



September 2008

A Child's View of Human Rights

Education Newsletter



Editorial

The Council of Europe takes great pleasure in focusing this special issue of its Education Newsletter on the project "A Child's View of Human Rights." This project was conducted during the 2007-2008 school year by the association Regards d'enfants, under the patronage of Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and with the support of various partners. We felt that this project set a fine example, giving children an opportunity to express their own view of human rights.

Ever since it was founded almost 60 years ago, the Council of Europe has sought to make all Europeans aware of the need to protect and promote human rights. This work was stepped up just over 10 years ago, when the "Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights" project got under way, and every one of our member states is now participating in one way or another. In this context, we are studying how best to teach and practise democracy, how an awareness of the values that human rights teach us can help us to live together in our multicultural societies, and how we can work for inclusion and sharing and protect the vulnerable while defending our own rights. For our own rights are other people's, too. We are working not only with governments, but also with non-governmental organisations, to build a public-spirited partnership centring on subjects particularly close to our hearts.

For ten years, experts from all our member states have been working together to design school courses and guides for the democratic governance of schools, and to define the skills that teachers need to communicate the message about democracy and human rights. It is now an accepted fact that our children must be taught to respect these rights from their very earliest years. If people know what they are and apply them from childhood onwards, human rights will become an integral part of adult life.

These children's views on human rights have shown just how inextricably linked these rights are to questions of day-to-day life, questions which are of concern to us today and which all of us have to face. They have also provided a demonstration of the participants' creative gifts and talents, and I should like to congratulate them on their exemplary work. Well done to them all!

Ólöf Ólafsdóttir



Special issue: "A Child's View of Human Rights" project,
Strasbourg, 8-10 March 2008



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A Child's View of Human Rights



Values are neither imposed nor applied by order. It is only in the light of the free beliefs of each individual that human rights become reality, and children have much to contribute through their intuition and their ways of expressing themselves.

Between September 2007 and March 2008, activity leaders from socio-cultural centres and teachers from eight schools in Germany, France, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation and Switzerland worked with 9 to 12-year-old pupils on an adapted version of the European Convention on Human Rights. All the children who wished to do so were invited to take part in a competition called "Draw me human rights", held under the patronage of artist Tomi Ungerer. The best drawings were displayed at an exhibition organised by the CIC banking group, the Council of Europe, the *Fossé des Treize* socio-cultural centre (Strasbourg, France) and the city of Berne (Switzerland).

Some 160 children involved in the project met in Strasbourg on 8, 9 and 10 March 2008. They had done some preparatory work based on one article of the European Convention on Human Rights and came to present the results of their educational activity: a song, a

film or cartoon, a play or a pictorial work, all of them featuring values relating to human rights. They presented these to



officials from the European Court of Human Rights and other Council of Europe bodies. The children were then asked to act as Human Rights Ambassadors, and

they planted a "human rights tree" in the grounds of the Court of Human Rights.

The Council of Europe supported this activity as an exemplary project in the field of education for democratic citizenship and human rights. The project was initiated by the association *Regards d'enfants*, whose chair, Brigitte Kahn, is also vice-chair of the Human Rights Grouping, was conducted by children and teachers from five countries, with support from various partners and patrons.

With the association's help, these young Human Rights Ambassadors have already taken a number of positive steps:

- running information stalls at the European picnic held in Strasbourg on 1 June 2008;
- organising an inter-faith meeting on 30 June 2008 between two schools (the Jewish school of Strasbourg and the *collège* of Seloncourt), involving visits to the mosque, the synagogue and the cathedral.

The same young ambassadors have various practical projects in the pipeline for the school year 2008-2009.

We wish them the best of luck with their future activities.



Prizewinners

Winners of prizes in the drawing competition

- AMARGER Théo (Collège Foch, Strasbourg, France)
- BERLING Marie (Ecole Jacques Gachot)
- BOLLENBACH Lucie (Lampertheim, France)



- BOUCHTEDT Lise (Ecole Rolland, Moscow, Russia)
- CERUTTI Simone (ECLF, Berne, Switzerland)
- HOCINE Safa (ECLF, Berne, Switzerland)
- HUTT Alicia (Collège Foch, Strasbourg, France)
- Juliette (Ecole Schoepflin, Strasbourg, France)
- KIRDIANOVA Lilia (Ecole Rolland, Moscow, Russia)
- KUNKEL Caroline (Strasbourg, France)
- Louis (Ecole Schoepflin, Strasbourg, France)
- OTT Louise (Collège de Barr, France)

- SPRENGER Valérie (ECLF, Berne, Switzerland)
- TAHEYEFF Sacha (ECLF, Berne, Switzerland)
- STETTLER Usa (ECLF, Berne, Switzerland)
- STRICKLER Marie (Ecole Notre Dame de Sion, Strasbourg, France)
- VALENTIN Mathilde (Ecole Schoepflin, Strasbourg, France)
- WALSPURGER Maud (Baldenheim, France)
- ZEITER Nevine (ECLF, Berne, Switzerland)
- A number of children from the educational support group (CLAS)

