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## Human Rights Council

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### Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development

## Midterm progress report on the implementation of the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

### Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\*

#### *Summary*

Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 42/7, the present report provides an overview of action taken at the national level in the context of the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, focused on youth. The present report summarizes information received from 17 States and includes some conclusions and recommendations for further advancing human rights education and training for youth.

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\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



## **I. Introduction**

1. In its resolution 59/113 A, the General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education, a global initiative to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors. The World Programme is structured in consecutive phases, with each phase focusing on specific sectors. The first phase (2005–2009) was dedicated to the integration of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems. The second phase (2010–2014) focused on human rights education in higher education and human rights training for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels. The third phase (2015–2019) focused on strengthening implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists.

2. In its resolution 39/3, the Human Rights Council decided to make youth the focus group of the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme and requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare a plan of action. In its resolution 42/7, the Council adopted the plan of action submitted by OHCHR,<sup>1</sup> which provides guidance on developing a comprehensive human rights education strategy for youth at the national level. In the same resolution, the Council called upon all States to implement the plan of action for the fourth phase and requested OHCHR to prepare a midterm progress report on the implementation of the fourth phase and to submit it to the Council at its fifty-first session.

3. In February 2022, OHCHR sent notes verbales to States inviting them to submit relevant information. By 28 June 2022, 17 Governments had responded (see annex).<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, OHCHR compiled the information received into the present midterm progress report.

4. The report provides an overview of action taken by States, as reported in their submissions to OHCHR. For the purposes of preparing the present report, OHCHR did not assess the implementation of the measures and practices reported by States. The report is structured around the four components for effective human rights education for youth identified in section II. D of the plan of action for the fourth phase. It ends with some conclusions and recommendations for further implementation.

## **II. Action at the national level to implement human rights education for youth**

### **A. Policies and related implementation measures**

5. General provisions on human rights education are included in the national strategies, plans or laws of most of the reporting States, including Angola, Argentina, Burundi, Colombia, El Salvador, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mexico, Romania, Slovenia and Türkiye. In Angola, one of the pillars of the National Human Rights Strategy (2020) is the promotion of human rights education and training. Within this framework, the National Strategy for Human Rights Education has been developed. Despite the fact that it is awaiting approval, it is already under implementation. In Colombia, the National Plan for Human Rights Education (2021–2034) devotes special attention to groups that are in vulnerable situations and have suffered discrimination historically, such as women, children, young people, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. In Lithuania, the current government programme (2020–2024) prioritizes strengthening human rights and anti-corruption education. In Latvia, the Guidelines for the Development of Education (2021–2027), entitled “Future skills for the society of the future”, indicate that all forms of education and training should include content

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/42/23.

<sup>2</sup> Government submissions are available on the OHCHR website at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training/world-programme-human-rights-education/phase4>.

that promotes an understanding of human rights, sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity. In Argentina, pursuant to the National Education Act (No. 26,206 of 2006), the protection and promotion of human rights is an integral part of all education policies developed by the Ministry of Education with a view, among other things, to promoting human rights education and building participatory, democratic and responsible citizenship.

6. Some respondents highlighted the integration of human rights in formal education curricula. In Türkiye, pursuant to the National Education Act (No. 1,739), the goals of the national curriculum include ensuring that students exercise their rights, fulfil their responsibilities and are ready for life in accordance with their individuality. Human rights and other relevant topics have been integrated in various school subjects. In Romania, syllabuses have been developed for elective subjects addressing human rights issues that schools can offer within the curriculum. Human rights courses or subjects have been made available in higher education in Angola, Colombia, Ecuador, Mauritius, Mexico, the Russian Federation and Slovenia, either through specific human rights programmes leading to a degree in human rights or incorporated into other study programmes.

