

Young people's access to rights through youth information and counselling



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To receive further information about the Council of Europe Youth Department and ERYICA, please visit the following websites: www.coe.int/youth and <http://eryica.org/>.

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“Information is not knowledge”, said Albert Einstein. With this in mind, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) designed this toolkit on how to inform young people about their human rights in an appealing way, and give them practical experience to use them. At the end of the publication there is a summary of the most relevant and useful online resources, and an overview of good practice.

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Introduction

This publication is the result of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA). Human rights are central to the work of the Council of Europe, and ERYICA is an independent organisation composed of national youth information co-ordination bodies and networks. The logical outcome of a connection between these two organisations is a toolkit on how to inform young people about their rights.

This toolkit was initially intended to assist youth information workers working directly with young people. We are, for the purposes of this publication, defining “youth” as those between the ages of 12 and 26. But the toolkit can also be used in other non-formal activities. It offers many sources of information and inspiration on how to inform young people about their rights in an appealing way. The intention is not simply to inform, however. As Albert Einstein said, “Information is not knowledge.” Information alone is not enough when addressing such a crucial topic as human rights and youth. Only a combination of information and practical experience can ensure that human rights and youth issues will be understood in their totality, so at the end of the publication you will find a list of practical activities to help young people understand human rights better.

Many useful materials on these issues are already available online; this toolkit offers you a summary of the most relevant, while providing an overview of good practice.

We hope that this toolkit will help you in your work with young people and encourage you in informing them about the links between human rights and youth. Let us take this publication as the starting point of long-term task – raising awareness about human rights among the young generation so as to encourage them to uphold these rights.

Information Right Now!

On 17 April 2012, Information Right Now! was launched by the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) and the Council of Europe. The campaign aimed to raise awareness among young people, decision makers and the media of the special role of youth information in helping young people access their rights and ultimately, of access to information as a right in itself. Respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms implies the right of all young people to have access to complete, objective, understandable and reliable information, and this right has been recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5), as well as in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe's Recommendations No.R (1990) 7 concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe and CM/Rec(2010)8 on youth information, and the European Commission White Paper, "A new impetus for European youth" (2001).

The objectives of the campaign were:

- ▶ to help young people understand they have the right to information;
- ▶ to encourage them to access this information through youth information centres;
- ▶ to ask decision makers to guarantee the right of young people to information.

The campaign operated on both decentralised and centralised levels. Both levels had their own missions, target groups and tools.

On a decentralised level, the campaign consisted of over 120 activities in 29 Council of Europe member states, organised by local youth information centres and youth workers, and tailored to specific target audiences. These activities reached over 35 000 young people between April and December 2012. On 16 May 2012, designated Pan-European Campaign Action Day, many Information Right Now! activities took place across Europe. The Action Day aimed to maximise the campaign's impact by showcasing the variety of issues it addresses and facilitating a deeper understanding of the different realities faced by youth information workers.

Centralised activities, co-ordinated by ERYICA, were more focused on decision makers, the media and international presentation of the campaign. These activities included a Facebook photo competition and exhibition and a campaign webpage. ERYICA also organised a training session for its Youth Ambassadors in May 2012. These highly motivated individuals represented youth and youth rights not only in their own countries, but also at several international events. Two Youth Ambassadors represented the campaign at the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference in St Petersburg in September 2012.

Considering that youth information is both an essential right and a prerequisite for young people to access their rights, Information Right Now! has been a highly valuable tool contributing to the success of the Conference of Ministers and follow-up processes in the member states. It has also benefited ERYICA's membership and Council of Europe member states by underlining the relevance of the everyday work of youth information workers. Most importantly, it has brought to the forefront the fact that youth information is much more than an asset on top of other youth work activities. It is an essential tool in enabling young people to access their rights. Therefore access to information needs to be acknowledged as a right in itself.

Times of crisis have shown us how important it is to be informed about our possibilities. This is crucial in order to stay alive and maintain a certain standard of living. Many people, faced with the prospect of hard times, resort to illegal or anti-social activities. In these times, society tends to discriminate against its weakest members. How easy is it to discriminate against children, young people and the elderly? How easy is it to encroach on the rights of those groups that are not informed about their rights? Two years on from the campaign's launch we cannot afford to ease up. We have to continue working in the direction the campaign has shown us and carry on informing, promoting and strengthening young people's rights and human rights in general among young people.

The social group labelled "youth" is hard to distinguish. Young people consider themselves adults, but adults tend to see them as kids. Young people, therefore, are very vulnerable and easily abused. Youth information workers and other professionals who work on a daily basis with this group should be the ones to help both young people and grown-ups find the balance between their expectations and their rights.

Indeed, the boundary between childhood and adulthood is so undefined that it is difficult to precisely identify "youth". Some define "youth" as those between 12 to 16 years of age, while others define the group as between 21 to 26 years of age. In some cases this category includes those up to 30 years of age. For the purposes of this publication, we talk about young people between 12 and 26 years of age.

The Information Right Now! campaign has shown us many ways by which we can bring human rights closer to our target group. Young people may be in search of their identities, but they love to be in groups and share valuable advice amongst themselves and with adults. Therefore the most successful activities of the campaign were those with the participation of young people themselves. It is essential to take into account the specific characteristics of young people, whatever activity one involves them in.

As we can see, the young generation is confident but vulnerable. Young people are hungry for new experiences, information and challenges. They may sometimes engage in irresponsible behaviour, and the hormonal storm in their bodies can trigger many misunderstandings. Therefore having the right information, right now – "right" in the sense of verified, relevant and actual – is crucial for responsible decision making, advocacy and implementing the rights of young people in their daily lives. This is the difficult task that youth information workers face: to help the young generation survive the crisis of our times responsibly and as human beings.

The final report from the campaign, with descriptions of the activities held across Europe, may be accessed on the ERYICA website (<http://eryica.org>), and more information on Youth Ambassadors is available on the Information Right Now! campaign website (www.informationrightnow.eu).

Young people's rights

Universal human rights

If you ask people if they know what human rights are, you will probably get a positive answer. But if you ask them to enumerate these rights they will probably only be able to recall a few – those they are familiar with or which concern them personally or those they have heard about in the media in the context of human rights violations. Ask children and young people, and very likely they will know only a few. In fact, it is unlikely that even youth information workers are able to name all 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This is a pretty sad state of affairs, if you consider that knowing your rights is crucial to their observance. Human rights make us human beings. Human rights form the basis of a functioning society. Our civilisation depends upon the dissemination of human rights, as a consensus reached by society, among the young generation.

Let us start with a definition. The easiest definition of human rights could be: "The rights you have simply because you are human". No exception, no explanation, just the fact that because you are a human being, you have your rights. The reality is not so straightforward, because human rights are still unsecured for some people. Could this be because some people feel that they are "more human" than others? Is the violation of human rights proof of a lapse of humanity within society? It could be that it is the result of a lack of information about human rights.

