

INTRODUCTION: DIVERSITY VALUES AND SELF-WORTH

Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty (United Nations, n.d., 1948).

Human rights are those basic standards, which are important for enabling people to live in safety and dignity. Human rights protect our lives and our bodies from harm, allowing us to live as free persons, and to carry out different activities – to express ourselves, to learn new information, to meet with friends and like-minded people, etc.

In most of the countries, human rights in their most basic form have been explained in the National Constitutions.

Rights of a child are human rights. When we speak about rights of a child, we mean the child's human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) lists internationally acknowledged rights of children. The aim of the adoption of the convention was to emphasize something that adults tend to forget – a child is a human with equal rights as a parent has. The Convention sees child as a subject of law or, to put in another way, as a holder of rights. This means that a child is an individual who has human rights, and no one has owner's rights over the child, including parents. Child rights, as human rights, are rights which apply to every child, irrespective of age, gender, nationality, or other characteristics (Estonian Chancellor of Justice, n.d.).

The need for special rights for child is that children cannot always protect their rights and interests, so they need help and protection from adults. Children must be protected from mental and physical violence, injustice, negligence, abuse, sexual abuse, and other threats. Additionally, adults must ensure that children have what they need to live and establish suitable conditions for the development of children's skills and interests (United Nations, 1989). Due that it is recommended to create and adhere child protection policies at schools and other organisations working with kids.

Two of the key values that lie at the core of the idea of human rights are **human dignity and equality**. Human rights can be understood as defining those basic standards which are necessary for a life of dignity; and their universality is derived from the fact that in this respect, at least, all humans are equal. We should not, and cannot, discriminate between them. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Freedom from discrimination, set out in Article 2, is what ensures this equality (United Nations, 1948).

Many other values can be derived from two fundamental, for example (Council of Europe, n.d.):

- **Freedom:** because the human will be an important part of human dignity. To be forced to do something against our will demeans the human spirit.
- **Respect** for others: because a lack of respect for someone fails to appreciate their individuality and essential dignity.
- **Non-discrimination:** because equality in human dignity means we should not judge people's rights and opportunities based on their characteristics.
- **Tolerance:** because intolerance indicates a lack of respect for difference; and equality does not signify uniformity.
- **Justice:** because people equal in their humanity deserve fair treatment

- **Responsibility:** because respecting the rights of others entails responsibility for one's actions and exerting effort for the realisation of the rights of one and all.

Human rights are universal, they apply equally to all people everywhere in the world, and with no time limit. Every individual is entitled to enjoy their human rights without distinction of "race" or ethnic background, colour, sex, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth, or other status. We should note that the universality of human rights does not in any way threaten the rich diversity of individuals or of different cultures (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Diversity requires a world where everyone is equal, and equally deserving of respect. Human rights serve as minimum standards applying to all human beings.

The respect of diversity lies in the understanding of human rights and the obligation to respect other's rights.

Diversity is defined as differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people (European Institute for Gender Equality, n.d.). Diversity is a part of life everywhere in the world. Human beings differ from one another in their appearance, origin, interests and activities, life choices and abilities, but we all share the same human dignity. A democratic state treats people equally and takes into consideration the specificities of people. This means that social rules and norms must take into consideration our differences to ensure equal opportunities and inclusion for everybody.

As the human rights are value-based, the concept of diversity denotes both a value attitude and a principle of increasing tolerance and respect for differences. It is an overarching principle that requires equal treatment, respect for rights and inclusion.

For children the learning of human rights and diversity values starts from the birth and at home and has a lot to do with parental role models. The younger the children are, the more they imitate their parents' behaviour patterns and attitudes. In adolescence, perceptions can change and even conflict, but the primary role model remains with the parents.

As human's values are developed in childhood and adolescence, the parents and teachers have the responsibility to support the child's value development. Conscious dealing with the topic of values increases the value competence of all involved parties, helps to make sense of one's development needs, interests, and values, promotes responsible behaviour, opinion, and adequate self-esteem. However, schools that prioritize value education find that such an emphasis also results in an increase in students' interest in learning and better learning results. In addition, effective value education is expressed in the general atmosphere of the school, relaxed and benevolent communication, respect for oneself and others, continuous self-improvement of school employees, effective cooperation between all parties of the school community, and mutual respect (Centre for Ethics, University of Tartu, 2014).