7. Some States undertook reviews of their existing education laws or curricula with a view to including or strengthening human rights education. The Mauritius Institute of Education regularly develops and updates the primary and secondary school curricula to ensure that learners develop competencies that empower them to become responsible citizens who uphold respect for human rights. In 2020, the Institute introduced new curricula for Social Modern Studies and Life Skills subjects for primary and secondary schools, both of which include human rights education, and in 2021, it initiated a review of the curricula for Values and Citizenship Education. In 2021, in El Salvador the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology revised the curricula of several primary and secondary school subjects and proposed human rights education as a cross-cutting theme across all subjects. In Mexico, the Sectoral Education Programme (2020–2024) aims to ensure that curricula and programmes are relevant to the challenges of the twenty-first century and allow children, adolescents and young people to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for their development. This includes updating curricula and programmes with a focus on human rights and gender perspectives, to offer comprehensive guidance, including on health, sexual and reproductive education and social and emotional development.

8. Specific policies have been adopted to ensure that education, including human rights education, is accessible to all children and youth without discrimination. In 2021, the Government of Slovakia adopted a strategy for an inclusive approach in education, which aims to provide access to inclusive education for all children without distinction, from kindergartens to universities. In Mexico, the General Higher Education Act (2021) requires federal, state and municipal education authorities to guarantee access to higher education to all, in line with the principles of human rights, equality and inclusivity and taking into account youth, gender and intercultural perspectives. It places particular focus on indigenous peoples, Afro-Mexican people, persons with disabilities and other groups in vulnerable situations. In Romania, the Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority (2022–2027) aims to ensure access to quality education for Roma citizens by reducing the school dropout rate, promoting interculturalism, creating an inclusive school environment, preserving cultural identity and building self-esteem among Roma students. In El Salvador, the National Higher Education Policy (2021) provides for scholarships and other financial assistance for students with disabilities and students with different learning abilities. In Mauritius, the Special Education Needs Authority provides free meals, school equipment and scholarship opportunities aimed at ensuring that children from both urban and rural areas on different islands, children with special needs and children in vulnerable situations are not left out of the education system. In Slovenia, the undergraduate admission procedures offer preferential treatment to candidates with documented special needs, disabilities or illnesses and those from underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds. Latvia reported that it has taken measures to assist children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine and has integrated over 700 children from Ukraine in its education system. The National Centre for Education is working closely with the respective municipalities to ensure that they have access to preschool, primary and secondary education, as well as to relevant therapy and psychological services. The Latvian Ministry of Education and Science has also ensured that young people

from Ukraine have access to vocational training in Latvia, including by recognizing Ukrainian education documents to enable them to continue their studies in Latvia.

9. A number of reporting States have organized human rights education activities for youth outside the formal education system. In Mauritius, as part of the implementation of the National Youth Policy, the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission, organized a series of programmes to empower young people, including through human rights education. Around 500 young people benefit from the human rights education programme every year. In Mexico, in the context of National Volunteer Day 2021, in recognition of young people's role as strategic actors in generating welfare and strengthening the social fabric, the Government developed various volunteering programmes to promote the Sustainable Development Goals. One component was a training course aimed at strengthening young people's human rights competencies in community work in order to support their volunteering activities. In the Russian Federation, the Consortium of Russian Universities, a group of universities that implement a human rights master's programme, organizes an annual summer school on human rights. In 2021, the one-week programme, structured in three thematic clusters (human rights and climate change, human rights and migration and human rights and youth engagement) was hosted at Kazan Federal University and involved lectures, seminars, round tables and film screenings. In Türkiye, in the 161 courthouses located throughout the country, the Department of Judicial Support and Victim Services conducts sessions for victims of crime, including children and youth, on their rights, the services available to them and the functioning of the judicial process, in order to facilitate their access to justice. In Slovenia, since 2005 the authorities have been promoting human rights education among children and young people internationally through the "Our Rights" project. To date, more than 250,000 children from 26 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East have participated in the project.

