

A Network in Action

A Vision Statement for the Cooperation of the Global Campus of Human Rights and the Right Livelihood Foundation

The cooperation between the Global Campus of Human Rights and the Right Livelihood Foundation has the purpose 'to promote the acknowledgement and observance of human and child rights and to strengthen the participation of children in all matters affecting their lives in the present and in the future'. In this endeavour, the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights is a strategic partner in planning and implementation. Additionally, to increase the diversity of perspectives and the scope of its outreach, a Steering Group was formed with an advisory function to help shape this cooperation. In its first meeting on 20 April 2020, the Steering Group outlined a set of principles that shall serve as a guiding star for the future development and implementation of this common endeavour. These guiding principles are characterised below:

Creating a network in action

The cooperation is based on the recognition that many conventional systems do not protect a rights-based and sustainable existence for future generations. As champions of human rights research, education and advocacy, our cooperation thus envisions the birth of a **network in action** where human rights scholars and educators connect with a variety of youth-led movements and strategic partners thus translating schools of thought into schools of action.

Fostering non-traditional modes of research and education

We are convinced that this requires **non-traditional modes of research and education** that boldly and urgently address the major crises affecting the lives of people and especially children. These include the health and climate crises, but also the growing concern that traditional forms of education fail to provide children with the needed **tools and skills** to claim their rights. In this sense, we foresee a cooperation where the way in which we educate young people in our global classrooms mirrors the way in which they are empowered. This includes concentrating our combined efforts to **engage with the major crises** that especially affect the rights of children.

Seeking to stimulate a new human rights wave

While accepting the fact that traditional human rights education has its legitimate place, this cooperation also wishes to stimulate a **new human rights wave**, which requires building on knowledge already present in communities. Establishing 'learning communities' has to be a fundamental part of future human rights research, education and advocacy. We therefore see our role as a network in action in the development of strategies that would bridge children's rights with the realities and experiences of children, the movements they inspire and the actions they take. In this sense, our cooperation works to theoretically as well as empirically facilitate strategic thinking around the need for systems change and a new order of children's rights.

Standing with children

Our approach encourages child participation. Importantly however, child participation should be approached in a way that motivates us to move beyond our discussion forums and lecture halls towards non-traditional learning spaces. We see ourselves going out into the environments that children live in – into the spaces they occupy and choose to shape. In this sense, involving children should not merely mean that *they* 'sit with us', but that *we* 'stand with them'. Our vision of successful

human rights education and advocacy is one in which **children occupy political spaces on their own terms**. We see them empowered to claim their rights by utilising what we can offer them as educators in terms of human rights in action.

Enhancing critical perspectives and training sustainable multipliers

Whether in research, education or advocacy, a guiding element of our cooperation is to not only improve children's rights, but also to **create sustainable multipliers** enriched with a robust commitment to defend the rights of children worldwide. We strive to do so by enhancing **critical perspectives** within our curriculums, thus providing learners with the confidence to disagree, to reflect independently, but importantly also to view the world from perspectives other than their own.

Developing a sense of cross-regional ownership

Finally, the vision of our cooperation also includes actively fostering across our own network the sense that we are part of a global effort advocating for sustainable change in the service of children worldwide. The moment we achieve such a **sense of cross-regional ownership** is the moment when our cooperation transforms into a movement of its own.

May 2020

Signed by all members of the Steering Group:

Veronica Gomez (President Global Campus of Human Rights)

Lotte Leicht (Chair, European Centre for Constitutional & Human Rights; EU Director of Human Rights Watch)

Dzidek Kedzia (Honorary President Global Campus of Human Rights)

Luisa Neubauer (Climate Activist, Fridays for Future)

Manfred Nowak (Secretary General, Global Campus of Human Rights)

Jamila Raqib (Executive Director Albert Einstein Institution)

Wolfgang Kaleck (represented by Claire Tixeire, European Centre for Constitutional & Human Rights)

Ole von Uexküll (Executive Director, Right Livelihood Foundation)