New South Wales are autonomous advisory bodies that bring together stakeholders to develop both curriculum and national or state-wide student assessments.<sup>11</sup>

In countries with a decentralised education system, state or provincial governments have control on creating all or part of the curriculum for their geographical region. In these instances, NHRIs may need to engage with educational stakeholders at the sub-national level and with specific groups of rights-holders, whose rights should be reflected in the curricula (e.g. indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities). It might be worth considering what are the common factors in the curriculum

and then decide to strategise towards having an impact on the common levels in order to maximise impact and get the most out of your efforts. However, even in decentralised education systems, the Ministry of Education is responsible for establishing standards and NHRIs will want to engage with them.

### What are the Processes for Curriculum Review?

A full review of the national curriculum does not happen very often, typically every ten years. However, reviews of subject syllabi and associated learning supports, such as pupil textbooks, might take place more frequently, depending upon the capacity of the Ministry of Education.

Curriculum review processes often include the following:

- **Curriculum Review Team**, including subject specialists from or appointed by the Ministry of Education. This team might include staff from higher education faculties and school teachers
- **Curriculum Writing Team**, with the same specialist composition as the Review Team
- **Technical Reference Group**, representing different stakeholder groups such as teachers, teacher trainers, and school administrators

In more transparent curriculum development processes, teachers, NGOs, NHRIs, and rights-holders (indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities etc.) are given the opportunity to comment on draft curriculum through public comments, workshops, websites, and social media.

## POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS IN A CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

- The Board of Education and the Ministry of Education (national level)
- Educational authorities at the regional and district levels
- Teachers
- Students and their families
- Curriculum developers
- School headteachers and department heads
- Higher education teacher trainers and experts
- NGOs engaged in HRE-related efforts
- NHRIs
- Donors
- Other stakeholders

**Source: OECD/UNESCO (2016). Reviews of National Policies for Education: Education in Thailand. Paris: OECD, p. 17-18.**

In addition to the traditional actors involved in curriculum review processes, human rights education might attract other potential allies, e.g. lawmakers; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including the office following-up on the implementation of human rights treaties and obligations); development and planning structures linked to the 2030 Agenda and Education 2030; and inter-governmental agencies, such as the OHCHR, UNESCO and UNICEF.

Building relationships with actors and institutions for supporting HRE curriculum development, implementation and monitoring is an ongoing, dynamic process.



### STEP 3: DETERMINE THE CURRENT INTEGRATION OF HRE IN THE CURRICULUM

NHRIs will need information about the status of HRE in the national curriculum in order to have reliable data from which to engage stakeholders and develop recommendations for improvement.

The DIHR has developed a range of tools and training materials to facilitate this analysis.

The use of the SDG 4.7/HRE Monitoring Tool developed by the DIHR, in consultation with the OHCHR, can guide this assessment.

### SDG 4.7/HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION MONITORING TOOL



The Tool has a domain focused specifically on curriculum with indicators to guide an assessment of the degree of integration of explicit HRE in the curriculum.

The tool also includes a policy section that contains indicators for monitoring the integration of HRE in key national policy documents, including Education Laws, and National Action Plans on Human Rights Education or other Plans. It is key to also assess whether policy decisions related to human rights in these documents are operationalised in the formal curriculum, including in the learning outcomes and syllabi.

### Online Course on HRE Curriculum Mapping

A more detailed curriculum mapping study might also be useful to determine the integration of explicit and implicit HRE in the curriculum.

#### ONLINE HRE MAPPING COURSE

Visit the DIHR's online "mapping study" course, which presents in Module 3 details on how to carry out a baseline study along with examples from different NHRIs and national contexts.

<https://www.humanrights.dk/learning-hub/content-topic/human-rights-education>

When carrying out a HRE mapping study, you will need to decide if the technical work can be carried out in-house, through a recruited specialist(s), or through a collaboration with the government and/or civil society. You can explore the "pros" and "cons" of each of these approaches in Module 3 of the DIHR's online mapping course.