10. Some States have facilitated and supported – particularly through funding – non-formal human rights education conducted by civil society. In Chile, in 2020 the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights launched a fund for cultural and memorial site projects, which finances civil society initiatives aimed at strengthening the historical memory and reparation of human rights violations that occurred during the military dictatorship, by keeping alive a lasting memory of the victims and contributing to the promotion of human rights. While the fund's activities were hindered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020, in 2021, 13 projects were selected, receiving a total of \$107,528,219. In one of the projects, around 150 students from five schools in the commune of La Serena created artwork based on the accounts of victims of political repression during the military dictatorship and interviews about that period with their family members. In Slovenia, support has been provided to several human rights educational activities for young people in non-formal settings. In 2019, the government office for youth issued a public tender for a two-year programme to strengthen the competencies of young people through active citizenship for greater employability, aiming to provide co-financing of projects carried out by organizations working in the youth sector. The project involved practical workshops and training courses, individual mentoring, opportunities to meet entrepreneurs and employers and the co-creation of social space. In Lithuania, plans are under way for the Ministry of Justice to select and fund, in 2022, civil society projects aimed at increasing respect for human rights, equality and the rule of law, as well as countering hate speech. The Ministry has reportedly allocated 70,000 euros for the initiative.

11. Some of the reporting States highlighted the importance of engaging young people as key partners in planning and designing human rights and human rights education policies. In Chile, while developing the second National Human Rights Plan (2022–2025), the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, for the first time, held consultations with children and youth, giving them the opportunity to exercise their right to participate virtually. The consultations were supported by a group of experts in child and youth participation involving the Undersecretariats for Children and for Education, the National Service for Minors, the National Institute of Human Rights, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). A total of 2,835 children and youth participated in the process and expressed their views on the human rights challenges that are most important for them, actions to be taken by the State to improve human rights and proposals

for monitoring mechanisms. In Italy, the fifth National Plan of Action and Interventions for the Protection of the Rights and Development of Children and Adolescents, which includes provisions on human rights education, was developed and finalized in 2021 after collaboration and consultation among stakeholders including the National Observatory for Childhood and Adolescence, other governmental institutions, civil society, experts, universities and research centres. In addition, young people's views and suggestions on the priorities and strategies contained in the National Plan were collected through surveys. In El Salvador, municipal youth units have been set up, aimed at enabling young people to take part in formulating youth policies and contributing to the development of their respective municipalities and communities. As part of that process, young people are trained in human rights, especially youth rights, so that they can contribute effectively to policy formulation efforts. To date, 30 of the country's municipalities are implementing this initiative and a total of 5,265 young people have been trained. In Slovenia, the active participation of young people in the development of youth policies and legislation has been encouraged through the National Youth Council, an umbrella organization of all national youth organizations representing various interests and ideological or political orientations. It aims to defend the interests of young people and to promote their participation in decision-making processes affecting their lives and work. The Slovenian Student Union, the national organization of more than 75,000 university, college and high school students, as well as Slovenian students abroad, cooperates actively in the development of national policies and programmes concerning higher education, scholarships, student residence, student work, health care and the employment of graduates.

12. Some States reported that they have adopted specific measures or undertaken projects to monitor national progress in the area of human rights education and training, in order to improve and strengthen implementation. In Colombia, the 2021–2022 implementation plan for the National Human Rights Education Plan (2021–2034) contains a series of guidelines, strategies and actions for over 30 relevant national entities. The department for culture, human rights and peace education within the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Human Rights and International Affairs monitors the implementation of the implementation plan. Romania participated in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, from 2019 to 2022. This educational benchmarking project was carried out by the University of Bucharest with the support of the Ministry of Education. The Study explores how education systems prepare young people for their role as active citizens and promote civic behaviour. It also aims to contribute to improving the ways in which civic competences are taught and developed for young people. In Slovakia, the Centre for Scientific and Technological Information has conducted a long-term assessment of human rights education and its impact at school and in the family environment. Data have been collected on learners' awareness of human rights, school and family cooperation in human rights education, human rights violations in the school and the family environment, teachers' awareness of human rights and their suggestions for improving human rights teaching, changes in pupils' attitudes towards human rights, parents' views on human rights issues in the family and in the school environment and parental participation in the human rights education of children. Empirical data were collected through questionnaires at selected primary and secondary schools throughout Slovakia.

