



YouthWorkAndYou.org

Victoria University, Australia
in collaboration with
Ulster University, Northern Ireland

Unit 1

Human Rights and Ethics in Professional Youth Work

What are Human Rights?

YouthWorkAndYou.org is brought to you by the Youth Work eLearning Partnership [YWeLP], an Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership 2017-2019.

Introduction

Human Rights in Youth Work practice.

This unit provides you with a short introductory video, information about the topic, the opportunity to reflect on your own practice as a youth worker and finally a call to action.

This module will encourage you to consider how human rights education might benefit young people in a youth work context.

Please watch the Unit 1 video before proceeding further.

A photograph of a modern brick building, identified by the large sign as Victoria University. The building has a light-colored brick facade and a large, dark blue sign with white lettering that reads 'VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'. Below the sign is a decorative square window with a blue and white geometric pattern. The sky is clear and blue.

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

Setting the Scene

Human rights are a set of moral and legal guidelines that outlines the protections and freedoms ascribed to all humans, across cultures, ethnicities, religions and geographic locations. These rights reflect the value and worth of every person. A community which upholds human rights is inclusive and recognises every community member's contribution. Principles of dignity, equality and respect are also reflected in human rights (Australian Human Rights Commission 2019).



Throughout history, different civilisations have had foundations of some elements of the human rights laws that we see today. Great philosophers and religious teachers have taught lessons about the value of human life, and promoted behaviour that benefited and respected others. The Magna Carta was one of the earliest documents to outline human rights, although at that point in history, not all members of the community had access to these rights.

Charter bodies and treaty bodies within the United Nations (UN) system of governance now exist to protect the human rights of all humans as set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) (United Nations Human Rights Council 2019). Since the implementation of the UNDHR, smaller groups in society continued to face direct and indirect discrimination and their rights have been ignored. As a result, other documents have been written in an attempt to address

these inequalities. Some of these documents include:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNFPA 2004)

References

- Australian Human Rights Commission 2019, *What are human rights?* Australian Human Rights Commission, viewed 5 April 2019, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/what-are-human-rights>
- UN Human Rights Council 2019, *Welcome to the Human Rights Council*, United Nations Human Rights Council, viewed 5 April 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/AboutCouncil.aspx>
- UNFPA 2004, *Core International Human Rights Instruments*, United Nations Population Fund, viewed 5 April 2019, <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/core-international-human-rights-instruments>

What you will learn

Unit 1 Human Rights in Youth Work practice covers the following:

- The ability to define human rights in the context of Youth Work practice
- Gain a historical understanding of human rights
- Knowledge of some human rights issues facing young people across the globe
- The ability to reflect on one's practice and seek out further information

Unit 1 Contents



1. The ability to define Human rights in the context of Youth Work practice:

This module will provide an understanding of human rights, what they are and why they are important for young people and youth workers. This theme also aligns well with the module which explores diverse societies by Northern Ireland.

2. Gain a historical understanding of Human rights

Society's attitudes and structures have changed overtime: from the Magna Carta, to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These documents assist us to promote the rights of the young people that we support.

3. Knowledge of some human rights issues facing young people across the globe

Some of the human rights issues will be highlighted to increase awareness and promote the role of the youth work to advocate for the rights of young people to be upheld everywhere.

4. The ability to reflect on one's practice and seek out further information

This module encourages the practice of self-reflection in all learning activities. Time for reflection is important to apply the new knowledge to the context of working with young people in your community.

Summary of Video Content



Engaging with the Interactive Video Content

1. Human Rights in Youth Work practice

So, what are human rights? Let's take a look back in time to find out. Every community throughout history has created their own set of rights and responsibilities for their own citizens. These rules and mores were the basis of building a peaceful and productive community, however not all citizens were treated equally. People in positions of power had more rights over land and other resources, as well as a voice in the decision making of the community in which they lived.

After the devastation of World War II, many countries in the international community came together in a peace building activity and the United Nations were formed. Their charter outlined their commitment to maintaining international peace and security, developing and maintaining friendly relations among nations to promote social progress, better living standards and human rights. Human rights reflect basic human needs and the basic standards for living and experiencing freedom, justice, equality, dignity, and respect.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was written and adopted by the countries of the United Nations in 1948. There are 30 articles in the UDHR.

Human rights are *universal*, *inalienable* and *interrelated* (OHCHR 2019). Let's look at what that means.

As stated in the title: **Human Rights are**

universal, this means that all humans have the same set of rights that should be upheld, regardless of "race" or ethnic background, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, language, religion, political association, national or social origin.

REFLECT: Can you think of a situation in your workplace or community where young people's rights have not been upheld?

2. Human rights are *interrelated*. All 30 articles of human rights are interconnected and cannot be seen individually without considering the other rights. No one right is more important than any of the others (UN n.d.).

