

Global Citizenship in Context

Human Rights and the Education Agenda

Aims of the session

- To critique the concept of human rights
- To explore how agencies can promote and encourage rights for all

Reflection

- Reflecting on your own life experiences what are the essential human rights that you have enjoyed and have supported your sense of wellbeing?
- Where have these come from?
- How do you know you have them?

What are human rights? Some definitions

- Human rights are 'always and necessarily scandalous and highly contested.' (Bowling 2012 p.53)
- Are also ever changing
- Human rights 'have gained widespread currency through a process of cultural interaction and exchange yet they are in a constant process of development as they are interpreted, negotiated and accommodated in different cultural settings.' (Osler and Starkey (2010, p.93)
- Generally refer to a set of principles common to all individuals within a given nation state
- Absolute and non-absolute human rights
- Non-absolute fall into two categories, limited and qualified

- Absolute rights include freedom from torture, these are rights that should never be restricted
- Non-absolute rights
 1. Limited – can suspend freedom in situations where a crime has been committed
 2. Qualified – these rights need to be balanced in relation to those of others and of society. These can be controlled but this control must be lawful, legitimate, necessary and proportionate.

Key characteristics

1. **Inherent** – they intrinsically belong to all people because they are human beings, they are not given or earned
2. **Inalienable** – part of the human condition and as such cannot be retracted or removed
3. **Universal** – they apply to all human beings
4. **Indivisible** – to realise one's human rights require the realisation of all human rights; countries cannot pick and choose which ones are important

'Right Here Right Now' – Ministry of Justice (2008)

Human rights are the basic rights that we all have simply because we are human; they are the fundamental things that human beings need in order to flourish and participate fully in society. Human rights belong to everyone, regardless of their circumstances...The ideas behind human rights have been present throughout history in many different societies and civilisations.'

More definitions

Amnesty International

- Civil and political rights
- Economic and social rights
- Environmental, cultural and developmental rights

The work of Wenar (2005), McCowan (2012) considers what human rights are for

- Distinguishes between 'status based' and 'instrumental' justifications for human rights

Post WWII renewed interest in human rights

- **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** – 30 articles for the protection of human rights
- **The Geneva Convention (1949)** – Fourth in a series of conventions that set out the basis for humanitarian treatment during times of war
- **European Convention on Human Rights (signed 1950, effective from 1953)** – treaty that protects human rights within Europe ratified by all council of Europe members. Established European Court of Human Rights

- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (signed 1966/effective from 1976)** International treaty adopted by UN General Assembly and requires signatories to respect and protect key civil and political rights.
- **United Nations Convention Against Torture (signed 1984/effective from 1987)** International treaty adopted by UN General Assembly and commits nation states to prevent torture and other forms of degrading treatment within their borders. Also prevents extradition of those to a nation state where they could potentially be tortured.
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)** Recognises and respects the rights of children generally under the age of 18

Discuss



Shamima Begum: UK 'unjust' to remove citizenship

The British teenager who fled London to join Islamic State says she believes the UK government are being unjust by removing her citizenship without speaking to her first.

She says she doesn't have dual citizenship elsewhere and had hoped Britain would understand she made a 'big mistake' by joining IS.

© 20-Feb-2019

f t e Share

Millennium Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals

Which MDGs relate specifically to education?
Why must the rest go hand in hand with this?



The Sustainable Development Goals: 2015-2030

- In September 2015, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, Member States formally adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) in New York. The agenda contains 17 goals including a new global education goal (SDG 4).
- SDG 4 is to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* and has seven targets and three means of implementation.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The Interruptive School (Davies 2003)

- Education on its own cannot solve world peace but can interrupt the processes towards more violence

1. Existence of wide range of forums for positive conflict (representation on curriculum committees, support for school student unions, youth parliaments etc)
2. Provision of organised and frequent ways to generate dialogue, deliberation, connectivity, argument, information exchange, empathy, feedback and listening between students, between teachers in front of students and between teachers and students as *encounters between equals*.

3. Encouragement of avenues for belonging which are not exclusionary or segregated, and the promotion of identity which values hybridity, not purity.
4. A critical pedagogy and political education which surfaces inequalities as well as global inequality, and which contains language and media analysis
5. An emphasis on human rights, and on active responsibilities to other learners
6. The learning of conflict mapping and conflict resolution skills and dispositions (students and teachers) which lead to new behaviours and new reflection

7. The acknowledgement of unfinished knowledge and unfinished cultures, of fuzzy logic
8. Creativity, play and humour, both to heal peoples and to interrupt dogma
9. The modelling by teachers of protest and resistance, of imperfect duties, of sins of commission, and encouragement of students; to exercise agency against injustice
10. Risk taking and limit-testing which pushes the school towards the edge of chaos and to creative emergence

Task

- Amnesty International
- Human Rights Watch
- Liberty
- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- World Vision
- Human Rights Education Associates

Consider the following questions

1. How are the aims of these similar and how do they differ?
2. How are the methods used by each of them similar and how do they differ?
3. How do they support and advocate for human rights?
4. What pedagogical approaches do each of the organisations encourage to engage learning in human rights education?