13. States have also reported the adoption of sectoral policies and initiatives which create synergies with their human rights education efforts. In Mexico in 2021, the National Youth Programme (2021–2024) was approved, providing guidance on the implementation of youth policies in response to the different challenges faced by young people in Mexico. Priorities include the promotion of young people's participation in public affairs and fostering among them a civic culture, knowledge of their rights and respect for the rule of law in order to strengthen their ability to exercise citizenship. Romania has started implementing its National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization and Hate Speech (2021–2023), which aims to promote tolerance, civic education and the resilience of Romanian society against anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech. It also involves updating projects and programmes in the educational and cultural fields and building on relevant international cooperation programmes. In Argentina, the Directorate of Education for Human Rights, Gender and Comprehensive Sexual Education has established several

educational programmes relevant to human rights: the National Programme on Comprehensive Sexual Education, which aims to promote physical integrity, the right to health, gender equality and diversity; the National Programme on Education and Memory, which, through the teaching of history, aims to develop democratic citizenship respectful of human rights and national identity; the National Programme on Prevention and Care in the Educational Environment, which guides educational institutions to promote the right to health; and the National Programme on Comprehensive Environmental Education, which contributes to caring for the environment and exercising the right to a healthy environment. All the programmes call for the development of related educational resources and materials and teacher-training activities.

## **B. Teaching and learning processes and tools**

14. Some States provided details about the content of their human rights education programmes and the competences addressed therein. Latvia reported that by the end of ninth grade, students are expected to know about the fundamental role of human rights and related norms; to understand the rule of law and recognize violent ideologies; to be able to express opinions on issues such as democracy in modern society, civil and non-governmental initiatives and their role in a democratic society; and to gain experience in dealing with issues relevant to the local community, influencing decision-making processes and addressing society's needs. By the end of twelfth grade, students are expected to be able to assess situations in which collective safety, health, dignity and human rights are threatened and how to offer solutions that address them; to recognize hate speech, misinformation and offensive language; to analyse local, national and international legal norms, their relevance and impact on the public; and to develop proposals to improve existing laws and submit them to the relevant institutions. Slovenia reported on the competencies sought by the new Active Citizenship subject in upper-secondary school, in which students learn about the concepts of transnationality and globalization and evaluate inter-ethnic relations in the global age. They will be able to critically assess the processes of globalization and the impact on their lives from various angles; to analyse the concept of sustainable development; to research and plan activities to protect human rights; to identify and evaluate the consequences of conflicts and wars in a globalized world and discuss endeavours for peace and conflict prevention.

15. In Angola, human rights topics have been integrated in subjects at all levels of education, from preschool to higher education, and efforts have been made to ensure the topics are relevant to students' lives. At secondary level, for example, human rights topics include early pregnancy, early marriage, domestic violence, child labour, access to education, bullying and violent extremism. References are made to relevant international and regional human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. In Mauritius, human rights are introduced in the different subjects taught at the secondary level and include citizenship education, intercultural education and sexuality education. Citizenship education seeks to impart knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and values that prepare learners to become informed, respectful and responsible citizens and participate actively in community life, and supports their social development and the building of their character, behaviour and self-confidence, enabling them to engage with and respect others. Intercultural education seeks to contribute to peaceful coexistence, especially in a country like Mauritius, where people of different religious beliefs and traditions share a common space; schools reflect such diversity and become an ideal place for nurturing cultural exchange and understanding, which contributes to the promotion of peace and social cohesion. Sexuality education encourages discussions on how learners think about their and other people's bodies and seeks to promote sexual and reproductive health.

16. Some respondents highlighted various methodologies used to ensure effective human rights education and training for youth. In El Salvador, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology referred to learner-centred, gender-sensitive and practical methodologies, in

the context of vocational education. In Türkiye, the National Education Act stipulates that secondary education institutions shall employ a student-centred methodology that fosters active participation and democratic culture. In Mauritius, the national curriculum (2015) specifies the adoption of a contextual, problem-based, interactive and participatory methodology, with a teacher-learner relationship that fosters inclusion and respect and empowers learners to voice their views and share their experiences. In Argentina, students are encouraged to share their perspectives on human rights-related themes creatively through a collaborative project launched in 2020 by the Ministries of Education and of Justice and Human Rights and the National Youth Institute. Young people are invited to participate and express themselves on issues most relevant to them as rights holders: the environment and sustainable development; democracy and sovereignty, education and equality; identities, gender and diversity; information and communication; memory and human rights; youth participation; prevention and care. In the first edition, submissions were received from 12 provinces in various creative formats such as short stories, essays, poems, songs, videos, photographs, drawings and other artworks, from which 15 outstanding creations were selected and published on the educ.ar portal. The second edition, held in 2021, elicited submissions from young people from 16 provinces.