Human rights have evolved and adapted to the flow of history and the needs of the world. The roots of human rights lead back into the deep past, but began to take on a clearer form through their public declaration in the 18th century up to the year 1948, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their evolution did not stop in the post-war period, when nations perceived the common principles of fundamental rights as necessary for the prevention of another dreadful conflict. In Europe, communism was seen as a threat. The newly formed Council of Europe, considering that democracy in Europe was in danger, sought to protect human rights on the continent through the promulgation of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950. This unique document (also known as the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms), is the basis for the protection of human rights through the strong tool provided by the European Court of Human Rights. Indeed, the Convention is the only international agreement protecting the human rights of individuals.

One of the basic human rights is the right to information. For young people, this is a truly essential right, a prerequisite for their approach to all the other rights. Perhaps this quote, from an unknown author, describes it best: "We protect only what we love, we love only what we know, we know only what we are taught." Without knowledge and information we cannot defend and demand our rights. So let us help young people to know their rights.

Rights of young people

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, society began to recognise children as a special group, with special needs, attitudes and also special rights. Until this point, they had been seen as “small adults”. This changed with the development of education, women’s emancipation, and the separation of work and leisure in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. This process of development led all the way to the year 1989, when it was decided that children needed a special convention just for them, because those under 18 years of age often need special care and protection that adults do not. This was also to highlight the fact that children have human rights, too. Thus we have a Convention on the Rights of the Child.

But what about young people? Young people, unfortunately, are still missing such a document, tailor-made for them. Balancing on the edge of childhood and adulthood as they are, they need to be informed about their rights. Since young people tend to ignore that which does not touch them personally, we need to bring the issue of rights into focus for them by giving it a more concrete form relevant to everyday situations. Youth information workers play a vital role here.

Consider your national legislation. Is there something you should inform young people about? What might affect their lives? We could look at the legal age for voting, driving, drinking, compulsory education or conscription, not to mention the age of consent. We support international mobility, but do we prepare young people for different laws in other countries?

The right to vote has been among the most promoted rights in youth information centres in recent years. Across the world, we find that most young people can access this right at the age of 18, but this can vary between 16 to 21 years. In some countries, voting is compulsory. In fact it was more common to be allowed to vote only at age 21, but this limit was lowered to 18 (for the first time in 1946, in Czechoslovakia), and in Austria the voting age is now 16 (18 for the European Parliament elections). As society changes, the voting age is also evolving, and there is ongoing debate as to the right age. There is a pan-European initiative, arising from the European Youth Forum and its members, to lower the voting age to 16 years (www.voteat16.eu).

If we are to support and encourage young people to participate in public life, including elections, we also have to provide them with more complex information on how to participate. Young people have the right not just to vote, but also to be elected. In many European countries, young people can stand for parliamentary elections at the age of 18, though in some states the limit is 21 (e.g. Belgium and the Czech Republic) or even 25 (Lithuania). Different limits can be set for senatorial elections (e.g. 24 in Austria), though in the Czech Republic the possibility of being elected to the Senate is closed to young people, with an age threshold of 40.

If we want to introduce young people to their rights we need to look more closely at their interests. If you were a teenager, what would interest you? We can all agree that youth information services have to cover sex, alcohol and illegal/legal drugs. Whether we like it or not, these topics, and related legislation, are important for young people. As professionals, we should be ready to answer questions about these issues. They are also “hot” with regards to the mobility of young people, who travel

across countries and need to be aware of the differences. For instance, the age of consent varies significantly across Europe – from 14 years in Lithuania, through 15 to 16 years in other countries, to 18 years in Malta. You can find lots of interesting facts and materials about this topic on the webpage of the European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (www.youact.org). “Young love” often needs support, quality information and counselling. Sometimes legal advice is needed, including about marriage and the age limits involved.

The same situation applies to drinking alcohol and smoking, where the laws vary across Europe. For example, young people can legally drink alcohol at the age of 16 in Belgium and Luxembourg. But in Luxembourg, one is not allowed to smoke before the age of 18. In some countries, the rules change depending on the type of alcohol. All this can be handy legal information for young people going abroad for a holiday, an internship or an exchange year.

There are, of course, other rights that affect young people’s lives. From our “adult” perspective we should consider, first of all, compulsory education as well as labour laws that set the age from which people can work legally. This age from which youth can work legally is 13 in Sweden, 14 in France and Finland, and 16 in Lithuania. From the “youth” perspective the age at which one can drive can be very important. In most countries this is 18 for a car (though in Luxembourg one can drive at 17, and in Belgium too if accompanied by an adult). For motorcycles, again, there are many differences, often depending on engine power (in the Czech Republic, for example, there are four categories of motorcycles. The least powerful can be operated by 15-year-olds, but the most powerful can only be driven by those 21 years old or more.)

It is clear that the everyday lives of young people relate to human rights, as well as the other topics youth information centres are providing information about, for example education, employment, travel, participation, and sex and relationships. In each of these topics, youth rights are hidden, and as professionals we have to be aware of them. Even more – we should actively promote not only human rights, but also rights that are closely related to the lives of the younger generation. After all, the right to information is a human right.

Quality information

The right to information is a human right. For young people, it is a truly fundamental right, a prerequisite for their approach to all other rights. For us, as youth information workers, we can add that providing quality information is our obligation. We have to teach the younger generation how to recognise and use quality information. But they also have the right to receive such information from trained, experienced and motivated staff. This is what we need to highlight to the public, decision makers and young people themselves all across Europe.

At European level it is the task of the Council of Europe to promote quality youth information services in each member country. Many initiatives have already been taken, including the campaign Information Right Now!, a joint action of the Council of Europe and ERYICA. The Council of Europe also supports quality youth information services through important documents such as Recommendations No.R (1990) 7 and CM/Rec(2010)8 on youth information. Quality youth information is required across the European Union, as noted in the document “Council resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018)”. The resolution identifies fields of action in which access to quality information and youth counselling services should be provided.

ERYICA is working on strengthening and disseminating quality information on the European level as well. Its members are doing this difficult work on a national level. To this end, they are using something we all should have in hand while providing information to young people – the European Youth Information Charter (2004) and the Principles for Online Information (2009). Following these documents can help ensure basic quality of services and information for young people. Some ERYICA members, to ensure the quality of information services for youth, have created national standards/quality indicators.

But for young people, the most important factor in accessing quality information is the frontline – the youth information providers at the centres themselves. Quality can only be ensured via trained staff. Indeed, the mantra for such professionals should be “CRAP”. Jokes aside, these four letters indicate what quality information should look like:

- ▶ C – Clear: quality information is clear information. It needs to be focused, understandable and backed up by clearly labelled sources;
- ▶ R – Relevant: the quality of the information found is relative to the needs of the young person searching for the information. It may be clear, but unless the information is also relevant to the person, it may not be appropriate and could actually be harmful;
- ▶ A – Accurate: the information may be clear and straightforward and it may also be suited to the person in need. But the information also needs to be up to date, factually correct and suitably objective;

- ▶ P – Pitched: finally, how well pitched or appropriate is the information for the specific situation of the young person? Does the information suit the needs and abilities of the young person?

This list of basic indicators of quality information is taken from Mick Conroy's training methods in the ERYICA YIntro-Manual. The most important thing is to always think about and know the client to whom you are providing information. But before the information is provided to the user by the youth information worker, it has to be assessed for quality. Some crucial questions need to be answered.

