

policy

education for human rights,  
conflict resolution and  
tolerance



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united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east

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## introduction

As reiterated in the UNRWA Education Reform Strategy 2011-2015<sup>1</sup>, UNRWA is the main provider of basic education to Palestine refugees. All Palestine refugee children are eligible to avail themselves of the Agency's nine to ten years of free basic education provided in the five Fields of operation and also to secondary schooling in Lebanon.

The education programme is the largest of the UNRWA programmes, both in terms of staff engaged and the budgetary allocation. UNRWA education staff comprises more than 70% of the total Agency staff and education expenditure accounts for 59% of the total regular budget. In terms of a single agency managed system, UNRWA operates one of the largest school systems in the Middle East, covering five countries.

This human rights, conflict resolution, and tolerance (HRCRT) policy builds upon the efforts undertaken by UNRWA through its existing HRCRT programme. UNRWA's HRCRT programme has its origins in a pilot project conducted in 1999 in Gaza and the West Bank. This sought to develop students' abilities to manage and resolve conflicts in effective, non-violent and non-adversarial manners. The success of that project prompted the development of the HRCRT programme involving all schools in all five Fields of operation, with the following objectives<sup>2</sup>:

- Promotion of awareness and knowledge of fundamental rights of persons and of children;
- Facilitation of student participation in decision-making in schools and the promotion of leadership skills amongst students;
- Creation of violence-free school environments that facilitate teaching and learning.

The scale of the UNRWA HRCRT programme has increased over the years with its conceptual framework and development logic remaining grounded in the objectives outlined above. However, in spite of these achievements, evaluative and scoping work conducted in 2011<sup>3</sup> highlighted the need to strengthen the UNRWA HRCRT approach and programme through the development of a comprehensive and coherent HRCRT policy. The strategic aims of such a policy would be to:

- Bring more coherence to the HRCRT programme, which has progressively developed in the five fields;
- Enhance the delivery of the HRCRT curriculum;
- Ensure harmony of the HRCRT programme with on-going UNRWA reforms.

In order to be effective, policies need a coherent and practicable implementation strategy – including the identification of priorities and the setting-up of coordination mechanisms – which will subsequently ensure coherence, accountability, and allocation of resources. Such a strategy should take into account the multiplicity of stakeholders at both the national level (e.g. local government, the Ministry of Education, teacher training institutions, research bodies, non-governmental organisations) and UNRWA level (e.g. headquarters [HQ], field education departments, head teachers and their staff, parents, and students), and involve them in putting the strategy and broader policy in place.

Reflecting the need to build on current practices and engage stakeholders in its development, the UNRWA HRCRT policy is based on a review of existing policies and practices in UNRWA and consultation with students, teachers, parents, education specialists, education development centres, field staff, the department of legal affairs, and other HQ and external stakeholders during the period May-October 2011.<sup>4</sup> It also draws on international best practices and standards in human rights education.

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA Education Reform Strategy 2011-2015, 2011, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA briefing note: "Human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance programming within UNRWA", 2011, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> OIG and HREA with the UNRWA education department.

<sup>4</sup> This process included a scoping mission and report from Human Rights Education Associates: "UNRWA Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, and Tolerance (HRCRT) Education Programme Scoping Study Report."

## 1. embedding the HRCRT policy in existing UNRWA and global strategies and policy frameworks

The HRCRT policy should not be perceived as an independent document detached from the education programme as a whole, but rather as embedded in existing UNRWA strategies and policy frameworks which themselves are aligned with global, regional, and national frameworks. In this section, this alignment is made more explicit regarding the following levels: the international human rights system; UNRWA's broader strategic frameworks; the UNRWA education reform strategy; and the host country education systems.

### 1.1 UNRWA and the international human rights system

Established on the basis of the United Nations Charter, UNRWA is part of the United Nations and a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. As a United Nations Agency, UNRWA is bound to adhere to the United Nations' purposes and principles set out in the UN Charter. One of those purposes is "to achieve international co-operation [...] in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" (UN Charter, Art. 1(3)).

As the parent organ of UNRWA, the General Assembly establishes UNRWA's mandate and, more generally, informs the Agency's standards and operations. The General Assembly has emphasised the Agency's "essential role in providing vital services for the well-being, human development and protection of Palestine refugees". The General Assembly has also encouraged the Agency, "in close cooperation with other relevant United Nations entities, to continue making progress in addressing the needs and rights of children [...] in its operations in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child".<sup>5</sup> The "other relevant United Nations agencies" include, among others: UNESCO (with which UNRWA has had a partnership since its beginning), OHCHR, and UNICEF. The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out important elements regarding the provision of education to children. Notably, education shall be directed towards the following:

- "The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations" (Art. 29(1)(b));
- "The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own" (Art. 29(1)(c));
- "The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin" (Art. 29(1)(d)).