17. In Burundi, the Ministry of Human Rights and Gender conducts training and awareness-raising activities on human rights for young people through youth centres and reading and cultural activity centres in different municipalities. In Mauritius, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology organized a Model United Nations conference at which students had the opportunity to debate on human rights issues and propose possible solutions. In Romania, the Institute for Human Rights, in partnership with the European Law Students' Association, launched a campaign in 2021 on the right to information and expression and the role of young people in promoting democratic dialogue. The campaign focused on diversity, tolerance and the rights to freedom of thought and freedom of expression and aimed at raising law students' and young lawyers' awareness of the importance of those rights and the need to guarantee them in a democratic society. In Lithuania, one of the initiatives being taken by the Ministry of Justice is the Constitution exam, an annual public legal knowledge test, attracting around 20,000 participants each year, mostly school children and youth. Participation in the exam encourages the public to take an interest in the legal foundations of the State, including the protection of human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution.

18. Some respondents reported the use of technology in their human rights education and training activities for young people. The Russian Federation, on the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, in 2020, launched an online quiz entitled "Know your rights" for the indigenous peoples of the north, Siberia and the far east of the country, which attracted over 2,000 participants. In 2021, the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation organized the fifth "Open lesson on human rights", which was held remotely and attended by more than 5 million students. Furthermore, the interactive educational project for students entitled "The school of human rights defenders: learn and act", involved online awareness-raising and educational activities, including interactive lectures and a game platform called "Legal volunteers". In Lithuania in 2020, the Ministry of Justice implemented a public legal education project entitled "I know my rights", which included the development of an innovative educational application for smart mobile devices that presents various topics to young people in an appealing format, in the context of everyday situations. In Romania, in order to support teachers and students during the 2020 school closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Romanian Institute for Human Rights made available an online course entitled "I am learning online about the right to education", targeting lower secondary school students. The course also aimed to involve young people in actively promoting and protecting their right to education.

19. Several States also reported the development of specific human rights education materials. For instance, in Türkiye, the Ministry of National Education, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, implemented the "Strengthening a culture of democracy" project, aimed at integrating a democratic school culture and human rights in the education system. Educational materials such as storybooks, activity books and teacher guides on human rights and democracy have been developed and are being piloted in 110 selected schools in 10 provinces, reaching around 48,500 students across the country. In the Russian Federation,

under the aegis of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, two textbooks are being developed, one on human rights for school grades 9 to 11 and another on civil rights for undergraduate students pursuing non-legal specialties. In Argentina, focus has been placed on creating comprehensive sexual education materials in indigenous languages. The materials have been developed in consultation with different educators and researchers representing different indigenous peoples in the country.

### C. Training of educators

20. Policies concerning human rights training for teachers have been adopted in some of the reporting States. In Mexico, one of the priority strategies under the Sectoral Education Plan (2020–2024) is to provide comprehensive training for teachers, including on human rights, in order to ensure quality education. In Slovakia, the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre conducts educational programmes for teachers and other professional staff of schools, school facilities and social assistance facilities. Human rights topics have been integrated as a cross-curricular topic in the programmes.

