



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

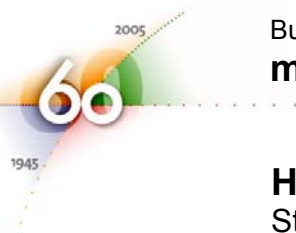
Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织



Human Rights

Strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has been a cornerstone of UNESCO's action since its creation. Its primary goal is fostering a genuine culture of universal human rights.

UNESCO's Constitution contributes to insuring respect for all human rights, within its fields of competence. Given its intellectual and ethical mandate since its creation, the Organization has played an important role in promoting the adoption of standard-setting tools and in fostering research and education concerning human rights. UNESCO's diverse activities are carried out in partnership with the Member States, the UNESCO National Commissions, the United Nations system and civil society.

- promotion of education on human rights, including learning about and exercising human rights and learning about educational and pedagogical methods to create an environment favourable to dispensing such education. UNESCO is focusing on the implementation of the first phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. The Plan stresses primary and secondary education. The UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education is awarded every two years;



Eleanor Roosevelt and the
Universal Declaration of
Human Rights
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A NEW STRATEGY

UNESCO confirmed its attachment to the cause of human rights at the 32nd session of its General Conference in October 2003. The Conference adopted a new Human Rights Strategy (Document 32 C/57). A fruitful intersectorial effort, of partners outside and within the UN system, produced the following list of priority actions:

- better use of a human rights-based approach in all UNESCO programmes (see box) ;
- promotion of research and publication of information on human rights (right to education, right to take part in cultural activities, right to hold and to express an opinion, right to benefit from scientific progress and from its applications) in order to contribute to the development and the implementation of policies by well-informed political leaders;

- setting standards and organizing events relating to the protection of human rights, particularly through the work of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CR). Drafting standard-setting tools in the fields of bioethics and human rights and of cultural diversity and human rights;

- reinforcing partnerships with the aim of dividing the tasks and achieving complementarity within the United Nations system, especially with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and its specialized agencies; with research centres; local institutions defending human rights; and civil society in general.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The struggle against racism, discrimination and xenophobia is the core of UNESCO's mandate. In the fight against discrimination in all of its forms, UNESCO strives to expose the

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Human Rights: The Cornerstone of all UN activity

Integrating human rights into the various activities of the United Nations system was established as one of the major challenges of the reform programme begun in 1997. In 2003, an inter-institutional workshop led to the drafting of a common position of United Nations institutions on the implementation of a human rights-based approach. It is comprised of three main points:

- all programmes should promote human rights;
- standards and guidelines relating to human rights must be applied to all activities in all sectors and in all phases of preparation and of implementation;
- activities must contribute to the capacity-building allowing stakeholders to discharge their obligations and/or permitting stakeholders to obtain their rights.

UNESCO launched a programme in 2005 aimed at progressively integrating human rights into all of its activities. This programme will train UNESCO personnel, both at Headquarters and in the Field Offices, on human rights standards and on drafting programmes based on the respect of human rights.

obstacles impeding the full exercise of human rights. These stumbling blocks include ultranationalism; religious intolerance; discrimination against minorities; and discrimination in the use of scientific or medical progress such as in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. In October 2003, responding to the emerging challenges of modern society, UNESCO adopted an Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance (32C/13). In 2004, following up on this renewed commitment, UNESCO launched an International Coalition of Cities against Racism. Its main goal is to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences and expertise with the aim of improving their anti-racist policies through a common action plan.

As for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, much remains to be done. The figures speak for themselves: barely 15.6% of the world's Members of Parliament are women, there are no countries in which women are paid equal salaries for equal work, women comprise two thirds of the 876 illiterate people in the world, and no woman has ever been Secretary-General of the United Nations nor Director-General of UNESCO. In the hope of reversing this trend, the Social and Human Sciences sector focuses on research aimed at encouraging the development of public policies promoting equality between women and men. Their work also involves sharing

knowledge and supporting initiatives taken by women and encouraging women to establish networks. UNESCO encourages the development of university study programmes in the fields of gender equality and women's rights with the aim of producing future leaders that will be sensitive to these issues.

UNESCO also promotes reflection on human safety, on consolidating democracy, and on maintaining peace, all building blocks of a universal human rights culture.

Contact :

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To Find Out More

UNESCO web site on human rights:
www.unesco.org/human_rights