The following human rights instruments and standards have been adopted by the General Assembly and therefore explicitly inform UNRWA's approach towards human rights education:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006);
- The World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing), and related Plans of Action (I and II);
- The Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (adopted in December 2011).<sup>6</sup>

The importance of strategically aligning UNRWA's work within the international human rights system has been further reinforced by UNRWA's *Framework for Effective Engagement with the International Human Rights System* (September 2011). As stated in the framework, it forms "an integral part of UNRWA's protection of Palestine refugees, both in and through programming (internal aspect) and monitoring, reporting and interventions (external aspect). It guides UNRWA's interaction with the structural component of the international human rights

<sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 66/74 of 12 January 2012, operative para. 12.

<sup>6</sup> See GA resolution 66/137 of 19 December 2011.

system (IHRS), notably: the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her office; human rights treaty bodies; the Human Rights Council and associated mechanisms such as UN special rapporteurs, the universal periodic review and fact-finding missions; and several New York-based mechanisms.”<sup>7</sup>

Reflecting alignment with the international human rights system, the UNRWA HRCRT policy is based on core elements identified in the World Programme for Human Rights Education<sup>8</sup>. These elements are themselves based on a common understanding of human rights education, principles of teaching and learning, teacher preparation and professional development, the learning environment, and a strategy for monitoring and evaluation of human rights education.

## 1.2 human rights education and UNRWA’s broader strategic frameworks

Human rights education is also closely aligned with existing UNRWA strategic frameworks, such as the medium term strategy 2010-2015 and the 2011-2015 education reform, and with the host country education systems. With regards to the medium term strategy, human rights education is in line with the following human development goals (HDG) and strategic objectives (SO):

- Human rights education furthers HDG 4 (“human rights enjoyed to the fullest extent possible”) and SO 13 (“safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees by promoting respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law”);
- Human rights education also falls under HDG 2 (“acquired knowledge and skills”) and SO 5 (“enhance education quality and outcomes against set standards”). As stated above, the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides specific standards, including that education shall be “directed to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations”;
- By promoting knowledge of and respect for human rights, including those relevant for UNRWA’s provision of services (e.g. right to health and adequate standard of living), human rights education can also contribute to the achievement of other UNRWA human development goals (i.e. goals 1, “a long and healthy life”, and 3, “a decent standard of living”) and corresponding strategic objectives.

## 1.3 human rights education and the UNRWA education reform strategy

The HRCRT policy presented in this document builds upon the 2011-2015 education reform strategy that has at its core a vision of a unified and integrated UNRWA education system, in the context of the broader organisational decentralisation processes. The Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to support effective teaching and motivated teachers to enhance the quality of education in general. It seeks to promote meaningful coherence, contextualisation, collaboration, lesson-learning, and mutual working across the UNRWA education system.

The HRCRT policy also builds on other key and emerging policies and strategies developed by UNRWA:

- UNRWA Education Reform Strategy 2011-2015 and Education Reform Strategy Implementation Plan
- “Teachers for the Future: Teacher Education and Development Policy Framework” (draft December 2011);
- UNRWA Quality Framework for Curriculum Implementation (draft July 2011);
- Inclusive Education Policy for UNRWA (draft January 2012);
- UNRWA Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2009-2015;
- UNRWA Policy on Gender Equality (2007)
- UNRWA Disability Policy (2010); and
- UNRWA Protection Policy and Strategy (draft 2012).

## 1.4 human rights education and host country education systems

Further to long-standing arrangements with host authorities, the Agency uses the host curriculum and textbooks in all UNRWA schools in its five fields of operation. UNRWA has developed specific human rights education

<sup>7</sup> See “UNRWA framework for effective engagement with the international human rights system”, *UNRWA Department of Legal Affairs, International Division (2011)*, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/programme.htm> for information pertaining to the Programme.

materials to be taught as an independent subject or to be integrated into other subjects. The HRCRT policy will build on existing work, materials, and expertise in human rights education among UNRWA teachers and other education staff. Through its vision (Section 2.3), it will also clarify how UNRWA will undertake human rights education as a means to fulfil its mandate in a more systematic and cohesive manner.

## 2. key elements of the HRCRT policy

The HRCRT policy is based on a global understanding of the meaning of human rights education, a common set of human rights principles, and a clear vision of the HRCRT programme. These key elements inform the policy as a whole.

### 2.1 defining human rights education

Following on from the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) and the adoption of the plan of action for the first phase (2005-ongoing) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education<sup>9</sup>, education and training in human rights have expanded significantly, not only in formal education (schools, universities), but also in non-formal and informal education such as youth work and activities at the community level.

What makes human rights education unique from other education and training is that it references international human rights standards engrained in international law. The accompanying legal concepts may, at times, be challenging for learners to grasp, yet at the same time they form a very powerful framework in their articulation of human rights of everyone, which can be claimed and need to be respected, protected, promoted, and fulfilled by governments.

The World Programme for Human Rights Education reflects this uniqueness and defines human rights education as “education, training and information aiming at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing of knowledge, imparting of skills and moulding of attitudes directed to:

- The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and minorities;
- The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law;
- The building and maintenance of peace;
- The promotion of people-centred sustainable development and social justice”.<sup>10</sup>

The UNRWA HRCRT policy is therefore in line with the World Programme for Human Rights Education and will focus on formal education but explore potential links to non-formal education, particularly with regard to youth, reflecting the commitments of the “Engaging youth conference” in Brussels in March 2012.

