



Human Rights Education Methods for Youth Workers

Estonian Human Rights Centre

April 2025, Tallinn, Estonia



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This toolkit presents a selection of human rights education methods and activities developed for youth workers in Estonia and Iceland. It offers a range of approaches to facilitate discussions on human rights, with a particular emphasis on promoting equal treatment and the inclusion of minorities, including LGBTQ+ youth.

The toolkit was created as part of the Estonian Association of Youth Workers' 2025 Winter School, "Make Space! Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Youth Work," which brought together both Estonian and Icelandic youth workers. A dedicated workshop on human rights education took place during the event, and many of the methods and activities included here were developed by participants during that session.

The content was compiled and edited by Kelly Grossthal, an expert on equal treatment at the Estonian Human Rights Centre, based on the intellectual contributions of the Winter School participants.

Thank you for your interest in human rights and human rights education. We hope this toolkit proves useful to youth workers in both Estonia and Iceland and that it inspires meaningful, inclusive activities in youth work.

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Project Overview

This material was developed as part of the project “Raising Awareness of Human Rights and Equal Treatment Among Youth Workers” - a collaborative initiative by the Estonian Human Rights Centre, the Estonian Association of Youth Workers, and Samtökin '78 (Iceland). The project was carried out from autumn 2024 to spring 2025.

Its aim was to enhance youth workers' understanding of human rights, with a particular focus on the principle of equal treatment. The project sought to promote deeper awareness and support the creation of safe, inclusive spaces for young people from minority backgrounds, especially those who are particularly vulnerable, such as queer youth. The project was funded by the Bilateral Relations Fund of the European Economic Area and Norway Grants.



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Run for Human Rights:

All Human, All Equal

Purpose and Context

A community-focused running event open to young people of all backgrounds and abilities. The run promotes unity, visibility, and pride in one's identity.

Aim

To foster a sense of belonging and shared experience among diverse youth — including LGBTQ+ youth, ethnic minorities, and youth with disabilities — across different age groups.

Run for Human Rights:

All Human, All Equal



Methods/Activities

- Offer multiple race distances (e.g., 1 km, 5 km, 10 km) to accommodate varying abilities.
- Ensure accessibility by including at least one race specifically designed for participants with disabilities.
- Plan the event in consultation with relevant groups (e.g., Estonian Chamber of Disabled People).
- Collect donations during the event to support a human rights cause.
- Encourage participants to wear meaningful symbols (e.g., Pride flags, cultural colors).
- Involve public figures to promote participation and signal that human rights are a shared societal value.



Tips

- Use inclusive messaging and ensure clear communication in all promotional materials.
- Celebrate diversity visibly through music, symbols, food, and media coverage.

One-Day Festival: How Do You Show Love?



Purpose and Context

A festival celebrating the many ways love is expressed: emphasizing diversity, inclusion, and shared humanity.



Aim

To uplift love in its many forms and promote values of acceptance, dignity, and unity. The event highlights the right to love and be loved without discrimination.



Methods/Activities

- Interactive graffiti wall for messages and drawings about love.
- Collect and present love stories in various forms: print, audio, film, or live readings.
- Include a wide range of stories — romantic, familial, queer, intercultural, and more.
- Co-facilitate the event with diverse figures (e.g., a cisgender woman and a drag queen).



Tips

- Create a warm, welcoming space where all expressions of love are respected.
- Involve youth in curating and presenting stories.

Storytelling Workshops

Purpose and Context

A safe, creative space where youth express their lived experiences, dreams, and values through storytelling in various formats.

Aim

To support freedom of expression and affirm the worth of every personal narrative. Storytelling fosters empathy, understanding, and dignity.

Methods/Activities

- Begin with warm-up activities that explore identity and memory.
- Encourage story creation through writing, drawing, or video.
- Share stories in small groups or at exhibitions.