Who is providing the information?

Who is behind the information? Is it a government entity, a lobbying body or a commercial organisation? What motives might they have in offering information and advice, putting content online or providing their contact address? Could they be trying to sell a product? Could it be a hoax? Is the source of information objective? In the search for quality information, the youth information worker should also check on the author and the source of funding behind the content, whether it is a webpage, a publication, a leaflet or a poster. This does not mean that you cannot use "business" information. It means that you have to treat all information with caution.

While checking on the author, the information worker should take note of his/her reputation and level of qualifications with regards to the subject. Is the information objective, or is it simply the opinion of the author? Beware of using subjective opinions as a source of information; though this is by no means prohibited, and indeed can provide useful links and sources, one should always double-check the data one comes across, and take care that the context is applicable to your purpose in providing the information.

Finally, is it possible to contact those responsible for the information, either the author or the publisher? If so, one can ask for more detailed data, or confront the author with other relevant sources, adding weight to the information provided.

How accurate is the information?

Always try to find the "original" source of the information. If there is a link provided or if there is a reference to another source, follow the trail. If for example you find information about a new campaign for youth rights, go to the webpage of the campaign. Do not rely on re-directed information.

When was the information produced? Don't waste time on old sources; always try to find a newer source. A sign of quality information is also the date it was last accessed.

Is the information easily accessible and simple to use?

Is the text spaced out and easy to read? Can you find what you need easily? Are the design, language and content tailored to the needs of young people? These indicators are not the most crucial, but they can tell you a lot about the information

providers and their professionalism. In fact, these are things one should be aware of while passing on this information or repackaging it for young people.

More on online information can be found in the ERYICA publication “Guide to safety and quality online”, the source for the text above. The publication notes that the basic rules of information apply equally offline and online:

- ▶ find out what the source is;
- ▶ think about their motives for producing the information;
- ▶ always double-check and compare the information with that from other sources;
- ▶ don't be paranoid, but stay critical;
- ▶ if in doubt, do not use the information or redouble efforts to check its veracity.

Information needs

Information needs should be constantly tracked and updated. Most youth information services conduct surveys among their target group and then revise and adapt the information they provide accordingly. In order to incorporate young people's rights into this information, then, one need only add questions about rights to existing surveys. But the best way is to talk to young people. They may not be aware that they are missing important information about their rights. This lack of knowledge means that they may even, unconsciously, violate the rights of others.

Sometimes youth information work requires one to be a detective. Based on certain questions and the responses to them, we have to ascertain the motives behind them. A young person may come to a youth information provider with the simple question, “Where can I find a job?” A professional has to read more into the question – why the client needs a job, does the client have a problematic home situation, what kind of information will be appropriate for his/her level of past experience, education, and so on. But we also need to give clients information about their rights, regarding employment rules and the minimum wage that applies to them – practical things that young people may not be aware of.

This is why a plain survey will not work perfectly. If you are interested in information needs, then combine more methods of research. A suggested mode is the focus group discussion. This type of qualitative research results in valuable information in a peer group setting, rather than numerical output. Young people between 12 and 17 years of age tend to spend a lot of time with their peers and friends. As these young people cease to see their parents as infallible and omniscient, other adults outside the family enter the scene. The youth information worker is ideally suited to lead focus group discussions with youth peer groups. Adolescents are more open to such settings as they are increasingly able to articulate themselves and resist peer pressure. In fact, they enjoy debating issues that concern them. In this sense, human rights is an appropriate subject for focus group discussions with young people.

Arranging a focus group is not always straightforward, however. Time is needed to prepare for the discussion and find an experienced person to moderate the group. Finding appropriate participants too may prove an obstacle.

Focus group discussions are well worth it, but if you don't feel comfortable with a face-to-face method involving a group of giggling teenagers, other means may be used to collate human rights information. Online tools are always useful, and we must not forget social media as a tool of communication with youngsters. Simply asking a question online may work; for instance, a provocative statement, picture or video on social media can trigger a debate.

Youth rights in youth information services

ERYICA member organisations and their national youth information services use many channels to disseminate information about human rights. Human rights may be treated as a special topic (e.g. Belgium and the Czech Republic), or they may be dealt with indirectly, as part of other topics (e.g. in Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Malta). In other states, information about human rights may be provided on an irregular basis, through projects or campaigns (e.g. Croatia, Lithuania and France).

Ultimately, youth information services provide information to as many young people as possible, through a range of channels. The widest impact has been through the Internet and social media. Young people go online to look for information; ironically, this is where their rights can be easily violated. The question of a "safe Internet" should therefore be always present in youth information activities. As professionals, we have the responsibility to give young people not just information, but also provide a safe online environment. The aforementioned Principles for Online Information and "Guide to safety and quality online", can help youth information workers ensure such a safe space. A good example of a website providing information about youth rights is www.droitsetdevoirs.lu. Detailed, practical information about youth rights, organised into the spheres of life they are relevant to, may be found here.

It is not only online media that is attractive for our target group. Paper leaflets, publications or posters – if adequately designed – can attract the attention of young people. In Finland, youth information services (e.g. the Finnish children's rights ombudsman at www.lapsiasia.fi) offer many informational materials about human and youth rights).

It is crucial that youth information centres provide information that is tailored to the lived reality of young people. The Swedish organisation Solna UngInfo tries to put human rights in context for the young people, for example by raising the topic of human rights during the Olympic games in China via a photo exhibition, or by holding debates with representatives of political parties about their rights.

For ERYICA members, the highlight has been the campaign Information Right Now! This publication offers more ideas on how to best provide information on youth rights, illustrated with activities and examples from across Europe. Every information worker should use such resources to be prepared and knowledgeable about the rights of young people. What is more, they need to continuously monitor the progress of their activities, and keep their information up to date.

Social media and new technologies

Youth information workers should be aware of new trends and technologies popular with the young generation. Indeed, he/she must be actively engaged; it is better to be two steps ahead than one step behind. Young people love new technology, and need to fit in with their peer groups. This combination means that social networks often develop through the medium of technology. For youth information workers not using social media means losing the most effective way to target this group. And not using it effectively – for example, by adapting to the brevity of Twitter – means failing to engage the attention of this target group.

Good advice on how to use social media in information work may be found on <http://socialmediatoday.com> or the social media magazine www.socialmediaexaminer.com. These websites feature many tricks for social media marketing. While formal education does not use social media all that much, non-formal organisations and especially information services should not miss the chance to disseminate information about youth rights through this channel.

The following tips for Facebook newsfeed optimisation are based on features from the websites just mentioned:

- ▶ less is more: two to three posts a day is enough, otherwise people will feel it like you are spamming and may “unlike” your page. Posting once or twice per day produces 40% higher user engagement. Posting one to four times per week produces 71% higher user engagement. Complicated wall posts are not good. Simple posts receive 94% higher than average engagement;
- ▶ shorter character count: posts with 80 characters or less receive 66% higher engagement. Very concise posts – those between 1 and 40 characters – generate the highest engagement;
- ▶ time your posts: posts made between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. receive 20% more user engagement. Also try to time posts according the information or news you are posting – not too early, not too late. Informing young people about a summer festival in January is not good timing, but a day before the festival may be too late;
- ▶ type of content: young people, especially, use different types of content – photos, videos, links, and so on. Ask questions! This type of content generates comments at double the rate of “non-question” posts. “Fill in the blank” posts receive nine times more comments than other types of posts.