### 2.2 guiding principles of the HRCRT policy

The UNRWA HRCRT policy will ensure a clear, common understanding of human rights education in all fields through a common set of human rights principles that inform all HRCRT strategies, activities, and results. This common set of human rights principles derives from international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The principles<sup>11</sup> which are particularly relevant to the context of Palestine refugees, are:

<sup>9</sup> See GA resolution 59/113 of 17 February 2005.

<sup>10</sup> The definition of human rights education is from the plan of action for the first phase (2005-ongoing) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (A/59/525/Rev.1).

<sup>11</sup> The definitions of the principles of universality, equality and non-discrimination, and participation and inclusion are taken from UNFPA, Human Rights Principles. Retrieved from:

<http://www.unfpa.org/rights/principles.htm>. The definition of tolerance taken from UNESCO's Declaration of principles of tolerance (1995). Retrieved from: [http://www.unesco.org/webworld/peace\\_library/UNESCO/HRIGHTS/124-129.HTM](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/peace_library/UNESCO/HRIGHTS/124-129.HTM). See the Annex for definitions of these principles.



- Human dignity
- Universality
- Equality and non-discrimination
- Participation and inclusion
- Tolerance

These principles must therefore be reflected across the UNRWA education system.

### 2.3 partnerships with other organisations

In realising its policy vision, UNRWA should collaborate with different governmental and non-governmental organisations and local communities.

Organisations such as UNESCO could contribute to curricular review, while the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights could provide guidance on good practices and standards relevant to human rights education. In fields where it is considered relevant, UNRWA could collaborate with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the strengthening of materials on international humanitarian law. UNRWA will also engage and welcome collaborative efforts to help promote human rights education in their schools and communities by strengthening ties with local and regional non-governmental organisations.

Establishing and reinforcing links with academic institutions and non-governmental organisations, within and beyond the region, will also be important in order to benefit from the existing expertise of those with experience in human rights education teacher training. UNRWA has a unique opportunity and expertise that most of universities in the fields do not currently have as UNRWA has included the teaching of human rights in its schools for more than a decade. UNRWA is in a position to offer its support to such academic institutions in order to strengthen the academic relationships across the five fields. In time this support could be offered to the League of Arab States as it has its own plan to teach and disseminate human rights across the Arab world.

### 2.4 UNRWA HRCRT approach

The overall goal of the HRCRT programme is grounded in the vision of UNRWA's education reform which is to establish an education system which "develops the full potential of Palestine refugees to enable them to be confident, innovative, questioning, thoughtful, tolerant and open-minded, upholding human values and religious tolerance, proud of their Palestinian identity, and contributing positively to the development of their society and the global community".<sup>12</sup>

Specifically, the UNRWA HRCRT policy will support a programme which:

- Aims at fostering a culture of human rights and peace;
- Is learner-centred;
- Allows for a range of approaches to integrate human rights education within the curricula of host countries (for example, "integrated" and "stand-alone" approaches);
- Has an emphasis on human rights, with conflict resolution and tolerance as supporting skills development.

Different educational approaches can coexist, but it is critical to articulate a common understanding of the value of human rights as a starting point for all schools and other educational facilities. This common understanding of human rights education within UNRWA will help strengthen human rights across the curriculum. It will thus inform a rights-based approach to the curriculum content, materials, and teaching and learning in all five fields. Below summarises the UNRWA HRCRT approach.

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<sup>12</sup> UNRWA Education Reform Strategy 2011-2015, 2011, p.1.

## UNRWA HRCRT approach

### vision

To provide human rights education that empowers Palestine refugee students to enjoy and exercise their rights, uphold human rights values, be proud of their Palestinian identity, and contribute positively to their society and the global community.

### statement of commitment

UNRWA is committed to providing quality human rights education in its schools and educational facilities in line with its education vision, the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the related instruments in the international human rights system, and the World Programme on Human Rights Education.

### strategic objectives

The strategic objectives of the UNRWA HRCRT programme, based on the World Programme for Human Rights Education will:

- Build on the human rights principles embedded within the cultural context of Palestine refugees;
- Develop a human rights education environment in UNRWA educational facilities that is conducive to promoting a culture of human rights;
- Equip UNRWA students and youths with human rights knowledge and skills in an attempt to positively influence their attitudes and behaviour in order to contribute positively to their society and the global community.

## 2.5 realisation of the UNRWA HRCRT approach

Thus, for the realisation of the approach outlined in this policy, it is important that human rights education:

- Is integrated in all UNRWA education policies (such as the teacher education policy and the inclusive education policy), frameworks, and training;
- Is integrated in the development of school-based teacher development (SBTD) materials, an essential component of the educational reform strategy;
- Is based on a common set of guiding human rights principles (see Section 2.2), and be centred on the achievement of human rights education competencies and learner outcomes (see Section 3.1);
- Is taught in all grades of basic education in UNRWA schools;
- Is the responsibility of all teachers, acknowledging that some schools will have human rights-specific teachers while others may not;
- Gives equal importance to cognitive (knowledge and skills) and social/affective (values, attitudes, behaviours) learning outcomes.

It is also crucial to consider the overall curriculum framework being developed, which will guide the delivery of the education programme, and to ensure the HRCRT policy is formulated and adapted in line with it.

## 3. teaching and learning

Strengthening HRCRT education requires a holistic approach to teaching and learning that reflects human rights values. Starting as early as possible, the development of human rights education competencies ideally is integrated into all aspects of education. In particular, teaching practices are democratic and participatory, and curriculum and material content and objectives are rights-based.

### 3.1 developing HRCRT learner competencies

The teaching and learning of HRCRT in UNRWA schools and educational facilities should reflect the guiding principles listed in Section 2.2 and be directed towards the full development of the desired learner competencies. The list of learner competencies will form a framework for determining the HRCRT curriculum approach. Existing HRCRT materials can be used, revised, and adapted, and new materials can be developed in order to achieve these competencies.

This list of HRCRT learner competencies<sup>13</sup> is not exhaustive and should only serve as an initial guide towards the development of an age-appropriate competencies framework upon which to build a full HRCRT programme. Development of age-appropriate competencies should be further informed by international standards such as those developed by the OHCHR.<sup>14</sup>

The HRCRT learner competencies are grouped under three headings: knowledge and understanding; attitudes and values; and skills. Although the competencies are presented individually, they are in the main interlinked.

#### **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

*The learner is aware of/knows about and understands:*

- Human rights and their enjoyment by children: participation and inclusion; equality and non-discrimination; accountability; and the evolving capacities and best interest of the child;
- The history and philosophy of human rights; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and the on-going development of human rights in all regions of the world, linked to the human struggle for freedom, equality, justice and dignity;
- Arguments for the universality of human rights; the indivisibility of rights; the interdependence of rights; and common challenges to these perspectives;
- The evolving nature of the human rights framework and international human rights standards elaborated in international and regional instruments, e.g., the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is of special relevance to the school context;
- Rights in conflict with one another and the challenge to maximise respect for all rights under these circumstances;
- The context and causes of human rights violations;
- Current or historical events in one's own country, continent or in the world that illustrate major human rights issues, violations or movements;
- Individuals and groups – past and present – who contributed and still contribute to the upholding and defence of human rights, in one's own country, continent or the world (famous as well as unsung).

#### **ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

*The learner demonstrates:*

- Respect for oneself and tolerance and respect for others based on the dignity of all persons and their human rights;
- The belief that one person can make a difference in the world in promoting and protecting human rights;
- A valuing of and engagement with human rights and justice/injustice themes;
- Compassion for and solidarity with those suffering human rights violations or those who are the target of attacks resulting from prejudice (especially more vulnerable groups).

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<sup>13</sup> The list is adapted from Human Rights Education Guidelines for Secondary School Systems (draft December 2011, Warsaw: HREA, OSCE, and ODIHR). The competencies in these guidelines are for secondary schools and have therefore been adapted for UNRWA's context.

<sup>14</sup> See ABC - Teaching Human Rights: Practical activities for primary and secondary schools, chapter 1. New York: OHCHR. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/TrainingEducation.aspx>.

**SKILLS**

*The learner is able to:*

- Use the human rights framework and principles to resolve interpersonal conflicts; apply knowledge of one's rights to be assertive in situations when others are denying his/her rights;
- Describe historical and contemporary political, legal, economic, cultural and social processes from a human rights perspective and using human rights language;
- Locate information and sources on human rights relevant to one's personal and academic needs and interests;
- Take an active part in discussions, debates and controversies related to human rights;
- Demonstrate confidence, motivation and leadership abilities, as well as skills at building and maintaining collaborative efforts in taking action for human rights in schools and communities;
- Take an active role in defending, protecting and achieving the human rights of others.

### 3.2 teaching practices

The realisation of the HRCRT vision set out in this policy requires teachers capable of developing the HRCRT learner competencies listed in Section 3.1. The emphasis of the UNRWA education reform on developing children's full capabilities requires that teachers should learn how to teach about HRCRT in a way that prompts critical reflection on the part of students, engages them in a participatory manner, places emphasis on strengthening knowledge of human rights principles, teaches them practical skills (such as conflict resolution and/or mediation), and helps shape their personal beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours.

It is also crucial that teaching practices themselves are reflective of human rights principles: teachers should respect the dignity of each student and provide equal opportunities for them; they should adopt learner-centred methods and approaches that empower students; they should encourage cooperative learning, and a sense of solidarity, creativity, pride, and self-esteem.

In order for teaching practices to reflect these characteristics, the professional development of teachers needs to be strengthened through regular teacher training both at the pre-service and in-service stages. This is explored more in Section 4. Similarly, the overall ethos of the teaching and learning environment as one of inclusivity, respect and empowerment must be emphasised in all strands of educational structures and practices.

### 3.3 curricular approach

Complementing the professional development of the teachers and the overall ethos of the education programme, the curricular approach must reflect the diversity of experiences and contexts in the five fields in which UNRWA operates. While UNRWA has developed an amount of curriculum enrichment materials and independent human rights subject material in the past to help support teachers, the HRCRT policy acknowledges and builds upon this experience and materials to ensure a forward-looking approach that is versatile and adaptable within the five fields.

In order to ensure that students attain the human rights education competencies throughout the primary and lower secondary grades at UNRWA schools, the following must take place:

- Review and, if necessary, revision of existing materials used to teach human rights, whether (1) through integration in specific school subjects such as Arabic language, Islamic education and social sciences or (2) as an independent subject;
- Support teachers to more actively make use of existing materials;
- Develop additional human rights materials that will complement the existing ones; and
- Encourage more extensive use of the many available curricular resources, games and other enrichment materials on human rights (e.g. on the Internet if the ICT infrastructure allows).

## 4. teacher preparation and professional development

As mentioned in Section 3.2., for the school and other educational facilities to serve as a model of human rights learning and practice, all teachers and staff need to be able to both transmit and model human rights values. Training and professional development must foster educators' knowledge about, commitment to, and motivation for human rights. Furthermore, as holders of rights themselves, educational personnel need to work and learn in a context of respect for their dignity and rights. Within the school community, opportunities for awareness-raising about human rights and for training in human rights education should not exist only for teachers, but also for head teachers and members of the school management, education specialists, administrative staff in schools and educational institutions, education officials, and planners in local and national authorities, community leaders and parents.

Reflecting the emerging teacher-related policies, a broad range of human rights issues need to be considered in all areas of professional development, including training, recruitment, promotion, and retention and the roles and job descriptions of teachers and other staff such as education specialists. In line with the reform strategy, measures taken in this area aim to achieve one of the main goals of the policy, which is to change classroom practice. A common need is teacher-training on HRCRT and the continuous professional development of teachers in strengthening their skills in teaching human rights. There is a need to provide specific training to teachers to assist them in integrating HRCRT more effectively in the subjects they teach or, in the case of specialised human rights teachers, to provide additional teacher training support. Apart from this, teacher training can reinforce teaching practices that are respectful of human rights and will further strengthen all teachers to be positive role models in the classroom.

Many teachers, including those in Gaza who are "human rights teachers" (they only teach human rights), are appreciative of the innovative and participatory teaching methods they have acquired as a result of teacher training on human rights.<sup>15</sup> It has renewed their energy to teach and it has reinvigorated the students in learning about human rights as well.

### 4.1 recruitment, pre-service and in-service professional development

In order for the HRCRT vision to become a reality, the following elements must be included in the HRCRT programme in the selection of teachers and pre-service and in-service training and professional development:

- Special consideration must be given in interviews to prospective teachers' commitment to human rights principles;
- Contracts should be signed by teachers in which they affirm that they will not resort to corporal punishment;
- All teacher-training programmes must include and reflect human rights principles and empower teachers to adopt classroom practices that respect and promote human rights;
- All newly-appointed teachers should attend a mandatory basic human rights education training course. This includes teachers of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and the youth programme;
- All teachers – not simply the ones who are currently using human rights enrichment materials in the integrated approach or those teaching human rights as a separate subject – should receive HRCRT in-service training in order to appreciate the value of teaching students about/for human rights, and to enhance their capacities to better teach about human rights;
- Basic teacher training on human rights education should emphasise the guiding principles (Section 2.2), the core competencies (Section 3.1), methods of effectively teaching human rights education, and skills in conflict resolution;
- The school-based teacher development (SBTD) programme should include a training unit on human rights education;
- Leadership courses (such as "Leading for the Future") should include a human rights education component;
- A comprehensive training programme that goes beyond the basic HRCRT training for all teachers needs to be developed for the specialised human rights teachers.

<sup>15</sup> See "UNRWA Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, and Tolerance (HRCRT) Education Programme Scoping Study Report", p.7.

The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been acknowledged in the education reform as a means to implement and strengthen the reform's impact. Building on this, ICTs can enable teachers to strengthen their knowledge and skills in human rights by the following:

- The establishment of an online community through which teachers and other stakeholders can exchange resources, good practices, and lessons learned, and a common understanding of the HRCRT programme can be fostered;
- Provide teachers with access to online resources regarding human rights, human rights education, tolerance, and conflict resolution either through a dedicated section of UNRWA's online library and resource bank or by making them more aware of existing online resources provided by Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), OHCHR, UNESCO and other information providers and online clearing-houses in human rights education;
- The development of a short, self-paced, self-directed e-learning course on human rights and how they specifically apply to children, targeting all educational personnel and interested stakeholders. The self-paced delivery mode will allow for any teacher, counsellor or parent to participate in this course at any time. Successful completion of the course could be tied to performance management policies for teaching personnel;
- The development of an instructor-led distance learning course on human rights, conflict resolution, and tolerance for new teachers. Ideally this course would be offered in collaboration with a university (and hence the course would be certified) several times a year as to allow for larger numbers of teachers to participate;
- Teachers and other education staff should have opportunities to participate in online courses through other international human rights bodies or institutes.

To ensure the above is effectively implemented and maintained, a monitoring and evaluation system should be put in place. Such a system should consider criteria for admission, the means of ensuring proper completion of the requirements, and an evaluation mechanism to measure the impact of the course on participants.

## 5. learning environment

Human rights education strives towards an environment where human rights are practised and realised in the daily life of the whole school community. As well as addressing cognitive learning, human rights education includes social and emotional development. This rights-based environment will facilitate respecting and promoting the human rights of all actors characterised by mutual understanding, respect, and responsibility. It also enables children to express their views freely and to participate in school life, and offers them appropriate opportunities for interacting with the wider community.

UNRWA is committed to ensuring a safe and stimulating rights-based school environment where students learn, enjoy their rights, respect rights of others, and fully participate in school life. This environment is hazard-free, violence free, healthy and accessible to all, thereby ensuring physical and mental safety. The learning environment and all education activities—both inside and outside the classrooms—should be respectful of human rights principles at all times and in all cases.

A rights-based school environment will only be realised by an integrated approach which addresses all levels – that is policy and management, teachers and students, and a safe and stimulating learning environment. It will also be important to ensure interaction between the school and wider community.

### 5.1 policy statements and implementation provisions for human rights in the school

School policy statements and implementation provisions should have human rights principles reflected in all management processes.

School management should plan for, support, and implement human rights at all times and in all situations. Each school should have a clear charter on students' and teachers' rights and responsibilities based on the human rights principles outlined above. In line with existing UNRWA instructions and policies, the management of the school should have a code of conduct for a learning environment free of violence, sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, and corporal punishment. This code of conduct should include:

- Commitment by all not to resort to violence, sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, and corporal punishment;
- Procedures for resolving conflicts or disputes and dealing with violence and bullying;
- Procedures for redress in case of sexual abuse, harassment and corporal punishment;
- Mechanisms for participation of students in school-related events or activities, including through the formation of democratically-elected and sustainable school parliaments;
- Non-discrimination policies protecting all members of the school community, relating to—among others—admissions, scholarships, advancement, promotion, special programmes, eligibility, and opportunities.

School management should place emphasis on the recognition and celebration of human rights achievements through festivities, awards, and prizes throughout the school year.

School management should make sure all of the above is received, read, well-understood, and applied by all school members.

## 5.2 teachers in a rights-based school

Teachers of a rights-based school have an explicit mandate from the school management concerning human rights education. This mandate should ensure teachers:

- Learn about human rights concepts, principles, and values and apply them when interacting with their fellow teachers and students;
- Show a sense of belonging to their school community, have an active role in ensuring that the rights-based schools concept is fully applied in all situations;
- Respect the human dignity of students and colleagues under all circumstances, including zero tolerance to violence, discrimination, and corporal punishment;
- Encourage free self-expression and exchange of ideas among students and provide participation opportunities for all students;
- Have access to forums and online resources, to exchange good practices and to network with other teachers in nearby schools, within the same field, between fields, and internationally, depending on available resources;
- Work closely with school management to reflect human rights education as an integral component of the education process.

## 5.3 students in a rights-based school

Students of a rights-based school enjoy freedom of expression and have chances to freely exchange ideas, communicate with others and participate in decision-making processes (suitable to their age group/level). They will:

- Show a sense of belonging to their school community, are proud of proud of their Palestinian identity, and respect and value cultural diversity;
- Apply what they learn through their curricula to their day-to-day practices in the classroom, the school, and the community;
- Be tolerant with diversities, which includes respecting the needs of all students in line with the inclusive education policy;
- Be respectful of their teachers and the education staff;
- Be protective of their schools' physical environment/property;
- Not engage in violent acts and acts of bullying.

These principles should be actively introduced to the children as early as possible at all school levels.

## 5.4 interactions between the school, local government, and the wider community

The value of human rights education must be linked to the lives of the students, their parents, and the communities in which they live. School management and teachers should identify opportunities to raise awareness among parents, local community, civil society and the local authorities about human rights in relation to the day-to-day lives of the children and their education.

To achieve this, school management should:

- Put in place communication mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of ideas among the school staff, students, non-governmental organisations, and the surrounding communities in order to strengthen the human rights culture in the community at large;
- Ensure that the parent/teacher associations are well-supported and that parents are actively participating in decisions that promote a human rights culture in their communities, as for example, the participation of parents in joint human rights projects in the community;
- Encourage students to carry out extra-curricular projects in the community, particularly on human rights issues;
- Promote partnerships with non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, and other human rights organisations to enrich and support the HRCRT programme at large.

The support of the community and civil society is crucial to the success of UNRWA's efforts in reinforcing the value of human rights within its education system and indirectly introducing it to the whole community. It fosters the relationships with the different bodies active in the community and enhances the possibilities of ownership of human rights initiatives by different stakeholders. This type of support and engagement from the community and civil society will also help facilitate the overall understanding and acceptance of other UNRWA policies such as the inclusive education policy.

## 5.5 a safe and stimulating learning environment

Finally, a rights-based school environment should be safe, environment-friendly, stimulating, and learner/teacher-friendly. To achieve this, the:

- Environment should be obstacle-free and accessible to all students and users. Its buildings, facilities (playgrounds, library, computers labs, etc.), and services should be made available in full respect of the inclusive education policy;
- Environment should be free of violence (including gender-based violence), sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, and corporal punishment;
- Learning environment should be sufficiently-resourced and well-accommodated with furniture, computer labs, and educational tools that are comfortable and safe to use;
- Schools should be located—where feasible—away from main roads to eliminate or minimise road traffic accidents among students, and to minimise exposure to noise, fumes, and exhaust among students and school staff;
- Schools and the community provide time and space to apply curricular and extra-curricular educational activities, in line with UNRWA policies on the use of UNRWA facilities.

## 6. monitoring and evaluation

This section underscores the need for systematic monitoring, evaluation, and research to under-pin and support the HRCRT programme. An effective monitoring and evaluation system will not only help improve the quality of the programmes being offered, but also contribute towards the HRCRT policy's understanding and vision of how such efforts can impact on lives of children. The monitoring and evaluation system is in line with the monitoring and evaluation framework for the education reform strategy.

### 6.1 focus of monitoring and evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation of the HRCRT programme fits into the overall monitoring and evaluation framework for the education reform strategy which stipulates that a culture of human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance will be put in place.

Monitoring and evaluation encompasses the three interrelated areas highlighted in the HRCRT policy: teaching and learning, which includes learner competencies (see Section 3); teacher preparation and professional development (see Section 4); and the learning environment (see Section 5), as well as cross-cutting issues (Section 7). Some areas to be monitored and evaluated are:



a. teaching and learning and curriculum materials

- Learning materials which are in line with HRCRT values and principles;
- Learning materials which develop HRCRT learner competencies;
- Availability of learning materials and resources for students;
- Time in the curriculum for HRCRT programming;
- Actual availability of time in the curriculum for HRCRT programming (contact time);
- Intended versus actual methodologies of instruction used by teachers;
- Achievement of student outcomes (knowledge, attitudes and values, and skills).

b. teacher preparation and professional development

- Learning materials which are in line with the principles of teaching and learning of HRCRT;
- Availability of learning materials for teachers;
- Availability of training for teachers (both pre-service and in-service);
- Actual training undertaken by teachers (contact time);
- Effectiveness of individual training programmes;
- Achievement of teacher outcomes (knowledge, attitudes and values, and skills related to implementing the HRCRT programme).

c. the learning environment

- Evidence of tolerance, equality and non-discrimination for all being encouraged and respected;
- Quality and degree of open discussions between teacher and students and among students in the classroom;
- Level of critical inquiry encouraged among students;
- Level and degree of children's participation and agency;
- Ability to peacefully resolve conflicts within the school environment;
- The learning environment is safe and non-violent (emotionally as well as physically);
- Partnerships exist between school staff and parents, local government and other organisations in the community.

d. cross-cutting issues

- Application of policies, frameworks, and strategies addressing cross-cutting issues;
- Availability of gender-sensitive HRCRT curricula and materials;
- Awareness of teachers and students about cross-cutting issues;
- Degree of cooperation with UNRWA entities addressing cross-cutting issues is enhanced;
- Non-bias and tolerance for diversity throughout.

## 6.2 methodologies of monitoring and evaluation

In order to effectively and reliably measure the programme implementation and results for all these dimensions, a set of shared standards and indicators should be developed.

The indicators should be carefully chosen in relation to the competencies and criteria mentioned in this Policy, and should be limited in number in order to be manageable. This process should be facilitated through the identification and development of monitoring and evaluation tools and processes which are easily understandable and realistic for practice. Monitoring and evaluation should be systematic to ensure that implementation is carried out as planned and that the outcomes observed correspond to the expected results.

Some elements of programming lend themselves readily to quantitative indicators, for example, coverage of the HRCRT programme, student participation levels, and certain forms of assessment related to content knowledge. Other elements lend themselves more easily to qualitative indicators, such as the methodologies used in the classroom, student and teacher views on the programme, and impacts related to values and skills. These qualitative indicators should be assessed through perceptual analysis, allowing to measure practices, attitudes

and values. UNRWA will develop indicators and associated tools and processes that capture both the core elements of programme implementation as well as high priority results.

In line with a human rights-based approach to monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders should be actively engaged in decisions related to the methodologies chosen and actively involved in this process in a way that encourages reflection and improvement on the parts of teachers and students.

As UNRWA develops its monitoring and evaluation system for the HRCRT programme, it should rely on emerging initiatives such as the human rights education guidelines for secondary school systems developed by Human Rights Education Associates, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

### 6.3 coordination of and responsibilities for data collection

In order to measure UNRWA-wide changes, the monitoring and implementation of the HRCRT programme must be a coordinated effort using shared standards and indicators deriving from the Field Implementation Plans (FIPs), the Headquarters Implementation Plan (HIP), and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) for those core elements of the programme that are shared across Fields. This requires a close link with the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the Education Reform Strategy.