## Practical Tips when Assessing Curriculum for HRE

The sources of your curriculum mapping will include analysis of written text. The obvious sources are the various curriculum policy documents mentioned earlier in the "Overview of Most Common Documents Constituting an Official Broad Sense Curriculum".

The following are some measures that one can take in this regard:

- Do a word search for an explicit mention of human rights in the school curriculum, noting how often and where it is mentioned. Remember that you will need to consider not only the frequency of occurrence but also how substantive these references are, and which learning outcomes they seem likely to successfully address.
- Do a word search for human rights values e.g. non-discrimination and equality and review the context of the reference and decide if it is sufficiently explicitly linked with the human rights framework.
- Check if references to explicit human rights are in mandatory or optional courses or represented in mandatory versus guiding learning resources.
- Note any patterns or gaps in the references. For example, the rights of persons with disabilities might be present in the curriculum but the rights of other vulnerable persons, especially those belonging to politically sensitive groups, might be absent.
- Find out the overall status of human rights in the curriculum. How much time is allocated for explicit HRE? Is it part of a main learning outcome for a subject or subsumed as a content theme for an individual unit or lesson?
- Note if references to human rights are primarily international or national in nature?
- Is the teaching and learning on human rights applied to everyday life in the school or community?

- Be sure to identify existing statistics collected by the government that could have a bearing on your curriculum mapping, including studies or evaluations that could also shed light on HRE in schools. For example, there might be data on vulnerable populations and their school attendance (e.g. indigenous or minority groups). Such statistics might lead you to review whether these groups are visible in the curriculum and presented in textbooks and learning materials in a non-discriminatory way.

In addition to doing a desk review of the key curriculum documents, it is highly recommended to reach out to key national stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education, specialised curriculum institutions, or any other actor that might already be familiar with the situation in the country and can comment on the general status of HRE in the curriculum. This information might also help you to ascertain to what degree a traditional curriculum approach is being used in the schools, regardless of whether the framework is outcome-based.

If time allows, you might also investigate the status of the **implemented curriculum**, that is, how much HRE is taught in schools and the methods of instruction. This could be an interesting study to carry out when you find that there is some explicit integration of human rights in the curriculum but wonder if it is being implemented by the teachers. You could also carry out a survey and/or teacher interviews to determine their motivation to teach human rights education, their opinion on the quality of the curriculum, and their needs and challenges for implementing human rights education in schools.



#### **STEP 4: CHOOSE A STRATEGY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF HRE IN FORMAL CURRICULUM**

Having reviewed the national curriculum in the previous step and identified the gaps, the next step is to reflect on the most effective strategy for strengthening HRE in the curriculum.

There are three common curriculum strategies used to further HRE in formal curriculum:

- Integration of explicit HRE themes within one or two (“carrier”) subjects
- Mainstreaming HRE across levels and subjects along with school-wide and co-curricular experiences
- Separate subject on human rights

In selecting the appropriate strategy for your context, you will need to assess the opportunities and challenges for strengthening or introducing HRE in your own formal curriculum. For this, you will need to analyse the political and educational landscape.

The following questions can, among others, guide this analysis:

- What is the likelihood for you to succeed in either strategy?
- What would be your strongest arguments based on, for instance, your national status report or annual report to Parliament on the human rights situation in your country?
- What are the recommendations from human rights monitoring bodies to your country regarding HRE?
- What strategy would lead you to the most effective results?

#### **DIHR SDG-HUMAN RIGHTS DATA EXPLORER**

The SDG-Human Rights Data Explorer is a searchable database that links monitoring information from the international human rights system to the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It allows users to explore the recommendations and observations of international human rights monitoring bodies, as they relate to the implementation of the SDGs and their 169 targets in specific countries.