The Council of Europe and human rights

The Council of Europe advocates human rights through international conventions, and monitors member states' progress in different areas of human rights, making recommendations through independent expert bodies. It has launched campaigns on issues such as child protection, online hate speech, and the rights of the Roma. Another means to protect human rights is the Commissioner for Human Rights, an independent, non-judicial institution of the Council of Europe mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member states. After more than 60 years of the European Convention on Human Rights, however, it is still necessary to introduce its core principles and values to the broader public. In this spirit, the Andorran Chairmanship of the Council of Europe, in 2013, launched the campaign Nurturing Human Rights.

We have already mentioned the essential document, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (along with the powerful supporting tool of the European Court of Human Rights). Other activities carried out by the Council of Europe may be found in the document "Rights and freedom in practice". This teaching material explains the Council of Europe's activities, the Convention's scope, and the role of the Court, along with illustrative examples. It also introduces other Council of Europe documents on human rights. For a deeper understanding of the Convention and its protocols, the Human Rights Handbooks published by the Council of Europe (and available at www.coe.int/t/dgi, the webpage of the Council of Europe Directorate General I, Human rights and Rule of Law) are very useful.

The Council of Europe conducts many activities focusing on the rights of children and youth. The Council's children's rights unit webpage (www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/Default_en.asp) provides much material and sources in this regard. The Youth Department of the Council of Europe, part of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, also deals with human rights. It elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels. It provides funding – through the European Youth Foundation – and educational support for international youth activities through European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg. It aims at the promotion of youth citizenship, youth mobility and the value of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. These activities are detailed on the webpages of the Youth Department (www.coe.int/youth). A few are highlighted below.

European Youth Foundation

According to its statutes, the European Youth Foundation aims to: “promote youth co-operation in Europe by providing financial support to such European youth activities as serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation between the people of Europe and of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

The foundation supports non-governmental organisations at international, national and local levels through a range of grants. The Council of Europe Youth Department has three programme sectors (democratic innovation, diversity and participation), each of which comprises different programmes reflecting the priorities of the foundation. Application guidelines for the years 2014 to 2015 provide a list of expected project results, and all sectors offer the possibility of funding for human or youth rights projects. In the sector for democratic innovation, under the programme on good governance, member states are expected to have developed and applied youth policies based on Council of Europe standards, with a view to supporting young people’s access to rights. In the same sector, under the programme on promoting democratic competences, youth non-governmental organisations are expected to have “increased their competences in human rights education and education for democratic citizenship to act as multipliers in member states” (source: 2014-2015 Priorities of the Council of Europe’s Youth Sector). Priority is given to those projects that match the expected results.

All Different – All Equal

The All Different – All Equal European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation was launched by the Council of Europe in 1995, and run again from June 2006 to September 2007. It was organised in partnership with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum, with the involvement of 42 Council of Europe member states. The campaign may have ended, but its activities still provide inspiration and its materials are a valuable resource for today’s campaigns to inform young people about their rights. The final report of the campaign lists examples of activities at the European level, as well as relevant publications. The best good practice from the campaign was collated in the “All Different – All Equal cookbook”. One of the campaign’s outcomes was the document “Companion – A campaign guide about education and learning for change in diversity, human rights and participation”. This contains practical activities and games for young people on campaign topics.

Enter!

The Enter! project promotes access to social rights for young people, in particular those exposed to social exclusion, discrimination and violence (<http://enter.coe.int>). Many outputs such as trainings, seminars and publications resulted, including a card game about social rights called “Enter Dignityland!”

No Hate Speech

The No Hate Speech movement, involving young people for human rights online (www.nohatespeechmovement.org) is a project being run by the Council of Europe's youth sector between 2012 and 2014. Part of this movement is the Campaign of Young People for Human Rights Online. The main actors are youth organisations and young people, and the campaign consists of a series of online and offline activities that complement each other. The campaign has several goals, including to "support young people in standing up for human rights, online and offline" and to "mobilise, train and create a network of online youth activists to defend human rights". Several educational activities supported the campaign.

Compass

Compass is a manual for human rights education with young people. As the title indicates, it contains just the material needed to inform young people about their rights in a non-formal setting. The manual was produced within the framework of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. It is available in several languages and contains many practical activities for young people, including games that deal with every aspect of human rights. Compass also offers background knowledge about human rights, and their history, development and justification. The manual is downloadable at www.eycb.coe.int/compass.

ERYICA and human rights

ERYICA supports its members in their activities, promotes their work and works on increasing the visibility of general youth information and counselling services. Along with the campaign Information Right Now! it manages and co-ordinates activities such as A Better Youth Information for New Times, Meet the Street, JIMMY – Youth Information Mediator, Safety and Quality in Online Youth Information, and Youth on the Move – InfoMobility. One of the outcomes of Information Right Now! is the training for Youth Ambassadors.

Youth Ambassadors

Many young people have been involved in Information Right Now! at the national level, and ERYICA seeks to involve them at a European level, too. This was how the idea of Youth Ambassadors – young people aged between 18 to 24, strongly motivated and trained to advocate youth information – came about. It was necessary to train participants and involve them in the campaign, and the first meeting for Youth Ambassadors took place in May 2012 in Malta. The aim was an exchange of experiences and training in advocacy for youth information. Short video testimonials were produced, and two of the ambassadors were selected to go to the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference in St Petersburg in September 2012. Others had the chance to advocate the right to youth information at different European meetings.

The objectives of the training course for Youth Ambassadors were to:

- ▶ raise the awareness of Youth Ambassadors on the importance of young people's right to information, both as an essential right and a prerequisite for young people's access to their rights;
- ▶ increase the competences and abilities of young people to spread the message of the campaign among their peers, decision makers and the media;
- ▶ strengthen co-operation among young people from different parts of Europe by enhancing open attitudes towards different cultural experiences.

As part of the campaign, the Youth Ambassadors were also involved in the activities of ERYICA member organisations in their own or other countries. Activities included debates or advocacy meetings to stress the European dimension of the campaign. Twenty-four Youth Ambassadors were part of the first training; their profiles may be viewed on the Information Right Now! homepage. The success of the training convinced ERYICA and its members to continue, and a second training took place in Sweden in 2013.

Photo exhibition

On 16 May 2012, Pan-European Campaign Action Day took place, and ERYICA members sent in photos of their campaign activities. A travelling photo exhibition was constituted out of these photos as well as the best of the Facebook Photo Competition, and was first exhibited at the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference in St Petersburg in September 2012. The photos may now be viewed upon registration on the ERYICA online platform for European youth information workers, Sheryica (www.sheryica.org).

ERYICA member organisations

As noted, ERYICA members and their national information and counselling services provide information to young people on a daily basis. The issue of rights – human rights in general and the rights of young people – is impossible to ignore.

