

Introduction to *Human Rights. YES!*

The Purpose of *Human Rights. YES!*

The adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the UN General Assembly in 2006 presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the international disability rights movement. The human rights of persons with disabilities are now set forth in a legally binding treaty and provide a common language for engaged advocacy on a wide range of issues of importance to persons with disabilities. The challenge is to undertake broad-based education around the CRPD to ensure that persons with disabilities worldwide know and claim their rights to live self-determined lives in their communities with dignity.

Using *Human Rights. YES!*

This manual is intended to help all those who care about the human rights of persons with disabilities to become effective educators and advocates on human rights and disability, able to share both their passion and their knowledge. *Human Rights. YES!* draws on the experience of many educators and organizations, illustrating effective advocacy practices and distilling their accumulated insights in the development of participatory exercises.

Like most human rights education manuals, *Human Rights. YES!* is designed to be used as both a reference and tool: easy to read, easy to use, easy to photocopy, easy to relate to people's real lives. Each part and chapter stands alone and may be read and used independently depending on the needs of the reader. Throughout the manual, technical terms are printed in boldface type and defined in the Glossary.

Human Rights. YES! is unique in that it is written and designed for use by people with disabilities. However, adaptation for specific learners is recommended throughout the text. Facilitators should be sensitive to the needs of any particular audience and adapt the physical environment, activities, and all means of communication to make everyone's full participation possible. For more information on facilitation, see Annex 2, "Facilitating Human Rights Education," p. 291.

Part 1, "Understanding Disability as a Human Right," sets out some basic principles for thinking about human rights and disability. It provides a review of who is responsible for human rights and introduces the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It also summarizes common attitudes and perceptions about disability that may stand in the way of realizing human rights, and explores the way in which disability issues have been defined and researched. It concludes by setting forth a rights-based approach to disability and making the links between disability, human rights, and effective advocacy.

Part 2, "The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," provides a comprehensive overview of the human rights set forth in the CRPD in seventeen chapters. Each chapter considers a set of human rights contained in the CRPD, providing an accessible explanation of each right, and incorporating participatory exercises to help people consolidate their understanding, articulate the issues in their own words and contexts, and think constructively about how to take action. Illustrative examples of advocacy strategies, helpful facts, and other topical information are also provided. Each chapter concludes with a short list of useful additional resources on the topics covered.

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Part 3, “Advocacy! Taking Action for the Human Rights of People with Disabilities,” explains the essentials of effective human rights advocacy: awareness of rights; awareness of self; and action. Examples of advocacy actions are provided, along with exercises for adopting an advocacy action plan and an advocacy action plan template. Finally, Part 3 takes the reader through six steps of advocacy:

- Step 1: Defining the change you want to make
- Step 2: Articulating the change you want to make
- Step 3: Preparing for action
- Step 4: Making your action plan
- Step 5: Taking action
- Step 6: Following-up.

The **Annexes** contain a variety of useful resources:

- **Annex 1, Human Rights Documents:** Full text, plain-language text, and summary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and a list of major human rights instruments and their Internet addresses
- **Annex 2, Facilitating Human Rights Education:** Tips on interactive learning and accommodating learning for participants with disabilities, as well as model workshops
- **Annex 3, Resources:** A list of significant printed, electronic, and other materials
- **Annex 4, Glossary:** Definitions of human rights terms used in the text
- **Annex 5, Topic Index:** A list of principle subjects covered in the book