<https://sdgdata.humanrights.dk>

#### **WHAT IS A CARRIER SUBJECT?**

A subject that by its scope and nature is more likely to help learners develop certain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are not the domain of a single subject(...)

**Source: International Bureau of Education (2013)**

Below we describe the main characteristics of the different strategies.

#### **Integration of Explicit HRE Content Areas within Carrier Subject**

Overcrowded curriculum is a common phenomenon in most educational systems and one of the main obstacles limiting the introduction of new subjects, content, learning outcomes and approaches. The strategy of integration of HRE into one or two carrier subjects is most commonly seen amongst NHRIs and other actors pushing for strengthened HRE in formal curricula.

The most common carrier subjects for HRE at the primary and secondary school levels are the following: Citizenship Education, Social Science, History, Life Skills, Philosophy, Religion, Literature, Art, Languages, and Technology.

If this strategy is chosen, the carrier subject(s) should be mandatory, as this will help to ensure that all learners receive HRE, not just the portion of students who choose an optional subject or attend a school where the subject is offered. However, this strategy requires that you understand the identity of each subject and how a HRE perspective and HRE learning outcomes and content can support the achievement of the overall competences enshrined in the subject.

### EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATION OF HRE INTO A CARRIER SUBJECT IN NEW ZEALAND.

Human rights are explicitly mentioned for Social Sciences in five of the eight levels of learning:

**Level 2.** Understand that people have social, cultural, and economic roles, rights, and responsibilities.

**Level 5.** Understand how people define and seek human rights.

**Level 6.** Understand how individuals, groups and institutions work to promote social justice and human rights.

**Level 7.** Understand how communities and nations meet their responsibilities and exercise their rights in local, national, and global contexts.

**Level 8.** Understand how policy changes are influenced by and impact on the rights, roles and responsibilities of individuals and communities.

**Source: New Zealand Ministry of Education, Social Sciences, Achievement Objectives, Achievement objectives / Social sciences / The New Zealand Curriculum / Kia ora - NZ Curriculum Online ([tki.org.nz](http://tki.org.nz)) (Accessed 6/2/2021).**

As an NHRI you need to put yourself in a position where you can present concrete HRE content areas and learning outcomes to curriculum developers and other educational stakeholders. These should be relevant for the carrier subject(s) and include explicit HRE in a way which adds to the identity of the subject.

For instance, in the subject citizenship/social studies, HRE learning outcomes can qualify learning outcomes on diversity training so that the teaching on diversity shifts from being teaching about what the teacher believes in her or his own opinion is diversity, to what is, as a matter of fact, learning about diversity based on international and national human rights norms and standards.

Drawing from actual HRE curriculum, the New Zealand example demonstrates how HRE learning outcomes are integrated within the subject, Social Sciences, in the primary and lower secondary school levels.

This strategy has both advantages and disadvantages:

The advantages are:

- By integrating HRE into an existing subject, the NHRI is likely to have success, as this will not challenge the existence of other subjects that it could possibly replace.
- Integration into one or two existing subject(s) will be a realistic goal for most NHRIs.

The disadvantages are:

- HRE may end up being reflected in only knowledge-based learning outcomes and not skill-based learning outcomes because other content areas and learning outcomes need to be covered in the carrier subject(s).
- Treatment of HRE in the curriculum may not be holistic but turn out to be a fragmented treatment of key issues and not integrated in the subject(s) across all levels.

### **Mainstreaming HRE across levels and subjects**

Transversal integration of HRE learning outcomes across many subjects and all levels, along with school-wide and co-curricular experiences, can be a way to mainstream HRE

in schools. By mainstreaming HRE, it becomes less vulnerable to changing curriculum reviews. HRE learning methodologies become a way of strengthening schooling through human rights, “which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners.”<sup>12</sup>

### **WHAT ARE CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?**

Co-curricular activities refer to activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students are learning in school i.e., experiences that are connected to or mirror the academic curriculum.