There are many ways to disseminate information – face-to-face, online, work groups, peer-to-peer, through printed materials, and so on. Most youth information centres use more than one method. One should always keep in mind the need to customise activities for youth, and encourage their participation, and the principles of the European Youth Information Charter for online youth information are very useful in this regard.

The Information Right Now! campaign taught us how to involve young people in information provision. Now is the time to use those experiences and extend them into practice in spreading awareness about human rights and the rights of young people. We have already mentioned some of the activities carried out by ERYICA members. For more ideas and partners Sheryica – as a space to exchange experiences and tips and hold discussions – is a valuable resource.

Resources on human rights

Many organisations are working on promoting human rights. This is a non-exhaustive list of sources that may be useful for those working to provide information on youth rights.

United Nations

The United Nations is perhaps the most important organisation working in the field of human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) produces a wide range of publications and provides information about human rights. A highlight for our purposes is the Training and education materials webpage, particularly the publication “ABC – Teaching human rights: practical activities for primary and secondary schools”, which contains practical activities that can be conducted as non-formal activities in youth information centres. This material is available in six languages.

The OHCHR poster on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is available only in English, but with each article of the declaration explained through a picture, it serves as a useful informal resource for human rights education. The “Share, learn and innovate!” Toolkit, part of OHCHR’s Professional Training Series, concerns methods and technologies to share human rights knowledge and ideas. Methods such as storytelling, sociometrics, SWOT analysis and knowledge fairs are discussed and elaborated in instructional sheets, and technologies such as online surveys, podcasting and video-conferencing are introduced.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is an important organisation relevant to the rights of young people. Voices of Youth was founded in 1995 as UNICEF’s online space for young people to learn more about issues affecting their world. On this platform, young people can share their thoughts and opinions on subjects such as education, the environment, violence, conflict, HIV/AIDS, health and human rights with thousands of people from all over the world.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global movement with millions of supporters. It is an independent, non-governmental organisation, and its vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights they are entitled to. Education and information about human rights is therefore a big part of Amnesty’s work, and to this end it produces much relevant material. Their Human rights education resources webpage can be searched by age group, topic, country, type of activity (e.g. formal, non-formal, peer education), language, type of material (including audiovisual materials) and so on. “First steps – A manual for starting human rights education” targets young people between 15 and 25 years of age, using the method of peer education with many practical activities.

Krovna Organizacija Mladih Srbije (National Youth Council of Serbia)

KOMS is an independent umbrella organisation of 68 youth organisations. It has been a member of the European Youth Forum since 2012. Its mission is to represent the interests of young people by developing a partner relationship with the state, facilitating cross-sector and international co-operation, encouraging the active participation of young people in a variety of initiatives, and promoting the organisational development of its member organisations. KOMS has successfully run several projects, such as the Youth Leadership Academy, where young people were provided with training to develop their leadership skills and competences and encourage them to start initiatives in local communities. The project Umbrella – Youth Participation at Intermunicipal Level helped youth organisations in networking achieve a greater profile and legitimacy in their efforts to advocate for broader youth participation in decision-making processes at the regional level. It focused on youth unemployment, and how networking can increase the visibility of this problem at the national level.

The project Elections and Youth Participation, funded by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and the Open Society Foundations, can serve as a good example for other organisations in raising awareness of young people's rights among decision makers. Its aims were:

- ▶ strengthening the capacity of young people to boost human resources and increase youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels;
- ▶ raising awareness of the importance of young people's involvement in decision-making processes and their democratic rights through panel discussions and educational workshops;
- ▶ providing young people with the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate in social processes and practice their rights.

The project focused on youth involvement in election year, for example by raising awareness among political parties about the importance of young people and their rights; monitoring the promises of politicians on specific measures for the inclusion of young people, and their empowerment; and mobilising young people from civil society to actively participate in the election campaign and vote. Among the project outcomes were a documentary film entitled "They promised", which was used after the election for advocacy, and an open letter to politicians. The entire campaign was actively followed on the Internet, and 14 panel discussions were organised.

Jeden svět (One World)

Jeden svět (www.oneworld.cz), organised by Člověk v tísni (People in Need) from the Czech Republic, is currently the biggest human rights documentary film festival in the world. It travels the whole country and has also crossed borders, including by providing help to other human rights documentary festivals.

The festival has documentary screenings as well as discussion programmes, and film-related events take place all year long. It offers a special programme for primary

and high schools, “One world in schools”, and co-operates with universities in the incorporation of human rights topics into their curricula.

Youth information centres have the possibility of borrowing documentaries for free and holding screenings of their own. It is helpful to have a discussion after screenings, as this often leads to interesting human or youth rights topics. This activity has proven very popular not only in information centres, but also in youth clubs and youth organisations.

YouthRights.NOW

Partners in the youth field in Europe launched the campaign YouthRights.NOW at the end of September 2013. The campaign came into being following the 9th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth of the Council of Europe in St Petersburg, (Russian Federation).

The aims of the campaign are to:

- ▶ raise awareness of young people’s rights among young people/society;
- ▶ put the issue of young people’s rights on the table with policy makers in the Council of Europe;
- ▶ strengthen the voice of young people and youth organisations in the Council of Europe’s member states and its structures.

Since the campaign addresses young people, it is based online (www.youthrights.eu). The website is used to inform young people about their rights and give them the option to express themselves by contacting their governments directly via the website. A prepared draft of an email for each country representative, along with contact information, is provided. Further facilitating pan-European use, the campaign video is currently translated into 22 languages and the website is translated into 14 languages of the Council of Europe. All translations were done by young volunteers.

This project was conceived by the European Youth Foundation, and is carried out in partnership with AEGEE, OBESSU, JEF, IGLYO, EFIL, YEU, TEJO, CNJ, CJE, FNG, Vlaamse Jeugdraad, and Mus-e Kosova. With support and advice from European Youth Forum and Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

It is hoped that the campaign will keep the issue of young people’s rights on the agenda of the Council of Europe, though the campaign will not be complete without lobbying activities in parallel.

Let's get it right!

Let's get it right! (www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk) is a great source of inspiration, featuring games and materials for children and young people. It is run by the Welsh Government and is dedicated to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More recently the site has added a section for children and young people that contains rights information, videos and games. An example is Coloodle, a printable booklet ideal as an introduction to human rights. Training materials are also available for professionals, with videos, links and activity packs. These are primarily for younger children, but can be adapted for youth.

The OneMinutesJr.

The OneMinutesJr. (www.theoneminutesjr.org) is a video initiative that celebrates diversity among youth around the world, giving 12- to 20-year-old youth the opportunity to make their voices heard. It was initiated in 2002 by The European Cultural Foundation, The One Minutes Foundation and UNICEF in order to develop new tools for youth empowerment and social change. Since 2010 it has been a partnership between UNICEF and The One Minutes Foundation.

The project is not just a video competition for 60-second short films on different topics. It is a place for the self-expression of young people. In youth information work it can be used as a source of videos on human rights (though not exclusively) created by the young generation.

Activities

In previous chapters, we went over various campaigns and projects relevant to youth information rights, with the knowledge that such initiatives often inspire those working in the field. In this chapter, we describe a range of activities suited to non-formal settings with young people.