21. Angola reported that teacher training has been addressed as part of the integration of human rights content into primary and secondary education. Since 2011, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, has collaborated with OHCHR to include human rights content in pedagogical materials. In the first phase, staff of the National Institute for Educational Research and Development were trained on the main international human rights instruments, cultural values and education, curriculum revision and evaluation techniques, development of pedagogical texts and basic strategies for the integration of human rights in the school curriculum. Subsequently, human rights textbooks for primary and secondary levels were developed, and teacher-training programmes on using the textbooks were delivered at the national level, aimed at providing teachers with a series of methodological guidelines to enable them to teach human rights in various subjects. In El Salvador, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology organizes training courses for teachers in coordination with the National Institute for Teacher Training with the objective of strengthening teachers' competencies in: analysing the theoretical foundations of and approaches to human rights, peaceful coexistence and human rights protection at school; applying strategies and tools for coexistence and peacebuilding at school; implementing mental health practices in crisis situations and human rights violations; and identifying the psychosocial manifestations of stress, burnout and applying strategies to promote the health and well-being of students and all members of the educational community. At the time of submission of the report, 19,837 teachers had been trained through these courses.

22. Mauritius reported that the Institute of Education offers modules that address human rights, life skills and citizenship education in pre-service and in-service training for primary and secondary school teachers. A specific module on Human Rights Education is offered during in-service training for primary school teachers. Some of the learning objectives include demonstrating knowledge of human rights, their origins and evolution over time as concept and practice; discussing the contribution of human rights education in maintaining peace and harmony in a multicultural context; appraising the application of human rights at the school level; and identifying specific activities from the textbooks that can be used to promote human rights education. Another example is the module on citizenship education, which integrates concepts such as human rights, responsibilities, respect and tolerance, and is offered as an elective module during both pre-service and in-service training for secondary school teachers. The module focuses on project-based learning with the aim of preparing secondary school teachers to integrate aspects of citizenship and values in their teaching. In total, 315 educators have taken human rights or human rights education related modules since 2020.

23. In Romania, teacher training in human rights education is provided by the teacher training colleges under the Ministry of National Education, usually in collaboration with various relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, public and private educational institutions, the Romanian Institute for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Union and different United Nations agencies (UNICEF, the United Nations



Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). For example, as part of a project entitled “Relevant curriculum, open education for all” (2017–2022), an extensive in-service teacher-training programme has been conducted for over 55,000 primary and secondary school teachers. The training sessions covered all subjects in the compulsory curriculum, including in the area of education for democracy and human rights education, addressing critical thinking, the rights of the child, intercultural education and education for democratic citizenship. The programme was also designed to enable teachers to adapt the learning to the individual needs of students. Within this project, a national curriculum management training programme is also being rolled out in 2022, targeting 6,000 newly appointed school principals. The training programme includes a special module on students at risk, which is part of the overall strategy to increase inclusion within secondary schools.

24. In 2019 in Mexico, the national teacher training university introduced a master’s degree in coexistence management in schools, focusing on violence, human rights and a culture of peace, for teachers and other members of the educational community. The programme consists of three components: basic training, which offers theoretical and conceptual tools for the multidisciplinary analysis and understanding of human rights, violence, conflict and a culture of peace; pedagogical and institutional training, which seeks to deepen the analysis of coexistence management in school; and methodological training, which provides the methodological tools for the development of a coexistence strategy based on human rights and a culture of peace. In Ecuador, the Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation developed an online course on building equality in higher education for educational authorities, teaching and administrative staff of higher education institutions. The course provided participants with tools to raise awareness, increase knowledge and generate competencies to apply comprehensively gender-sensitive, intercultural, disability-inclusive and environmental approaches in research, training, institutional management and community outreach.

25. Many reporting States have developed human rights training materials for educators. For instance, in Mauritius in 2015, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, with the assistance of the Commonwealth Secretariat, developed a toolkit on human rights education, which provided a practical framework for teachers to easily integrate human rights education into existing lessons. In Argentina, the Directorate of Education for Human Rights, Gender and Comprehensive Sexual Education has published a list of textbooks and resources on human rights, gender and sexual education that teachers can use to generate discussions on those complex issues; all the materials are available on the [educ.ar](http://educ.ar) portal. In Slovakia, the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre developed “short methodological inspirations”, which contain learning activities, didactic games and other activities on human rights designed by professional development teachers, external lecturers and participants in educational programmes run at the Centre. The relevant worksheets, templates and resources are available for free on its website. In Romania, the development of teaching materials takes into account the cultural diversity of students. For example, the methodological guidelines for teachers of primary and secondary schools cover topics not only relating to education for democracy and human rights education but also the history and traditions, mother tongues, literatures and music of minorities. The guidelines are intended to help teachers facilitate learning approaches that make the most of the cultural diversity of their students.