**Source:** <https://www.edglossary.org/co-curricular/>

As HRE encourages participatory, learner-centred methods, these should be encouraged across all subjects, along with human rights values with clear linkages to the international human rights system. School-wide approaches could also incorporate HRE, both inside and outside of the classroom. Ministries of Education sometimes issue directives on school-wide theme days. Clubs can encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities and engage with local government agencies and community organisations. Community-based organisations and NGOs can provide support to classroom teaching and provide places where students can do further studies or experiential learning.

This strategy has both advantages and disadvantages:

The advantages are:

- HRE will not be as vulnerable to changes in the curriculum, as it is integrated across many levels and subjects.
- The “through” dimension of HRE will be strong in this approach and adequate time for HRE is likely be scheduled, especially when HRE learning outcomes are integrated into mandatory subjects and content areas which are related and work together to provide a holistic approach to HRE.

The disadvantages are:

- HRE does not “live” anywhere in particular in the curriculum and may be treated “step-motherly” in all subjects and themes.
- If there is too much emphasis on the optional directives from the Ministry of Education and not on integrating explicit HRE learning outcomes into mandatory subjects, then the local schools may end up not integrating HRE in any extracurricular activities.

### Separate Subject or Course

It is sometimes possible to introduce HRE as a separate subject which can be chosen for one or more school years under an implicit HRE heading, such as “Citizenship Education”, or as a short explicit HRE course, such as “Children’s Rights”.

If it is a separate subject, more aspects of HRE can be introduced and the students will most likely have a clear understanding that human rights are an important part of their education.

If it is a short course, it may be an optional course, for example, for use in the “open hours” that teachers have at their disposal each week.

In decentralised education systems, there may be additional possibilities for having separate HRE courses, which would be approved by the Ministry of Education but left at the discretion of schools to decide whether to offer the course or not.

### EXAMPLE OF A SEPARATE HRE COURSE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

“Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy” is offered in Grade 4 in primary school.

The course has six units:

- 1) Being human
- 2) Rights, freedoms, and responsibilities
- 3) Justice and equality
- 4) Compromise
- 5) Rules
- 6) Living together

Below is a sampling of learning outcomes that explicitly mention human rights.

**Outcome 4.1.2.** To develop an understanding that all humans are born with human rights and they are inalienable.

**Outcome 4.2.4.** To express compassion to others in situations where rights and freedoms are violated or restricted.

**Outcome 4.2.5.** To demonstrate how to take responsibility for solving situations where rights and freedoms are violated or restricted. (The curriculum notes that solutions should be non-violent and that institutions such as school councils, provincial and district human rights boards, as well as Ombudspersons and equality institutions could be used.)

**Outcome 4.2.6.** To respect the human rights and freedoms of others.

**Source:** <http://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/ProgramDetay.aspx?PID=328>



This strategy has both advantages and disadvantages:

The advantages are:

- All aspects of HRE adjusted to education level and local context can be introduced in relevant learning outcomes. The subject or course will have its own logic, only referring to the overall aim of education in the school law.
- Hours are ensured for the teaching of the subject or course. Learning outcomes are likely to be holistic and coherent with a clear and detailed taxonomy.

The disadvantages are:

- The existence of HRE in the curriculum will be vulnerable, as it can be easily removed if, for instance, there is a change in government

and it is decided politically to cancel the subject or course. In this case, all HRE learning outcomes might be removed at once, constituting a major setback.

- If the subject or course is not mandatory but optional, not all students will receive HRE.

In all cases, in keeping with international standards on HRE, the use of teaching and learning methods must be active, participatory, and student-centred. In addition, in all three strategies, NHRIs will want to recommend classroom hours sufficient for the delivery of quality HRE, as well as a clear curriculum with educational aims, content areas and learning outcomes based on progressive taxonomies across levels.