Winners of special prizes for their drawings

- AGANIC Avdo
- FUCHS Apolline
- BOUDANI Houda
- WEISBECKER Florian

Schools/institutions which were awarded prizes

- Ecole Cantonale de langue française (ECLF), Berne, Switzerland
- Ecole Schoepflin, Strasbourg, France
- Centre Louis Braille, Neuhoof, Strasbourg, France
- Fossé des Treize sociocultural centre, Strasbourg, France
- Ecole Yehuda Halévy, Strasbourg, France
- Ecole Rolland, Moscow, Russia
- Collège Kléber, Haguenau, France
- Collège Foch, Strasbourg, France

What some of the children said

"I learned all about human rights. I had never heard of the European Convention on Human Rights before. I learned not to be embarrassed when play-acting in front of other people. I had already done some acting, and that helped me to go further. I think that the project brought the class together a little bit more. It was great to spend three whole days together."

Emma

"The activities were brilliant: learning about chocolate, the boat trip, the human rights-themed workshops (they were really great). The cartoon was the most difficult part, but it made the biggest impression as well. It was difficult: we had to do loads of stuff and we didn't have much time. We worked really hard on it, and in the end it was fantastic. We were working with a film director and an artist, so we also saw how they do their jobs."

"[...] I liked the part with the clown, which made us realise how serious it is to interfere in people's private lives. At the same time, it was fun."

Fériel

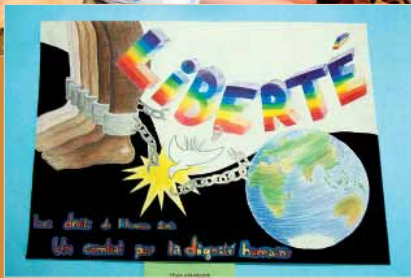
"What I liked best was the journey to Strasbourg, travelling together as a class and meeting other pupils. Sometimes it

was a bit difficult to understand each other. [...] I knew that people should respect and help each other, but this experience has made it even clearer. We learned to listen to one another. I learned about human rights [...] during the weekend organised by *Regards d'enfants*."

Camille



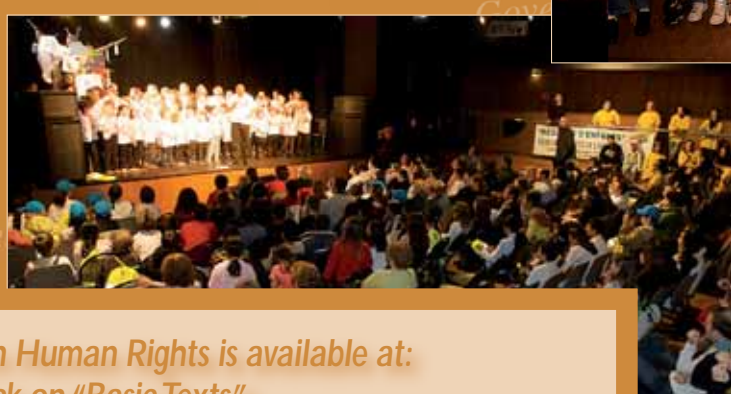
A children's introduction to on Human



the European Convention Rights

Article 10 - Freedom of expression

You have the right to hold opinions and to receive information from others. This includes freedom of expression.



Information on Human Rights is available at:
- Click on "Basic Texts"

the rights in this Convention... Such restrictions are only allowed if they are...

Messages received during the project weekend



© Photo: Sandro Weltin / Council of Europe

"Now it is your turn to start acting as 'Human Rights Ambassadors': it is through shared respect for the dignity of every man, woman and child, without the slightest intolerance or discrimination, that we shall be able to create greater peace among ourselves. I entrust each and every one of you with this responsibility, and I shall rely on you all to continue to carry out this duty, whichever part of Europe you may be in."

Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General, Council of Europe

"It is my hope that you will continue to make it very clear, through your creative activities and through your words and deeds, that without respect for human rights our planet would be like a jungle where the strongest would always prevail. We shall need you in the years ahead: please take up this challenge! So when you get back home, be true 'ambassadors', carriers of the human rights message, in your respective countries, schools and families."

Mr Philippe Boillat, Director General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe

"Human rights education finds its true meaning in this effort, not only to promote the European Convention on Human Rights, but also, more generally, to help to uphold democracy and promote citizenship in a way which respects all the cultural differences between us, so that each and every one can make it a part of his or her own tradition. It is while we are children that we learn to look at others and become aware of differences, and it is at that early stage that the fundamental values on which Europe is built are shaped."