Humans as social beings, learn from the interaction with other people and create the picture of the world and about themselves. The healthy, secure relationship with parent(s) or carers, create a foundation for trust with the world and other people and the identity of child itself. Parents can support the development of a child's self-esteem and self-worth in many ways, for example by expressing their own positive feelings ("I care about you very much", "I am happy with you"), recognizing the child's efforts and achievements ("you can be proud of yourself because..."), helping the child learning about yourself through discussion ("what do you think?", "what did you feel?"), protecting your child from injustice (say that what happened was not the child's mistake/fault), sharing responsibility and trust (confirm that you have believe in your child, let your children help themselves). Researchers have concluded that if parents are attentive, open, and caring towards the

child, they create a safe growth environment, which in turn helps to form a higher self-esteem of the child. A child grows confident and respects himself and others. In the future, they will be able to cope better with difficulties as well as unpleasant situations, have a positive attitude towards themselves, believe in their own abilities and be able to enjoy other people's progress. They are also able to stand up for themselves and their views and be ready to admit their mistakes (The National Institute for Health Development, 2019).

Role of holistic sexuality education

It is said that children's self-esteem and development can be supported with holistic sexuality education. As the learning of values starts very early, the sexual education starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood. For children and young people, it aims at supporting and protecting sexual development.

Traditionally, sexuality education has focused on the potential risks of sexuality, such as unintended pregnancy and Sexual Transmitted Infections (WHO (World Health Organisation) Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2010).

A holistic approach based on an understanding of sexuality as an area of human potential helps children and young people to develop essential skills to enable them to self-determine their sexuality and their relationships at the various developmental stages. Sexuality education is also part of a more general education, and thus affects the development of the child's personality. Its preventive nature not only contributes to the prevention of negative consequences linked to sexuality, but can also improve quality of life, health, and well-being. In this way, sexuality education contributes to health promotion in general.

Holistic sexual education gives children and young people unbiased, scientifically correct information on all aspects of sexuality and, at the same time, helps them to develop the skills to act upon this information (Part & Kull, 2018; Rutgers, 2015; WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2010).

Children's sexuality education must be simple and age-appropriate, then it balances the oversexualized media messages. Children's sexuality education is learning about their own body parts, accepting their own and other bodies as valuable, recognizing different genders, learning to express their feelings, and perceiving and expressing their privacy. Knowledge and skills in this area help the child to set boundaries, express their wishes, experience the joy of safe physical intimacy, create friendships, protect their personal space, recognize (sexual) violence, seek help if necessary. Age-appropriate sexual education allows children understand their sexuality, treat themselves and others with tolerance, positiveness, and respect, create close relationships based on equality and consent, and take responsibility for their own and their partner's (sexual) health. Adults play a very important role because their attitudes, behaviour and words shape children's sexuality (Part & Kull, 2018; Rutgers, 2015).

Holistic sexuality education has the principle, that it is based on a (sexual and reproductive) human rights approach and is firmly based on gender equality, self-determination, and the acceptance of diversity (Part & Kull, 2018; Rutgers, 2015).

For example, the holistic sexual education is a self-assertion, that (Part & Kull, 2018; Rutgers, 2015):

- The child has the right to decide who touches his body.
- They know the "swimwear rule" (nobody can touch, look at or talk about the parts of the body under the swimwear without the child's permission);
- Can say "NO"
- Understand and consider when the other child does not want to be touched.

- Know that the child has the right to safety and protection.
- Are aware that some people are not good and can be violent.

Not all parents and all families and all people who work with children feel confident and do not talk to children about sexuality, but at the same time most want children to receive modern knowledge and skills on these topics. It is important that through modern and high-quality sexuality education, all children and young people acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that support human dignity, which help to be healthy, to resist inappropriate or violent behaviour, to notice and resist (gender) inequality, to challenge limiting gender roles and thereby avoid damage to mental and physical health. This gives the child the opportunity to grow into a person who can create happy, long-term and mutually satisfying close relationships - and this is the cornerstone of today's active and functioning society (Sexual Health Research Center of the University of Tartu, n.d.).

The violation of human and children's rights (e.g., discrimination, bullying and violence) has a damaging effect on a child's development, depending on the of violation. The trauma has a "footprint" on children's lives.

Inclusive education and gender

Most countries have the policy of inclusive education. It goes along with the child's right for to quality education and learning.

Inclusivity, in its very definition, means to be open to everyone and not limited to certain people. Regarding gender, this means that services, establishments, schools, practitioners, government agencies, and other institutions are welcoming of all kids, regardless of their gender identity or expression (Gender Spectrum, n.d.).

Adults can help create gender inclusive environments and communities, providing support, compassion and encouragement to all kids and teens, by teaching them that they matter, by sticking up for them, and by demonstrating support through actively opposing gender discrimination to create gender inclusive spaces, all adults must take responsibility for the safety of all children, regardless of the clothes they wear, the toys they play with, or other gender expressions. Moving from the notion of gender as a binary concept to a more expansive understanding of the complex nature of the gender spectrum only occurs with a concerted effort by all adult stakeholders and allies (Gender Spectrum, n.d.).

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