

SIDE EVENT at the 2025 Social Forum

The transformative role of Human Rights Education as a frontline defence for the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms

31 October 2025, 13:30 to 15:00 (CET)

Room VII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

This side event will explore the contribution of human rights education within formal education and lifelong learning. Through a series of panel presentations, it will highlight how human rights education plays a critical and transformative contribution in protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

International human rights frameworks on the right to education are explicit on the role of education to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Additionally, Sustainable Development Goal 4 provides a policy goal that all learners acquire knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development including through education on human rights.

In the global context of a growing multiplicity of assaults against human rights accountability, against international law, and against the UN, organized resistance against those forces is not merely essential; it is our only legitimate recourse. Human rights education has a vital role to play in this process. Actively learning about human rights throughout life is a critical dimension of education that contributes to the respect, promotion, protection, and fulfilment of all human rights for all. Human rights are not passive ideas or instruments, as legal obligations they require action from the state and should be central in the development of education from an equity, inclusion and learning perspective.

This side event will explore how formal education and lifelong learning opportunities can effectively integrate Human Rights Education (HRE) to fulfil the legal obligations on the aims and objectives of education to strengthen human rights for all. The session will highlight legal and policy frameworks, and importantly it will highlight human rights education as transformative practice.

2. OBJECTIVES

The side event aims:

- Increase understanding of Human Rights Education as a transformative contribution of education to promote and protect human rights.
- Provide practical examples for HRE in formal and non-formal education strategies.
- Strengthened partnerships among stakeholders working on education and human rights to support human rights education.

3. SPEAKERS

Moderator: Mr. Illan Acher, Human Rights Education Manager, Amnesty International Switzerland

Speakers:

- Ms. Kate Moriarty, Head of Human Rights Education, Amnesty International
- Mr. Andrés Allán Sánchez Osorio, human rights educator from Mexico
- Ms. Faiza Hassan, Director, Inter-agency Network of Education in Emergencies
- Ms. Ana Paula Brandao, Director of Programs, ActionAid, Brazil
- Ms. Elena Ippoliti, Coordinator, Human Rights Education Unit, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

4. DRAFT PROGRAMME

13.30 - 13.40	Welcoming remarks
13.40 - 14.10	Presentations speakers
14.10- 14.30	Panel discussion (Moderated)
14:30 - 14:50	Dialogue and Q&A - Feedback from the audience
14.50 - 15.00	Closing remarks

5. LANGUAGE

The side event will be in English.