## **STEP 5:** **DEVELOP HRE CURRICULA**

It is notwtime to develop concrete HRE curricula that you can present and push for in the curriculum development process at the national or regional level.

Understanding the hierarchy of aims and outcomes in the curriculum are important for securing a more systemic integration of HRE in the formal curriculum and for developing a comprehensive curriculum framework upon which you can base your recommendations to government, Parliament, and responsible education authorities. Please refer to the conceptual clarification in the Figure, showing the hierarchy between 1) aims of education, 2) content and competence areas, 3) learning outcomes (knowledge and skills), and 4) syllabus (teacher guidelines, content descriptions and other state endorsed short courses, teaching materials and textbooks). In addition, Chapter 3 provides some examples of explicit HRE learning outcomes as inspiration in your process of developing suggested HRE content areas and learning outcomes for your national curriculum.

### **Guiding Principles for Developing HRE Curricula**

The following are the key principles based on best practice:

- **Bring a human rights lens to the education sector**  
NHRIs are already familiar with human rights challenges and opportunities in the national context. Bring this understanding to the curriculum development process to ensure that HRE addresses genuine human rights problems affecting the everyday lives of people.
- **Equal treatment and non-discrimination**  
Ensure that the treatment of vulnerable groups and specific groups of rights-holders

in the curriculum is based on equality and non-discrimination, and adequately reflect the specific rights pertaining to these groups.

- **Use taxonomies in the development of learning outcomes**  
The use of taxonomies is key in developing progressive learning outcomes, as it provides a good direction for the advancement of skills and action.
- **Go for explicit HRE**  
Explicit HRE is the only guarantee that HRE will take place in the interpretation of the curriculum. It is the only way you, as an NHRI, can hold the state accountable for providing HRE.
- **HRE into the binding part of the curriculum**  
Go for furthering the status of HRE in the binding part of the curriculum, particularly if the status of HRE in the binding part of the curriculum is weak. In this way, chances are that HRE learning outcomes will not be down-prioritised in favour of other themes.
- **Understand the educational contexts in which you will be developing HRE curriculum**  
This includes the formal curriculum in all its forms, curriculum development processes and actors, and the opportunities and challenges for integrating HRE in the formal curriculum. This is an ongoing learning process.
- **Foster an inclusive process of curriculum development**  
In keeping with a human rights-based approach, encourage the Ministry of Education and educational authorities to engage duty bearers, rights holders, and other stakeholders in the HRE curriculum development process. These processes should be participatory and transparent and

involve capacity development in HRE, as necessary.

- **Develop a comprehensive HRE framework**

Prepare your advocacy work by drafting a comprehensive HRE framework with overall educational aims, content- or competence areas, and concrete learning outcomes with pairs of knowledge and skills and a list of suggested teaching methodologies. The HRE framework can serve as the reference point for your curriculum development strategy and link with other policies addressing school operation and management.

- **Be proactive in ensuring the opportunity for every learner to get quality HRE**

To increase engagement and effectiveness, HRE should use a range of methodologies and concentrate on learning strategies to engage all learners, including girls, pupils with disabilities, second language learners, and those from vulnerable groups.

### **Syllabus and Teaching Methodologies**

After identifying a balanced set of learning outcomes in the outcome-based curriculum, curriculum developers then develop learning activities to support them. Because outcome-based curriculum shifts learning away from memorising content, it calls for new methods of instruction in the classroom.

Since the aim is for all students to be successful, teachers should be encouraged to use inclusive methodologies of instruction to meet the different learning styles of their pupils.

Pupil textbooks, teacher guides, and other state-endorsed teaching and learning materials are essential for bringing life into the HRE curriculum. Teachers need them to assist in building lesson plans and carrying out activities

in the classroom. Students use them to support their learning inside and outside the classroom.

As Ministries of Education move ahead in strengthening the presence of human rights and HRE in the learning outcomes, it will be crucial that teachers are given the support needed to implement this curriculum.