As the target group is very broad and diverse, the following activities should be taken primarily as models that can be adapted to your own situation. The times and age groups specified, for instance, are tentative.

Trial

Age group: 16-24

Group size: minimum 10

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: minimum 30 minutes

Supplies: room modified as a court, with seats for the judges, the accused, the advocate, the prosecutor and the jury

Description:

The youth information worker is the judge (you can have more than one). A “human right” is sitting in the dock; this can be a real person (from the group) or be represented by a picture. Two of the young people from the group – volunteers with good language skills, preferably, are chosen as prosecutor and advocate. Other members of the group are sitting on the side and work as the jury.

In the first five minutes, the main actors prepare their arguments. The trial begins, and the first speaker is the prosecutor. He/she has three minutes to make a speech about how the right is not working in real life, how it can be easily violated, how it is not useful, how we need to modify it and so on. Then the advocate has three minutes to argue how the right is useful, important, essential and so on. Then the judge asks questions to both the advocate and the prosecutor. If a real person is representing the accused right, the judge can ask him/her questions. The jury can also ask questions through the judge – each member of the jury has a piece of paper and can write questions on it and give it to the judge. This part should take up around five minutes, but this depends on how many questions the judge receives from the jury and the ability of the advocate and prosecutor, who have a minute to sum up their arguments.

The jury deliberates in public, though the other actors should not be allowed to contribute to the argument at this point. The verdict is then handed down.

It is useful to prepare some props to increase the authenticity of the setting and make the trial more realistic. The verdict is not the goal of this activity. More important is the process and the discussions during the trial and after it. In fact the post-trial discussion is essential, and may be the most important part of this activity.

Oracle

Age group: 12-18

Group size: minimum 2

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention) or pieces of paper with youth rights written on them, preferably one set per pair

Description:

Divide the young people into pairs. One person from each pair will be the Oracle. The other will choose five cards with rights written on them and hand them to the Oracle. He/she will then predict the partner's future without these rights. The facilitator should encourage the Oracles to be creative and relate the "missing" rights to realistic situations. If there is enough time, a second round may be played so everyone can have a go at being an Oracle. This can be fun, but a short post-activity recapitulation is necessary to allow the participants to express their feelings.

My life

Age group: 12-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: depends on the number of participants

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention) or pieces of paper with youth rights written on them

Description: Every participant should choose one card and describe how his/her life would look like without the right in question – now or in the future – and how the right affects his/her life. The facilitator should ensure that all participants have the same amount of time to express themselves, and should allow time at the end for further comments and even disagreement regarding the "life stories" described.

The most important

Age group: 12-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention) or pieces of paper with youth rights written on them

Description:

The facilitator presents the cards with human rights/pieces of paper with youth rights to the whole group and gives participants one minute to decide which of the rights is the most important for them. Then everyone gets the opportunity to say which one he/she has chosen and why.

Modification:

The facilitator chooses four cards/pieces of paper from the whole package. This can be done randomly or selectively. Each right is placed in a corner of the room. Then the participants have to choose the most important right for them and go to that corner. After the group is split up, the facilitator allows them to debate their choices in these small groups, providing their justifications. Each group will then have one minute to present the results to the other groups.

Battle

Age group: 16-21

Group size: minimum 10

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 10-15 minutes

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention) or pieces of paper with youth rights written on them, paper and pens, abacus optional

Description:

The facilitator randomly chooses two cards/pieces of paper with rights written on them, then divides the group into two. Each smaller group will be given one right and will "fight for it", facing each other as if on a battlefield. After three to five minutes to prepare their arguments (these can be written down) the battle begins. The facilitator tosses a coin to decide who starts. Each group can loudly present one argument for "their" right – that is, why it is important. The groups take turns, presenting one argument at a time. The facilitator keeps count of the number of arguments. In the

event that one group has no more arguments (or takes too long to come up with one) the other group wins. To maintain the dynamic the facilitator must control the speed of arguments and encourage the teams. An abacus to keep count also generates a sense of excitement.

Modification:

This activity can be modified for youth rights. The facilitator divides the group again and allocates one youth right to each. For example, the topic can be the age limit for drinking alcohol. One group will argue for the existing limit, the second group will be against it and wants to lower or increase it. After a few minutes for preparation, the battle of arguments can begin. Several topics can be discussed this way.

Once upon a time...

Age group: 12-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention)

Description:

Each member of the group randomly chooses one card with a human right written on it and sits down in a circle without showing it to anyone. The facilitator starts to tell a story with the line, "Once upon a time..." It may be necessary to prepare the story in advance, but a good storyteller will be able to improvise. The story should be about someone's life and what happens to him/her in case of human rights violations. The participants listen carefully and when there is a reference to the violation of the right they have chosen, they shout out loud, "That is my right!" The facilitator stops reading, and the young person in question tells the others what right it was before returning the card. He/she is now "out of the game" and only listens. At the end of the game some people may still have their cards with them. These are the winners and they also present their rights.

Target

Age group: 12-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies: Large bulls-eye style targets with concentric circles on them (30 in the case of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or corresponding to a number

of selected national youth rights). The innermost circle should be the biggest, and should be visible to everyone.

Description:

Each participant has a blank target, with only circles on it. They have between three to five minutes to add to each circle one article of the Universal Declaration or one right from a list of youth rights, as applicable. The most important right for them (30 points, or corresponding to the number of youth rights) should be written in the innermost circle, moving out through the circles until the least important right for them is written in the outermost circle (1 point). Then the facilitator counts with the whole group the points allotted to each article or right by the group. The result will be one big target with the order of importance of the articles/rights, according to the participants.

Demonstration

Age group: 12-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 45-60 minutes

Supplies: art supplies, poster paper, cardboard, bed sheets, wooden sticks

Description:

"Demonstration" is a creative activity that allows young people to express themselves. As a motivating introduction, the facilitator should introduce to the group their rights and inform them that their rights have been violated – all their rights, or a chosen few. The facilitator should mention the possibility of having peaceful demonstrations to protest this and ask the participants to prepare transparencies, banners, slogans and songs. The facilitator should ensure that no vulgar or inappropriate expressions distort the notion of a peaceful demonstration.

In someone else's shoes

Age group: 16-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies: none

Description:

This calm exercise begins with the imagination of the individual. Every participant should be asked to imagine himself/herself in the shoes of someone else – someone they want to be and then someone they don't want to be – from the perspective of human rights or the rights of young people. This can be a real person from the past or present, or fictional characters. Feel free to also look to the future. Then the participants present their scenarios of being in someone else's shoes, but only if they want to. The self-reflexive aspect of this activity is more important.

Charades

Age group: 16-21

Group size: 4-12

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention) or pieces of paper with youth rights written on them

Description:

The aim of this well-known game of pantomime, in this context, is to communicate a human/youth right without using any verbal communication. It can be played by individuals against individuals or groups against groups, whereby one side chooses a card/paper with rights and mimes it to the other side.

Modification:

It is also possible to draw pictures to "mime" the right, or describe the right without using keywords.

Yes-No

Age group: 12-16

Group size: 4-10

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights

Time: 5 minutes

Supplies: cards with human rights written on them (from the Universal Declaration or the Convention)

Description:

A volunteer from the group chooses one card, but doesn't look at it. He/she shows the card to everyone else. Then the volunteer asks questions to find out which human right he/she represents. The questions should be those that can only be answered

with a yes or no. The facilitator has to ensure that the volunteer doesn't ask overly simple or leading questions.

Take a step forward

Age group: 12-16

Group size: 5 and more

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, youth rights

Time: 5 minutes

Supplies: none

Description:

The participants stand in line. The facilitator starts to ask them questions such as "Whose granny lives in the countryside?" or "Who has a dog?" and so on. Whoever answers yes steps forward. After a few questions like this the facilitator declares that whoever answered yes (that is, those with grandmothers living in the countryside or those with dogs) has no right to be in the group. These individuals are then made to sit down. The game continues with a few more questions, and the facilitator may choose to end with a winner, though this is not necessary. The facilitator should ask obvious questions to eliminate participants, such as "Who has long hair, blue eyes" and so forth. Whoever answers yes has to step forward, and is then told that they do not have the right to be there and should go and sit down. After the game, a discussion should take place, beginning with the first group of excluded people. How did they feel being told they did not have the right to be with the group and being excluded? Did the winner feel superior to the rest?

I could / I could not / I had to

Age group: 16-21

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: youth rights

Time: 5 minutes

Supplies: paper with tables to fill in for each participant, pens

Description:

Each participant gets a paper with questions about their rights that they have to match with the answers provided, according to what they were able to do/were not able to do at different ages.

Example:

When I was 7 years old

I could/I could not/I had to

return from school alone sit in the car next to the driver go to school

Once this is completed individually by the participants, they may discuss their responses, but the activity should serve more as a warm-up for other activities concerning youth rights.

Hard work

Age group: 16-21

Group size: minimum 8

Topic: human rights

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies: instructions for each group (prepared by the facilitator using Lego building blocks in red, blue, yellow and green), Lego building blocks, blindfolds for each group, and a pair of mittens for each group.

Description:

The group is divided into small groups, minimum 4 people. Their task is to build something from Lego blocks. The facilitator has instructions on what to build for each group. Before the beginning of the game, the facilitator “violates” certain rights of the participants, as follows.

Only one person from each group will have the right to see the instructions. But the same person will not be allowed to speak or touch the building blocks.

A second person will have the right to hold and use the red and blue blocks, but won't have the right to see and will be blindfolded.

A third person will have the right to help the blindfolded person navigate, but won't have the right to touch the building blocks or use the word “left” and “right”.

A fourth person will have the right to touch the yellow and green blocks, but won't be allowed to use his/her bare hands (i.e. will be wearing mittens).

The aim is to build according the instructions as quickly as possible. This is a competition that boosts group dynamics, and a debate is needed following this activity. The facilitator should ask people how they felt not to have all their rights, and the discussion can lead onto human rights and why is necessary to ensure the same rights for everyone.

Modification:

Each group has different rights, and one group might have all rights, enabling them to build quickly and easily.

Fill in the gap

Age group: 12-16

Group size: doesn't matter

Topic: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights

Time: 30 minutes

Supplies: The text of the Universal Declaration or the Convention, with certain words deleted from each paragraph, and pens for each participant.

Description:

Each participant is given one modified copy of the Universal Declaration or Convention and has 10 minutes to read the text and fill in the missing words. Then the text is read aloud. Whoever has the most correct answers wins. After a joint reading of the documents a discussion follows, during which participants can ask questions, say what they filled in, and why. The facilitator should be very familiar with the text.

Links and sources

Amnesty International – A global movement of more than seven million supporters, members and activists in over 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights (www.amnesty.org).

Commissioner for Human Rights – An independent, non-judicial institution of the Council of Europe, mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member states (www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner).

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the European Convention on Human Rights – The first Council of Europe convention and the cornerstone of all its activities. It was adopted in 1950 and entered into force in 1953. Its ratification is a prerequisite for joining the Organisation (<http://human-rights-convention.org>).

Convention on the Rights of the Child – The principal children’s treaty, covering a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It grants rights for children in peacetime as well as during armed conflict, and provides for the implementation of those rights. The Convention serves as both a rallying point and a useful tool for civil society and individual people working to protect and promote children’s rights. It was adopted in 1989 (www.unicef.org/crc).

Council of Europe – The continent’s leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law (www.coe.int).

European Court of Human Rights – An international court set up in 1959. It rules on individual or state applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Since 1998 it has sat as a full-time court and individuals can apply to it directly (www.echr.coe.int).

European Youth Centres – Permanent structures for the implementation of the Council of Europe’s youth policy. There are international training and meeting centres in Budapest and Strasbourg with residential facilities, hosting most of the youth sector’s activities (www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/EYC/European_Youth_Centres_en.asp).

European Youth Foundation – A fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial support for European youth activities. It has an annual budget of approximately three million euros. Its purpose is to encourage co-operation among young people in Europe by providing financial support to such European youth activities as serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation in a spirit of respect for the Council of Europe’s fundamental values such as human rights, democracy, tolerance and solidarity (www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation).

European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) – An independent European organisation, composed of national youth information co-ordination bodies and networks. It works to intensify European co-operation in the field of youth information work and services. It aims to develop, support and promote quality generalist youth information policy and practice at all levels, in order to meet the information needs of young people in Europe and to apply the principles of the European Youth Information Charter (www.eryica.org).

European Youth Information Charter – A document adopted in Bratislava (Slovak Republic) on 19 November 2004 by the 15th General Assembly of ERYICA. It consists of 16 principles intended to apply to all forms of generalist youth information work. They constitute a basis for minimum standards and quality measures which should be established in each country as elements of a comprehensive, coherent and co-ordinated approach to youth information work, which is a part of youth policy (<http://eryica.org/page/european-youth-information-charter-0>).

Human rights – Those rights that are essential to live as human beings: basic standards without which people cannot survive and develop in dignity. They are inherent to the human person, and are inalienable and universal (www.unicef.org/crc/index_framework.html).

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. It has a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights (www.ohchr.org).

“Principles for online youth information” – A document adopted in Rotterdam (the Netherlands) on 5 December 2009 by the 20th General Assembly of ERYICA. It should ensure the quality of online youth information services and guarantee their added value and trustworthiness, together with the principles of the European Youth Information Charter (<http://eryica.org/page/principles-online-youth-information>).

United Nations (UN) – An international organisation founded in 1945 after the Second World War to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and promote social progress, better living standards and human rights. It can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 193 member states to express their views through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees (www.un.org).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – The driving force behind efforts to build a world where the rights of every child are realised. UNICEF is active in around 190 countries and territories through country programmes and National Committees (www.unicef.org).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Generally agreed to be the foundation of international human rights law. Adopted in 1948, the Declaration has inspired a rich body of legally binding international human rights treaties. It works to address injustices, particularly in times of conflict and in societies suffering repression, and works towards achieving universal enjoyment of human rights. It represents the universal recognition that basic rights and fundamental freedoms are inherent to all

human beings, inalienable and equally applicable to everyone, and that every human being is born free and equal in dignity and rights (www.un.org/en/documents/udhr).