Tips

- Use gentle, open-ended prompts to inspire creativity.
- Value authenticity over technical skill.
- Make participation voluntary and respectful.

Human Rights Hackathon



Purpose and Context

A fast-paced event where youth collaborate in teams to create solutions to real-world human rights challenges.



Aim

To empower young people to act as changemakers by identifying and addressing social issues such as discrimination, inequality, and exclusion. Promotes rights like freedom of expression and equality.



Methods/Activities

- Form teams to brainstorm and develop solutions to selected challenges.
- Present ideas or prototypes to a panel or peers.
- Outputs may include tech tools, art pieces, or advocacy campaigns.



Tips

- Set clear and relatable challenges.
- Encourage diverse teams and perspectives.
- Keep energy high with regular energizers and informal breaks.

Diversity Day Festival

Purpose and Context

A celebration of human differences and dignity, aimed at increasing awareness and shifting attitudes toward inclusion and prejudice.

Aim

To showcase the diversity within communities and encourage reflection on exclusion and discrimination. The event promotes equality, non-discrimination, and cultural participation by amplifying underrepresented voices.

Methods/Activities

- Living Library: Real stories on topics like migration, disability, and coming out.
- Counter-speech workshops: Learn to challenge hate and prejudice effectively.
- Diverse food stalls representing multiple cultures.
- Traditional music and dance performances.
- A photo exhibition portraying diverse identities (e.g., age, ethnicity, ability).

Tips

- Provide space for reflection and open dialogue.
- Ensure leadership and representation from diverse youth groups.

Singing for Human Rights



Purpose and Context

Harnessing the emotional and expressive power of music to explore human rights issues in creative and engaging ways.



Aim

To connect communities and youth with human rights themes through collective music-making. Promotes freedom of expression, cultural participation, and inclusivity.



Methods/Activities

- Rewrite lyrics of well-known songs to reflect human rights topics.
- Facilitate music workshops in youth centers or partner with choirs and bands.
- Host a community concert.



Tips

- Respect copyright rules for public performances.
- Invite people of all ages and backgrounds to participate.

Human Rights Film Project

Purpose and Context

A youth-led short film initiative addressing bullying based on identity and its connection to broader human rights issues.

Aim

To raise awareness of bullying as a violation of human rights, and to empower young people to stand against exclusion and violence. Focuses on dignity, safety, education, and freedom of expression.

Methods/Activities

- Produce a short film based on real-life experiences of bullying.
- Use accessible tools (e.g., phone cameras).
- Screen the film in schools and youth centers to spark dialogue.
- Highlight cyberbullying, exclusion, and the role of bystanders.

Tips

- Provide emotional support to participants sharing personal stories.
- Use the film as an advocacy tool in campaigns and educational settings.

Social Action Campaigns



Purpose and Context

Youth plan and lead advocacy or awareness campaigns on issues they care about, from LGBTQ+ rights to mental health and climate justice.



Aim

To promote active citizenship and amplify young voices. Supports rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association — especially for youth from marginalized backgrounds.



Methods/Activities

- Identify key causes and target audiences.
- Develop materials (videos, posters, social media content).
- Engage local communities and decision-makers.



Tips

- Offer training on effective campaigning strategies.
- Encourage realistic and achievable goals.
- Connect youth with mentors, activists, or local NGOs.

Art for Social Change Exhibitions

Purpose and Context

Youth explore social justice themes through art - including painting, photography, and installations - and present their work in public exhibitions.

Aim

To promote awareness and conversation around human rights by showcasing creative expressions of personal and collective experiences. Art becomes a tool for visibility, advocacy, and community dialogue.

Methods/Activities

- Select a guiding theme (e.g., “Freedom,” “Justice,” “Belonging”).
- Create artworks in any medium.
- Exhibit pieces in local venues or online.

Tips

- Prioritize meaningful expression over technical skill.
- Involve youth in the full process: creation, curation, and presentation.
- Celebrate every participant’s vision and voice.