NHRIs will thus need to bear in mind that well-designed HRE materials consider the needs and capacities of teachers and their students. The use of different types of materials is suggested to expand learning opportunities for students, including a range of print, non-print, and web-based resources. Different low technology activities in the classroom, such as art-making, games, role-playing or simulations, can increase student creativity and allow for more personalisation. The design of teaching and learning resources must consider both the quantity of information they can convey and the type of learning activity they can facilitate.

## WHAT CHARACTERISES GOOD HRE LEARNING MATERIALS

- Links to the national curriculum framework;
- Level of difficulty of language and concepts appropriate for learner age and previous education;
- Culturally and contextually relevant, including relevance to the everyday lives of learners;
- Have a user-friendly format;
- Available in non-majority languages in addition to dominant one(s);
- Comprehensible and accessible regardless of race, sex, age or other status.

Below is a list of some of the specific methodologies used in HRE. There are numerous resources available to elaborate on the ways in which these, and other methods, might be used for an engaging and effective HRE experience. Working to impact the syllabus may be a way for you, as an NHRI, to influence HRE curriculum development in periods between national curriculum reviews of the formal curriculum framework.

## LIST OF HRE METHODS

- Brainstorming
- Case Studies
- Closings
- Creative Expression
- Debates and Negotiations
- Discussion
- Dramatisations
- Energisers
- Films and Videos
- Field Trips
- Games
- Hearings and Tribunals
- Icebreakers and Introductions
- Interpretation of Images
- Interviews
- Jigsaw Activities
- Journal Writing
- Media
- Mock Trials
- Open-Ended Stimulus
- Presentations
- Research Projects
- Ranking and Defining Exercises
- Simulations
- Storytelling
- Surveying Opinion and Information Gathering
- Webbing Activities

**Source: The Human Rights Education Handbook, Part IV A.**



## **STEP 6: PLAN FOR REGULAR MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

NHRIs can use **the SDG 4.7/Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool** to regularly collect data, including on the degree of integration of HRE in the formal curriculum. The data can also be used in reports prepared by countries for monitoring national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Education 2030, and states' human rights obligations.

NHRIs will want to plan for this data collection and decide who will be collecting and analysing this information, how often, and how it will be shared and with whom. This will create an important baseline against which to assess progress in the integration of HRE in the school curriculum and to, more broadly, strengthen HRE nationally.

In addition to confirming the status of HRE within the formal curriculum, Ministries of Education and NHRIs may want to know if and how teachers are using this curriculum and if more clarity or direction is needed.

In contexts where educators have some autonomy in what they teach, they may opt to spend more time on HRE or, the opposite, they might skip these lessons.

Ministries of Education often have their own procedures for checking on the implementation of the curriculum. For example, in Chile, there is a Quality of Education Agency (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación) that has a school evaluation system that verifies compliance with study programmes.<sup>13</sup> In Zambia, the Ministry of Education recently commissioned five curriculum studies which were conducted by scholars and researchers from the University of Zambia.<sup>14</sup>

A systematic approach to monitoring human rights education carried out by a Ministry of Education might include the adoption of the indicators in **the SDG 4.7/Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool**. The indicators in the Tool could be used for monitoring the intended curriculum, drawing on the policy and curriculum domains in the Tool. They could also facilitate the monitoring of the attained curriculum under the student assessment domain. This could be done on an annual basis by the educational authorities themselves with input from you as an NHRI.

## INTENDED, IMPLEMENTED AND ATTAINED CURRICULUM

**Intended curriculum** - a set of formal documents that specify what the relevant national education authorities and society expect that students will learn at school in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes to be acquired and developed, and how the outcomes of the teaching and learning process will be assessed.

**Implemented curriculum** - the actual teaching and learning activities taking place in schools through interaction between learners and teachers as well as among learners, e.g., how the intended curriculum is translated into practice and actually delivered.

**Attained curriculum** – the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that learners acquire as a result of teaching and learning, assessed through different means and/or demonstrated in practice.

**Source: UNESCO/UIS, pp. 6-7.**

NHRIs might also facilitate periodic studies of teacher implementation of HRE, using surveys, interviews and school visits. This kind of research can be very helpful in understanding what additional support teachers may need to implement HRE. It may be that educational personnel require additional training, or that HRE concepts need to become more grounded in local realities.

### Monitoring Attained Curriculum

Ultimately, NHRIs will want to know if the HRE curriculum is successfully meeting its learning outcomes. Most countries include some type of national (or sub-national, if the country

is decentralised) assessment at different milestones in a student's education. For example, in Zambia, national, subject-specific exams are administered in Grades 7, 9 and 12. These 'high-stakes' exams determine whether a student can transition to the next grade. You will therefore want to understand how student achievement is already being captured at the school and national level and consider how this can be used to understand how well students are achieving HRE learning outcomes. Standardised student assessments of attained implicit HRE curriculum are not enough to capture the range of competences and learning outcomes that explicit HRE fosters. However, they may give some indication of the level of students' knowledge and skills on human rights related issues.

The monitoring and evaluation of the attained curriculum will look different across countries. Knowledge of learner outcomes across the schooling system can come from a combination of national tests, comparative studies, omnibus surveys, and commissioned or academic studies. This research can help determine the sufficiency of the intended and implemented curriculum and whether students are acquiring the intended knowledge or building the envisaged skills. It is only in this way that we can determine if the formal HRE curriculum does, in practice, reach the classroom and students, and whether it is achieving the outcomes set forth in formal documents.

As an NHRI, you can, for example, monitor students' learning outcomes in omnibus surveys to document self-estimated and tested knowledge, skills and attitudes amongst students. The DIHR has done this approximately every other year for 8 years. In this way, progress and setbacks are measured over time. Data is used for pushing for reforms and is a basis for the formulation of concrete recommendations on HRE in various national curriculum review processes.

## STUDENT SURVEY ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has asked students in lower secondary about their knowledge, skills, and attitudes on human rights.

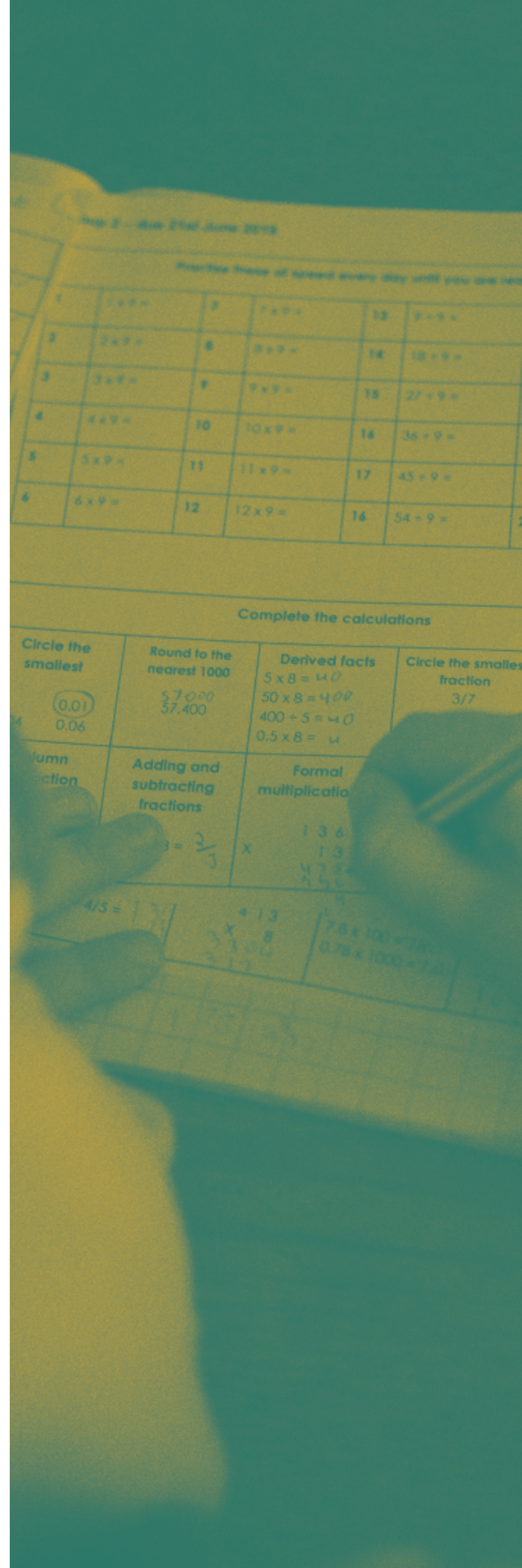
44% are able to mention one human right when asked about the rights they can think of.

