

FOREWORD BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



On current estimates, one in ten people lives with a disability. Of these, a high proportion live in poverty, on the margins of society, and their rights are all too often breached. In many cases, people are simply unaware that they have rights and unaware of the opportunities that exist to combat inequality and bring about positive change. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol has provided us with the means to shift disabling attitudes and environments in society and empower persons with disabilities to realize their rights. Now is the time to bring this new Convention home, to people, and I believe that “Human Rights. YES!” offers a much-needed tool to achieve this.

The curriculum is an accessible and easy-to-use training manual and provides a major resource for human rights advocates and practitioners to strengthen advocacy and human rights education. The division of the training material into three chapters – elaborating upon the human rights context of disability, a right-by-right explanation of the Convention and plans for future advocacy and action – comprehensively covers the human rights of persons, focusing in particular on the new Convention but drawing also from the body of law and experience of the broader human rights system. Importantly, each unit encourages participants in the course to make commitments to promote respect for the rights of persons with disabilities beyond the classroom. The chapter format offers practitioners the option of providing a full training package over an extended period, or shorter training sessions on specific human rights issues.

Human rights education through curricula such as “Human Rights. YES!” is an essential step in empowering people and communities. For persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, learning about human rights can help combat discrimination when it occurs and strengthen advocacy efforts to avoid it in the future. Significantly, through informed advocacy, we can help build the capacity and will of governments to undertake the law and policy reform needed to bring about change on the ground. For the broader community, the curriculum raises awareness of human rights and the ways that persons with disabilities can and do contribute to society – an important step in building more inclusive societies.

“Human Rights. YES!” is an indispensable addition to the human rights education tool-kit and I take pleasure in being associated with it. I congratulate the authors and sponsors for this initiative and I hope that it is widely used.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Louise Arbour".

Louise Arbour
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights