

DECLARATION OF CHILD RIGHTS-CENTRIC EDUCATION (2024) (DRAFT)

Preamble

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly, in the “First phase (2005-2009) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education”, affirmed that

- “It is essential to ensure that **educational** objectives, **practices** and the organization of the **schools** are consistent with human rights values and principles”; and

Recalling that General Comment 1 (2001) of the UN CRC on Article 29 (1) “The Aims of Education” recognized that

- “‘Education’ in this context goes far beyond formal schooling to embrace the broad range of **life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society**”; and
- Called for “the **fundamental reworking** of curricula to include the various aims of education and the systematic revision of textbooks and other teaching materials and technologies, as well as school policies”; in recognition that
- “Approaches which do no more than seek to superimpose the aims and values of the article on the existing system without encouraging any deeper changes are clearly inadequate”; and
- “Efforts to promote the enjoyment of other rights must not be undermined, and should be reinforced, by the values imparted in the educational process. This includes not only the content of the curriculum but also the educational processes, the pedagogical methods and the environment within which education takes place, whether it be the **home, school, or elsewhere**”; and

Reasoning that

1. When it was only as recently as 1989 that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) recognized Children as the Subjects of their own Rights, it is inconceivable that prevalent practices of Education that evolved and were mainstreamed several decades prior (when Children were considered Property, of the State or Parents) would respect Child Rights;
2. Nevertheless, Child Rights are inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent and there cannot be any justification for practices of Education to violate them; and
3. Whilst the essentiality of ensuring that “**educational objectives, practices and the organization of the schools** are consistent with human rights values and principles” arise from **schools being the institution established explicitly for education**, to fulfill the state’s obligation to compulsorily provide primary education (UN CRC Article 28), the recognition that education encompasses a “**broad range of life experiences and learning processes**” which can take place at “**the home, school, or elsewhere**” makes it imperative that the protection of human rights values and principles be extended to **all environments** providing education.

WE CALL FOR

1. All Education Practice (defined broadly as "*all experiences and processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society*") in all Environments (home, school or elsewhere) to be fundamentally reworked to ensure they are consistent with human rights values and principles, and especially the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
2. This reworking to be prioritised in schools and other institutions, both State and non-State, established explicitly for the purpose of Education of the Child; and
3. Be extended to reworking the evaluation of the education provided for children in elective home education.