## **D. An enabling environment**

26. Many States reported that they have adopted policies and measures specifically aimed at building a safe learning environment in educational establishments. In El Salvador, under its Institutional Strategic Plan (2019–2024), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology includes actions to promote the enjoyment and full exercise of all students’ rights in protective school environments that are conducive to learning. The Ministry published and updated in 2019 the National Policy on School Coexistence and a Culture of Peace with the main aim of building inclusive, safe, gender-equal and universally accessible educational environments that foster the conditions for quality education, coexistence, equality and

participation. The Policy covers all persons involved in the educational system, especially students, teachers, principals, families and guardians, as well as other persons and institutions that collaborate in the implementation of educational programmes and projects. In 2021, a handbook on student participation for school coexistence was published to support implementation of the Policy and ensure the participation of children and youth as rights holders in the creation of safe and conducive learning environments. In Romania, the Government adopted legislation banning bullying in all educational establishments, followed by a ministerial order providing guidelines on the implementation of actions and approaches to take to address bullying. In Italy, legislation was passed in 2017 aimed at protecting children and young people by preventing and tackling cyberbullying.

27. In Ecuador, with a view to mainstreaming gender perspectives, promoting gender equality and eliminating gender violence in the higher education system, the Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation established the Higher Education and Gender Network in 2015 to provide a space for coordination and cooperation in human rights and gender issues between higher education institutions and the governing bodies of public policy in higher education. A biennial workplan (2022–2024) has been proposed, which includes organizing training activities for student representatives as policy advocates on human rights and gender issues, advising on the development of seminars on human rights, gender and other related topics, and putting in place and evaluating protocols for the prevention of and action in cases of harassment, discrimination and violence in higher education institutions based on gender identity and sexual orientation. In Slovenia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has accorded special attention to the issue of sexual and other forms of harassment and violence in academia. It has commissioned an analytical study on normative regulations for the prevention of harassment and other forms of sexual violence in the academic and research area, and organized a public consultation on the topic. It has also launched a research programme on institutional, legislative and awareness-raising solutions and activities to address sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in higher education and research organizations, with the aim of preparing a legislative framework for the protection of students, educators and other staff and to raise awareness on the subject.

28. In Slovakia, the Standards for the Higher Education Internal Quality Assurance System (2020) provide that higher education institutions must ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to investigate complaints brought by students seeking to uphold their rights. The Standards require that the investigation be transparent and carried out by student representatives. The complainants are then to be provided with feedback on the results of the investigation and the measures that have been adopted.

29. Some of the reporting States have put in place or strengthened avenues for students to exercise governance and defend their rights. In El Salvador, there are various mechanisms to this end: student councils, the main role of which is to operationalize student-led strategies in educational establishments; student governments, which represent all students in all matters of interest to them; gender violence prevention committees, which collaborate with educational institutions in the promotion of gender equality and coexistence free of gender violence and the creation of related plans of actions; student mediators, who are responsible for supporting teachers and school authorities in mediation or negotiation in the case of conflicts among students; and student ombudspersons for the protection of rights, which is a mechanism for guaranteeing the rights of children and young people in the educational system. Currently, there are 500 offices of student ombudspersons for the protection of rights, composed of 8,467 students (5,185 female and 3,282 male).

30. Several States have adopted measures to increase the protection and realization of young people's human rights more generally. In Mexico, for example, the National Youth Programme (2021–2024) calls for measures to promote inclusion and equal opportunities for all youth without distinction and to eradicate stereotypes and prejudice against youth. In Colombia, the Presidential Council for Youth implemented the “Colombia pact with youth”, a nationwide initiative aimed at listening to and addressing youth concerns. Under the programme, proposals and commitments have been made by the Government on providing free education for youth, stimulating youth employment (by generating 600,000 new jobs) and facilitating youth access to home ownership. In Slovakia, the Government reported on

measures to protect the rights of children and young people, which include publishing links on school websites to children's helplines and organizations offering assistance and psychological counselling to victims of crime, including young persons with disabilities.