The monitoring and evaluation effort should encourage and make use of relevant data collection techniques that are undertaken within the school systems. This will help to ensure that educational policy-makers, managers, and teachers are familiar with the goals of the HRCRT policy, feel a sense of ownership of the intended outcomes, and participate in the reflective learning process that evaluation can engender.

Gathering the data for monitoring and evaluation is thus a shared responsibility at all levels, from the schools to the field offices to headquarters. At the school level, mechanisms for student and teacher self-assessment can be put in place to help measure competencies of students and teachers' abilities to teach about human rights. Also at the school level, teachers are specifically responsible for human rights along with head teachers, who support the data-gathering aspects of monitoring and evaluation. Education specialists and other field staff are responsible for additional data gathering and preliminary analysis to be supported by headquarters. The majority of data gathering should be made through UNRWA staff and available resources, but it will be required to occasionally benefit from external stakeholders to provide guidance in monitoring and evaluation methods and to provide external evaluations. Coordination with other programme areas of the education programme will be key.

A range of effective data collection methods, many of which are already used by EMIS, need to be identified and validated in the fields. All types of information gathered should be referenced in relation to baseline data, and be – to the extent possible – based on existing data gathered through EMIS. There should be a concerted effort to promote the sharing of good practices between fields.

## 7. cross-cutting dimensions

The HRCRT policy addresses the following cross-cutting issues: gender, youth, protection, inclusive education/disability, and educational environment. These issues are to be considered implicitly and explicitly in the four areas of the human rights policy: teaching and learning; teacher preparation and professional development; the learning environment; and monitoring and evaluation.

### 7.1 vulnerable groups

Education staff and teachers should consider the specific rights of vulnerable groups (such as children with disabilities, orphans, or persons having suffered human rights violations). To this end, cooperation with the UNRWA inclusive education approach will be enhanced.

<sup>16</sup> Draft guidelines were developed as of December 2011 and contributed to the development of the core HRE competencies listed in Section 3.1.

## 7.2 inclusive education/ disability

The HRCRT policy reflects the approach of inclusive education as part of the right to learn in line with the UNRWA inclusive education policy. The policy addresses disability in line with the UNRWA disability policy based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To this end, cooperation with the UNRWA inclusive education unit will be enhanced.

## 7.3 gender

All materials and activities developed for human rights education should be gender-sensitive and all curricula should be reviewed and analysed to tackle stereotypes and bias in line with the 2008–2009 UNRWA gender mainstreaming strategy and the UNRWA policy on gender equality. Gender is a theme that is to be addressed clearly in the HRCRT curriculum. To this end, cooperation with the UNRWA gender task-force and the UNRWA programme coordination and support unit will be enhanced.

## 7.4 youth

Human rights education should clearly address the needs of Palestinian youth, their right to education through a rights-based school environment that enables them to participate actively in their communities and uphold the human rights values and their Palestinian identity. Youth participation will be fostered through functional school parliaments that have real influence in decision-making and planning. To this end, cooperation with the UNRWA programme coordination and support unit will be enhanced.

## 7.5 protection

The HRCRT policy complies with UNRWA protection standards of the rights of Palestine refugees as well as UNRWA education technical instructions regarding violence-free schooling. To this end, cooperation with the UNRWA senior protection coordinator will be enhanced.

## 7.6 educational environment

Students and teachers should enjoy a safe and stimulating school based on UNRWA education technical instructions, a code of conduct, and an ethical framework. To this end, cooperation with the UNRWA governance, administration and finance unit will be enhanced.

## annex 1 - guiding principles of the HRCRT policy

### human dignity

Human dignity is a principle that asserts that all human beings, by virtue of being human, deserve to be respected and treated well.

### universality

Human rights are universal. All people everywhere in the world are entitled to them. The universality of human rights is encompassed in the words of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

### equality and non-discrimination

All individuals are equal as human beings and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each person. No one should therefore suffer discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or geographical origin, disability, property, birth or other status as established by human rights standards.

With specific reference to children's rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child established non-discrimination as one of its core obligations in Article 2: "The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It does not matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis." Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also makes reference to the right to education "without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity."

### participation and inclusion

All people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being. Rights-based approaches require a high degree of participation by communities, civil society, minorities, women, children, young people, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

With specific reference to children's rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child integrates participation as a guiding principle<sup>17</sup>. In particular, Article 12 of the Convention highlights the need to respect the views of children: when decisions are made that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. This convention encourages others to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making – not give children authority over adults. Article 12 does not interfere with parents' right and responsibility to express their views on matters affecting their children. Moreover, the convention recognises that the level of a child's participation in decisions must be appropriate to the child's level of maturity. Children's ability to form and express their opinions develops with age and most adults will naturally give the views of teenagers greater weight than those of a pre-schooler, whether in family, legal, or administrative decisions.

### tolerance

Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty; it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace. Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.

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<sup>17</sup> See UNICEF, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child – Guiding Principles: General Requirements for All Rights*. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding_Principles.pdf).



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