Mr Philippe Richert, Vice-President of the Senate, President of the Bas-Rhin Departmental Council, France

"We felt that children's views were vital, for children are pure and innocent, not subject to outside influences, and able in particular to ask questions leading those around them to reflect and to play a role other than that of passive witness. This is crystal clear from children's drawings and comments, which also remind adults of things they no longer notice. Children amaze us with their accurate and far-seeing perceptions, and with the clarity of their analysis, and sometimes even of their judgment. They challenge us, and it is vital that we should respond."

Mr Salomon Levy, Treasurer of Regards d'enfants

"As 'grown ups', bearing a very heavy responsibility for enabling all members of the community to live together, in spite of their differences, we need help from you children. We need you to tell us what you think and to explain to us your interpretation of 'human rights', the rights of every individual."

Msgr Jean-Pierre Grallet, Archbishop of Strasbourg, France

"Anyone who draws, like our forebears who provided us with the first evidence of human life, leaves clues, lessons, and even warnings for future generations. Spontaneous drawings by children can get a clear message across and show how only moral or religious virtues can encourage us to love our neighbours and respect their dignity, although this message has not always been heeded in human history."

Mr René Gutman, Grand Rabbi of the Bas-Rhin Department and of Strasbourg, France

"One of the main ideas, possibly even the most important one of all, relates to human beings, their condition and their dignity. Hence the principle that is peculiar to human beings above all others, namely respect. And since human beings are not automatically endowed with moral principles and qualities, only having a predisposition towards them, it is vital that such principles and qualities should be taught and absorbed."

Mr Abdelhamid Youyou, Imam, Director of Cultural Affairs, Strasbourg Central Mosque, France

"[...] The adult takes in what the child wants to say, as communicated by his eyes as well as his words. Each listens to the other, and each respects the other. Knowledge can then be acquired as time goes by."

Ms Annie Marandin, documentalist and leader of the La Réflexion en partage project, Collège les Hautes Vignes, Seloncourt, France

"One of the fundamental problems facing schools is that their role is not just to pass on knowledge, but also to forge citizens

who will respect human rights. This requires teachers to know all about not only facts and events, but also the basic issues facing today's world."

*Ms Inna Tikhomirova, head teacher,
Ms Tatiana Pastushenko, teacher of French,
Ecole R. Rolland, Moscow, Russia*

"It takes years of careful pruning before a tree bears fruit. [...] So an awareness must start to be developed in children while they are still at kindergarten [...] Morality must be taught through fairytales or fables. We must explain that telling lies and



stealing are wrong, that goodwill is worth the effort and that a smile invites a smile in return. We shall show the benefits derived from friendship and multilingualism, which encourages open-mindedness. We shall show that, if there were no differences in race, social class or religion, there could be no comparisons, but that it is a combination of comparison and curiosity which leads to acceptance. For each person has something that the other has not."

Mr Tomi Ungerer, Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador for Childhood and Education

Regards d'enfants, an association with a mission

Regards d'enfants is a humanitarian association which was set up to provide children from Council of Europe member states or from states associated with the Council, irrespective of their social, cultural and religious origins,

with information, training and, more generally, education for citizenship and human rights, and to pass on to them the values fundamental to community life, namely respect for others and a willingness to listen to their views.

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Patrons

- The Human Rights Committee of the Conference of INGOs, a specialised committee of the 400 international non-governmental organisations working within the Council of Europe framework
- Tomi Ungerer, who designed the project logo
- Strasbourg's municipal, departmental and regional authorities
- Strasbourg's religious authorities

- And the following generous sponsors:
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 - France Bleu Alsace
 - Pizza Hut, Strasbourg
 - Radio Judaïca, Strasbourg
 - Alsace Gîte "La Perle du Ried", Boofzheim
 - Carré Blanc
 - Fossé des Treize socio-cultural centre, Strasbourg
 - Monceau Fleurs, Strasbourg

Books in brief

Exploring Children's Rights (Volume V),
by Rolf Gollob
and Peter Krapf
ISBN 978-92-871-6089-8

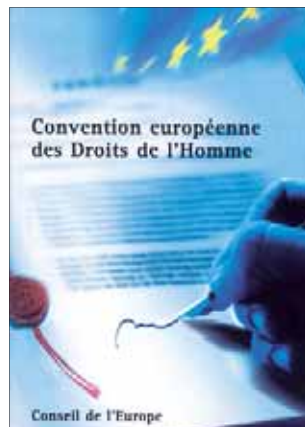
Exploring Children's Rights (Volume V) is designed for

teachers looking for tools to teach human rights to primary-school students.

It contains 9 small projects of four lessons each.

The manual is now available in Azeri, English, French, Macedonian and Russian.

(to order the book:
<http://book.coe.int>)



"The European Convention on Human Rights: starting point for teachers" is available in English, French, German, Italian and Russian.

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