3. Human rights are also *inalienable*. A person cannot lose their human rights, because these rights are linked to being human and cannot be separated. There are some situations where a society may restrict one of a person's human rights, but not all of them. We see an example of this in the justice arena. If a person has committed a crime and is convicted and sentenced to prison, then that person's freedom of movement and liberties are restricted for the period of imprisonment.

When human rights are ignored... children and young people are more likely to be exploited and denied access to basic necessities of life. We see examples of this around the world...through human trafficking, girls denied access to school, and child

soldiers.

Since 1948 other human rights documents have been written and adopted, to further emphasize the rights of particular groups of people, including for instance the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRoC) in 1990, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, in 1993, Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2006 (UNFPA 2004).

REFLECT: *Why do we need additional human rights documents, if the UNDHR covers everyone?*

4. The Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains that children and young people are still growing and developing and require extra protection from adults because of their age. This convention was particularly controversial to opponents who were focused on human rights being an individual right, rather than a right for a group. Adults and governments have the responsibility of ensuring that the rights of children and young people are upheld and not ignored.

The four principles that underpin the CRoC are:

- **Non-discrimination:** These human rights relate to all children and young people under the age of 18, regardless of where they are born.
- **The best interest of the child:** All decisions made by adults and governments should always be in the best interest of the child

- **Surviving, thriving and flourishing:** Children and young people have the right to life, and access to opportunities to grow, develop and learn in order to reach their potential.
- **Participation and a voice:** Children and young people have the right to be consulted and have a say in decisions regarding their lives (UNICEF n.d.).

Organisations around the world such as UNICEF work tirelessly to ensure that governments and communities are protecting and upholding the rights of children and young people.

Youth Workers and other adults that work with young people should always work from the principles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and a human rights framework should shape our practice (UNICEF n.d.).

In communities where young people are being excluded from decision making, exploited or abused, Youth Workers play a vital advocacy role to speak up against inhumane treatment and policy making that is not in the best interest of young people. Human rights education is one way to raise awareness about human rights and empower children and young people. How can people defend and uphold human rights if they have not been taught?

By teaching human rights inside the classroom and outside in community settings, children and young people are able to acknowledge the benefits that diversity brings to their lives. Educational activities also assist children and young

people to realise their own cultural biases, understanding concepts of tolerance and discrimination as well as learning how to stand up and speak out against injustice and discrimination (Council of Europe 2017).

REFLECT: How might you teach human rights to young people?



Intercultural learning is a key element of human rights education and is central to European Youth Work. In the youth field of the Council of Europe, intercultural learning is presented as an educational process which aims at encouraging positive relationships between young people from different cultural backgrounds. This learning promotes mutual respect and solidarity (Council of Europe 2019). This theme will be further explored in the module on diverse societies.

Every person has an important role to play to make sure the human rights of all humans are acknowledged, upheld and respected. Here are some organisations that are working hard to ensure that governments are making decisions in the best interest of children and young people

in their communities.

- Human Rights Commission Australia
- World Vision
- Amnesty International
- Human Rights Watch

See below for the links to their websites.

REFLECT: Take a walk around your workplace and note how human rights of young people are being promoted (through policy, programs and posters etc)

5. Global Human Rights issues for young people

Young people around the world are facing many Human Rights challenges. Let's explore some of these examples:

Access to education:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/access-education-students-disability-barriers-and-difficulties>

Human trafficking of children and Young People:

<https://www.worldvision.com.au/global-issues/work-we-do/child-slavery>

Ethnic profiling:

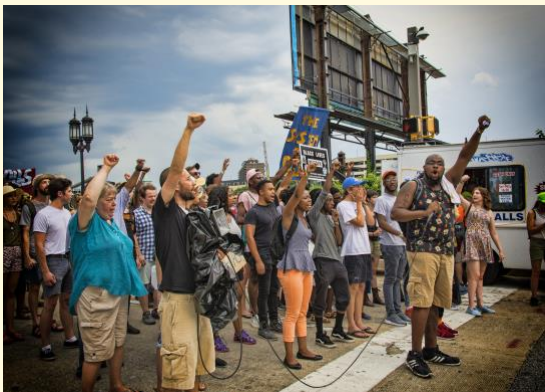
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/ethnic-profiling-a-persisting-practice-in-europe>

Experiences of poverty and the impact this has on the Rights of children and young people (example taken from Northern Ireland):

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issue_s/EPoverty/UnitedKingdom/2018/NHRI/NorthernIrelandCommissionerChildrenYoungPeople.pdf

6. Call to Action

What will you do now as a result of what you have learnt? The following pages provide more information about human rights as well as resources to assist you in your work with young people. There are several ways that you can make a difference for young people in your community. Are your workplace policies based on a human rights framework? Does your country have a Youth Work Code of Ethical Practice? Is there an opportunity to be involved in an awareness campaign or direct action involving a human rights issue?