Youth – There is no universally correct definition of youth. The concept of youth is socially constructed rather than biologically determined, meaning that it differs with time, the socio-economic development of a society, and the person or institution defining it. It depends also on national realities and traditions. For the purpose of this publication we are talking about people aged 12 to 26 years. (Youth policy manual – How to develop a national youth strategy, Finn Yrjar Denstad Council of Europe, 2009. ISBN 978-92-871-6576-3, available at: <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Research/Publication>).

Youth Department of the Council of Europe – Part of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe. It elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels. It provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming at the promotion of youth citizenship, youth mobility and the value of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about the life situations, aspirations and ways of expression of young Europeans (www.coe.int/youth).

Youth information centre – Confidential areas offering information that is relevant to young people and those who work with them. The information depends on the needs of the young people in question (Yintro – Stepping into youth information, <http://eryica.org/page/yintro-%E2%80%93stepping-youth-information>).

Youth information work – A specialised form of youth work. Youth information has become a specific part of youth work in many countries, involving a range of interventions and services for young people. The way youth information work is delivered depends very much on the national legislation, the overall role of youth work and the other structures and facilities available for young people. Nevertheless, some essential tasks and principles are the same for all youth information centres and services (“Youth information starter kit”, <http://eryica.org/page/starters-kit>).

Youth rights – The European Youth Forum refers to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by young people. This includes access to existing human rights but may also entail, where needed, the creation of new rights and freedoms. The definition of youth relies on national realities, and so does that of youth rights (“Policy paper on youth rights”, adopted by the European Youth Forum General Assembly, Maribor, Slovenia, 22 to 25 November 2012, http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_youthrightsexpertgroup_policypa).

Important organisations mentioned in the publication

Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org

Council of Europe: www.coe.int

Council of Europe, Youth Department: www.coe.int/youth

European Court of Human Rights: www.echr.coe.int

European Youth Foundation: <http://eyf.coe.int>

European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA): www.eryica.org

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): www.ohchr.org

UNICEF: www.unicef.org

United Nations: www.un.org

Voices of Youth: www.voicesofyouth.org

Good practice examples mentioned in the publication

Council of Europe campaign All Different – All Equal: good practice, www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/ADAE_cookbook.pdf

ERYICA campaign Information Right Now!: www.informationrightnow.eu; Final report with list of activities: <http://eryica.org/news/report-information-right-now>

ERYICA “Good practice in youth information” booklet: <http://eryica.org/news/good-practice-booklet-youth-information-new-edition-out-now>

European youth forum: www.youthforum.org

European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights: www.youact.org

Krovna Organizacija Mladih Srbije: www.koms.rs

The OneMinutesJr.: www.theoneminutesjr.org

One World film festival: www.oneworld.cz

Sheryica, online platform for European youth information workers: www.sheryica.org

Vote at 16: www.voteat16.eu

YouthRights.NOW: www.youthrights.eu

ERYICA members and co-operating organisations that contributed to this publication

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh: www.agenzjazghazagh.gov.mt

De Ambrassade: <http://ambrassade.be>

Bureau Information Jeunesse de Vienne: <http://bijdevienne.unblog.fr>

Centre Information Jeunes: www.cij.lu

Infozona: <http://infozona.hr>

Jongenvanzin: <http://www.jongenvanzin.be/>

Koordinaatti: www.koordinaatti.fi

Národní Informační Centrum Pro Mládež: www.nicm.cz

LijOT – Lithuanian Youth Council: www.lijot.lt

Solna Stad: www.solna.se

Tvibit: www.tvibit.net

wienXtra-jugendinfo: www.wienextra.at

Links to material and video sources concerning human or youth rights:

Adolescent development information, also used in ERYICA JIMMY training: www.kidsgrowth.com/resources/article/detail.cfm?id=1140

Amnesty international resources: www.youtube.com/user/AmnestyInternational;
Amnesty International Human Rights Education Resources Centre: www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/resource-centre

Council of Europe campaign Nurturing Human Rights with list of human rights resources: <http://human-rights-convention.org/nurturing-human-rights>

Council of Europe card game about social rights “Enter Dignityland!": <http://enter.coe.int/eng/Enter-Dignityland!-A-game-on-social-rights>;

Council of Europe Directorate General I Human Rights and Rule of Law publications: www.coe.int/t/dgi/publications/index_publications_en.asp

Council of Europe document “Rights and freedoms in practice”: www.coe.int/AboutCoe/media/interface/publications/fiches_dh_en.pdf

Council of Europe document with practical activities and games “Companion – A campaign guide about education and learning for change in diversity, human rights and participation”: www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/2007_Companion_without_cover_en.pdf

Council of Europe document Compass, A manual for human rights education with young people: www.eycb.coe.int/compass

Council of Europe No Hate Speech campaign materials: <http://nohate.ext.coe.int/Campaign-Tools-and-Materials>

Council of Europe videos: www.youtube.com/user/CouncilofEurope

European Commission: White Paper, “A new impetus for European youth”, COM(2001) 681 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52001DC0681>

European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation statutes: www.dropbox.com/s/rmr3rh6ycyttg76/Statutes_EYC_EYF.pdf

European Youth Foundation: guidelines for submitting grant applications, www.dropbox.com/s/hcktxqtx77a88mb/Priorities%20EYF%202014_2015_12%2009%202013.docx

ERYICA: “Guide to safety and quality online”, <http://eryica.org/page/publications>

Optimising Facebook newsfeed: www.socialmediaexaminer.com/7-ways-to-get-noticed-on-facebook-with-facebook-news-feed-optimization

Writing effective Facebook posts: <http://socialmediatoday.com/bigsea/370308/writing-effective-facebook-posts>

Focus groups and how to set them up: www.qualitative-researcher.com

OHCHR: www.youtube.com/user/UNOHCHR; Poster on Universal Declaration of Human rights, www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Poster_en.pdf; "Share, learn and innovate!" Toolkit, <http://slitoolkit.ohchr.org>; Training and education materials, www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/TrainingEducation.aspx

The OneMinutesJr.: www.theoneminutesjr.org; www.youtube.com/UNICEFoneminutesjr

United for Human Rights: www.humanrights.com

Welsh Government: Let's get it right! website: www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk

Youth for Human Rights: www.youthforhumanrights.org

Youth rights information: www.droitsetdevoirs.lu

This publication is the result of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA). On the one hand, there is the Council of Europe where human rights is one of the most important topics; on the other, ERYICA, an independent organisation composed of national youth information co-ordination bodies and networks. This toolkit on access of young people to their rights is first and foremost intended to assist youth information experts working directly with young people, but it can also be used in other non-formal activities.

The toolkit offers many sources of information and inspiration on how to inform young people about their rights, in an attractive way. This publication offers you a summary of the most relevant and useful material available in the online world.

The toolkit's purpose is not only to inform: as Albert Einstein said, "Information is not knowledge". It is important to translate information into practical experience. Therefore, at the end of the publication one can find suggestions of practical activities and examples of good practice that can help young people to better understand human rights and ways to access them.

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.



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