8% think it is okay to punish children physically by, for example, shaking or slapping. The percentage has increased from 4 % over a two-year period.

20% think it is okay for the police to use torture in special situations.

11% think it is okay that the state is using surveillance against its own citizens.

**Kantar Gallup for The Danish Institute for Human Rights and UNICEF Denmark, 2019**





## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Danish Institute for Human Rights (2017). **Guide to a Strategic Approach to Human Rights Education.** Edited by Cecilia Decara. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Human Rights.

IBE UNESCO (2018). **Training Tools for Curriculum Development: A Resource Pack for Global Citizenship Education (GCED).** Geneva: IBE -UNESCO.

Stabback, P., Male, B. and Georgescu, D. (2011). **What Makes a Good Quality School Curriculum?** Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

Tibbitts, F. (2015). **Curriculum Development and Review for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights.** Strasbourg: Council of Europe, in collaboration with UNESCO, OSCE/ODIHR and the Organisation of American States.

ODIHR/OSCE, OHCHR, Council of Europe, UNESCO (2009). **Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice.** Warsaw: OSCE.

OSCE/ODIHR (2012). **Guidelines for Human Rights Education in Secondary School Systems.** Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR



## ENDNOTES

- 1 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2019). SDG Indicator 4.7.1: Proposal for a Measurement Strategy. Madrid: UIS, p. 3
- 2 The Danish Institute for Human Rights (2017) "Guide to Strategic Approach to Human Rights Education. How NHRIs can benefit from their unique position and set winning priorities".
- 3 Ibid., Article 2, para 2.
- 4 Tibbitts, F. (2015). Curriculum Development and Review for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, UNESCO, OSCE/ODIHR, Organization of American States. footnote 2.
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- 6 Yates, L. (2016). "Europe, transnational curriculum movements and comparative curriculum theorizing." European Educational Research Journal, 15(3), pp. 366-373.
- 7 Decara, C. and Timm, L (2014) "Mapping of Human Rights Education in Danish Schools" The Danish Institute for Human Rights.
- 8 <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/a92b773f2db6142e42ad8dcc9fbe148493ebf4c4.pdf> (accessed 06-15-2021)
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- 10 OECD/UNESCO (2016). Reviews of National Policies for Education: Education in Thailand. Paris: OECD, p. 125.
- 11 OECD/UNESCO, p. 125.
- 12 See UN General Assembly (2011). Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, Article 2, para 1.
- 13 OECD (2013). Education Policy Outlook:Chile. Chile-country-profile-2013 (oecd.org)
- 14 Mulenga, I.M. and Kabombwe, Y.M. (2019). A Competency-Based Curriculum for Zambian Primary and Secondary Schools: Learning from Theory and Some Countries Around the World, International Journal of Education and Research, 7(2), pp. 117-130. (17) (PDF) A Competency-Based Curriculum for Zambian Primary and Secondary Schools: Learning from Theory and some Countries around the World (researchgate.net)

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