### III. Conclusions and recommendations

31. The submissions received and summarized in the present report are rich in information and present, for most of the 17 reporting countries, significant progress in the development or review of policies concerning the inclusion of human rights education in the formal education system. Of particular interest is the development, in a few countries, of projects and mechanisms to monitor national progress and evaluate the impact of human rights education strategies and programmes, in order to improve and strengthen their implementation. Monitoring and evaluation processes are key to ensuring that human rights education content and methodologies remain relevant to the experiences and challenges that youth face and equip them with appropriate tools to participate in public life and engage in the realization of human rights in their communities. Such processes must integrate gender perspectives and take into account the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by youth, including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability. OHCHR noted that most of the submissions did not include gender-disaggregated data. Collecting disaggregated data is crucial to a comprehensive analysis of needs and the tailoring of measures and policies, as well as assessment of their impact.

32. Human rights education in non-formal settings plays an important role and complements significantly human rights learning in formal education by extending access, particularly for youth in situations of exclusion and vulnerability, and by offering a platform to experiment with new methodologies which, if proven useful, can be replicated in all contexts. While a number of responding States shared examples of human rights education initiatives outside the formal education system, it is important to increase facilitation of and support for the work of civil society, especially youth groups and movements and youth-led organizations conducting human rights education for their peers, considering that peer-to-peer learning is widely recognized as a main principle for effective human rights training. More attention should also be given to human rights training of educators in non-formal settings, including young educators and educators from groups in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, in order to build pools of skilled young people to train their peers.

33. As stressed in some submissions, young people are rights holders and key actors in realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development and securing peace. Across the globe, youth participation and activism are flourishing, and youth initiatives are frequently leading the way in challenging discrimination and injustice and demanding accountability. It is also imperative that young people play a key role in defining priorities and designing approaches for human rights education concerning them. Their inclusive and meaningful involvement as key partners in developing, implementing and monitoring human rights education policies and other relevant measures must be continuously enabled and encouraged, so that human rights education for youth is also conducted with and by youth.

34. Human rights education processes are inevitably influenced by the learning environment and the experiences that young people have in their communities, particularly with regard to their human rights. Accordingly, national strategies for human rights education for youth must be accompanied by the adoption and implementation of legislation, policies, programmes and strategies to ensure that young people's human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled at the national level. Advancing the rights of young people, working closely with youth organizations and youth-led structures, enables human rights education, and some submissions received indicate that States are increasingly putting in place measures to this end.

35. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing use of technology in and outside of the classroom, as mentioned by some respondents, has rekindled the debate about

inequality, including in relation to the right to education and access to information. While the tremendous potential of new technologies should continue to be capitalized for educational efforts to increase their impact and accessibility, particular caution should be exercised and measures put in place in order to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that all youth have the opportunity to learn, including about human rights, and thereby leaving no youth behind. Other risks associated with the use of technology, including the isolation of young people, divisive discourses, disinformation and violations to their right to privacy, also need to be addressed.

36. In a world of increasing uncertainty and complexity, marked by multiple challenges, including violence and conflict, climate change, health crises, poverty and widening social and economic inequality, young people can play a major role in proposing and advocating solutions to these challenges that are grounded in the understanding that everyone is equally deserving of respect and dignity. Human rights education is an important strategy to empower young people as agents of change and active citizens who uphold their human rights and those of others. Enhancing efforts to implement human rights education for, with and by youth, using the plan of action of the fourth phase of the World Programme as a benchmark to support stocktaking and further action, is a vital investment for a peaceful, just and sustainable future.

## **Annex**

### **List of respondents**

Angola  
Argentina  
Burundi  
Chile  
Colombia  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
Italy  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Mauritius  
Mexico  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Türkiye

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