"In order to protect children and young people's rights there must be full incorporation into domestic legislation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child."

(Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People 2018, p.16)

References

Council of Europe 2017, Introducing Human Rights Education, Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with young people, viewed 29 April 2019, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/introducing-human-rights-education>

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People 2018, Submission to Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights prior to visit to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in November 2018, NICCY, viewed 20 May, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/EPoverty/UnitedKingdom/2018/NHRI/NorthernIrelandCommissionerChildrenYoungPeople.pdf>

UNFPA 2004, Core International Human Rights Instruments, United Nations Population Fund, viewed 5 April 2019, <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/core-international-human-rights-instruments>

UNICEF n.d. About the Convention: What is the CRC?, CRC Home for Youth, viewed 29 April 2019, https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/237_202.htm

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2019, What are Human Rights, OHCHR, viewed 29 April 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/pages/whatarehumanrights.aspx>

United Nations n.d., Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, viewed 29 April 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Links to other Information and Reading

Here is a list of additional information which will assist you to explore human rights further as well as resources that you can use while working with young people.

Resources

Online Resources

1. **THE MAGNA CARTA:** This infographic provides an overview of the Magna Carta, arguably one of the most important foundational documents in the history of human rights.

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/magnacarta/infographic/>

2. **HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL GUIDE:**

This document outlines the role and purpose of the Human Rights Council within the United Nations structure.

https://www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/guide_cdh_anglais.pdf

3. **TED ED LESSON (UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS):**

This learning module has been created by Benedetta Berti and can be used by young people and youth workers.

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-are-the-universal-human-rights-benedetta-berri>

4. **50 HUMAN RIGHTS CASES THAT TRANSFORMED BRITAIN:**

A helpful infographic outlines legal cases that have historical significance in Britain.

<https://rightsinfo.org/infographics/fifty-human-rights-cases/>

5. **TEACHING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION:**

This resource is helpful for teaching young people about human rights

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/lesson-plan-ideas/lesson-8-what-are-human-rights>

6. **WITNESS:**

is a global movement, using technology to highlight human rights issues around the globe. <https://witness.org/>

7. **UNICEF** poster of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC): This poster can be placed on the work of the youth centre or workplace as a helpful reminder.

<https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycroc.pdf>

Journal Articles and books

1. **Cole, M (ed.) 2006**, Education, Equality and Human Rights: Issues of gender, 'race', sexuality, disability and social class, Routledge, Oxfordshire.

<http://able.manavata.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/education-equality-and-human-rights-Issues-of-gender-race-sexuality-disability-and-social-class.pdf>

2. **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017**, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination survey - Main results, FRA Luxembourg, viewed 10 May, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/eumidis-ii-main-results>

3. **Livingstone, S & Third, A 2017**, 'Children and young people's rights in the digital age: An emerging agenda', New Media & Society, vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 657-670.

4. **MacDonald, F 2017**, 'Positioning young refugees in Australia: media discourse and social exclusion', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, vol. 21, no. 11, pp. 1182-1195.
5. **Martinson, DJ & Tempesta, CE 2018**, 'Young People as Humans in Family Court processes: A child rights approach to legal representation', *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 151-198

Website Links

1. UNITED NATIONS:

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/>

2. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/>

3. HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH:

<https://www.hrw.org/>

4. AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/>

5. RIGHTSINFO:

<https://rightsinfo.org/your-rights/>

YouTube Clips

1. **"Everybody"**- Amnesty International UK have put together a clip explaining the UNDHR: <https://youtu.be/Pby1KngOhBY>
2. **"Being Young and Making an impact"** TED Talk- Natalie Warne talking about a global human rights movement: https://www.ted.com/talks/natalie_warne_being_young_and_making_an_impact/transcript
3. **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:** from drafting to reception <https://www.coursera.org/lecture/childrens-rights/1-2-the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-from-drafting-to-dpaUJ>
4. **"United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the child"**- Queen's University- Belfast have put together a clip explaining the CROC: <https://youtu.be/TFMqTDIYI2U>
5. **"Why educating refugees matters"** - TED Talk- Mary Maker talks about her own experiences of education: https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_maker_why_educating_refugees_matters

Wrapping Up

Human rights are universal, inalienable and interrelated. Human Rights documents have been written to assist communities to recognize and uphold the rights of all people. Young people can be considered more vulnerable because of their age, and as a result, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was written. Youth Workers play an important advocacy role in ensuring young people's rights are considered in all areas of life.

Unit 2 in this module introduces the concept of ethics, and ethical decision making in youth work practice.



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Unit 1

Hickey, Jane (2019). *Human Rights and Ethics in Professional Youth Work Units 1, 2 and 3*. Youth Work eLearning Partnership (YWeLP). Available at

<https://www.youthworkandyou.org/ywelp-three/>

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www.youthworkandyou.org

